Secondary School Students' Perception of Violence

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Published: 28.12.2023 **Keywords:** Violence, secondary school, violent tendencies	Violence is a phenomenon that negatively affects the lives of societies. The subject of most studies conducted in Turkey and in the world is the existence and negativity of violence. It is important to investigate the causes of an issue that is so uncomfortable for societies and to eliminate the phenomenon of violence. Although there are many definitions of violence, there are many reasons for its emergence. The difficulties of the lives people live, psychological reasons, being directed by the environment, etc. Violence is seen in our school environments as well as in every area we live in. Violence seen at all levels of education has increased in recent years. This situation has become quite disturbing. Violence and perceptions of violence also vary. Violence tendencies also differ according to violence perception levels. The presence of physical violence is mostly mentioned as the perception of violence. There is no mention of the existence of emotional and economic violence. With this study, which deals with the phenomenon of violence, it is aimed to investigate the phenomenon of violence among secondary school students studying in Çumra district of Konya province and to measure the violence tendency levels. Violence Tendency Scale was applied to 375 students among 4160 students studying in the 2021-2022 academic year. As a result of the research, it was determined that there is a significant relationship between the students' violence tendencies in terms of gender, class levels and having close friends of the opposite sex. At the same time, it has been observed that there is no relationship between violence tendencies and whether parents live together or separately.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is one of the most important problems of societies today as it was in the past. The violence that we observe, experience, apply or be exposed to in all areas of life has unfortunately increased in recent years. According to the research conducted by the World Health Organization, more than 1.3 million people die every year due to violence (WHO, 2014). Violence, which exists in all areas of life, is unfortunately also frequently seen in the school environment. According to the complaints from my colleagues, parents and my close circle, the opinion is that violence has increased greatly in the educational environment. According to the research data of the Turkish Grand National Assembly published in 2007 in our country, it is seen that one out of every 4-5 young people face physical violence, one out of every two young people face verbal violence, one out of every three young people face emotional violence and one out of every 6-7 young people face sexual violence. 37 percent of the youth think that this violence occurs in and around the school (Parliamentary Research Commission Report, 2007). The fact that the rate is so high in this study carried out by the Turkish Grand National Assembly negatively affects both our society and our school environment.

It is known that most behaviors learned in childhood are through imitation. Violent behavior often occurs in individuals through imitation. In the first childhood period; They can become perpetrators of violence by imitating the behaviors observed by family members and people they can take as an example in the school environment, in violent incidents in the environment. According to Ayas (2008:23), children who learn the aggression and violence behaviors shown by their families show these behaviors to others in later periods. At the same time, children who have been exposed to violence are more likely to use violence in any area of their lives. In the study conducted by Ünalmış (2010) on this subject, it is seen that students who have been exposed to violence before exhibit more positive attitudes towards violence (Ünalmış & Şahin, 2012). Although living in the age of technology gives us a great advantage, it causes negative effects on the structure of society. The fact that children are intertwined with technology, playing violent games on different platforms, and isolating themselves from the society they live in causes loneliness and incompatibility over time. The inability to adapt to the society one lives in brings along psychological problems over time. The most frequently complained type of violence in the school environment is the violent behavior among students, which we call peer bullying. Although it is sometimes seen as physical violence, it is also seen as psychological violence.

In the Turkish Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (2009), violence is defined as expressing the correctness of one's own opinion to those with different opinions, and using brute force instead of reconciliation. In his article published in Sınır (2019), he defined violence as the physically or emotionally compelling behaviors that a person performs against himself/herself or others, which can result in death, injury, psychological damage, developmental abnormality or deprivation.

There are many definitions of violence as a concept. What is perceived as violence is also important here. According to people's perceptions, some behaviors may be perceived as violence while some behaviors may not be seen as violence. Kubar and Kıral (2009) found that the perceived violence pattern of the students in the central district of Elazig province, beating, and the factors affecting the violence tendency; It was concluded that gender, class,

family income level, mother and father's attitude and father's working status. According to Akbaşlı, Üredi, and Özmen's (2017) research, students stated that they perceive pressure, especially with kicking, punching, and slaps, as first-degree violence. In the study of Violence Perceptions of Primary School Students conducted by Deveci, Karadağ, and Yılmaz (2008), primary school students define violence in different ways such as fighting, beating, misbehaving, swearing, shouting, hurting, getting angry, using a knife, and responding to the violence they encounter in their environment. similar to his definitions, he gives examples such as beating, fighting, snatching, extortion, theft, harming animals, stabbing, shouting, movies and TV series on TV, killing events.

Classifications are made regarding the forms of violence and separate definitions are made for each sub-dimension. According to the definition made by the World Health Organization, violence; It has been discussed in four categories as "physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, and economic violence" (Parliamentary Research Commission, 2007). The reason for the differences in the perception of violence may be that the classifications made here are not noticed. In the study conducted by the Parliamentary Research Commission (2007), it was determined that while the perception of "violence" as physical violence was the highest among students, the rate of perceiving verbal violence and emotional violence as violence was low.

As seen in the studies, only the physical dimension of violence is defined as violence, but the emotional violence dimension is ignored. Most of the time, it is thought that the sub-dimensions of violence are applied. Children who have been subjected to violence have a high rate of perpetrating violence. When we examine children with a high tendency to violence, it is possible to find many common features. As with the sub-factors examined in this study, age and gender can be cited as examples. According to Perry's (2001) study on this subject, children with the following characteristics are in the dangerous group in terms of being prone to violence (As cited; Hoşgörür & Orhan, 2017): a) Those who are aggressive and reactive and cannot control their impulses b) Those who do not participate in social activities at school and stay out c) Unsuccessful students who have problems in their classes d) Children from broken families e) Children of families who do not know how to treat their children f) Those who have been subjected to and witnessed violence at home g) Those who have been abused in the past.

Although the excuse of violence that exists at every level of education and our lives is unacceptable, there are various underlying reasons. Psychological reasons in childhood, emotional changes in adolescence, reasons due to economic problems, adaptation problems caused by technology addiction, violence from the environment, etc. can be cited as the underlying causes of violence. In this study, the existence of various causes of violence in secondary school students was examined. With this research, it is aimed to learn the perceptions and causes of violence by teachers and families. It is hoped that it will contribute to the causes of violence in studies to prevent future violence. Making violence and the causes that cause it visible, revealing the existence of violence, trying to understand both the perpetrators and the victims of violence will help us to remove violence from our society.

Violence is a factor that negatively affects educational environments and causes students to stay away from school. Increasing violent behavior in schools in recent years has attracted the attention of many teachers. Violent behaviors seen in the school environment

have started to show themselves at all levels. For this reason, the aim of my research is to measure the violence tendencies of secondary school students and to determine whether there is a relationship between various variables and violence tendencies.

METHOD

In this study, qualitative research method was used. It is a survey type research in terms of the techniques used. Surveys are studies on a sample group selected from the universe covering large groups (Bal, 2012). The research universe includes secondary school students studying in Çumra district of Konya province. In the 2021-2022 academic year, there are 4160 students in 30 secondary schools in Konya province Çumra district. The sample of this research consists of 5 randomly selected secondary schools and 375 students. The Violence Tendency Scale (VTS), which was prepared by Haskan (2009) with proven validity and reliability, was used as a data collection tool. VTS was formed as four factors. By examining the contents of the items, the first factor was determined as "feeling of violence", the second factor was "violence through information technologies", the third factor was "the thought of harming others", the fourth factor was "inflicting violence on others" (Haskan & Yıldırım, 2012).

RESULTS

The findings obtained as a result of the research were evaluated the relationship between the variables of the samples' gender, class levels, parents living together or separately, having close friends of the opposite sex and violence tendencies. The percentage values of the students surveyed in the study are given as flat tables, such as gender, grade levels, parents living together or separately, whether they have close friends of the opposite sex.

Table 1. *T-Test analysis examining the differences by gender*

Variables	Groups	n	X	t	df	p
				T Testi		
Feeling of Violence	Girl	302	1.679	-2.303	373.000	.022
	Boy	73	1.852			
Violence Through Information Technology	Girl	302	1.788	-2.554	373.000	.011
	Boy	73	1.979			
Thoughts of Harming Others	Girl	302	1.375	-2.798	373.000	.005
	Boy	73	1.524			
Violence to Others	Girl	301	1.621	-3.899	372.000	.000
	Boy	73	1.868			

In Table-1, it was examined whether the gender of the sample group differed in terms of variables. According to the table, a significant difference was observed between the sexes, since $p < 0.05$. According to these findings, it was observed that male students were more

prone to violence than female students. The biggest difference was observed in the variable of inflicting violence on others. Male students are more likely to inflict violence on others than female students.

The research findings of İkiz and Sağlam (2017) are similar to the findings in this table. The research was conducted with secondary school students and it was found that male students were more prone to violence than female students in secondary school students. The research findings of Külekçi and Akyavuz (2021) gave parallel results with this study. According to the research, violence tendencies of secondary school students were measured and it was concluded that violence tendencies were high. When the genders are compared, it is understood that male students are more prone to violence than female students. In addition to having parallel results with this study, there are also studies with opposite results. In the research he conducted in Sınır (2019), he concluded that violence tendencies of 9-12 age group students do not make any difference between genders. According to the research conducted by Bulut (2008), 90% of male students are both perpetrators and victims of violence. It has been observed that male students are more prone to violence than female students.

Table 2. *Tendency to Violence Between Classes Anova Results*

Variables	Source of	KT	df	KO	F	p
Feeling of Violence	Between	3.855	3	1.285	3.844	.010
	Groups	123.365	369	.334		
	Total	127.220	372			
Violence Through Information Technology	Between	.372	3	.124	0.368	.776
	Groups	124.211	369	.337		
	Total	124.583	372			
Thoughts of Harming Others	Between	.577	3	.192	1.143	.332
	Groups	62.134	369	.168		
	Total	62.711	372			
Violence to Others	Between	3.511	3	1.170	4.962	.002
	Groups	86.797	368	.236		
	Total	90.308	371			

According to Table 2, while there was a significant difference in some sub-factors in the findings of the inter-class violence tendency scale, no significant difference was observed in some sub-factors. There is a significant difference between the classes since the sub-factors of feeling of violence and inflicting violence on others have p<0.05. There is no significant difference between the classes, since p>0.05 in the sub-factors of violence through information technologies and the thought of harming others.

Table 3. *Anova Results of the Sense of Violence Scale Scores by Class*

Classes	n	X	Source of Variance	KT	df	KO	F	p	Meaningful ness

Classes	n	X	Source of Variance	KT	df	KO	F	p	Meaningfulness
5th grade	110	1.556	Between G.	3.855	3	1.285	3.844	.010	5-6-7-8
6th grade	108	1.765	G. Inside	123.365	369	.334			
7th grade	92	1.776	Total	127.220	372				
8th grade	63	1.801							
Total	373	1.712							

Table 3 shows the anova results of the distribution of the feeling of violence sub-factor by grades. According to the table, violence tendencies of 6th, 7th and 8th grades are higher than 5th grades.

Table 4. *Anova Results of Violence to Others Scale Scores by Class*

Classes	n	X	Source of Variance	KT	df	KO	F	p	Meaningfulness
5th grade	110	1.556	Between G.	3.511	3	1.170	4.962	.002	5-6-7-8
6th grade	108	1.765	G. Inside	86.797	368	.236			
7th grade	92	1.776	Total	90.308	371				
8th grade	63	1.801							
Total	373	1.712							

Table 4 shows the anova results of the distribution of violence to others sub-factor by class. According to the table, violence tendencies of 6th, 7th and 8th grades are higher than 5th grades.

When Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 are evaluated together, it is observed that the violence tendencies between classes increase as the class level rises. It is also possible to associate class level differences with the age variable. As the age of the students increases, their tendency to violence increases. The findings of the research conducted by Özgür, Yörükoğlu, and Baysan Arabacı (2011) are also similar to this result. It is seen that as the grades of the students increase, in other words, as their age increases, their tendency to violence also increases. In the thesis research conducted by Yavuzer (2011), it was concluded that 8th grade students are more prone to violence than 7th grade students. As the reason for this situation, he concluded that 8th grade students experience emotional changes due to their

adolescence. Another study showing parallelism with these results was conducted by Bozkurt (2010) and it was observed that the tendency to violence increases as the age of secondary school students increases. Again, in the study conducted by Yavuzer (2011), it was observed that the attitudes towards violence increased as the age of secondary school students increased. It is also possible to come across studies that result in the opposite of these studies. According to the research conducted by Sınır (2019), it was seen that the rates of tendency to violence are not related to the age factor. Another study was conducted by Şahin and Arı (2016), and it was concluded that the violence tendencies of secondary school students were not related to the age variable.

Table 5. *Violence Tendency in Parental Relationship Anova Results*

Variables	Association Status	n	X	Source of Variance	KT	df	KO	F	p
Feeling of Violence	Together	346	1.704	Between G.	.50	2	.248	.734	.481
	Separate	20	1.850	G. Inside	124.94	370	.338		
	Other	7	1.595	Total	125.43	372			
	Total	373	1.710						
Violence Through Information Technology	Together	346	1.821	Between G.	.03	2	.013	.039	.962
	Separate	20	1.829	G. Inside	123.88	370	.335		
	Other	7	1.881	Total	123.91	372			
	Total	373	1.822						
Thoughts of Harming Others	Together	346	1.396	Between G.	.11	2	.053	.325	.723
	Separate	20	1.470	G. Inside	60.34	370	.163		
	Other	7	1.421	Total	60.45	372			
	Total	373	1.401						
Violence to Others	Together	345	1.664	Between G.	.04	2	.020	.084	.920
	Separate	20	1.710	G. Inside	89.09	369	.241		
	Other	7	1.657	Total	89.13	371			
	Total	372	1.666						

According to the table, there was no significant difference in violence tendencies among the interviewees depending on the parental union. According to the research conducted by Aykul (2012), the violence tendencies of students whose parents live separately are higher than those of students whose parents live together.

Table 6. *T-test analysis examining the differences according to closeness to the opposite sex*

				T Testi		
Variables	Intimacy with the	**n**	**X**	**t**	**df**	**p**
Feeling of Violence	Yes	193	1.777	2.144	343.831	0.033
	No	182	1.649			
Violence Through Information Technology	Yes	193	1.940	3.872	327.949	0.000
	No	182	1.715			
Thoughts of Harming Others	Yes	193	1.478	3.290	366.224	0.001
	No	182	1.338			
Violence to Others	Yes	193	1.733	2.385	371.989	0.018
	No	181	1.611			

In the table, it was examined whether there was a significant relationship between the data of whether the students had close friends of the opposite sex and their violence tendencies. According to the table, a significant difference was observed in all sub-factors as $p<0.05$. In this case, it was concluded that students who have close friends of the opposite sex are more prone to violence than students who do not have close friends of the opposite sex.

It shows parallelism with the result of the violence tendency perceptions of the students in Burdur, which Aykul (2012) did. According to the research, students who have close friends of the opposite sex are more prone to violence than students who do not have close friends of the opposite sex. Aykul states that this situation stems from the students' desire to protect and watch, since they are in adolescence.

There are also studies that come to the opposite of the findings in Table 6. According to Haskan (2009)'s research on violence tendencies among adolescents, there is no relationship between those who have close friends of the opposite sex and those who do not have close friends of the opposite sex in terms of violence tendencies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, a research was conducted on the "Violence Perception of Secondary School Students". The study was completed according to the analysis results of the Violence Tendency Scale applied to 375 students studying in the Çumra district of Konya. As a result of the analysis;

It was concluded that secondary school students have a high tendency to violence in four sub-factors of the Violence Tendency Scale, Feeling of Violence, Violence through

Information Technology, Thoughts of Harming Others, and Violence against Others. When the relationship between the genders of violence tendencies of secondary school students is examined, it is seen that male students are more prone to violence than female students (Table 1). It has been observed that the 5th grades are less prone to violence than the 6th, 7th and 8th grades in terms of whether the violence tendencies of secondary school students differ according to their grade levels. As the class levels increase, the rate of tendency to violence also increases (Table 2). When the violence tendencies of secondary school students are examined according to their parents' living or not living together, it is seen that there is no relationship (Table 5). When the relationship between the violence tendencies of secondary school students and whether they have friends of the opposite sex is examined, it is seen that students with friends of the opposite sex are more prone to violence than students who do not have friends of the opposite sex (Table 6). In order to reduce the violence tendencies of the students, it may be beneficial for the teachers to share the violence tendencies they observe with the parents, and to use the teacher-parent communication effectively to prevent these behaviors. Unfortunately, incidents of violence occur especially in secondary schools. While this varies from school to school, violence can often occur in the form of physical fights or even more serious incidents. It is important for school administrations to have clear policies and procedures to prevent violence in schools. In this context, teachers and school staff should be trained to recognize signs of violence and intervene when necessary. On the other hand, it should provide counseling and support services for both victims of violence and perpetrators of violence.

Provincial, district and school directorates informing both students and teachers about the emotional changes of students who have entered adolescence may be effective in preventing the emergence of violence. Based on the conclusion that the violence tendencies of the students increase as the grade levels of the students increase, it is thought that the students cannot direct the emotional changes they experience during adolescence and distance themselves from the social life. Emotional changes cause an increase in the tendency to violence. It will be beneficial for students to be directed to various sports branches and to engage in artistic activities in order to support their emotional changes. After class hours, courses should be opened in the fields of arts, culture and sports that students can benefit from according to their interests, and the necessary financial support will be provided by the Ministry of Education, which will lead to an increase in participation. In addition, adolescent students' voluntary participation in community service activities should be supported. Animal shelters, retirement homes, child welfare institutions, soup kitchens, etc. Joint studies should be carried out with institutions, it will help students to be involved in life and strengthen their feelings of empathy. In the studies to be carried out, it may be effective in reducing the violence that the reasons behind the violence tendencies of the students are investigated.

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