

INVESTIGATING THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CONTEXT OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE CASE OF THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHIN THE DISTRICT OF AIN MERANEIN CHLEF/ALGERIA

Djilali BELAIDOUNI

Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria

djilalidjilali1975@gmail.com

Mohammed Larbi SI MERABET

Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Belabes, Algeria

&

Lilia BENABDELKEBIR

Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

Abstract: During the latest decades, schools have witnessed many phenomena, some of which are regarded as intruders to the field of education. One of these strange behaviours is that of school violence, which should be, by principle, distanced and abstracted from the educational environment. This contradictory fact is the subject of this investigation as it has unfolded very quickly and then, leading to the creation of a taxonomy. This research is deep-rooted to the behaviourist theory. It rather deals with the inside and outside school variables that govern the occurrence of this unusual comportment. This attempt investigates “the context” of violent actions in the Algerian secondary schools. The aim of the study is to examine the issue of school violence among students. A mixed method is used to gather data. As a sample of this research, we opted for 24 teachers (13males and 11females) and 20 pupils (7males and 13 females) from three secondary schools within the district of Ain Merane in chlef. The results showed that the issue of school violence affects negatively the learning atmosphere, and it has several causes and consequences. This exploratory analysis concerns providing recommendation at least to reduce the occurrence of school violence that is causing the education process to be a truncated perspective.

Keywords: Attitudes; Context; Educational environment; Impact; School violence.

ETUDE DU CONTEXTE DE LA VIOLENCE SCOLAIRE DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE - CAS DE TROIS ECOLES SECONDAIRES DANS LE DISTRICT D'AIN MERANEIN CHLEF/ALGERIE

Résumé : Au cours des dernières décennies, les écoles ont été le théâtre de nombreux phénomènes, dont certains sont considérés comme des intrus dans le domaine de l'éducation. L'un de ces comportements étranges est celui de la violence à l'école, qui devrait, par principe, être éloignée et dissociée de l'environnement éducatif. Ce fait contradictoire fait l'objet de la présente enquête car il s'est déroulé très rapidement et a conduit à la création d'une taxonomie. Cette recherche est profondément enracinée dans la théorie comportementaliste. Elle traite plutôt des variables internes et externes à l'école qui régissent l'apparition de ce comportement inhabituel. Cette tentative étudie "le contexte" des actions violentes dans les écoles secondaires algériennes. L'objectif de

l'étude est d'examiner la question de la violence scolaire parmi les élèves. Une méthode mixte est utilisée pour recueillir des données. Comme échantillon de cette recherche, nous avons opté pour 24 enseignants (13 hommes et 11 femmes) et 20 élèves (7 hommes et 13 femmes) de trois écoles secondaires dans le district d'Ain Merane à Chlef. Les résultats ont montré que la question de la violence à l'école affecte négativement l'atmosphère d'apprentissage, et qu'elle a plusieurs causes et conséquences. Cette analyse exploratoire vise à fournir des recommandations au moins pour réduire l'occurrence de la violence scolaire qui fait que le processus éducatif est une perspective tronquée.

Mots-clés : Attitudes ; Contexte ; Environnement éducatif ; Impact ; Violence à l'école.

Introduction

The field of education has witnessed various controversial issues in the last decades. But, the particularly most prevalent one among pupils is violence in schools. Despite its incompatibility with the educational field, it has become the most common worry for educationalists. So, physical or verbal violence is set as the favourite solution for school issues by teachers to control their classrooms. But, pupils see themselves persecuted. This research is dedicated for analysing the phenomenon of violence in schools in terms of reasons behind its occurrence. It also sheds light on types of violent behaviours namely; verbal and physical ones. Consequences of violent actions in schools are also investigated. Moreover, this case study explores teachers-pupils' interactions and so for the administration reactions towards pupils' unusual behaviours. As a case study, it explores the impact of media and society on the appearance of violence at schools despite its types, time or space of its occurrence. For the previous process to take place, we raised the following research questions: What are reasons standing behind school violence appearance, and how can we avoid it? How do teachers and students react to violent incidents at school, and what are the implications of these perceptions? Has school violence an impact on students' achievements? The following are the major hypotheses for this study, based on the highlighted questions: School violence is caused by socio-economic factors and preventing it requires a comprehensive approach involving students, teachers, parents and the community. Students and teachers have different perceptions of reasons and outcomes of school violence. School violence is disadvantageous on students' mental health and academic performance.

1. Literature Review

-History of violence in Algerian secondary schools

Violence in secondary schools has been a long-standing issue in Algeria. During the Algerian Civil War in 1990s, schools were often targeted by armed groups, leading to their closure and the disruption of education for many children. Since then, the issue of violence in Algerian secondary schools has continued to be a concern. There have been reports of physical violence between students, as well as violence perpetrated by teachers against students. In some cases, weapons have been brought into schools leading to injuries and even fatalities. One contributing factor to the prevalence of violence in Algerian secondary schools is the lack of resources and infrastructure, which can lead to overcrowding and poor conditions. In addition, there have been reports of inadequate training and support for teachers, which can

contribute to a stressful and challenging work environment that may lead to disciplinary issues. Efforts have been made in recent years to address the issue of violence in Algerian secondary schools including the implementation of anti-violence programs and the creation of committees to investigate and respond to incidents of violence. However, much efforts are highly required for the creation of a comfortable supportive educational environment for learners. (McDougall, 2017)

-Types and manifestations of violence in secondary schools

School violence can be manifested in different sorts namely:

Kicking, heating, slapping and other types of physical aggression towards another student. This type of violence can lead to serious injuries and is one of the most visible forms of school violence (Jimerson, S. R. & Mayer, M. J. 2019.). Insults, name-calling, taunting, and threats as verbal violence can lead to emotional harm and often leads to violent actions (Ogden, S. N., 2004.) There are many forms of bullying or harassment that occur through social media, text messages and online forums. Cyberbullying can cause emotional distress linked to depression and suicide (Patchin, S. H. 2009.). Religious violence is based on students' beliefs or practices, and can lead to feelings of exclusion and alienation as well as physical harm. Hazing refers to the infliction of physical or emotional harm upon students as part of an initiation into a group or organisation. These practices have long-lasting negative effects on the well-being of students. (Jeffrey, R. n. d 45-62) Vandalism encompasses various acts of damage or destruction inflicted upon school property, ranging from graffiti and defacement to broken windows and other forms of destruction. (Thomas, 1984 P56-73.). Substance abuse, encompassing the use of drugs or alcohol, poses a significant threat to students and school environments. The consumption of substances can impair judgement, escalate aggression, and disrupt relationships among students. (Fleming, 2008 P 45-62.)

2. Theories about violence

- Social Disorganisation Theory

According to (Wiley, 1987 ; P99-122). The theory suggests that school violence is a result of social disorganisation which occurs when a community is unable to maintain social order and control. Factors that contribute to social disorganisation include poverty, unemployment, lack of resources and high population density.

- Strain theory

According to (Merton, 1968), this theory proposes that school violence is caused by the strain and frustration experienced by individuals who feel they are unable to achieve their goals or expectations. For example students who feel overwhelmed by academic pressure, social exclusion or bullying may be more likely to engage in violence.

- Cultural deviance theory

According to (Matza, D. 1964), school violence is caused by the clash of values between different cultural groups, when students from different cultural backgrounds attend

the same school, conflicts may arise as they try to reconcile their values and beliefs with those of their peers.

-Control theory

According to (Olhin, 1960:1-13), this theory proposes that individuals are naturally inclined to engage in deviant behaviour, but are deterred from doing so by social controls, such as the fear of punishment or the desire to conform to social norms. When these controls are weakened or absent, individuals may be more likely to engage in violence

-Rational choice theory

According to (Herrnstein, 1985; P42-56), this theory suggests that individuals engage in violent behaviour as a result of a rational decision-making process, in which they weigh the potential benefits of violence against the potential costs, such as the risk of punishment.

-Feminist theory

According to (Pasko,2004: 1-13), focus is on the gendered nature of violence, including the ways in which violence against women is rooted in patriarchal social structures and cultural norms.

3. Methods

To ensure our study and validate or refute the hypotheses, our research utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques employing fundamental research instruments. For the best outcomes, a questionnaire is addressed to both teachers and students of the three Algerian secondary schools in Chlef concerning violence. To comprehend fully how teachers and students are responding to this problem, and to develop the possible strategy to end violence in schools, we opted for a sample namely; 24 teachers (13males-11females). 20 pupils (7males and 13females) from those spent maximum time at least five (05) years of studies. The aforementioned tools were employed in the research project to collect useful data about school violence and its effects on learning Starting with straightforward questionnaire to teachers and finalizing our work with another questionnaire to students.

4. Data Analysis

For the process of data analysis, the collected findings are tallied and shaped in the form of pie-charts and tables using the Microsoft excel. In order to highlight a clear representation of variables contributing in the occurrence of school violence, all findings were analysed from different perspectives using the [SPSS] system to give room for a clear and concise description of responses from both teachers and students.

5. Teachers' questionnaire

Question 1 : Are there more boys/girls in your school?

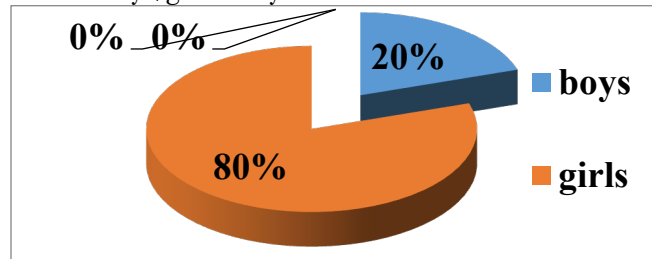


Figure 1 . Gender Distribution

We notice that there are more girls than boys in the school could have implications for understanding school violence, as different gender dynamics may come into play.

Question 2: How would you describe your relation with pupils?

	(n)	(%)
Good	11	46%
Very good	13	54%
Bad	0	0%
Total	24	100%

Table 1. Teachers-Students' Interaction

Findings indicate that a significant portion of teachers (54%) have a very good relationship with their students, while (46%) have a good relationship. Positive teacher-student relationship is crucial for fostering trust, mutual respect, and these interactions are conducive to a safer school environment by sharing best practices and addressing concerns collectively.

Question 3: How would you describe the school environment?

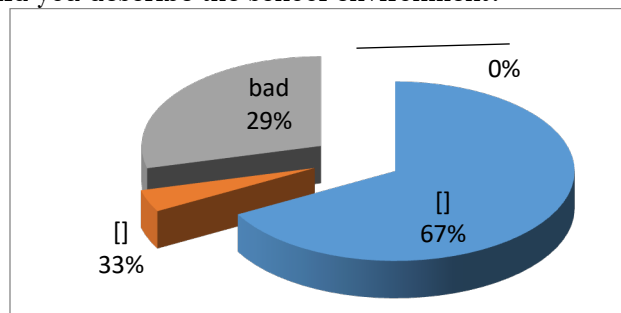


Figure 2. School Environment

According to the findings, the majority of teachers (67%) reported liking their school environment, while (33%) indicated a negative atmosphere. It is important to address any concerns related to the school environment to create a positive and safe space for both teachers and students.

Question 4: Do you discuss problems or school issues with pupils in classroom?

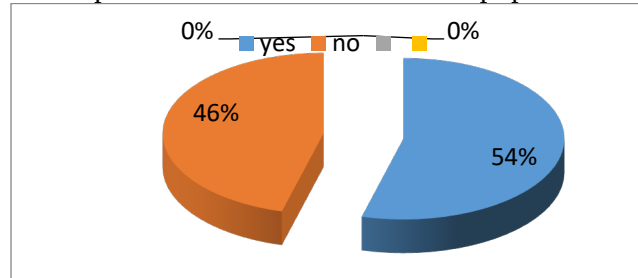


Figure 3. Teacher Discussions

The results revealed that most of the teachers (54%) engage in discussions about concerns and school-related issues, while (46%) do not. Encouraging open dialogue among teachers can help address and prevent school violence by sharing insights and experiences

Violence and school

Question 1: Have you ever witnessed violence in school?

	(n)	(%)
Yes	18	75%
No	6	25%
Total	24	100%

Table 2. Prevalence of Violence

The above table highlights the prevalence of violence in schools, with (75%) of teachers confirming its presence, while 25% of teachers reported for proactive measures to mitigate and prevent violence within the school setting.

Question 2 : Who were part of violent actions in school?

	(n)	(%)
Pupil/pupil	13	54%
Pupil/teacher	4	17%
Pupil/administration	4	17%
Teacher/administration	3	12%
Total	24	100%

Table 3. Responsible Parties

Understanding the breakdown of violent actions is essential. The findings indicate that (54%) of violent actions occurred between pupils, (17%) involved pupils and teachers, (17%) involved them and administration. Identifying the responsible parties helps tailor interventions and allocate resources effectively.

Question 3: Have you ever been involved in violence in school?

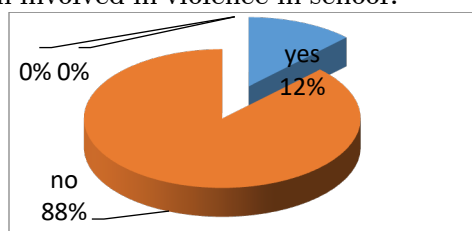


Figure 4 . Teacher Involvement in Violence

We conclude from this question that it is encouraging to note that the majority of teachers (88%) did not report being involved in violence, while (12%) confirmed experiencing school violence. The supporting teachers affected by violence make it crucial to ensure their well-being and ability to provide a safe learning environment.

Question 4 : What kind of violence did you practise in school?

	(n)	(%)
Physical	6	25%
Verbal	18	75%
Material destruction	0	0%

Table 4 . Types of School Violence

Findings highlight verbal aggression as the most spread type, as (75%) of teachers reported being involved in such kind of violent behaviour. Much efforts are highly

recommended for addressing and minimizing aggressive behaviours among both students and teachers.

Causes of school violence

This question aims at knowing the causes of violence at schools. We can deduce that there are numerous causes contributing in the occurrence of violence. So, (31%) said that it is an outcome of psychological problems, (27%) answered that parents neglect and carelessness is the reason for this phenomenon, (26%) about 15 teachers said that family problems are the main cause of school violence, and (16%) said that it is because of school problems.

Media, society and school violence

Question 1: Is mass media responsible of violence in schools ?

	(n)	(%)
Yes	22	92%
No	2	8%
Total	24	100%

Table 6. Impact of Social Media

Findings indicate that social media platforms contribute significantly to the increase of violence at schools. Recognizing and addressing the negative influence of social media through awareness programs and responsible online behaviour education is crucial.

Question 2 : Are pupils influenced by street violence?

	(n)	(%)
Yes	21	88%
No	3	12%
Total	24	100%

Table 7. Influence of Street Violence

The findings show that (88%) of respondents believe that pupils can be influenced by street violence, with the impact extending beyond immediate individuals. Understanding these external influences helps inform preventive measures and support systems within the school. In terms of solutions, teachers suggested several key approaches, including raising awareness, addressing adolescent psychological well-being, fostering positive relationships among all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, and the community), promoting mutual respect, providing effective.

Suggestions for avoidance of school violence occurrence

Question1 :What solutions do you suggest to impede school violence ?

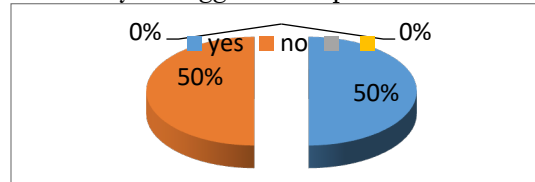


Figure 5. Avoidance of School Violence Occurrence

The solutions can be summarized as follows:

- Working on the psychological level of adolescents in order to comfort them and increase self-confidence.
- Cooperation between all parts (teacher-pupils-parents-community) and respect.
- Effective training to teachers and administration to deal with violent pupils
- Provide psychologists in schools
- Treating the causes then solving them

Students' questionnaire

Students' gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	07	35%
Female	13	65%
Total	20	100%

Table8. Students' Gender

These findings show a higher proportion of female students in the surveyed population, indicating a potential gender imbalance or disparity in the sample. Based on the results, it appears that there are no students from the first year. Instead, (25%) of them belong to the second year, while a majority of (75%) are in the third year.

Question 1 :Have you witnessed any incidents of violence (physical, verbal or emotional) within your school?

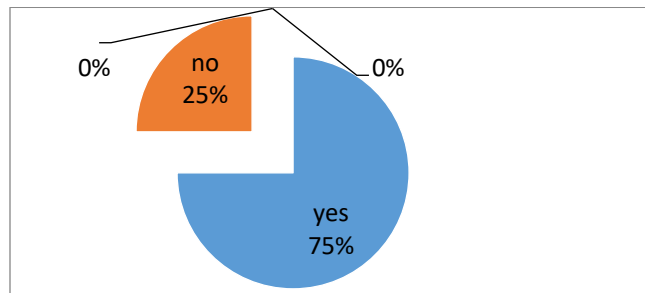


Figure6. Witnessing Violence

The results indicate that (75%) of the students have witnessed some form of violence (physical, verbal, emotional) within their school. This suggests a significant prevalence of violence within the school environment. On the other hand, (25%) of them reported not witnessing any violence. These findings emphasize the need to address and prevent violence in schools to ensure a safe and The findings reveal that (60%) of the students are aware of bullying incidents that have occurred in school. This indicates a considerable proportion of students who have knowledge or awareness of bullying incidents taking place. On the other hand, (40%) of them reported not being aware of any bullying incidents.

Question2 :Do you feel safe at your school ?

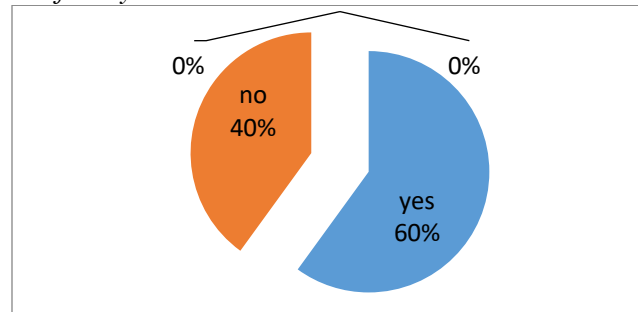


Figure 7. Feeling of Safety

The results show that (60%) of the respondents reported feeling safe at their school, while (40%) indicated that they don't feel safe. These findings highlight the importance of addressing safety concerns within the school environment. Unsafe students at school require immediate attention, it is crucial to dig deeper into the reasons behind their feelings of insecurity and identify the underlying factors that contribute to their discomfort. This is a positive indication that the school environment exhibits.

Question3: Have you ever been a victim of violence at school?

	(n)	(%)
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

Table 9. Personal Victimization

Based on the findings, it indicates that (60%) of students admitted to being victims of violence at school, while (40%) claimed not to have experienced such victimization. For the students who admitted to being victims of violence, their experiences point to a concerning prevalence of violence within the school environment.. On the other +hand, the 40% of them may suggest either a genuine lack of exposure to violence or potential underreporting of their experiences.

Question4: Do you think there is enough awareness about the consequences of school violence?

	(n)	(%)
Yes	9	45%
No	11	55%
Total	20	100%
Total	20	100%

Table 10 . Awareness and Education

The survey highlights that (45%) of students exhibit a considerable awareness and consciousness of the phenomenon of school violence and its severe consequences, while (55%) feel there is insufficient awareness and education. The (45%), suggests that they perceive existing efforts and initiatives to be effective in disseminating information and educating students about the impact of violence. They may feel that their school community is actively addressing the issue and taking steps to prevent and -- to violence appropriately. On the other hand, the (55%) indicate a concern that more needs to be done to effectively educate students about the consequences of school violence.

Question5: In your opinion, what can be done to prevent school violence and create a safer school environment?

The solutions can be summarized as follows: Students proposed several solutions for preventing school violence, as: promoting awareness throughout the school environment, fostering communication between parents and children, improving communication between teachers and students, enhancing communication between the administration and parents, and strict punishments for offenders.

Question6 :Do you think social media contribute to school violence?

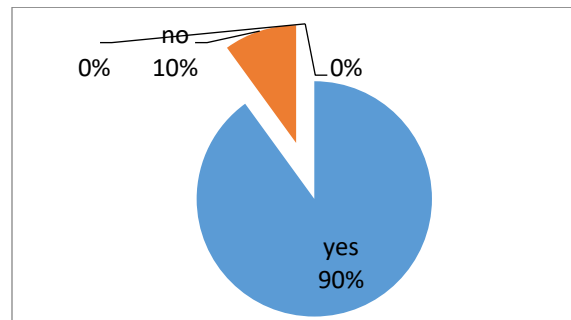


Figure 8. Influence of Social Media

It shows that (90%) believe that social media contributes to school violence, while only (10%) expressed the opinion that it doesn't. these indicate a strong consensus among the surveyed students that social media plays a role in school violence. It highlights the need to

address the impact of social media on student behaviour and interactions, as well as develop strategies to promote responsible and positive online behaviour.

6. Results

Findings of the current study confirm the three hypotheses about which violence deeply affects learners' learning atmosphere, and preventing it requires a comprehensive approach involving students-teachers-parents' community cooperation to raise students' awareness. Another point is that Students emphasized the necessity of parental involvement in preventing school violence, as well as the need for students to display more respectful behaviour, and the role of the teachers in enforcing discipline. Some expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their experiences. These findings provide valuable insights into the prevalence of violence, the perceptions of safety, and the proposed solutions regarding school violence among the surveyed students. Violence in Secondary Schools can have severe negative impacts on students' physical and mental health. It can result in injuries, trauma, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, positive and open communication channels between students, teachers, and administrators do play a crucial role in hindering violence from taking place.

7. Discussions

Teachers' Questionnaire

The fact that there are more girls than boys in the school could have implications for understanding school violence, as different gender dynamics may come into play. Effective communication channels help create a supportive environment and enable early identification and resolution of potential issues. Positive teacher-student relationships are crucial for fostering trust, mutual respect, and a conducive learning environment. It is positive to learn that the relation between teachers is good, collaborative and supportive relationships among teachers can contribute to a safer school environment by sharing best practices and addressing concerns collectively. Addressing the root causes for violence is important for developing effective preventive strategies. Recognizing and addressing the negative influence of social media through awareness programs and responsible online behaviour education is crucial. Moreover, Pupils can be influenced by street violence, with the impact extending beyond immediate individuals. Understanding these external influences helps inform preventive measures and support systems within the school. Students believe there is enough awareness and education about the consequences of school violence, while others feel there is insufficient awareness and education. Some suggest that they perceive existing efforts and initiatives to be effective in disseminating information and educating students about the impact of violence. They may feel that their school community is actively addressing the issue and taking steps to prevent and respond to violence appropriately. On the other hand, the (55%) indicate a concern that more needs to be done to effectively educate students about the consequences of school violence. Many students reported witnessing acts of kindness or positive initiatives aimed at preventing school violence. This observation highlights the existence of proactive efforts within the school community to create a safe and supportive environment. On the other hand, the students who claimed not to have witnessed any acts of kindness may suggest several

possibilities. It is possible that such acts are less visible within the school community. There might be a lack of initiatives addressing violence prevention.

Conclusion

Addressing violence in secondary schools necessitates a collaborative effort from various stakeholders. Educators, parents, policymakers, and law enforcement agencies must work together to develop effective strategies and interventions. Educational programs that promote positive values, conflict resolution skills, and empathy can help prevent and mitigate violence. Providing targeted support services, such as school-based counselling, can assist both victims and perpetrators in overcoming the underlying issues that contribute to violence. Moreover, fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity, nurtures positive relationships, and empowers students is crucial in creating a sustainable change. Start courses that increase knowledge of the effects of school violence, provide instructions on detecting and dealing with violence. Establishing a secure, private method where pupils can come forward with information about acts of violence without being afraid of retaliation. Engaging parents and guardians in discussions on recognizing signs of violence, promoting healthy relationships, and fostering communication. Encourage them to take an active role in developing a supportive and safe school environment. To effectively handle school violence, collaborate with regional community organizations, and mental health specialists. Utilize their knowledge and assets to create prevention initiatives and awareness campaigns. Encourage social emotional learning by integrating it the curriculum and placing an emphasis on abilities like empathy, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and conflict resolution. Give pupils the chance to apply these abilities in real-life situations. Implementing consistent and appropriate disciplinary measures for students involved in violent behaviours, ensure that consequences are fair, proportionate, and effectively communicated to deter future incidents. Fostering a positive, inclusive school environment by promoting respect, empathy, and tolerance.

At this stage, one should emphasize that this investigation has been carried out in more or less some spatio-temporal limitations and so for the sampling. Therefore, other studies can be done in different perspectives, and then provide deeper insights about the phenomenon. So, efforts can bring more reliable data about the phenomenon of school violence. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciations to (Dr.MohammedLarbi SIMERABET for his valuable insights, and suggestions that have enhanced the rigor and depth of our work. I am grateful; to teachers and pupils for providing us with the opportunity to pursue our research.

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