



SUMMARY

Violence has become a global problem that threatens the lives and security of people everywhere. Violence among young people is increasing dramatically. The most alarming is that these violent acts are not only occurring on the streets, but in the school systems as well. School violence is defined as any physical or verbal attack on a person while on school. School violence is an issue that has received widespread attention, but no real solutions have been found to combat that problem.

The aim of this study was testing the hypothesis that:

Violence among children aged 12- 15 years is a real problem. There is a real effect of many studied factors (independents) on the violent act (dependent).

The objectives of this study were :

- Calculating the prevalence rate of violence among a sample of preparatory school children in Benha City.
- Identifying different forms and degrees of school violence .
- Assessing risk factors inside and outside schools which influence violent acts committed by school children .
- Comparing between public and private mixed schools regarding the frequency distribution and determinants of this problem.



This cross sectional study was conducted upon four hundreds and twenty students, chosen randomly from four preparatory schools in Benha City, two mixed private schools (Al-Shobban Al-Moslemeen and Al-Fath Al-Khassah) and two public schools (Suzan Moubarak –for girls- and Al-Emam Mohammed Metwally Al-Shaarawy-for boys-) during the period from the first of December, 2007, till the end of April, 2008. The students, their teachers and parents were the target population in this study.

A structured questionnaire sheet was used to collect data from students, their parents and their teachers.

For Students:

- An interview questionnaire (in Arabic language) was used by the investigator for each student included in the study. It included data about violent behaviors and acts committed by school children, demographic & social information, home atmosphere and family structure, parent-child relationship, relation of child with family members and peers at school, exposure and /or initiation of violence at school, aggressive televised programs and video games, sports and scholastic achievement (Appendix I).
- Physical examination which included general appearance of the child and specific symptoms and signs of violence (fractures, burns, multiple sites of injuries, etc..).



- Anthropometric measurements: The school nurse assisted in obtaining weight and height of the studied students. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated by the investigator according to the formula :

$$\text{BMI} = \text{weight (kg)} / \text{height}^2 \text{ (m)}.$$

For Parents:

Parents of students were subjected to a self administered questionnaire which included parent form of Strength & Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) for parents of children 3-16 years old (*Goodman, 1997*). It also included items about perinatal and developmental history of the child, preschool items related to early aggressive child, family structure, home atmosphere and social class.

Teachers of students:

Data were collected using a self administered questionnaire, source of which was the teacher form of (SDQ) for teachers of children 3-16 years old (*Goodman, 1997*). (appendix I).

The age of studied students ranged from (11-16) years, the mean age was (13.6 ± 1.02) years in public schools and (13.4 ± 0.95) years in private schools. More than half (52.1%) of studied students were boys, two thirds (66.7%) of them were urban. Regarding the frequency of being engaged in school violence, this study demonstrated that 66.9% of studied students were involved in school violence either victims only (21.9%), perpetrator only (6.2%) or both "victim& perpetrator" (38.8%).



Considering victimization, 60.7% of the studied students were victimized, boys at both public and private schools were victimized at higher percentage (66.3% & 74.4% respectively) than girls (59.8% & 39.4% respectively) with statistically significant difference ($P < 0.001$). Regarding the types of violent acts to which victimized students were exposed, the most common subtype of victimization was direct verbal attacks (65.9%), followed by beating (45.1%). Kick was the commonest form of violence among beaten boys in both public and private schools (37.1% & 30.9% respectively), while pulling clothes was the commonest form among beaten girls in both public and private schools (60.9% & 40% respectively) ($P < 0.001$). Regarding the sequelae of beating, this study showed that 14.8% of beaten students acquired wounds & contusions and 11.3% of them acquired fractures, 40.9% of beaten students were injured and 36.2% of the injured sought medical care at hospital. Considering place of beating, this study revealed that the most common place where beating occurred was the playground followed by the classroom. Based on teacher's and parents' reports about problems of victimized students, the present study revealed that the higher percentages of those who had emotional problems, problems in concentration and behavioral problems were included among victims in both public and private schools.

This study found that 45% of studied students were perpetrators of school violence, 51.1% of boys engaged in fights with their colleagues, 9.5% of studied students at public schools carried weapon in the current academic year, 42% of public school students witnessed a colleague carrying weapon at school. Regarding risk factors of being perpetrators of school violence, this study revealed some factors; male gender was a



significant independent predictor of school violence as it was found that boys were more likely to induce violence than girls in both public and private schools (OR=2.3 & 6.6 respectively), students of lower social classes at both public and private schools were more likely to be perpetrators of violence (OR=1.7 in public schools & 1.95 in private ones), smoker students were (twenty nine) times more likely to induce school violence, victimized students were more likely to be perpetrators (OR was 5.4 for public schools and 16.8 for private ones), students with single parent in both public and private schools were about two times more likely to be perpetrators of violence, students who exposed to verbal and corporal punishment were at higher risk to induce violence, students who preferred violent TV programs were more likely to induce violence (OR=3.8 in public schools and 3.4 in private ones), students who preferred violent video games were about three times (in public schools) and about ten times (in private schools) more likely to be perpetrators, students who had aggressive friends were about fifteen times (in public schools) and about thirteen times (in private schools) more likely to induce school violence.

As regard studying students according to SDQ questionnaire, teacher's report of SDQ revealed abnormal score of student's behavior in (27.5%) and (21.8%) students of public and private schools respectively. While parents' report of SDQ revealed that abnormal score was detected among (25%) and (21.4%) of public and private schools students respectively. This study also showed that based on parents' report, the highest mean of SDQ total score was among perpetrators of school violence (15.2 ± 8.6).



It can be concluded from this study that violence among preparatory school children is a prevalent problem in Benha City affecting both public and private schools, with a tendency to badly affect the children and encouraging anti social behaviour, so, it is suggested that research efforts should focus more on this area with emphasis on intervention for prevention. This study recommended the application of a comprehensive anti violence program. For violence interventions to be effective it must focus beyond the violent child and the victim to include peers, school staff, parents and the community. This program can be integrated in the school health program.