

TEACHER, VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND POSSIBLE PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Effective teacher, effective school” Modern trends in education are directed towards the creation of effective schools. But what happens in our schools? Every day we hear, we are witnessing the violent behaviour of students just in schools, school yards. What forms of violent behaviour occur in schools? Who has the role of perpetrator, victim of violent behaviour? Where and what is the role of teachers in the prevention of violent behaviour?

In this regard, is the preparation of this paper? In this paper we present theoretical treatise of the problem of violent behaviour at the schools, teacher’s role in the prevention of violent behaviour, possible preventive strategies ..., special in R. Macedonia.

Also, we presented results of research conducted in the Republic of Macedonia. Results are obtained as a result of applying the method of theoretical analysis and descriptive-analytical method, and application of appropriate techniques and instruments: content analysis, the technique of interviewing, corresponding instrument free interview intended to the representatives from the expert teams from the primary schools in R. Macedonia and technique survey intended for teachers in primary education. The results speak about the current state on the field, talking about the treatment of violent behaviour at the schools, preventive strategies which are used, engagement of certain institution, and the overview of their proposals and suggestions in the direction to prevent these phenomena.

Keywords: elementary school, preventive strategies, violent behaviour, pupils

Violence, violent behavior presents a complex problem, problem that exists in every sphere of human life. It is a result of bad communication, intolerance, weak interaction among individuals in a certain sphere.

The educational sphere is unavoidable, more specifically expressed and present in the school as its institutional form. The contemporary school aims to prepare the youth for the future, to train them for permanent education, for their holistic, versatile development. It becomes open institution for new content, organizational modules and staff collaboration with everything that surrounds them. (Stevanović,M.&,Ajanović,D., 1977:113). The school

Is a pedagogical, cultural, and social community of pupils, teachers, parents, and all others which contribute to the realization of its program content. It aims to provide to the pupils all the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits which are necessary for life and furthermore education. The basic task for the school is to assure the continuous development of the pupils as spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and above all, moral beings with their capabilities and dispositions. (Stevanović, M.&Ajanović, D., 1977:113) Other than assuring the basic academic knowledge and skills and promoting the development of the character, the school has a primary role in the decision of multiple social problems amongst kids and youth. (Bojkovski et al, 2007:12-15)

Is the contemporary school immune to the problems that are happening in the closer and wider community? Are the problems such as: social-economic crisis, poverty, unemployment; weak family connections, preoccupation of the parents: the decline of the educational function in the family, unfavorable material circumstances in the family; the problem with the violent behavior in it; overemphasized meaning of material values, opposed to the spiritual; lack of parent warmth, supervision; environment factor; bad friendship, forming gangs; unorganized free time of the pupils; character of the person; reflect and have their impact of the phenomenon of violent behavior in the schools? Of course the answer to that question is affirmative. We are witnesses, we have heard of, saw, beside us, in the media, information's that speak of the existence of violent behavior in the schools, primary, secondary, where different shapes of violent behavior are identified, violators are identified, victims of violence.

Why these problems appear exactly in the school?

The reasons can be found in the following facts:

- they are the first, sometimes the second institution (after the pre-school institution) in which the child is taken care of institutionally, a part of the child's environment;
- it is legally regulated the compulsory coverage of the children in the primary and secondary education;
- the compulsory coverage has longer timespan, twelve, thirteen years (5,8 years – 18 years), period especially meaningful for the forming, development of the pupil's personality, his attitudes, values, believes, his relation towards the environment and the surroundings;
- These are places where there is intensive interaction, work, rivalry, stress...

Therefore, it is not odd that inside the schools appear various problems, violence problems, violent behavior. The violence regards to wide spectra of various behavior which take place amongst the children, from solving the collision through violence, unacceptable expression, anger or frustrations, to serious incidents and use of weapons. The problems take place in the presence and in the absence of adults. It is possible to appear occasionally, an incident to happen, but it is not excluded the possibility for increasing their frequency. They can occur in the same type and shape, for example: peer violence (bullying); violence towards the pupils from the employees of the school; violence of the pupils towards the

employees of the school; the school institution as a violator, but also occur in other shapes, to make a modification.

Uzelac, S., (2007:186)', among the shapes of behavior present in children from primary school age, which present a type of unacceptable behavior acknowledges:

- behaviors typical for the educational environment: unjustified absence from separate classes, arbitrary leaving of the teaching, unjustified whole-day absence from teaching, courtship the teacher, the act of telling the teacher of the actions of classmates, opposition to collective actions, cheating in exam situations, interruption in education etc.
- addiction behavior: taking pills, consuming narcotics;
- active shapes of behavior: opposing, verbal aggressiveness, physical aggressiveness, lying, abandonment of the family (running away from home), sell or giving personal stuff, theft, socializing with persons with asocial behavior, begging, wandering, malicious lying, resale of valuable objects;
- Passive shapes of behavior: timidity, withdrawal, depression, sobbing, negligence (laziness), indifference (boredom), spoiled, emotional coldness.

Although active shapes of behavior disorder are more common in boys, and passive more common in girls, the frequency of manifestation of separate behavior in boys and girls depends on the age.(Uzelac, 2007:186)

These shapes of unacceptable behavior that occur in the school environment are just some of the shapes of unacceptable, violent behavior in the school. From the school is expected to deal with this problem. Still, it is unreal to expect that every problem, the employees at the school can and must solve. It is their obligation and task to take whatever is in the limits of their power, to try to solve a specific problem, but at the same time to work on the preventive measures plan, train plan in the sense of their moral and socially responsible behavior in the school premises, and also outside of, fostering and practicing this relation towards the teachers, parents, and mutual school relations.

In the school, a set of preventive measures are taken indeed, taking in account the primary and secondary prevention. Certain preventive programs are being realized in which a lot of tasks are set. According to Popadić (2009:228) tasks of preventive programs are:

1. Development of social skills – children should be taught appropriate skills in social communication;
2. Solving of social problems – children learn to solve the social problems step by step;
3. Development of empathy – powerful protection to stop the already started molesting or incentive the witnesses to stand in defense of the victim.
4. Anger management – children learn how to recognize and control their anger through various techniques: relaxation, deep breathing, counting to ten, giving instruction to oneself etc.

In the realization of the tasks provided with the preventive programs, every person employed at the school takes participation, as involved parents, members of the wider community. Still, the greatest part in the prevention of this phenomenon, its overcome, plays the teachers. They are the most directly related to pupils; they are the model that influences them, the model they identify with. They are the ones which recognize, identify the violators, the persons to whom the victims of violent behavior address to, the persons that are giving the warning, advising the pupils to positive behavior, responsibility, non-violent behavior. Their reactions to the manifested violent behavior are different. While one teacher warn them, punish them, the other teachers give the caring to the expert services in the school, the principals, and third ones, downgrade the mark for the behavior of the pupil, call their parents for a meeting. (Topalova,2007)

The role of the teachers is not exhausted with the reaction at the moment, the intervention in the whatever has happened, but to give support, to cooperate with the victim of the violence, the parents; talk to the violator and the victim separately about the incident, explain the violator which behaviors are acceptable, and which are not, offer leverage if problem is observer and accept responsibility; to provide the pupils an atmosphere in which they can report the intimidation without fear; inform and include the parents of the violator and the victim in order to stop further violent behavior and intimidation, and in the end, to give an example with their own proper behavior.

The teachers in the contemporary school are the ones who every day:

- follow the everyday behavior of the pupil;
- intervene if needed;
- transmit pro-social messages in which the unnatural of the violent behavior is emphasized;
- stimulate the feel for responsibility for rejection of violent behavior in pupils;
- establish quality communication and interaction with the pupils in the class, parents, and the employees at the school;
- on the grounds of their mental, moral, social maturity, their education, recognize the victim pupil and the violator pupil, because every exaggeration or low level of tolerance in aspect of these kids can have far-reaching consequences;
- protect the pupil victim and if the violence comes from pupil or group of pupils, they create a sense of protection, self-respect and self-esteem;
- create conditions in which the pupil victim doesn't feel neglected or left even for a moment;
- animate a group of pupils that have already developed empathy feelings, pro-social, altruism, and tolerance with endeavor to protect the pupil which is a victim by some other peer or group of peers;
- constant education about the problems with violent behavior and the ways for overcoming them through seminars, expert and academic gatherings;

- Work on forming inclusive expert teams that will deal with the school violence in a wholesome way, especially when it comes to prevention, re-socialization, rehabilitation, etc.

In order to get data that relate the current situation regarding the problem of violent behavior in schools, the phenomenon of different shapes of violent behavior, the role of the teacher, expert services, and other affected parties in overcoming this problem, we conducted a micro research in eastern Macedonia, more specifically in the municipalities of Shtip, Karbinci, Veles, Sv. Nikole, in which we had two sub examples – sub example teachers and sub example expert coworkers. Techniques for collecting data that were applied were questioning intended for the teachers, and interviewing intended for the expert coworkers.

The purpose of the interview was to investigate the opinion and attitudes of the expert coworkers for the phenomenon of violent behavior in the school, the roles that they play in its prevention. Fifteen expert coworkers were interviewed, on previously mentioned themes. The instrument applied was protocol for free-form interview.

Interview results

On the basis of conducted interviews with the expert coworkers, we obtained the following results:

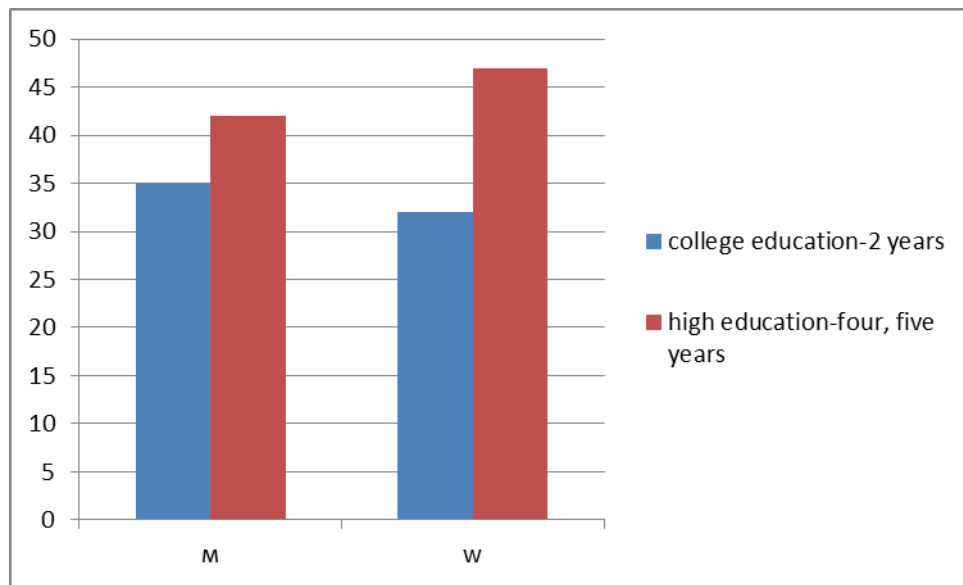
- There are no implemented contents for the prevention of violent behavior in the year's school plan and work program;
- Education in the area of preventing violent behavior, acquiring social skills, conflict resolutions skills, students acquire through the program “Life Skills program” for the pupils from the primary schools, but it is done very rarely, once in two or three weeks;
- There are various forms of violent behavior at schools, on different relation student-student, student-student group, teacher-student, student-technical staff, most commonly physical or verbally;
- Cases of violent behavior expert coworkers often notice personally, sometimes from teacher, but most commonly from the victims of violence;
- For cases of violent behavior they usually inform parents and the school principal;
- Cooperation with parents to overcome this problem is not high level, parents of violator often do not come to school, probably they shame,
- School professionals take various measures like: individual counseling conversation, group discussion; workshops, conflict resolution;
- Frequently taken measure is reprimand in accordance with the Law on Primary Education;
- On the prevention plan, expert coworkers mostly cooperate with the Centers for social protection, Ministry of Interior, Medical Center, NGOs;

- There is a proposal of measures for preventing of violent behavior- more workshops that include representatives of parents, professionals, teachers, parent; attendance of education seminars at the schools municipality and dissemination of results; adopt a national strategy for "save schools', schools without violent behavior.

The results of survey

The results from the questioning of the teachers are analyzed and interpreted. The questioning was used to test the teachers of information about the violence in the school, the presence and appearance of shapes of violence, personal experiences, the violators in the school, and also proposals and ways for solving the problems amongst pupils. The questioning covered 156 teachers from the afore-mentioned municipalities.

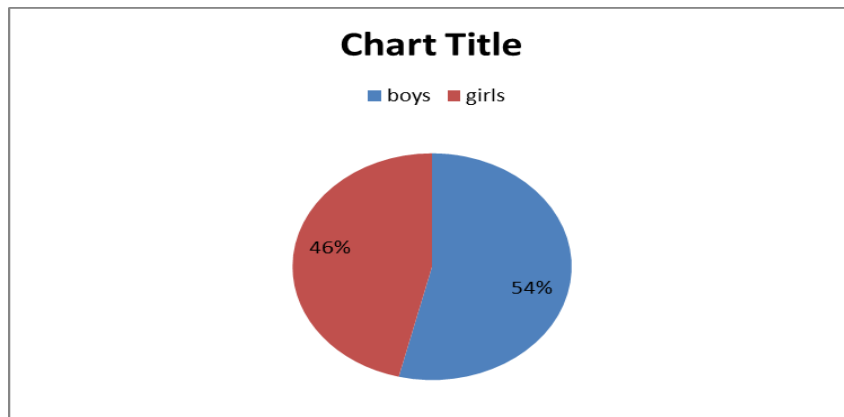
Figure1: Structure of respondents by gender and level of education



We got the following results:

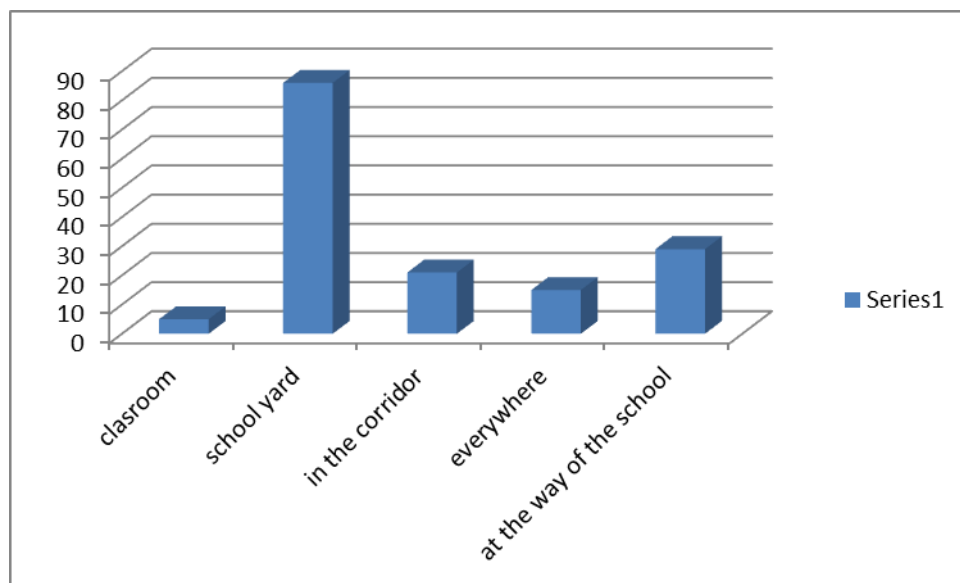
- The phenomenon of violent behavior is present in schools;
- Most common shapes of violent behavior are: peer violence, physical violence, emotional violence amongst the pupils;
- Both sexes of pupils behave violently;

Figure 2: Violent behavior of students by sex



- Most common violators are pupils from upper grades, male sex;
- Victims of violent behavior are more peaceful, calmer, withdrawn pupils, and hyperactive pupils are more troublesome;
- The violence takes place everywhere in the school premises – the classroom, the hall, the schoolyard;

Figure 3: The place of violent behavior



- The teachers have the need from supplementary education in order to be able to deal more successfully with the phenomenon of violent behavior;
- In cases of violent behavior they offer help, support for the victims of violence, cooperate with the parents, and send the violators at the expert coworkers that are trained to work with them;

- The only program that helps in solving certain dilemmas is the “Life Skills” program, but it is insufficient in dealing with the various shapes of violent behavior;

Their proposals are:

- teamwork, formation of inclusive teams for dealing with this phenomenon of violent behavior;
- dissemination of information from various trainings, seminars, so that every teacher is familiar;
- greater involvement and cooperation with the parents, members of the local community;
- more frequent debates, workshops on the topic of violent behavior, prevention, intervention, that leads to raising of the awareness for overcoming this problem;
- closer cooperation with Center for social affairs, Ministry of Interior;
- Involvement of the teachers from the faculties in the education of the teacher staff.

Instead of a conclusion

A famous child psychologist once said: “The punishment teaches the kid to punish, the insulting – how to insult. Showing that we understand it, we teach it to understand, helping it, we teach it how to help, cooperating with him, we teach it how to cooperate”.

“Let us help and guide the child towards the real spiritual values. We will achieve this with our personal example, our commitments for better, successful, bright future.”

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4.Brief bio

Snezana Jovanova-Mitkovska was born in Shtip. She works at Faculty of educational sciences at University Goce Delchev in Shtip. Her research interest is focused on Methodology of pedagogical research; Statistics; Teaching methods of educational work in nature and society environment; Teaching methods in math; New contemporary strategies and models of educational work; Lifelong education/professional development.