

Attitude of parents to children's crime and delinquent acts in secondary schools of district Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir (India)

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Abstract

This study was designed to understand, the level of parental awareness of the violent acts of their children and the actions parents will take when their children perpetrate violence and how violent acts can be solved in school. Thirty five children from eight secondary schools were chosen randomly and asked to give the questionnaire to their parents in the survey. The results reveal that parents are aware of violent acts that occur in schools and some of the causes are peer influence (88.6%), poor supervision by school authorities (85.7%), exposure to violent films (88.6%) and emotional instability (82.9%). Children that will report their violence to their parents are 82.9% while 57.1% believed that their children will report to them if they perpetrate violence in schools. Furthermore, 60% of parents would go to schools to approach any child perpetrating violence against their children while 54.3% would go and report to the teacher. Opportunity for sports and other recreational activities, visitations to schools by parents, establishment of Guidance and counseling units are some of the strategies suggested for solving violent behavior of children in schools.

Keywords: Perpetrate, Delinquent acts, Parental awareness, Children

Introduction

Olweus (1999) defined violence or violent behavior as aggressive behavior where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body as an object to inflict (relatively serious) injury or discomfort upon an individual. The World Health Organization (WHO; 2002) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, physiological harm, mal-development or deprivation. Violence is perpetrated against students, teachers and staff. Research has shown that a significant relationship exists between exposure to community violence and increase in aggressive behavior in adolescent youth (Cooley, Turner, Beidel, 1995; Bell and Jenkins, (1993). Exposure to community violence occurs through various modalities that include the media observation and direct contact either as perpetrator or victim (Schumbinar, Scott and Tzelips, 1993). Furthermore, the degree to which adolescents are exposed to violence in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and the extent to which they have been victims of violence are associated with their own use of violence (Durant, Pendergrast and Cadenhead, 1994). Despite the fact that children spend most of their time after school hours with parents, reports have shown that most children will not report cases of violence at home (UNICEF, 2007). No parent wants their child to live in fear of intimidation or harm. Children may not feel able to report acts of violence for the fear of further subjection to punishment by the abuser. Most times both child and abuser may see nothing unusual or wrong in the child being subjected to violence. They may not consider an act of violence actually to be

violence at all, perhaps viewing it as justifiable and necessary punishment.

This lack of documentation and increasing violence rates against children were part of the reasons for the global in-depth study of violence against children by the General Assembly Resolution 57/90 of 2002 to provide a global picture. Some of the major reasons why learners will not report cases of violence especially for physical and gender based violence were because they felt that nothing will be done. Improving the quality of education is difficult without also addressing, school violence, since regardless of how good the teachers or curriculum are, violence makes it difficult for students to learn. Children who are victimized to school crime often suffer from decreased self-esteem, truancy, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and in extreme cases, suicide and violent retaliation. In situations where parents finally become aware of violent acts against or of their children, speak to their child's teachers or the bully's parents but often this doesn't solve the problem. Many parents also want their child to fight back but the child is afraid of the bully and also of what the teacher will do if they fight back. In some cases things have gotten so bad that kids actually take their own lives. Based on all these views this study intends to find out the attitude of parents to children's delinquent acts in schools.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the types of violent acts common to secondary school students.
2. Find out parental awareness on children violent acts of students in secondary school.

- Determine parental attitude to children's violent acts in schools.

Research Questions

- What are the common causes of violent acts of students in secondary school?
- What are the types of violent acts common to secondary school students?
- What action will parents take when their children perpetrate violent acts?
- What are the parental views on how violent acts can be solved in school?

Methods

For the present study a survey research design was used. The population for this study comprise of all parents in Srinagar district of J&K. The parents were reached through their children. 35 children were used randomly from 8 secondary schools making a sample size of 70. Simple random sample technique was employed in the selection of the secondary schools. The rationale for undertaking the study in Srinagar city of J&K was because of past history of violence associated with the area. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A consists of personal data of the respondents. Section B and C consists of items on parents' attitude to children's violent acts and how children violent act can be solved in schools. Items in the questionnaire were closed, with two options of agree and disagree. These were

scored 2 and 1 respectively for all items of the questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using simple percentages.

Research Question: - What are the types of violent acts common to secondary school students?

Table 1: Percentile table showing types of violent acts common to senior secondary school students.

Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Stealing	53	75.7	17	24.38
Fighting	52	74.28	18	25.81
Damaging of school properties	60	85.71	10	14.38
Seizing other students food	32	45.71	38	54.38
Bullying other children	50	71.42	20	28.6
Rape	38	54.28	32	45.8
Abuses	48	68.57	22	31.5
Blackmailing	51	72.4	20	28.6
Extortion	40	57.9	30	42.1
Stigmatization	38	54.2	32	45.8

From the Table 1, damaging of school properties 85.7%, Fighting 74.2% stealing 75.7% and blackmailing 72.4% have the highest percentage in children violent acts in secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What are the common causes of violent acts of students in secondary schools?

Table 2: Common cause of children violent acts

Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Poor supervision by school authorities	60	85.7	10	14.3
Peer group Influence	62	88.6	8	11.4
Lack of interest in school	37	52.8	33	47.2
Student dislike of teachers	42	60	28	40
Teachers attitude of work	38	54.3	32	45.7
Home background of student	35	50	35	50
Parental influence	38	54.3	32	45.7
Emotional instability	58	82.9	12	17.1
Exposure to violent films	62	88.6	8	11.4
Lack of recreational facilities	40	57.1	30	42.9
Strike actions of teachers	40	57.1	30	42.9
Too many free periods	32	45	38	54.3
Absence of teachers from classrooms	38	54	32	45.7

It is revealed that many things do cause violent behavior in children among which are poor supervision by school

authorities 85.7% peer influence 88.6% exposure to violent films 88.6% and emotional instability 82.9%.

Table 3: Parental Method of dealing with Child's experience of Violent acts in school.

What did do when your child reported that they were victims of violence in school	Yes (total no)	%	No (total no)	%
1- Visit the school to accost the child involved	42	60	28	40
2- See the school authority or teacher to find out what happened	38	54.3	32	45.7

Table 3 showed that in dealing with cases of voice involving their children, parents would go to school to approach the

child involved (60%) or see the teacher (54.3%) rather than sending their children to go back to school to retaliate.

Table 4: Percentile distribution of parental action when their children perpetrate violent acts.

What will you do if your child reports that he/she perpetrated violence in school	Yes (total no)	%	No (total no)	%
1- Visit the school to beg the child involved	52	74.3	18	25.7
2- See the school authority or teacher to report	56	80	14	20
3- Discipline my child at home	64	91.4	6	8.6

The Table 4 showed that most parents will discipline their child at home (91.4%) rather than go to school to apologies to the child involved or see the school authority to report.

Table 5: Percentile distribution on parental view of how violent acts can be solved in school.

Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1- Parents should provide basic needs for their children	60	85.7	10	14.3
2- Parents should visit the school of their children from time to time to know their behavior	50	71.4	20	28.6
3- Establishment of more welfare centers to correct violent behavior	63	90	7	10
4- More time given to sport and other recreational activities on the curricular	61	87.1	9	12.9
5- Guidance and counseling unit should be established to help students with behavioral problems	40	57.1	30	42.9

Table 5 showed the establishment of more welfare centers to correct violent behavior, the provision of basic needs for children, opportunity for sports and other recreational activates, to schools by parents, establishment.

Discussion

The finding of this study showed that parents of children in Srinagar district of J&K are aware of violent acts that occur and are common in their children’s schools. It is also observed from the data analyses that some parents, about 50% feel that home backgrounds and parental influence are not causes of some of the violent acts of school children. Meanwhile a large percentage 88.6% believe that exposure to violent films is. There is consistent evidence that violent imagery in television, film and video, and computer games has substantial short term effects of arousal, thoughts, and emotions, increasing the likelihood of aggressive or fearful behavior in younger children, especially in boys. This study has also revealed that most parents will go to school to see the person involved in perpetrating violence against their children contrary to some beliefs the parents will send a child who had been a victim of violence back to school to retaliate. Furthermore, the study has shown the protective nature of parents because if their child perpetrates violence they will discipline such child at home rather than go to school to report their children, they will prefer to discipline their children themselves. It means parents really don’t like others to discipline their children for them. Parental attitudes toward violence may be an important factor in youth developing attitudes of resiliency towards violence. From the study it is obvious that more of the causes of violence are attributed to factors outside the home and parents believed to much in their children that they will tell them if they perpetrate violence in schools. Meanwhile the lack of skills to resolve conflict in an appropriate manner is considered to be a major precursor to violent behavior. Parents need information that children’s adoption of violence free attitude both at school and at home is not negotiable. Therefore parents should look into all these factors to assist youth overcome being victims or being perpetrators of violence. Establishment of more welfare centers to correct violent behavior, the provision of basic needs for children opportunity for sports and other recreational activities, visitation to schools by parents, establishment of Guidance and counseling units should be adopted as some of the strategies for solving violence behavior of children in schools. Prevention also must focus on improving conditions in the family through re-education aimed at improving family juvenile relations. Organize delinquency prevention programs. All these will help prevent violence among children.

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