

## ASPECTS REGARDING THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL

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### **Abstract**

*In this paper, the authors analyse a few aspects concerning violence in school which is, from a statistic point of view, the most frequent deviant behaviour in school. The different forms of violence among schoolchildren occur in different contexts. Breaks between classes mean a space where schoolchildren are not watched by their teachers, which allows them to inter-relate. Knocking, offending, pushing, wounding, hurting, cursing, threatening, and vandalising are but some forms of the violence in school. The conclusions the authors have reached thanks to a questionnaire applied to secondary school pupils allowed the former to develop a few directions of prevention and solution of school violence, a phenomenon that has marked the health state, body integrity and psychological development in schoolchildren.*

*Key words: School violence; School behaviour; Secondary school cycle; Prevention and solution*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Violence is one of the most serious issues of our contemporary world. A delicate matter, controlling violence in school can only be done if its causes, origins, forms, and prevention mechanisms are well known. The issue of violence in school can and must become a serious theme for everybody involved in the educational process.

Under the label “violence”, we can discover a wide range of behaviours relying on visual confrontation, nick-naming, teasing, bantering, miming, refusing support, offending, and hitting with different objects.

Depending on the level of violence and correlated with the kind of prejudice to the victim, one can discern between physical and psychological violence. The effects of physical violence concern both the victim's health and physical integrity, and his/her psychological evolution (at a cognitive level – negative self-perception; at an emotional level – fear, depression). Psychological violence affects mainly self-esteem: the victims may feel deprived of value; they lose self-confidence and become anxious. Aggressiveness affects their ability of focusing on school chores.

Schoolchildren come to school marked by family, community, and mass-media aggressiveness; they bring with them their fears, frustrations, and rivalries which they try to solve, sometimes, through violence. Most violent acts occur in class, during the breaks, on the stairs, in the corridors, on the sports grounds, at the school entrance, and they are motivated by one or more of the following: desire to be valued for something, desire to get a status, desire to capture people's attention.

Institutional violence can contribute to the increase of non-institutional violence, resulting in frustrations, preparing the psychological state necessary to act, and lowering the delinquency threshold. For instance, injustice of the teacher or teacher's labelling can have a wide range of effects: a violent reaction of the victim towards the colleagues which are considered the teacher's protégés (non-institutional violence), vandalism, or evasive behaviour.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The goal of the present research was to point out the causes and consequences of violence in school. To do so, we established the following objectives: analysing forms of violence in school and assessing discipline in school.

We had three working hypotheses:

- *1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis*: Violence among children would diminish if teachers took more disciplinary measures.
- *2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis*: Violence among children would diminish if families got more involved in their children’s education.
- *3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis*: Violence among children would diminish if there were no violence among schoolchildren groups.

Within the research carried out in the school year 2013, we involved 52 schoolchildren from Grades 5 and 8 (Secondary School in Giroc, Timiș County), of which 13 girls and 13 boys from grade 5 and 14 girls and 12 boys from grade 8.

The research method we used was the questionnaire. It was made up of 15 questions containing items related to the following: discipline degrees, forms of discipline in school, specific forms of violence in school, and measures taken to diminish violence in school. The questions were related to the hypotheses in the following way: 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis – questions 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8; 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis – questions 2, 6, 9, 10, and 14; 3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis – questions 5, 11, 12, 13, and 15.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In the present paper we analyse only the results concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> hypotheses.

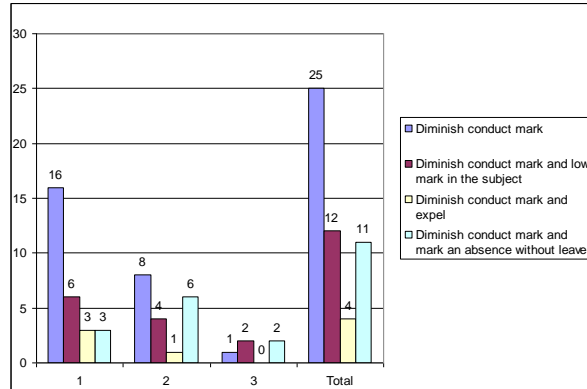
*1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis*: Violence among children would diminish if teachers took more disciplinary measures. We correlated questions 1 and 4 with this hypothesis.

- *Question 1*: Do they take disciplinary measures in school?
  - a) frequently
  - b) sometimes
  - c) rarely
- *Question 4*: What are the punitive measures the teachers take when schoolchildren are not disciplined?
  - a) Diminish conduct mark
  - b) Low mark in the subject
  - c) Expel
  - d) Mark an absence without leave
  - e) No punitive measure

Table 1

Synthesis of answers to questions 1 and 4

Do they take disciplinary measures in school?	What are the punitive measures the teachers take when schoolchildren are not disciplined?				
	Diminish conduct mark	Diminish conduct mark and low mark in the subject	Diminish conduct mark and expel	Diminish conduct mark and mark an absence without leave	Total
Frequently	16	6	3	3	28
Sometimes	8	4	1	6	19
Rarely	1	2	-	2	5
Total	25	12	4	11	52



Source: The questionnaire applied to the schoolchildren

Figure 1. Synthesis of answers to questions 1 and 4 :  
1-Frequently; 2-Sometimes ; 3-Rarely

Of the 28 schoolchildren we questioned and who claimed they take disciplinary measures in school, 16 answered that teachers punish undisciplined schoolchildren by diminishing their conduct mark, 6 that teachers diminish conduct mark and mark in the subject, 3 that teachers diminish conduct mark and expel, and 3 that teachers diminish conduct mark and mark an absence without a leave. Of the total number of schoolchildren claiming that the teachers sometimes punish them if not disciplined, 8 claimed the teachers diminish conduct mark, 4 that the teachers diminish conduct mark and mark in the subject, 1 that the teachers diminish conduct mark and expel, and 3 that the teachers diminish conduct mark and mark an absence without a leave. Of the 5 schoolchildren claiming that disciplinary measures in school are rare, 1 claimed that the teachers diminish conduct marks, 2 that the teachers diminish conduct mark and mark in the subject, and 2 claimed that the teachers diminish conduct mark and mark an absence without a leave. None claimed diminution of conduct mark and expulsion.

Results turned into percentage points (Figures 2 and 3) confirm that if teachers took more disciplinary measures, violence would diminish. Of all the schoolchildren, 53.8% confirmed disciplinary measures being taken in school, and 48.08% claimed that the most frequent punishment is to diminish conduct mark.

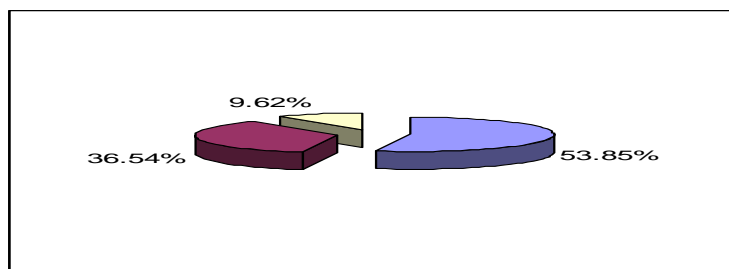


Figure 2. Frequency of punitive measures in school:  
53.85% - Frequently; 36.54% - Sometimes; 9.62% - Rarely

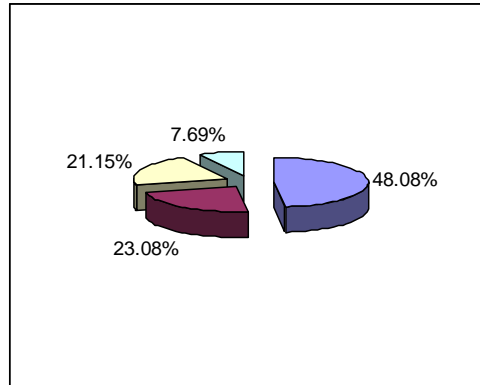


Figure 3. Punitive measures taken by teachers:

48.08% - Diminish conduct mark; 23.08% - Diminish conduct mark and low mark in the subject; 21.15% - Diminish conduct mark and expel; 7.69% - Diminish conduct mark and mark an absence without leave

As a conclusion, we can say that our hypothesis is confirmed: Violence among children would diminish if teachers took more disciplinary measures.

**3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis:** Violence among children would diminish if there were no violence among schoolchildren groups. We correlated questions 5 and 12 with this hypothesis.

- *Question 5:* How do you solve conflict situations with your colleagues and friends at school?
  - a) I have no conflicts
  - b) I aggress them verbally
  - c) I aggress them both verbally and physically
  - d) I ignore them
- *Question 12:* What type of violence is there in your group of friends at school?
  - a) Physical violence
  - b) Verbal violence
  - c) Physical and verbal violence

Table 2

Synthesis of answers to questions 5 and 12

How do you solve conflict situations with your colleagues and friends at school?	What type of violence is there in your group of friends at school?			
	Verbal violence	Physical and verbal violence	There is no violence	Total
I have no conflicts	4	6	18	28
I aggress them verbally	1	5	4	10
I aggress them both verbally and physically	-	1	-	1
I ignore them	4	2	7	13
Total	9	14	29	52

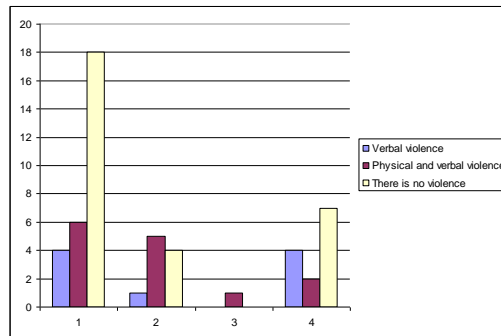


Figure 4. Synthesis of answers to questions 5 and 12:  
 1- I have no conflicts; 2- I aggress them verbally;  
 3- I aggress them both verbally and physically; 4- I ignore them

Of the total 28 schoolchildren claiming they have no conflicts in school, 4 claim there is verbal violence in his/her group of friends at school, 6 claim there is physical and verbal violence in his/her group of friends at school, and 18 claim there is no violence at all at school.

Of the total 10 schoolchildren claiming they solve conflict situations through verbal aggressiveness, 1 claimed there is verbal violence in his/her group of friends at school, 5 claimed there is physical and verbal violence, and 4 claimed there is no violence whatsoever in their group of friends at school. A single schoolchild solves his/her conflicts through physical and verbal aggressiveness and claims there is physical and verbal violence in his/her group of friends.

Results turned into percentage points show the following (Figures 5 and 6):

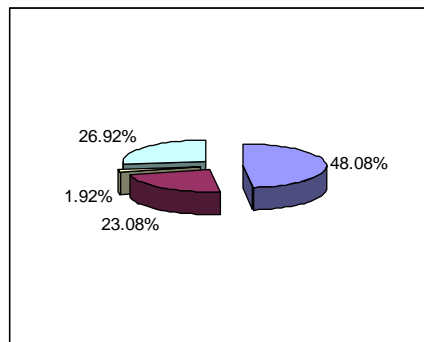


Figure 5. How do you solve conflict situations:  
 48.08% - I have no conflicts; 23.08% - I aggress them verbally;  
 1.92% - I aggress them both verbally and physically; 26.92% - I ignore them

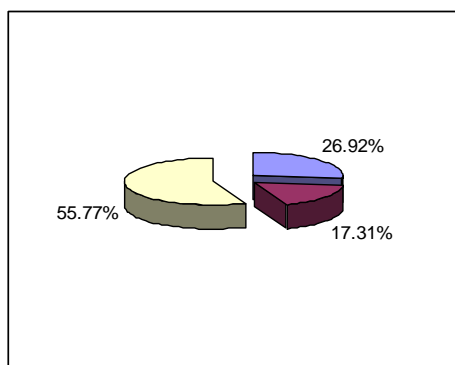


Figure 6. Types of violence at school: 26.92% - Verbal violence; 17.31% - Physical and verbal violence; 55.77% - There is no violence

As a conclusion, our hypothesis that “Violence among children would diminish if there were no violence among schoolchildren groups” is partially confirmed.

### CONCLUSIONS

Violence in its different forms among schoolchildren has become a reality in the rural area school we have monitored. If light forms of verbal violence (bantering, teasing, etc.) are considered part of the behaviour specific to schoolchildren and are tolerated in school, the more serious forms are criticised by most schoolchildren and their causes are identified at the level of other instances than the school.

We could see that, at a general level, boys are more aggressive than girls. Likewise, the forms of violence differentiate according to gender; thus, girls are associated with more “common”, tolerated forms of violence (particularly verbal violence), while boys are associated with more serious forms of violence (including physical aggressiveness). At the same time, we could see that younger schoolchildren are the victims of older schoolchildren.

The most frequent forms of school violence are related to verbal violence (disputes, arguments, conflicts, curses, yelling, etc.) that are considered tolerable and common at school compared to the social context (street verbal violence, mass-media verbal violence, etc.). within the same range of verbal violence, schoolchildren also mentioned as rather frequent offences concerning physical and/or psychical features of the schoolchildren, with roots in the behaviour specific to their age, when they become more aware and critical of their own or of everybody else’s physical and/or psychical features.

We can draw the conclusion that it is important to identify the school factors and contexts that favour and support such behaviour in order to develop a strategy for the prevention and correction of the negative impact of other contexts (family, mass-media, society on the whole).

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