

High school student's perceptions school security

I.Bakır Arabacı^{1a}

¹ Educational Faculty, Fırat University, Elazığ, 23100, Turkey.

Abstract. It is necessary to establish a secure environment for the realization of effective learning at schools. Students cannot focus on learning if they do not feel themselves in a secure environment. Today, uncontrolled change of social, cultural and technological environments poses a threat to the school security. This research aims to determine the perceptions of students studying in the high schools in Elazığ and Tunceli Provinces on school security. The phenomenology design of qualitative research designs and the interview form as data the collection technique were used in the research. In this study, the qualitative research design which aims to collect in-depth information was used instead of quantitative research design. 40 students studying in the high schools in Elazığ and Tunceli provinces in Turkey constitute the study group. As a result of the research, it has been revealed that the majority of female students do not feel themselves secure at school, environmental cleanliness and hygiene are not adequate at schools, and one quarter of female students and almost half of the male students are smoking.

Keywords: School security, high schools, school environment, student perception

1 Introduction

School is a social institution which is responsible to meet the educational requirements of the society. It is necessary to establish a secure environment for the realization of effective learning at schools. Students cannot focus on learning if they do not feel themselves in a secure environment. In other words, school security means that students can express themselves freely, they feel themselves secure and free from danger and fear, and teachers and other officials help them while they are trying to learn [1].

Today, uncontrolled change of social, cultural and technological environments poses a threat to the school security. Three theories come to the forefront in studies aimed at explaining the school security [2]. Each of these theories presents different descriptions regarding the school security. The first of these theories is the control theory. According to the control theory, the weakness of social and cultural effectiveness lies behind the acts of violence at schools. In particular, social values cannot be adequately transferred by the

^a Corresponding author: arabacibaki@gmail.com

institutions such as family and school. Traditional social norms and behaviors play a limiting role [2,3]. The second theory about the school climate is the School Climate Theory. According to this theory, school is more secure to the extent if it has a healthier and more open climate. The most important factor that determines the acceptable student behaviors is the school climate [4]. The most important reasons of children's behaviors concerning various crimes are those which are related to the school [3]. The third theory is the Social Disintegration Theory. According to this theory, school is the mirror of society. It is not an appropriate approach to consider school differently from the society in which it exists. First of all, the society must be secure if schools are desired to be more secure places [3].

The school security involves the entire process during which the child leaves from home to go to school and comes back to home. In this respect, many different factors should be considered within the scope of school security. Many factors such as acts of violence, psychological and social security, substance use, physical space security, health and nutrition, sexual abuse and traffic safety are related to school security. The fact that the students live in insecure environments is negatively reflected in healthy personality development and school success. The issue of school security becomes more important in the high schools comprising the students' puberty.

This study aims to determine the perceptions of students studying in general high schools on school security.

2 Method

The descriptive method aiming to reveal the existing situation and the «phenomenology» design from qualitative research designs were used in the research. The semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. Questions were posed to participants regarding whether they feel themselves secure inside and outside the school. The cleanliness and hygiene of the school and canteen, the substance use and exposing to violence are the other subjects of the questions. Participants' responses to interview forms were subjected to content analysis, they were divided into themes, sub-themes and categories, and then they were interpreted.

2.1 Study group

Students studying in various high schools in Elazığ and Tunceli provinces constitute the study group. Information for the study group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information for the study group

Province	Female	Male	Total
Elazığ	12	12	24
Tunceli	8	8	16
Total	20	20	40

The study group consists of 40 high school students including 8 male and 12 female students from Elazığ province and 8 male and 8 female students from Tunceli province. The distribution of the students in the study group by classes is presented in Table 2.

12 students from High School 1st grade, 12 students from High School 2nd grade, 7 students from the 3rd grade and 9 students from the 4th grade are included in the study group.

Table 2. The distribution of the students in the study group by classes

Class	Male	Female	Total
1 st	6	6	12
2 nd	4	8	12
3 rd	4	3	7
4 th	6	3	9
Total	20	20	40

3 Findings and Conclusions

The findings obtained regarding the fact that students feel themselves secure inside and outside the school, the situation of cleanliness and hygiene of the environment and the substance use are presented below.

3.1 Students' situation of feeling themselves secure inside the school

The findings for the students' situation of feeling themselves secure inside the school are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings for the students' situation of feeling themselves secure inside the school

Feeling themselves secure inside the school	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I feel safe my self.	15	75	19	95	14	35
I don't feel safe my self.	5	25	1	5	26	65
Total	20	100	20	100	40	100

75% of the female students and 95% of the male students feel themselves secure inside the school. Although the majority of the students feel themselves secure inside the school, it is seen that there is a situation against female students in this regard. Students' opinions in this regard are as follow;

"I'm not comfortable in the school yard (FS4)."

"Especially my teachers give me a sense of security inside the school (FS7)."

3.2 Findings for the students' exposure to violence outside the school

The findings for the students' exposure to violence outside the school are shown in Table 4.

30% of the female students and 10% of the male students stated that they were exposed to violence in and around the school. The females who were exposed to violence stated that they mainly suffered psychological violence from the family.

Table 4. Students' exposure to violence around the school

The students' exposure to violence outside the school	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	6	30	2	10	8	20
No	14	70	18	90	32	80
Total	20	100	20	100	40	100

3.3 Findings for the substance use of students

The findings for the substance use of students are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings for the substance use of students

Substance use of students (Especially smoke)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I used	5	25	9	45	14	35
I didn't use	15	75	11	55	26	65
Total	20	100	20	100	40	100

Although the use of addictive substances (especially cigarette) is 25% in female students, it reaches to 45% in male students. 1 of the male students who used substance stated that he used bally.

3.4 Findings for the school's cleanliness and hygiene

Students' opinions on the school's cleanliness and hygiene are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Students' opinions on the school's cleanliness and hygiene

Students' opinions on the school's cleanliness and hygiene	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I find school clean and hygienic	7	35	12	60	19	47.50
I don't find school clean and hygienic	13	65	8	40	21	52.50
Total	20	100	20	100	40	100

40% of the students stated that they did not find school clean. This ratio reaches up to 65% in female students. The fact that female students are more sensitive in terms of cleanliness and hygiene could be effective on this.

3.5 Hygiene of the canteen products

Students' opinions on the hygiene of the canteen products are shown in Table 7.

60% of the students stated that the canteen products are hygienic. In recent years, Ministry of National Education has conducted the canteen controls seriously and pays attention to legislative regulations on this issue. However, it can be said that the hygienic conditions in canteens are not at the desired level. Students' opinions in this regard are as follows;

"The cleaning of the canteen is not good (FS12)."

"The products sold in the canteen are not healthy (FS5)."

Table 7. Students' opinions on the hygiene of the canteen products

Students' opinions on the hygiene of the canteen products	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I find canteen products clean and hygienic	7	35	12	60	19	47.50
I don't find canteen products clean and hygienic	13	65	8	40	21	52.50
Total	20	100	20	100	40	100

4 Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

As a result of the research, it was revealed that a situation against female students was observed in high school students' perceptions on security inside and outside the school, ¼ of the female students do not feel themselves secure inside and outside the school, female students suffer psychological violence especially from their family outside the school (this situation could be caused by the conflict of students' perceptions on puberty autonomy and identity with cultural elements), 25% of the female students and 45% of the male students

use addictive substances "especially cigarette", a small percentage of male students use bally and synthetic drugs, and almost half of the students do not find the school and canteen clean and hygienic.

The obtained findings are consistent with the studies carried out. In the researches carried out on school security in high schools, they have been concluded that students do not feel themselves secure enough regarding the school security, *some physical elements pose danger, substances such as alcohol and cigarettes threaten the health of students, and the schools, canteen and its environment are not clean enough* [5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13].

Schools should be reliable and have healthy environments in terms of internal and external environmental conditions. For this purpose, the school and its environment should be clean, healthy, and free from violence, smoke and drug. The researches carried out indicate that insecure school environments are negatively reflected in the student health, school attendance and success [14,15,16,17,18]. For this purpose, the following suggestions have been put forward.

4.1 Suggestions

- The school security should be considered as multidimensional, and the applications should be performed in this direction. Therefore, the Ministries of Family and Social Studies, National Education, Health and Interior should work in cooperation about raising children and youngsters.
- Preparation of spot advertisements on TV and placing these advertisements in the ad breaks of the most-watched series can be suggested for the school security.
- Providing trainings for teachers, students and parents on the school security, and increasing the responsibilities of the school counselor and classroom teachers can be effective.

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