

*Full Length Research Paper*

# School violence in secondary education in the governorate of Mafrq: Forms, causes and prevention- a case study

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Received 28 March, 2013; Accepted 11 July, 2014

**This study considers school violence. It was investigated in secondary schools in the governorate of Mafrq. The aim is to identify the forms and causes of the phenomenon; hence to come out with the preventive and remedial measures, accordingly. The study was conducted in one of the secondary schools selected randomly in the city of Mafrq in the academic year 2013/2014. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used a qualitative case study methodology, drawing on the grounded theory model. The rationale of adopting this method was to generate forms, causes, and ways of preventing school violence as grounded in the data. Data were gathered through observations, interviews and documents. These data were broken down into themes. Themes were then grouped into categories. Common themes were then grouped together and links between them were identified. Both environmental factors and personal factors emerged as causes of school violence. Physical, and moral violence were found to be forms of this violence. The results showed that reducing and/or preventing school violence is a complex process which requires comprehensive educational programs for all parties involved in the educational course. In light of the study results, the researcher proposed some preventive and remedial measures for the phenomenon.**

**Key words:** School violence, forms of violence, causes of violence, methods of prevention.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper considers the phenomenon of violence in schools, which, nowadays, is often viewed in terms of being as much of a public health concern issues-smoking, heart disease, cancer, and infectious diseases (Lapidus and Braddock, 1996). The words 'school' and 'violence' have become two terms which are so often paired together. As stated in Wikipedia, "School violence is

widely held to have become a serious problem in recent decades in many countries, especially where weapons such as guns or knives are involved. It includes violence between school students as well as physical attacks by students on school staff. [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School\\_violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_violence).

Violence is as old as man is; it started, as stated in

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religious prescriptions at the earliest period of human existence, when Adam's son, Cain, murdered his brother Abel. Since then, violence has come to be a phenomenal aspect of people's life. It happens at homes, in streets, workplaces, hospitals, and schools. And because it has no barriers, this behavior continues to be a major global concern: its impact spans the entire world and there is hardly any country today that has escaped from its grip.

Jordan, like other countries is affected by the problem of school violence. In Jordan (unlike what was the case in the past decades when we only hear about violence in schools once in a while) frequent occurrence of violence in schools has become more common in recent years (Owydat and Hamdi, 1997). In almost every school in Jordan, there is some form or act of violence, particularly, in secondary schools. This problem does not only affect the school and the students who practice or experience it, but it extends to the society, per se. Research findings indicate that students who experience or witness violence at school are more likely to perpetuate violent behaviors outside school, and are more likely to become criminals (Taub, 2002; Stein et al., 2003).

Furthermore, students exposed to violence are at high risk for experiencing a range of psychological problems, including developmental disturbance, impaired moral development, substance abuse, and reduced academic performance (Bandura, 1986; Pynoos et al., 1995; Saigh et al., 1997; Kilpatrick et al., 2000; Flannery et al., 2001; Goleman, 2006). This state of affairs necessitates (and with immediacy) addressing this problem if we want a society that is secure, safe and violence-free.

If we want to do something about this problem and reach to viable, preventive and effective ways that decrease violent acts in schools, then we need to understand the forms and causes of violence in schools. If these are identified, it would be easier to reduce – or even eliminate – the problem, and then the society would become safer and violence-free. It is worth mentioning that violence in schools is classified mainly into two types: school violence by principals and teachers and school violence by students. Also, it is worth noting that school violence is not unidirectional: it may originate outside, but occur inside the school; it may derive and happen in the school; and it may begin in the school but end outside of it (Capozzoli and McVey, 2000).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the literature review, there are various perspectives of the concept of violence. Most of these perspectives share similar ideas, however. Violence, in a wider sense, refers to the use or threat of physical force with the intent of causing physical injury, damage, discomfort, or intimidation of another person. It also includes verbal and psychological abuse as well (Straus, 1991; Reiss and

Roth, 1993; Aronson, 1999; Nevid, 2003; Smith et al., 2003). According to Yahya (2001), there are five basic criteria by which violence can be identified, and these are: type of behavior, strength of behavior, degree of pain, characteristics of the actor or perpetrator of violence, and his or her intentions.

The World Health Organization (as cited in Krug et al., 2002, p. 4) defined 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, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation*" According to Reiss and Roth (1993, p. 2), violence refers to behaviors by individuals that intentionally threaten, attempt, or inflict physical harm on others. It is worth noting here that when we talk about violence, we include aggression as well. That is to say, any act whether physical or verbal that has the intent to or the consequences of inflicting harm to others (whether physically or psychologically) is considered to be a violent or an aggressive act (Davies, 1970; Berkowitz, 1993; Feshbach, 1994).

According to Moyer (1968), aggression is divided into seven types or forms representing seven stimulus situations, which trigger the aggressive behavior:

**Predatory aggression**, stimulated by the presence of a natural object of prey. In this type of aggression the predator attacks its prey, in order to obtain food.

**Inter-male aggression**, stimulated by the presence of a novel male conspecific in a neutral arena. This form of aggression occurs because of competition between males, for sources such as control, dominance, status, and female ... etc.

**Fear-induced aggression** stimulated by threats and always is preceded by escape attempts. This form of aggression is accompanied by fear and usually when escape is not possible; may be associated with previous unpleasant experiences.

**Irritable aggression**, stimulated by the presence of any attachable object. The tendency to display irritable aggression is enhanced by any stressor, such as isolation, electrical shock, and food deprivation.

**Territorial aggression**, stimulated by the presence of an intruder in the home or territory of a resident. In this form of aggression the aggressive behaviors of an individual or a group are directed toward the defense of their area against entry by others.

**Maternal aggression**, which stimulated by a threatening stimulus in the proximity of the mother's young.

**Instrumental aggression**, which is stimulated by any of the situations already described, but strengthened by learning.

It appears that there is a conscience among scholars towards classifying violence into two main forms: the

hostile revenge violence, which is directed towards enemies, and is referred to as the emotional violence, and the procedural violence, which is directed towards the achieving of certain goals. Research results indicated that individuals who have a tendency toward the revenge violence are individuals who are less intelligent than those who have a tendency towards procedural violence (Behar et al., 1990; Berkowitz, 1993). Other forms of violence can be listed under these two main forms, and these include:

**Psychological violence**, any behaviour that is psychologically harmful. It includes verbal attacks, threats, taunts, slugging, mocking, yelling, exclusion, humiliation, constant belittling, and malicious rumours (Krug et al., 2002; Banat, 2008). This form of violence is very common in rich and poor communities alike. However, the law does not recognize this type of violence, and it is not punishable because it is difficult to be measured and controlled (Al-Awawdeh, 1998).

**Physical violence**, intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm. This type of violence might involve beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, kicking, squeezing, burning, scratching, slapping, poking, hair-pulling, and use of restraints or one's body, size, or strength against another person. (Basile and Saltzman, 2002, p. 12).

**Social violence** which results when individuals are engaged in violent activities or antisocial behaviors at a group. This would include violence associated with riots, revolutions, and gang warfare (North et al., 2009). It would also include the denial of others' practising their personal and social rights (Rashwan, 2003; Krug et al., 2002).

**Sexual violence**, which denotes any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. It encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act (that is, rape), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (that is, unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment) (Basile and Saltzman, 2002, p. 9).

The interpretation of violence has been recognized by two opposing views. More particularly, two differing opinions with regard to whether violence is an instinctual or a learned behavior have emerged. For some, violence is genetically inherited. That is to say, humans are violent in nature, that is, are born with aggressive instincts, and as such, act violently in life in order to achieve their goals, or to release their feelings of aggression. For others, however, violence is environmentally learned, a cultural response, not a human instinct. It could be learned in many diverse ways, through observation, imitation or reinforcement, and as such, the exposure to violence encourages and teaches humans to become violent.

Hence, several different theories have tried to explain

violence in humans, and these theories include:

**Theories of Violence as a Motive:** There are many theories that view violence as one of the motives that drive behavior, and these theories include the psychoanalytic theory, which suggests that human behavior is governed by two basic motives: sex and aggression. Likewise, the ethological theories suggest that violence is a motive that has adaptive functions that increase the chances of the survival of an organism (Smith et al. 2003; Geen, 1998).

**Biological Theories:** The emotional arousal reactions such as anger, or tension cause qualitative reactions at the level of the nerves, or at the level of endocrine. Therefore, any act of violence which results in a change in heart rate, blood circulation, or secretions of the glands will make the individual realize the reaction after it has moved to the brain through the nervous system, and the reaction makes this psychological state (Ellsworth, 1994; Al-Awawdeh, 1998).

**Theories of Violence as a Learned Response:** In contrast to previous theories, these theories of violence maintain that the violent behavior in humans is a complex behavior. It cannot be acknowledged as a motive, neither it can be recognized as being biologically programmed into human nature (O'Leary, 1988; Nevid, 2003).

There are many diverse causes and factors that promote violence, including those related to the individual himself / herself, the society and the surrounding environment. These causes and factors include:

**Social Factors:** Some studies show that some societies encourage violence, while others do not, and some societies encourage a particular form of violence such as physical violence, while others encourage another form such as verbal violence (Catalano et al., 1993).

**Media:** Many studies have shown that watching television violent movies and shows that contain violence increase aggression and destructive behaviors among children and adolescents, as well (Hepburn, 2001; Huesmann, 2007).

**Situational Factors:** Alcohol and drugs, for example, are major factors that increase violence. Studies have shown that people who drink and who use drugs are more likely to become violent or act violently because they will not be held accountable for what they do (Giancola and Zeichner, 1997; Krug et al., 2002).

**Emotional Frustration:** increases violence, that is to say, when people are unable to satisfy their desires or accomplish their goals, they tend to behave violently against who or what prevents them from satisfying those desires and achieving those goals (Smith et al., 2003).

**Sex,** that is, It seems that there is a general agreement among researchers that males, whether human beings or animals are more aggressive than females (Crick and Jrotpetter, 1995; Salmivalli and Kaukiainen, 2004). This is

especially true when talking about physical violence. Males tend to express their violence physically, while females tend to express their violence verbally (Butovskaya et al., 2007).

Behavioral disturbance is considered as a cause for violence. That is to say, people who have behavioral disturbances or disorders tend to exhibit violent acts because of their inability to communicate either verbally or physically with others in ways that are appropriate and acceptable, or because of their feelings of unhappiness and depression (Nevid, 2003).

Berkowitz and Benbenishty (2012) have conducted a study to examine the distribution of the types of involvement in school violence (bullies, victims, bully-victims, and students not involved in violence) among the general population of Israeli school students. The prevalence of these different types of involvement was also examined according to gender, age or school level (junior high vs. high school), and ethnicity (Jewish vs. Arab).

Further, the study examines the relationships between type of involvement in school violence and students' perceptions of teachers' support, safety, and absence from school because of fear. Data were obtained from a nationally representative, stratified sample of 13,262 students in grades 7-11 who responded to a self-report questionnaire on victimization by, and perpetration of, school violence and on perceptions of school climate. Data revealed that 3.6% of all students were victims of bullying (18.5% of those involved in violence). The proportion of bully-victims among male students was 6.4% (21.9% of all involved) compared with 1.1% (11.2% of all involved) among females. Bully-victims reported the lowest levels of teacher support and feelings of security and missed school because of fear significantly more often. The results point to the uniqueness of the bully-victim group. This group presents multiple challenges for school staff with these students needing special attention.

In their study, Johnson et al. (2011) tried to identify the relative importance of various characteristics of the school environment or their differential impact on multiple violence outcomes. Twenty-seven (27) students from Baltimore City high schools participated in concept mapping sessions, which produced interpretable maps of the school environment's contribution to school violence. Participants generated statements about their school environment's influence on school violence and, with the assistance of quantitative methods; these statements were grouped according to their similarity. The subjects also, provided information about the importance of each of these statements for the initiation, cessation, and severity of the violence that occurs at school. The results of the study indicated that more than half of the 132 statements generated by students were rated as school environment characteristics highly important for the initiation, cessation, and/or severity of school violence. In

addition, the results indicated that students' own actions, expectations for disruptive behavior, and the environment outside the school were the most important characteristics for the initiation and increased severity of violence that occurs in school. This study provides support from students for the role of the school environment in school violence prevention, particularly in preventing the initiation and reducing the severity of school violence.

Blosnich and Bossarte (2011) conducted a study to explore whether school safety measures (e.g. security guards, cameras, ID badges) were associated with student reports of different forms of peer victimization related to school bullying. In this study, data came from the 2007 School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victimization Survey. Quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. Chi-square tests of independence were used to examine differences among categorical variables. Logistic regression models were constructed for the peer victimization outcomes. A count variable was constructed among the bullying outcomes with which a Poisson regression model was constructed to analyze school safety measures' impacts on degree of victimization. Of the various school safety measures, only having adults in hallways resulted in a significant reduction in odds of being physically bullied, having property vandalized, or having rumors spread. In terms of degree of victimization, having adults and/or staff supervising hallways was associated with an approximate 26% decrease in students experiencing an additional form of peer victimization. Results indicated that school safety measures overall were not associated with decreased reports of low-level violent behaviors related to bullying.

Johnson (2009) conducted a qualitative study to identify the mechanisms by which the school environment determines the likelihood of school violence. Twenty-five articles that attempted to understand the influence of either the school social or physical environment in determining teacher and students' perceptions of safety and experiences of violence were included in this study. Most of the articles included were cross-sectional surveys of junior high or high school students and staff. As articles used different measures of the school physical and social environment, a special classification system was created. Using this system, studies show that schools with less violence tend to have students who are aware of school rules and believe they are fair, have positive relationships with their teachers, feel that they have ownership in their school, feel that they are in a classroom and school environment that is positive and focused on learning, and in an environment that is orderly.

Al-Harbi (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationship between personality factors, parenting styles and school violence among a sample of 550 students in Al Mafraq city in Jordan. The results indicated that males were more violent than females, and that physical violence was the most common form of violence used by

the sample of the study. Also, the results indicated that conscientiousness, openness, authoritarianism, and permissiveness were the most related factors to school violence.

In their study, Taylor et al. (2007) attempted to explore the relation between academic self-concept, self-esteem, and aggression at school. Their data included self-reported academic self-concept, school-reported academic performance, and parent-reported school discipline from a racially diverse sample of middle-school students. Results revealed that, in general, students with low self-concept in achievement domains are more likely to aggress at school than those with high self-concept. However, there is a small sample of youths who, when they receive contradictory information that threatens their reported self-concept, do aggress. Global self-esteem was not found to be predictive of aggression.

Patchin et al. (2006) studied the relationship between exposure to community violence and involvement in assaultive behavior and weapon carrying among a sample of at-risk youth. The study findings demonstrated a connection between controlling for the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and other common correlates of delinquency (e.g., family supervision and structure, school attachment, and peer delinquency): youths who witnessed more violence in their neighborhoods were more likely to self-report assaultive behavior and weapon carrying.

In Saudi Arabia, Al Ershood (2002) conducted a study on 1086 male students from 12 secondary schools in the city of Riyadh to investigate their attitudes towards school violence. The results of the study revealed that there were various factors that lead to students' positive attitudes towards violence, including family and school-related factors. Also, the results indicated that watching violent movies makes students more aggressive. In addition, the results revealed that there were significant differences in students' attitudes towards violence due to difference in grade level, age, and mothers' educational level.

Flannery et al. (2001) conducted a study to examine violence exposure, violent behaviors, psychological trauma, and suicide risk in a community sample of dangerously violent adolescents by comparison with a matched community sample of nonviolent adolescents. Anonymous self-report questionnaires were administered to 3735 students in grades 9 through 12 in six public high schools located in Ohio and Colorado. From this sample, 484 adolescents (349 males and 135 females) who reported attacking someone with a knife or shooting at someone within the past year (that is, dangerously violent adolescents) were drawn. Four hundred eighty-four controls were also selected and matched on gender, age in years, ethnicity, area of residence, and family structure. The study revealed that dangerously violent adolescents reported higher levels of exposure to violence and victimization than did matched controls. Dangerously violent females were more likely to score in the clinical

range of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, anger, and dissociation than were control females and violent males; they also had significantly higher levels of suicide potential.

In Jordan, Alia (2001) conducted a study to investigate the effect of school violence on anxiety and school adjustment. The sample of the study consisted of 245 students divided into two groups: the first one represents those who were exposed to teachers' violence, while the second represents those who were not exposed to teachers' violence. The results of the study revealed that there were significant differences among victims and non-victims in the level of anxiety in favor of victims. Furthermore, the results indicated that there were gender differences in anxiety; females exhibited more anxiety than their counterparts. In addition, the results pointed out that there were significant differences among victims and non-victims in school adjustment in favor of non-victims.

Haj-Yahia and Ben-Arieh (2000) examined the incidence and socio-demographic correlates of witnessing and experiencing different patterns of abuse and violence in the family of origin among Arab adolescents from Israel. The researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey on a sample of 1,640 Arab secondary school students in Israel. The results of the study indicated that about 17% of the participants had witnessed their fathers threatening to hit or throw something at their mothers, and 18% had witnessed their fathers attacking, grabbing, or shoving their mothers at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey. In addition, 39, 40 and 42% of the participants indicated that their fathers, mothers, and siblings, respectively had yelled at them and/or done something to insult them at least once during the same period. Furthermore, 17, 15 and 20% of the participants revealed that their fathers, mothers, and siblings, respectively had attacked them continuously for several minutes with a stick, club, or other harmful object at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey.

O'Keefe (1997) conducted a study on 935 students from urban and suburban high schools in Los Angeles in order to explore their perceptions of violence in their communities and schools, and to examine the relationship between these perceptions and the students' emotional and behavioral functioning. Participants completed the Youth Self-Report (YSR) as well as measures assessing their perceptions of community, school, and family violence. The results of the study revealed that students exhibited violent behaviors more often when they were exposed to severe forms of violence such as a shooting or stabbing in their communities or schools during the year prior to the study. The results also revealed that for males, exposure to community and school violence was a significant predictor of aggressive acting-out behaviors, even when controlling for the effects of family violence and other socio-demographic variables. For girls,

however, only exposure to school violence was a significant predictor of aggression.

After identifying the causes of violence, its pervasive forms, and the most prominent theories that explain it, it can be said that the key point in preventing or limiting the spread of violence is to control the environment where it is spreading. It is the environment, whether the family, the school or the community and society and/or the interaction between them, which has the greater influence on the development of individuals and can bring out the best or worst in them. Hence, the role of education is so crucial for everyone from the moment of birth all through various stages of their development; each of these environments performs important roles in raising the individuals and in determining the positive or negative outcomes in them.

Accordingly, preventing or reducing violence in schools can only be accomplished through a collaborative effort of each of these aforementioned environments that is, the family, the school or the community and society. The family plays a key role in preventing or minimizing the risk of violence in schools when parents give proper love, affection and care to their children, do not condone violent acts at home and do not follow erratic, harsh and inconsistent disciplinary practices. The school also plays a vital role in preventing or lowering violent acts in schools if it establishes effective rules and a firm, but fair discipline system that applies to all students. Universities, colleges, institutes and community associations, centers and organizations can contribute to preventing or reducing violence in schools by providing school violence prevention plans, strategies, activities, the family, the school or the community and society programs and training courses.

One more point is that school violence prevention or reduction is dependent on understanding the theoretical foundations that interpret violence or aggression in humans. If violence is viewed as an instinctual behavior (Freud, 1950; 1915), then it requires that this behavior must be released through socially acceptable means. If violence is viewed as a learned behavior (Pierson and Thomas, 2006), on the other hand, then it requires that the environmental conditions must be moderated to help reduce violence and aggression.

According to psychologists, there are various aggressive behavior modification techniques, such as extinction, insulation, feedback and reinforcement (Al-Khateeb, 1990):

**Extinction** is the process through which we stop or cancel boosters that are provided after any unacceptable behavior has been exhibited. In doing so, we get rid of the unacceptable behavior or weaken it through the removal or withdrawal of the conditions that promote and increase it. The effectiveness of this technique increases, when combined with promoting socially desirable

responses.

**Insulation** is the process through which the perpetrator of aggression is isolated from the environment where aggressive acts have taken place. By doing so, we deprive the perpetrator of aggression from getting positive reinforcement. This method is more effective when combined with the use of positive reinforcement for violent children who display desirable responses.

**Feedback, reinforcement, and punishment**, that is, to tell the perpetrator of aggression about his or her past acts, praising good ones and discouraging bad ones and explaining how to modify them. It is worth noting here that there are two types of reinforcement: positive and negative. Positive reinforcement is to present a desirable reinforcer such as concrete rewards, praise, smiles, or any sense of accomplishment in order to increase or strengthen the probability of the wanted behavior being repeated. Negative reinforcement, in contrast, is to remove an already operating aversive or unpleasant condition when a desired behavior occurs in order to increase or strengthen the probability of this desired behavior to happen again. Thus, both positive and negative reinforcements have the effect of increasing the probability that a wanted behavior is more likely to happen again. Negative reinforcement should not be confused with the use of punishment as another technique of behavior modification. That is to say, while the former strengthens a specific behavior because a negative condition is removed or avoided as a consequence of this behavior, the latter weakens the behavior or decreases the probability that this behavior will happen again, because a negative or aversive condition is presented or experienced as a consequence of the unwanted behavior.

From the above, it becomes clear that school behavioral problems are serious problems that irritate parents, teachers, principals and counselors: aggression, theft, property damage, vehemence against teachers and students' disrupts negatively affect the learning environment (hence process) as a whole. Preventing and reducing school violence, therefore, becomes a priority. Such task, though complicated, is not at all impossible. Any attempt to prevent and reduce school violence, the researcher argues, should adopt comprehensive and integrated strategies. Under such an account, parents, teachers, principals, students, policymakers and the public should partake in accounting for school violence and finding effective ways to curb this problem.

### **Problem statement, questions and significance of the study**

In recent years, violence has become pervasive in the schools (particularly, secondary schools) of Mafrqa governorate. Such problem, undoubtedly, has a disruptive

impact of hindering a supportive and safe learning environment, which, accordingly, affects the quality of education in the governorate. Addressing the problem, this study was conducted to identify the nature of school violence in this region, exploring its causes and describing its forms and manifestations; hence, coming out with effective ways to prevent, minimize, and (if possible) eliminate it. More particularly, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the forms of school violence that exist in secondary schools in Mafraq governorate?
2. What are the causes of school violence in these schools?
3. What methods can be used in resolving (preventing and/or reducing) school violence in this region?

The significance of this study emanates from the importance of the topic it addresses. School violence is an increasingly real problem in Jordan. It is important, therefore, to understand and deal with this problem, and find solutions to minimize its occurrence. Thus, the findings of this study will be useful and helpful for practitioners, policy makers and researchers who are interested in this issue: the study is expected to enhance their understanding of school violence in terms of its causes and forms, and will provide pivotal insights (information as well) into how to prevent and reduce it. The study, thereby, contributes to the state of knowledge within school violence, adding to a growing body of literature on this critical topic.

#### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study ponders the question of school violence in secondary schools in the governorate of Mafraq, identifying its forms and cause, and suggesting strategies of preventing and reducing its effects on the quality of education in this region. To this end, a qualitative case study was conducted on one of the governorate secondary schools, which was randomly selected during the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013. And, congruent with the study's objectives, the Grounded Theory was adopted in the current study.

The Grounded Theory is an approach in qualitative research that aims to discover social-psychological processes (Strauss, 1998). Drawing on the analytic principles of this approach, a methodological triangulation that is, the combination of different data collection techniques was employed. Data were collected by using three main techniques: observations, interviews, and document analysis. The researcher allocated sufficient time for school observation. The total observation time per week was approximately two hours and twenty minutes. They spent these hours throughout the entire semester in the school premises. They observed and recorded the students' behaviors including their words, deeds, actions, symbols and gestures, and any behavior which is deemed threatening or disturbing to others. All of the observed behaviors were recorded and given the appropriate description and then categorized according to the different forms and causes of violence.

The researcher also conducted interviews with the principal,

some teachers and students who were randomly selected for interviews. They prepared a series of questions about the problem of the study in terms of forms of violence in schools, the different manifestations of such violence, the various types of violence in schools, the relationship between the manifestations of violence and its causes, and methods used for preventing and reducing school violence.

Finally, the researcher had the opportunity to view some documents, and records that highlight aspects of school violence, including investigations of some of the issues such as students' assault on other students and or on teachers, and some cases of profanity, as well as some cases of vandalism, and destruction of school furniture.

As for the research ethics, the researcher visited the school and met with the school principal and explained the purpose of the study. The principal was told that this school was chosen randomly as a case study, and its name will not be referred to and the information obtained would be treated as being strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of scientific research.

#### RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The data were analyzed qualitatively using a grounded theory methodology as follows: Firstly, the obtained information was compartmentalized into topics. Secondly, the topics were classified into categories (sections). Thirdly, similarities and differences across the categories were determined in order to formulate patterns. Fourthly, the theory was identified and described. The above steps were achieved through the following:

##### **The identification of topics according to the different groups**

##### ***Topics related to the group of the principal, which include:***

"Violation of regulations, insulting, screaming, beating, tampering with furniture, breaking glass, writing on walls, tearing books, sharp tools, injuries, profanity, rebellion, chaos, coming late, family carelessness, social situation, economic situation, job loyalty, perception towards the teacher, rules and regulations, citizens' awareness, culture, social level, social changes, availability of alternatives, the environment of the student, the environment of the school, social awareness, the school building, the authority of the principal, teacher's dealing, social cohesion, activities, the culture of parents, poverty, leisure, and the parenting style".

##### ***Topics related to the group of the teachers, which include:***

"Coming late, chaos during the class periods, violation of regulations, leisure, insulting, disabling of class periods, rebellion, beating, cynicism, the parenting style, cheating,

profanity, tampering with furniture, writing on walls, sharp tools, writing on seats, home upbringing, the culture of parents, the authority of the principal, perception towards the teacher, self-esteem, the school building, family carelessness, management, the number of students, social situation, and economic situation."

**Topics related to the group of the students, which include:**

" Chaos in the class, violation of regulations, beating, domination, poverty, the school building, tampering with furniture, social situation, parenting style, breaking glass, cynicism, insulting, destruction, screaming, tearing clothes, education, family carelessness, teacher's dealing, the authority of the principal, writing on walls, rules and regulations, the awareness of parents, educational system, homogeneity of the students, parents, class environment, law, the culture of parents, family, leisure."

**Linking of the topics at the three groups**

After examining and going through the topics in each group, it was revealed that:

**Some topics intersected in the three groups and these include:**

" Violation of regulations, insulting, beating, tampering with furniture, writing on walls, chaos, family carelessness, leisure, social situation, the school building, the authority of the principal, the culture of parents, the parenting style".

**Some topics intersected in two groups only and these include:**

" Screaming, breaking glass, sharp tools, profanity, rebellion, coming late economic situation, perception towards the teacher, rules and regulations, teacher's dealing, poverty, cynicism,

**Some topics did not intersect with any of the groups and these include:**

" tearing books, , injuries, job loyalty, citizens' awareness, social level, social changes, availability of alternatives, the environment of the student, the environment of the school, social awareness, social cohesion, activities, disabling of class periods, cheating, writing on seats, home upbringing, self-esteem, management, the number of students, domination, educational system, destruction, tearing clothes, homogeneity of the students".

**Exploring categories**

After topics have been fragmented and classified, a

number of categories merged. In order to explore these categories, questions using words such as, Who, When, Where, What, and How were asked, and comparisons to identify similarities and differences among the topics were made, as well as word and statement analysis was done. Accordingly, the following categories and their related topics emerged as shown in the following table:

**Category:** Social Changes

**Topics:** perception towards the teacher, role of family, poverty, number of students, leisure, students' cohesion, social level.

**Category:** Media

**Topics:** Teacher's role, perception towards the teacher, beating, injuries, social level

**Category:** Environmental Education

**Topics:** Profanity, chaos, self-esteem, cheating

**Category:** Management Style

**Topics:** School principal, teacher, school building, school system

**Category:** Rules and Regulations

**Topics:** Citizen's awareness, school system, protection of teacher, coming late

**Category:** Role of Family

**Topics:** Poverty, teacher's role, availability of alternatives, rebellion, screaming, social level, lying, profanity, lack of self-esteem

**Category:** Job Loyalty

**Topics:** Lack of job loyalty, tampering with furniture, tearing books

**Category:** Showmanship

**Topics:** Chaos, beating, rebellion

**Category:** The Role of Utilitarian

**Topics:** Job loyalty, chaos, self-esteem

**Category:** Nature of Self and Mind

**Topics:** Vandalism, beating, screaming, profanity, chaos

After categories were explored, the relationships between



them were drawn, and then patterns were found and formulated. Because of the importance of this step, the researcher had to read and reread thoroughly the collected data multiple times, and to revise the topics, notes and comments. Accordingly, the following patterns were observed: the environment and social changes; loyalty and love of showmanship; rules, regulations and social changes; the family and the law; the media and the psychological and mental formation; family and environmental education; loyalty and expediency; the media, rules and regulations; management and family; family and love of showmanship; and expediency and administrative growth.

Finally, by studying the above mentioned patterns and the relationships between each two categories, the theory was identified and the following generalizations about the phenomenon of violence in the school under investigation were made:

1. The important role of the environment for social change, including the change of the perception towards teacher, formulating of social classes, and poverty;
2. The tendency of the individual to appear and to have a negative loyalty, which results in lack of job loyalty, tampering with furniture, and tearing, or defacing materials such as books;
3. Social change and the reflections on the practice of rules and regulations; that is, the deep understanding of school rules and regulations encouraged circumvent and bypass and freedom;
4. The important role of media in intellectual functioning and psychological development of the individual. Individuals imitate the violence they see on television and in movies, such as beating, creating chaos, carrying sharp tools, and cheating;
5. Individuals are influenced by the environment which gives them opportunities for imitation, representation, and simulation. Beating, perception towards others, rebellion and destruction are examples of the influence of environment;
6. Loyalty versus expediency, or to fish in troubled waters. That is, in order to gain some personal advantage, some students want the school system to collapse, and as such, tend to do some destructive practices, create chaos and use profanity;
7. Awareness of the law through the media encouraged the confrontation by law, and the exploitation of law to find causes for rebellion, destruction and damage;
8. The decline of the authority of the family encouraged chaos, and the emergence of some forms of violence, such as rebellion, beating, verbal abuse, and violations of rules and regulations;
9. The existence of social classes encouraged the quarrels between various groups of students and provided a tense atmosphere between the parties involved in the educational process, and thus encouraged confrontation,

hustle, profanity, beating, and acts of destruction and damage; and,

10. The administrative pattern is linked to and dominated by expediency, and this results in and encouraged idleness and violation of rules and regulations of the school.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary

The results of the study can be summarized as follows.

1. The main forms of violence that are exhibited in the school that is under investigation are: moral or psychological violence, including, among others: insulting, screaming, profanity, cynicism, and physical violence upon a person(s) or upon property, which, among others, includes: beating, breaking glass, tampering with furniture, writing on walls and seats, and tearing books;
2. The economic and social conditions of the family, including lack of social interaction or emotional reciprocity and poverty can contribute to the use of violence in school;
3. The level of job loyalty and professional affiliation can be a cause of school violence. That is, teachers who have no motivation or who have disloyalties to the job of teaching are likely to act violently towards students and colleagues;
4. The school environment is one of the leading causes for school violence in. This is especially true respecting bad companions and blind imitation of bad behaviors;
5. The school's neglectful pattern of administration as well as the leniency of punishment have resulted in idleness and violation of rules and regulations of the school as well as of committing violent and unacceptable acts;
6. Media, whether visual or printed, play a major role in the increase of school violence. In particular, exposure of students to violence on television, movies, video games and the Internet make students imitate violent acts on their fellow students and teachers or on school property;
7. Social change and the declining status of teachers and teaching in the society encourages others to disrespect teachers and mocking and belittling them in front of others and even insulting or assaulting them;
8. Mental and psychiatric disorders, which are beyond the control of the individual increase violence in the school; and, Subjectivity and expediency make some take advantage of the flaw in the school system to achieve their own objectives and interests.

### Evaluation

After examining the results of the study, it can be

concluded that the research questions that were addressed in this study were answered, and thus the study has achieved its purpose. These findings are claimed to be of great value for those who are involved in improving the quality of education in this region, in particular. By the same token, the study is expected to contribute to the state of knowledge within the topic of school violence, in general.

## Recommendations

It has become clear that school violence is a complex problem that includes an interaction of various causes, including psychological, biological, behavioral, and social-related ones, as well as various forms, including moral, verbal, and physical ones. Thus, school violence prevention and reduction is not an easy task also, but it is not an impossible one. School violence can be avoided through cooperation from policymakers in the ministry of education, school administrators and teachers, parents and the community. In light of the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make the following suggestions:

1. Setting up a comprehensive preventive program for all students, parents and school administrators and teachers. The school counselors can plan and conduct this program with its activities, including lectures, workshops, symposiums, counseling sessions throughout the school year;
2. Setting up a violence prevention program for students who exhibit aggressive and violent acts in the school. This program should include lessons, sessions and lectures that reinforce core ethical values, which, among others, include: compassion, fairness, honesty, respect, and self-discipline, and teach students techniques on how to avoid violent behaviors, how to control their anger, cope with stress, communicate with their fellow students and teachers, keep away from alcohols, smoking, and drugs, and the consequences of violent behaviors;
3. Setting up parent training programs that teach parents the appropriate techniques on how to deal with their children and reinforce desirable behaviors and ethical values in them;
4. Setting up counseling programs for teachers that help them become more understanding, compassionate and patient by teaching them alternatives to the use of corporal punishment and ways of proper communication.
5. Setting up training programs for school principals that help them gain the necessary skills to handle violence in their schools;
6. Incorporating a zero tolerance policy for any and all acts of violence in schools committed by students, teachers or school administrators. If they are involved in violence in the school, a sort of punishment that fits their violent act should be applied on them;
7. Using a reward system to encourage good behaviors

in the school; and,

Inculcating the noble Islamic values of peace, tolerance, and the culture of non-violence into the school curriculum of secondary level; especially, in the subjects of social and Islamic sciences.

## Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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