

Original Article

Tendency to Violence in Adolescents and the Affecting Factors

Gulpinar Aslan, MscN, RN

First and Immediate Aid Program, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University Health Services Vocational School, Agri, Turkey

Ayse Berivan Savci Bakan, Phd. RN

Department of Nursing, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University School of Health, Agri, Turkey

Correspondence: Gulpinar Aslan, First and Immediate Aid Program, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University Health Services Vocational School, Agri, Turkey E-mail: pinar_goksuguzel@hotmail.com

Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to identify tendency to violence in adolescents and the affecting factors.

Methodology: This study is descriptive in nature. It was conducted with the participation of 1938 students in a city located in the Eastern part of Turkey between September and October, 2017. Data were collected using the Socio-demographic Form and Tendency to Violence Scale.

Results: Tendency to Violence Scale total mean score of the adolescents participating in the study was significantly higher in males, in whose monthly income was higher than expenses, in those who witnessed or were exposed to violence in family, at school, and out of family/school environments, and in those who were exposed to violence ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusions: It is recommended that one should avoid demonstrating oppressive and authoritative attitudes towards adolescents, parents/teachers should avoid committing violence and demonstrate attitudes that help adolescents to express themselves comfortably. Besides, tendency to violence could be decreased through education programs that help adolescents learn effective problem solving skills without resorting to violence.

Key words: Adolescents, tendency to violence

Introduction

Anger, aggressiveness and violence are three interrelated concepts that have significant effects on individuals' daily life, quality of life, and interpersonal relationships (Haskan and Yildirim, 2012). Violence is the emergence of feelings of hostility and anger in an intensive and destructive way. Beside the use of force in violence, all statements, approaches, attitudes, behaviors and physical and psychological effects reflecting violence are also acknowledged as tendency to violence (Ozgur et al., 2011). WHO (2014) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community (WHO, 2014).

Like other countries in the world, resorting to violence or exposure to violence in adolescents has been an important public health problem that continues to increase rapidly in our country, too. It is reported to increase particularly in the USA and in other developed countries (Lehrer et al., 2006).

According to Youth Statistics data obtained from the Turkish Statistical Institute, while murder rate is 2,1% in male adults, it is 2,8% in young males, 1,6% in adult females, and 3,5% in young females. Violence-based cases are more common among young people in comparison to adults (TÜİK, 2011).

Violence in adolescents is a bio-psycho-social problem which involves several reasons such as wrong child-rearing due to inconsistent parental behaviors, provocation, easy access to guns, exposure to violence, perception of violence as a solution to problems, flexibility of the family about permission, presence of strict rules, and effects of media (Sadeghi et al., 2014; Narayan et al., 2013).

Several new conflicting responsibilities and the need to create an identity emerge during adolescence, which is a fast development period. These conflicts happening in adolescence are experienced within the individual and with other people in society. These conflicts arise as rebellion against social rules, as well. It is also a

period in which risk-taking behaviors are experienced most frequently. Besides, having a good position, popularity, leadership and power is of importance among adolescents. To gain popularity, they may resort to violence (Ozgur et al., 2011; Avci and Yildirim, 2014).

This study aims to identify tendency to violence and the affecting factors in 9th and 10th grade adolescents in a city located in the Eastern part of Turkey.

Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. It was conducted in a city located in the Eastern part of Turkey between September and October, 2017. Target population of the study was 6000 students who attended 9th and 10th grade in 21 high schools located in the city center. No sampling was performed; the study was conducted with 1938 adolescents who were enrolled in 9th and 10th grade and who accepted to participate in the study.

Ethical Considerations

Written approval was obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education, and verbal consent was obtained from the participants after they were informed about the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected using the Socio-demographic Form and Tendency to Violence Scale.

Socio-demographic Form

The form consists of 15 questions which were prepared by the researchers and which aimed to collect data about the adolescents' socio-demographic features.

Tendency to Violence Scale

The scale was developed by Haskan and Yildirim (2012), and its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found .87. The scale, which consists of 20 items, is rated on a 3-point Likert scale (3=always, 2=sometimes, 1=never). One item in the scale is reverse-scored (Haskan and Yildirim, 2012). Scores to be obtained from the scale range between 20 and 60. Higher scores indicate higher tendency to violence. Cronbach's alpha value of this study was found .89.

Data Collection Method

Data were collected by the researcher in a classroom environment by administering the questionnaires to the adolescents who accepted to

participate in the study. Filling in each questionnaire took about 10 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in SPSS package program using descriptive, Kolmogorov Smirnov, Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney U analyses. Statistical significance was taken $p < 0.05$.

Results

An analysis of the participants' socio-demographic features showed that average age was 15.68 ± 0.87 . In addition, 51.9% were female, 55.5% attended high school, and 53.3% attended 9th grade. 42% of mothers and 38.9% of fathers were literate/ received education at primary school level; 53.3% had income equal to expenses; and the number of siblings was 5.15 ± 2.43 on the average.

An analysis of adolescents' having witnessed violence or being exposed to violence indicates that 16.8% witnessed violence in family, 53.5% at school, and 58.9% in environments out of school/family. In addition, 12.1% were exposed to violence in family, 16.8% at school, and 16.2% out of school/family. Besides, 60.1% experienced a very sad event during childhood (see Table 1).

Average mean score of adolescents' Tendency to Violence was found to be higher in males, in who were enrolled in Religious Vocational High School, in whose family had more monthly income than expenses, in who witnessed or were exposed to violence at school and out of family/school, and in those who experienced a very sad event during childhood. Differences between the mean scores were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) (see Table 2).

Discussion

Aggression and violence have been associated with the developmental features of adolescence, and it is reported that adolescents show reactional behaviors in response to frustration and not being understood, which might cause tendency to violence (Avci and Yildirim, 2014). Tendency to Violence total score of the adolescents in this study was found to be higher in males in comparison to females. Various studies in literature indicate similar findings (Ozgur et al., 2011; Avci and Yildirim, 2014; Kepir et al 2014., Cencoglu et al., 2014; Sevecke et al., 2016). This result might be explained with the fact that men represent power in society. The adolescent, who

aims to be liked and accepted in society, strives for fulfilling this representation supported by patriarchal family structure, which might explain the reason for men's demonstrating violence. On

the other hand, a number studies show that tendency to violence do not differ by gender (Kaura and Lohman, 2007).

Table 1. Socio-demographic Features of the Adolescents

		N (%)
Gender	Female	1006 (51.9)
	Male	932 (48.1)
School	Vocational High School	241 (12.4)
	Anatolian High School	1075 (55.5)
	Sport High School	46 (2.4)
	Science High School	208 (10.7)
	Religious Vocational High School	314 (16.2)
	Fine Arts High School	54 (2.8)
Grade	9 th grade	1032 (53.3)
	10 th grade	906 (46.7)
Education Level of the Mother	Illiterate	677 (34.9)
	Literate/Primary School	813 (42.0)
	Secondary School	285 (14.7)
	High School	124 (6.4)
	University and above	39 (2.0)
Education Level of the Father	Illiterate	139 (7.2)
	Literate/Primary School	754 (38.9)
	Secondary School	507 (26.2)
	High School	345 (17.8)
	University and above	193 (10.0)
Monthly Income	Income more than expenses	360 (18.6)
	Income less than expenses	546 (28.2)
	Income equal to expenses	1032 (53.3)
Having witnessed violence in family	Yes	326 (16.8)
	No	1612 (83.2)
Having been exposed to violence in family	Yes	234 (12.1)
	No	1704 (87.9)
Having witnessed violence at school	Yes	1036 (53.5)
	No	902 (46.5)
Having been exposed to violence at school	Yes	326 (16.8)
	No	1612 (83.2)
Having witnessed violence out of home/school	Yes	1141 (58.9)
	No	797 (41.1)
Having been exposed to violence at school	Yes	313 (16.2)
	No	1625 (83.8)
Having experienced a very sad event during childhood	Yes	1165 (60.1)
	No	773 (39.9)
		$\bar{X} \pm SD$
Age		15.68±0.87 (min. 11 max. 18)
Number of Siblings		5.15±2.43 (min. 1 max. 20)

Table 2. Distribution of Adolescents' Tendency to Violence Scale Total mean scores according to Socio-demographic Features

		$\bar{X} \pm SD$	U/KW
Gender	Female	34.63±8.52	U:291856.000 p:. 000
	Male	40.09±8.10	
School	Vocational High School	35.34±8.77	KW:33.444 p:. 000
	Anatolian High School	37.45±8.87	
	Sport High School	36.20±7.84	
	Science High School	37.14±8.17	
	Religious Vocational High School	38.83±8.45	
	Fine Arts High School	34.07±9.09	
Grade	9th grade	37.18±8.93	U:461844.000 p: .645
	10th grade	37.34±8.56	
Education Level of the Mother	Illiterate	36.97±8.61	KW:3.180 p: .528
	Literate/Primary School	37.40±8.80	
	Secondary School	37.26±9.05	
	High School	37.23±8.67	
	University and above	39.36±8.58	
Education Level of the Father	Illiterate	37.77±9.00	KW:5.253 p: .262
	Literate/Primary School	36.98±8.40	
	Secondary School	36.83±9.03	
	High School	37.87±9.26	
	University and above	37.98±8.24	
Monthly Income	Income more than expenses	38.90±8.95	KW:14.180 p:. 001
	Income less than expenses	36.62±8.99	
	Income equal to expenses	37.02±8.50	
Having witnessed violence in family	Yes	40.71±9.38	U:195937.000 p:. 000
	No	36.56±8.46	
Having been exposed to violence in family	Yes	42.17±8.89	U:130783.500 p:. 000
	No	36.58±8.52	
Having witnessed violence at school	Yes	39.17±8.65	U:341172.000 p:. 000
	No	35.06±8.36	
Having been exposed to violence at school	Yes	41.68±8.75	U:171584.000 p:. 000
	No	36.36±8.48	
Having witnessed violence out of home/school	Yes	38.72±8.59	U:346737.500 p:. 000
	No	35.17±8.56	
Having been exposed to violence at school	Yes	42.27±8.42	U:155994.500 p:. 000
	No	36.29±8.49	
Having experienced a very sad event during childhood	Yes	38.30±8.94	U:380510.000 p:. 000
	No	35.69±8.23	

This study found that the participants whose family had higher monthly income than expenses

had more tendency to violence. Ozgur et al. also found similar results in their study conducted with high school students (Ozgur et al., 2011).

An analysis of adolescents' Tendency to Violence total mean scores showed that tendency to violence was more significantly higher in those who witnessed or were exposed to violence in family, at school, and out of family/school environments and in those who experienced a very sad event during childhood. Other studies in literature reported similar results (Cencoglu et al., 2014; Schraft et al., 2013; Schimmenti et al., 2015; Cetin and Erdogan 2017). This result could be explained with the fact that witnessing violence or being exposed to violence normalizes violence, and people who are exposed to violence see it as a way to externalize the negative feelings they experience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Tendency to violence could be decreased by parents' and teachers' acknowledging the individuals' need to be independent and to resist authority, avoiding to show oppressive and authoritative approaches while communicating with adolescents and providing them with the opportunity to express themselves, and helping adolescents to gain effective problem solving skills without resorting to violence. Besides, it is recommended that detailed studies should be conducted in order to demonstrate reasons for these behaviors in groups demonstrating tendency to violence and to develop programs that help to decrease violence.

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