

The Effect of School Violence on Psychological Status of Intermediate Schools' Students in Baghdad City

اثر العنف المدرسي في الحالة النفسية لطلبة المدارس المتوسطة في مدينة بغداد

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الخلاصة:

الهدف: لتقييم انماط العنف المدرسي الموجه ضد طلبة المدارس المتوسطة وتحديد اثر العنف المدرسي في الحالة النفسية للطلبة.
المنهجية: دراسة وصفية مستعرضة اجريت في المدارس المتوسطة في بغداد. استخدمت استبانة الملئ الذاتي طريقة لجمع المعلومات، تكونت الاستبانة من ثلاثة اجزاء، مثل الجزء الاول مواصفات العينة؛ الجزء الثاني تضمن قياس سلوك العنف صمم من قبل الباحث لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة وتضمن الجزء الثالث مقياسين اثنين (مقياس الصحة العامة ومقياس الثقة بالنفس) لقياس الحالة النفسية للطلبة. اختبرت عينة عشوائية بلغت 600 طالب وطالبة من المدارس المتوسطة في قطاعات بغداد المختلفة باتباع الترتيبات الادارية اللازمة. قام الباحث بزيارة العينة ومقابلتهم في مدارسهم لجمع المعلومات المطلوبة. وقد تم تحليل النتائج باستخدام الاحصاء الوصفي كالتكرارات والنسب المئوية والوسط الحسابي والانحراف المعياري والاحصاء الاستنتاجي كمعامل ارتباط بيرسون.
النتائج: اظهرت النتائج ان هناك علاقة عكسية ذات دلالة احصائية بين عنف المدرسين تجاه طلبة المدارس وجودة الحالة النفسية ومستوى الثقة بالنفس للطلبة ($r = 0.194$ ، $r = 0.291$ بحسب الترتيب) باحتمالية خطأ $p \leq 0.01$.
الاستنتاجات: استنتجت الدراسة ان طلبة وطالبات المدارس المتوسطة يواجهون مختلف انواع العنف الجسدي والنفسى من مدرسيهم لها تاثير ذو دلالة احصائية في حالتهم النفسية.
التوصيات: اوصت الدراسة بتنفيذ ورش عمل توعوية حول العنف لمنع سلوكيات عنف المدرسين تجاه طلبتهم واجراء دراسات اخرى مشابهة على المستوى الوطني لتقييم مدى انتشار سلوك العنف المدرسي وتأثيره في الجودة النفسية للطلبة.
الكلمات المفتاحية: العنف المدرسي، الحالة النفسية، طلبة المدارس.

Abstract

Objectives: to assess school violence patterns toward the intermediate schools' students and to determine the effect of school violence on the psychological status of the students.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at intermediate schools in Baghdad. A self-administered questionnaire was used as a mean for data collection. It composed of three parts: part 1 represented the sample characteristics; part 2 concerned with the violence behavior, it was constructed by the researchers to achieve the study objectives; and part 3 included 2 scales (GHQ-12 and self-esteem scales), it concerned with the psychological status of the students. A random sample of 600 intermediate school's students was selected from different Baghdad districts' schools through a formal steps of administrative arrangements. The researcher visited and interviewed the sample at their schools to distribute the questionnaire for them to collect the required data. Data was analyzed by using the descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations and inferential statistics like Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results: Results revealed that there were a significant negative relationship between violence of teachers toward school students and the psychological wellbeing and self-esteem levels of the students ($r = -0.194$, $r = -0.291$ respectively) at $p < 0.01$.

Conclusions: The study concluded that intermediate schools' students (males and females) face different types of physical and psychological violence from their teachers that have a significant effect on their psychological status.

Recommendations: The study recommended that antiviolence awareness workshops should be implemented to stop and prevent violence behaviors by teachers toward student and further similar studies on a nationwide should be carried out to assess the prevalence of school violence behavior and its effects on the student's psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: school violence, psychological status, school students

INTRODUCTION

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (WHO, 2011).

Violence against children in school is a feature of the 'everyday violence' that violates children's human rights and causes them to suffer (Pinheiro, 2006). It negatively

affects students all around the world. It not only represents a violation of the rights of a child but also acts as a significant barrier to the achievement of international goals, including Education for All objectives (Pereznieta et al., 2010). School violence has been reported as one of the most important and devastating social problems facing school children and their parents, to the extent that students perceive their school context as an unsafe environment (Astor and Meyer, 2001).

Some teachers are unaware of the impact of their behavior upon children. It is possible that teachers are also unaware that their punishment is a form of child abuse that has serious damaging consequences on the development of children. They may perceive punishment as a means of molding and shaping children's behavior. Teachers may also lack alternatives in dealing with children who misbehave in schools (Jolly et al., 2009). In the classroom, the importance of children's mental health should not be underestimated. Violence and abuse can affect it. Children must survive as psychologically intact individuals. It is apparent that a chronic pattern of psychological maltreatment destroys a child's sense of self and personal safety. This leads to adverse effects on intrapersonal thoughts, emotional health, social skills, learning impairments, and physical health (Nesbit & Philpot, 2002).

Objectives:

1. To assess school violence patterns toward the intermediate schools' students and
2. To determine the effect of school violence on the psychological status of the students.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive analytical study in which the assessment approach is applied to achieve the objectives of the study.

The permission is granted by the Ministry of Education/ Educational Directorate of Rusafa and Educational Directorate of Al- Kurkh.

The study was conducted at 16 intermediate schools are distributed throughout Baghdad Educational Directorate of Al Rusafa and Educational Directorate of Al-Kurkh according to the number of students within each directorate; they included Baghdad Al-Jedeeda, Baladiat, Al Sadir City, Al Hussainiah, Al Shaab, Al Amin, Palestine's street and all arounds, Al Khademia, Al Doura and all around in Al Karkh, which were selected randomly. These schools are considered the most appropriate settings in which the subjects for the study can be selected.

A random sample of 600 students is selected from a probability stratified sample from the third class of intermediate schools for both sexes in Baghdad Al – Rasafa and Al-Kurkh districts. Which are selected randomly from third intermediate class.

Selection criteria:

In order for the students to be included into the current study, they need to meet the following.

1. Must be 14 - 17 years old.
 2. Both sexes.
- A questionnaire is constructed for the purpose of the study through a review of relevant literature and studies. It is presented as follows:
1. The general information: it deals with the students' demographic characteristics such as: age, gender, residence, income, years of fail and general health information.
 2. School violence behaviors scale: it was comprised of 39 items concerned with the school violence behaviors of teachers against their students on a rating and scoring type likert scale, the score was: Has a severe impact on my psychological status (the score = 4), Has an impact on my psychological status (the score = 3), Has no impact on

my psychological status (the score = 2), There's no penalty (the score = 1). Accordingly, the severity is between the lowest score which was 39 and the highest one which was 156.

3. Students' psychological status: GHQ-12 :This was comprised of 12 items with 4 level likert scale in which the score is between 12 to 48, the degree of psychological wellbeing is correlated according these scores which are concerned with the psychological wellbeing of the students; Self Esteem Scale: This was comprised of 10 items: positive and negative items which deal with the measurement of the students' self-esteem rated on 4 levels type likert scale for the positive attitudes, 4 for "strongly agree", 3 for "agree", 2 for "don't agree", and 1 for "strongly don't agree". So far the negative attitudes were scored and rated on the same scale, 4 for "strongly don't agree", 3 for "don't agree", **2 for "agree" and 1 for "strongly agree"**. **Accordingly the degree of self is between the score 10 - 40.**

In order to test the validity of the questionnaires, instruments were forwarded to a panel of experts for their opinion and suggestions to investigate the. It was presented to 5 experts in different fields. The experts' responses indicated that the content of the questionnaire is clear, relevant and adequate; Then the questionnaire was considered valid after taking into consideration their suggestions and recommendation for modification.

A pilot study was carried out for the period from 5 to 10 of December, 2010 and conducted on 30 adolescent students who were selected randomly from the intermediate schools in Baghdad Al – Rasafa and Al-Kurkh districts for the purpose of the questionnaire's reliability determination. The pilot study also aimed to identify the barriers that may be encountered during the study process and to consider the time estimated for the data collection, which shows how much time is needed to answer the questions and the questions took around 15 minutes.

Estimates of the reliability were determined through the use of split – half technique. The results revealed that the split – half technique for the school violence scale was $r = 0.92$; and for the GHQ-12 was $r = 0.87$, and for self-esteem scale was $r = 0.91$.

A self-reported technique was used for data collection from 15 December 2010 to the end of February 2011.

Data was collected through the use of the constructed questionnaire; students filled the questionnaire as self-reported after receiving the information and instructions required from the researcher to filling the questionnaire and the researcher stayed with students in their classroom during the process of data collection.

Data was analyzed through the application of the following statistical data analysis approaches: Descriptive statistical data analysis approach (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and Inferential statistical data analysis approach: This approach was performed through the application of the following: a. Pearson correlation coefficient to identify the relationship between school violence, psychological status and the students' socio-demographic variables.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage %
Age :		
≤14	163	27.2
15	205	34.2
≥16	232	38.7
Gender:		
Male	317	52.8
Female	283	47.2
Residence:		
Al Sadir City and Al Hussainiah	274	45.7
Al Shaab and Al Amin	137	22.8
Palestine's street and all arounds	70	11.7
Al Khademia and Al Doura and all around in Al Karkh like Al-saidia and Alyarmook	119	19.8
Educational performance:		
Excellent	67	11.2
Very good	108	18.0
Good	187	31.2
Acceptable	167	27.8
Weak	71	11.8
Family income:		
Sufficient	361	60.2
Barely Sufficient	181	30.2
Insufficient	58	9.7
Family punishment to student:		
Yes	360	60.0
No	240	40.0

The table shows that most of the respondents are within the age group ≥ 16 (38.7%) , males (52.8%), from Al-sadir City and Al-Huseiniah (45.7%), have not fail previously (65.7%), within good level of educational performance(31.2), have sufficient family income(60.2%), experience family punishment(60%).

Table 2: The psychological impact of school violence behaviors against the students

Items		Prevalence Of violent behavior		There's no penalty		Has a severe impact on my psychological status		Has an impact on my psychological status		Has no impact		Mean	SD.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1.	Hitting by stick or ruler or book	376	62.7	224	37.3	195	32.5	128	21.3	53	8.8	2.49	1.30
2.	Hitting on the head or body by using hand	331	55.2	269	44.8	161	26.8	114	19.0	56	9.3	2.28	1.28
3.	Kicking by foot	189	31.5	411	68.5	87	14.5	65	10.8	37	6.2	1.71	1.14
4.	Throwing chalks or others	228	38	372	62.0	80	13.3	88	14.7	60	10.0	1.79	1.12
5.	Pushing	243	40.5	357	59.5	86	14.3	80	13.3	77	12.8	1.83	1.13
6.	Hitting by electrical wire	131	21.8	469	78.2	34	5.7	45	7.5	52	8.7	1.41	0.86
7.	Slapping on the face	271	45.3	328	54.7	121	20.2	75	12.5	75	12.5	1.98	1.22
8.	Dragging hair	215	35.8	385	64.2	100	16.7	59	9.8	56	9.3	1.79	1.17
9.	Dragging ear	270	45.2	329	54.8	113	18.8	86	14.3	71	11.8	1.99	1.26
10.	Holding and dragging forehead	210	35	390	65.0	82	13.7	54	9.0	74	12.3	1.71	1.10
11.	Hitting by water pipe	154	25.7	446	74.3	59	9.8	41	6.8	54	9.0	1.52	0.99
12.	Hitting by using belt	117	19.5	483	80.5	36	6.0	28	4.7	53	8.8	1.36	0.83
13.	Spitting on the students	140	23.3	460	76.7	46	7.7	48	8.0	46	7.7	1.47	0.93
14.	Discharging out of the class	319	53.2	281	46.8	148	24.7	112	18.7	59	9.8	2.21	1.26
15.	Filthy speech (insult and curse)	300	50	300	50.0	156	26.0	92	15.3	52	8.7	2.17	1.29
16.	Threat by dismissing	305	50.8	295	49.2	151	25.2	95	15.8	59	9.8	2.17	1.28
17.	Minimizing marks	354	59.2	245	40.8	182	30.3	108	18.0	64	10.7	2.38	1.29
18.	Ridicule of students	290	48.3	310	51.7	143	23.8	92	15.3	55	9.2	2.11	1.27
19.	Furious glance	327	54.5	273	45.5	130	21.7	113	18.8	84	14.0	2.17	1.22
20.	Disregard student	240	40	360	60.0	110	18.3	73	12.2	57	9.5	1.89	1.20
21.	Asking questions for the sake of embarrassment	290	48.3	310	51.7	133	22.2	94	15.7	63	10.5	2.08	1.25
22.	Laughing at students	290	48.3	310	51.7	131	21.8	91	15.2	68	11.3	2.07	1.24
23.	Clapping using feet	177	29.5	423	70.5	62	10.3	57	9.5	58	9.7	1.60	1.03
24.	Shouting	362	60.3	238	39.7	164	27.3	123	20.5	75	12.5	2.35	1.25
25.	Scolding during scholastic alignment	225	37.5	375	62.5	100	16.7	64	10.7	61	10.2	1.81	1.17
26.	Discrimination on the base of ethnic or denominationalism	174	29.2	425	70.8	92	15.3	44	7.3	38	6.3	1.69	1.24
27.	Insulting by dropping to a lower stage	172	28.7	428	71.3	114	19.0	34	5.7	24	4.0	1.72	1.21
28.	Forbidding from examinations	261	43.5	339	56.5	123	20.5	102	17.0	36	6.0	2.02	1.25
29.	Standing on one foot facing walls	279	46.5	321	53.5	152	25.3	72	12.0	55	9.2	2.09	1.29
30.	Standing on one foot facing other students	242	40.3	358	59.7	126	21.0	74	12.3	42	7.0	1.95	1.25
31.	Standing beside wastebasket	291	48.5	309	51.5	156	26.0	73	12.2	62	10.3	2.13	1.29
32.	Standing under sun beams	163	27.2	437	72.8	64	10.7	51	8.5	48	8.0	1.57	1.03
33.	Jogging playground	190	31.7	410	68.3	77	12.8	57	9.5	56	9.3	1.67	1.09
34.	Walking on one foot	170	28.3	430	71.7	75	12.5	52	8.7	43	7.2	1.62	1.08
35.	Obligating the student on privet lessons	186	31	414	69.0	76	12.7	71	11.8	39	6.5	1.68	1.10
36.	Raising hands till the end of the lesson	184	30.7	416	69.3	73	12.2	56	9.3	55	9.2	1.64	1.07
37.	Standing the whole time of the lesson	280	46.7	320	53.3	127	21.2	88	14.7	65	10.8	2.04	1.24
38.	Writing the lesson several times	249	41.5	351	58.5	95	15.8	57	9.5	97	16.2	1.83	1.13
39.	Sexual abuse	50	8.3	550	91.7	25	4.2	13	2.2	12	2.0	1.19	0.67

Table 2 shows that the most impact and prevalence of violence behavior of teachers upon their students' psychological status from students' point of view are "hitting by stick or ruler or book (mean=2.49), Minimizing marks (mean=2.38),

shouting(mean=2.35),Hitting on the head or body by using hand(mean=2.28), and discharging out of the class (mean=2.21), Furious glance (mean=2.17), Filthy speech (insult and curse) (mean=2.17), Threat by dismissing (mean=2.17), and Standing beside wastebasket (mean=2.13) ” whereas the least prevalent are” sexual abuse(mean=1.19), hitting by using belt(mean=1.36), and hitting by electrical wire(mean=1.41).

Table 3: The means and standard deviations of psychological wellbeing of the students

Items		Mean	Standard deviation
Have you recently:			
1.	Been able to concentrate on what you're doing?	3.13	0.82
2.	Lost much sleep over worry?	2.82	0.97
3.	Felt that you're playing a useful part in things?	3.05	0.88
4.	Felt capable of taking decisions about things?	3.01	0.84
5.	Felt constantly under strain?	3.01	1.00
6.	Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	2.98	1.02
7.	Been able to enjoy your normal day to day activities?	2.90	0.89
8.	Been able to face up to your problems?	2.94	0.83
9.	Been feeling unhappy or depressed?	2.77	1.09
10.	Been losing confidence in yourself?	3.13	1.03
11.	Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	3.33	0.96
12.	Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	2.27	1.05
	Average mean	2.95	0.95

Table 3 reveals that the students have a moderate to severe level of psychological distress (average mean= 2.95 , SD=0.95).

Table 4: The means and standard deviations of Self-esteem of the students

Items		Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3.45	0.76
2.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	3.43	0.63
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	2.98	1.01
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	3.05	0.87
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	2.76	1.02
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	3.12	0.86
7.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	3.20	0.84
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	2.11	1.03
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	2.99	1.01
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	2.67	1.11
	Average mean	2.97	0.91

The results reveal that the students have a moderate level of self- esteem (average mean= 2.97, SD= 0.91)

Table 5: Pearson correlation coefficient among the school violence and the study variables.

variables	Total violence	self-esteem	Psychological wellbeing
Total violence	1.000	-0.291**	-0.194**
Total self- esteem	-0.291**	1.000	0.355**
Total general health	-0.194**	0.355**	1.000
Gender	-0.221**	-0.005	-0.105*
Family income	0.274**	-0.091*	-0.089*
Educational performance	0.143**	-0.041	0.019
Age	0.097*	0.049	-0.082*
Residence	0.086*	-0.083*	-0.242**
Family punishment	0.349**	-0.312**	-0.231**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The findings reveal that there are a significant negative relationship between school violence and family punishment with students' self-esteem and Psychological wellbeing at $p \leq 0.01$.

DISCUSSION:

The findings of table 2 showed that the most impact and prevalence violence behaviors of teachers upon their students' psychological status from students' point of view are "hitting by stick or ruler or book (mean=2.49), Minimizing marks (mean=2.38), shouting(mean=2.35),Hitting on the head or body by using hand(mean=2.28), and discharging out of the class (mean=2.21), Furious glance (mean=2.17), Filthy speech (insult and curse) (mean=2.17), Threat by dismissing (mean=2.17), and Standing beside wastebasket (mean=2.13) " whereas the least prevalent are" sexual abuse(mean=1.19), hitting by using belt(mean=1.36), and hitting by electrical wire(mean=1.41).Shumba (2002)supported the current results, he stated that school violence victims reported the following behaviors of their teachers: harassment; verbal put -downs; labeling (stupid, dummy);inconsistent erratic behavior; screaming at the children until they cried; inappropriate threats to try to control classes, allowing some students to harass and belittle others; use of homework as punishment; throwing homework at students; and different physical punishment. Physical abuse commonly involves hitting, smacking, slapping, or spanking children, withthe hand or with an implement. However, it can also involve having children hit each other; kicking,shaking, scratching, pinching, or biting a child; pulling on a child's hair or ears; forcing a child to strip orstay in uncomfortable positions; preventing a child from using the bathroom or eating; burning orscalding a child; washing a child's mouth out with soap; or forcing a child to swallow hot spices(Committee on the Rights of theChild, 2006) this report is agree also with the present findings.ConsistentlyGardner et al. (2003) revealed that threats and attacks on students at school were common: 50% of the students had been threatened with physical violence, 22% had been victims of violence "once or sometimes," and 11% said they were "often" victims of violence,in addition, 47% indicated that there were fights over "turf" or territory at the school.

The results in table 3 revealed that the students have a moderate to severe level of psychological distress (average mean= 2.95 , SD=0.95).

Consistently with our findings, African Child Policy Forum (2006d) reported that in Ethiopia, one survey found that 61% of school girls had experienced several kinds of psychological abuse in school including being shouted or glared at (70%), being insulted (54%), and being frightened or threatened (47%).

The results revealed that the students have a moderate level of self-esteem (average mean = 2.97, SD = 0.91) as shown in table 4. This may indicate that they got a moderate level of love and praise. This result was supported by Rogers (1980) who mentioned that people need positive regard from parents, teachers or social standards and also from their selves, they need to feel good about their selves to elevate their self-esteem. Jolly et al (2009) agree with current findings, they stated that people with high self-esteem are less susceptible to social pressure, have fewer interpersonal problems, are happier with their lives, achieve at a higher and more persistent level, and are more capable of forming satisfying love relationships.

The findings revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between school violence and family punishment with students' self-esteem and Psychological wellbeing at $p \leq 0.01$ (Table 5).

Consistently, Shumba (2002) warned that students should not be psychologically maltreated because: it humiliates and dehumanizes them; it destroys their self-concept or image; it makes them late for school, it deforms their character; it makes them shy; it makes them confused. In addition, school-abused students tend to exhibit excessive worry about school performance; verbalize fear that teachers would hurt them; excessive crying, headaches; stomach aches; sleep disturbance; withdrawal behavior or depression. Nesbitt and Philpott (2002) supported the present findings, they stated that violence victims students tend to suffer a greater decline in psychological development which usually lowers their self-esteem.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. There are numerous types of school violence practiced by the school teachers toward their students.
2. Students have moderate to severe level of psychological distress and moderate level of self-esteem.
3. School violence has a significant negative impact on the students' psychological status.
4. Family income, age, gender, residence, and years of school are participated in the determination of students' psychological status.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continuous follow up by Ministry of Education to all schools to prevent the violence by teachers toward the students.
2. Implement educational programs for teachers to clarify the negative psychological impact of school violence on the students.
3. Encourage the mass media to stress on the necessity of avoiding the school violence and teachers' punishment for their students.
4. Further national studies on a larger sample about the impact of violence upon the students' psychological status should be conducted.

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