

The Relationship of Family Factors with Student Violence in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

The study aims to address a very important topic, which is the phenomenon of school violence prevalent within educational institutions, and seeks to control this behaviour within its social context by linking it to factors outside the educational institution surrounding the student. This is done by investigating how this phenomenon is related to the most important social institution, which is the family, and by exposing the family factors that contribute to the spread of violent behaviour among students.

Keywords: Family, School Violence, Family Factors.

Introduction

The phenomenon of school violence is one of the social phenomena that generates considerable debate and is among the most discussed topics on both local and international agendas, especially with the increase in various forms of violence in educational institutions over the past decade, encompassing all types of abuse, including physical and psychological assaults. In addition to this is the phenomenon of indiscipline and lack of order among students, which reflects the inability of those responsible for the educational process to take measures to control it. School violence is considered a socio-psychological phenomenon present in all human societies, varying in intensity from one society to another depending on cultural specificity, societal awareness, and civilizational progress. For example, in Tunisia, « the issue of school violence occupies a wide space in discussions, most of which revolve

around the educational matter and the general future of the school, » due to repeated incidents of violence in school settings. According to Ministry of Education statistics in 2022, the school environment annually records between 13,000 and 21,000 cases of violence, especially in middle schools and high schools. Other statistics indicate that 24,000 cases of violence were recorded in educational institutions, placing Tunisia third globally. Globally, in terms of the prevalence of this phenomenon, the period between 2023 and 2024 witnessed a 19 percent increase in cases of violence within the environment (Gharbali, 2025).

The research issued by UNESCO under the title « Beyond the Numbers: Ending School Violence and Bullying, » at the 2019 Global Education Forum held in London, indicates the seriousness of this phenomenon and that it is a problem widespread across the world, affecting one-third of school students and impacting their mental and psychological health.

The prevalence of this phenomenon in educational institutions has often placed them in a situation where they cannot carry out their educational function and achieve the goals entrusted to them as required, reflecting a crisis within the educational system and indicating the school's loss of its role as a nurturer of standards, values, ideals, and principles in students.

The phenomenon of school violence, as a complex equation experienced by educational institutions, is not limited solely to the parties within it, such as teachers, caregivers, and students, but also involves relationships that include other parties outside of it, extending to society as a whole. Therefore, it must be diagnosed according to an integrated perspective that takes into account its social dimension. Sociologists have emphasized that school violence is a social phenomenon with multiple factors that cannot be studied from a narrow perspective or limited to psychological or pedagogical explanations; rather, it must be studied within its broader social context. The school is not an independent entity but a system that

operates and is shaped through a set of integrated social processes within the comprehensive social system. Its success is related to how it interacts with the surrounding world, particularly the family, the social institution that shapes the initial traits of the child's personality and is concerned with their upbringing and preparation for social adaptation, carrying values and standards that have a significant impact on the individual's present and future. It uses various methods ranging from gentleness to violence and threats. Experts have emphasized the importance of the early years in a child's life and their role in helping children adapt and integrate into society, as well as the significant role that parenting methods play in child-rearing, affecting intellectual growth, functional performance, and personality formation. A child is influenced by their family upbringing starting with the parents, whether the upbringing is positive or negative, and this upbringing has a significant impact on the child, particularly adolescents. Negative upbringing can lead to behavioural repercussions expressed through violent behaviours at school, which is considered the second institution where the child learns after the family. « Violence becomes one of the expressions of a deeper crisis, where the feeling of losing meaning intersects with the absence of guidance and social control mechanisms that both the school and family used to provide » (Gharbali, 2025). This is especially true given the transformations occurring in society across various fields, which have created a new social reality with its own values and standards, causing many young people and adolescents to reshape most of their values about their lives and world, leading to a significant degree of confusion and instability. A conflict between traditional social values and new values resulting from emerging changes.

Consequently, through this study, we will try to shed light on the phenomenon of school violence, one of the most significant problems faced by schools as social institutions, second only to the family in terms of their structural and functional importance. Society relies on them after the family to transmit the necessary values, standards, and skills to individuals, and to develop their personalities so that they can

become active and productive members of society. In recent years, these educational institutions have increasingly recorded incidents of violence in various forms, and on a daily basis, which often take dangerous turns, sometimes even leading to murder. This has created a clear contradiction between their role in regulating and correcting student behaviours and controlling their instincts, and the occurrence of violence and conflict, especially as all indicators show a significant increase in its prevalence, prominently and alarmingly affecting social reality.

This school violence cannot be attributed to a single factor. The causes of this phenomenon are complex, extending beyond the school environment to the larger society with its social, cultural, and economic dynamics, especially in its relationship with the family as a fundamental unit in shaping a balanced and effective personality, and in forming the child's readiness in a socially acceptable pattern, achieving harmony with the desires and values of society, and avoiding the development of socially unacceptable behaviours. Social adjustment also begins in the early years within the family, which marks the beginning of the child's formation stage, influenced by family circumstances, especially relationships among its various members. As the functional structuralist theory highlights in its explanation of violence, if there is a dysfunction in social systems such as the family, then if one component is affected by dysfunction, the entire structure will face cracking and disruption.

Accordingly, we will attempt to clarify the relationship between the family and the spread of violence within educational institutions by examining it under the lens of social analysis, and presenting a sociological theoretical framework for a set of familial factors that push the student to adopt and engage in violent behaviours in the school environment. We will also outline theoretical perspectives that have been able to approach and analyze this phenomenon, aiming to provide a clear explanation and interpretation of the study topic from a sociological perspective.

This will be addressed through the following problematic question: Is there a relationship between family factors, such as economic, social, and cultural conditions as well as parenting methods, and student violence within educational institutions?

This is where the importance of the study lies, in the significance of the topic, by approaching a social phenomenon that has severe harms on both the individual and society, which is the phenomenon of school violence that requires analysis, research, and solutions. It also highlights the relationship between the two institutions, the school and the family, which is considered one of the most important relationships that play a major role in shaping generations and forming a healthy society free of deviations; any disruption in either of them leads to an imbalance in society.

First Chapter: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

1-Violence:

Violence is defined as "any behaviour or act characterized by aggression carried out by an individual, group, or system with the aim of subjugating the opposing party and preventing them from exercising socially and legally recognized rights within the framework of unequal power relations between genders, and this unequal power leads to physical or psychological harm" (Al-Aisawi, 1997, p.9).

Michel Maffesoli refers to violence "as the opposite of socialization, introducing disorder into the social system as it represents an instinctive use of power" (National Institute of Educational Sciences, 1992, p.337).

As for Nietzsche, he considers it a natural product of will and power, coupled with them, while "Renee Casanova" regards violence as the model of this era: "It impose itself in world culture as something normal and ordinary." (Casanova, 2000, p.3)

2-School Violence:

School violence is defined as a pattern of behaviour characterized by aggression

originating from a student or a group of students against another student or a teacher, causing material, physical, or psychological harm to them or damage to the educational institution's property. School violence is referred to as "a set of unacceptable behaviours in school that affect the overall order of the school, hinder the educational process inside the classroom, and lead to negative outcomes regarding academic achievement. It is manifested in physical violence such as hitting, quarrelling, robbery, or vandalism of school property, writing on walls or desks, physical assault, murder and suicide, carrying weapons of various kinds, and moral violence such as cursing, insulting, mocking, ridiculing, disobedience, in addition to causing chaos in various ways in school classrooms and harassment of all kinds" (Khalidi, 2006, p.96).

School violence takes various forms, including:

- Verbal violence: which involves saying words that are not socially or legally acceptable.
- Physical violence: represented by using physical force against others and causing them bodily harm.
- Symbolic violence: it is the imposition of authority indirectly through symbols or signals to control others and assert dominance over them to achieve a goal without resorting to overt force.

3- The family:

The family is defined as "the theatre of interaction in which growth and learning occur, and the child's small world in which experiences about people, things, and situations are formed. The home also remains the child's refuge, to which they turn with eagerness and attachment" (Al-Dasouqi, 1997, p. 335).

The family represents the primary social environment or human group entrusted with the role of nurturing children, shaping their personalities, and preparing them to perform the roles required of them. Many psychologists and educators have emphasized the importance of the early years that an individual spends with their family as formative years. Thus, the family is responsible, especially in the early years of life, for many influences affecting the child. The earlier the age, the greater its importance, as it becomes the main sphere of the child's life. The psychological significance of the family for the child is that it is a source of reassurance for two reasons:

- First: It is the source of satisfaction experiences, as the child reaches the satisfaction of most of his needs through them.
- Second: It is the first manifestation of stability and communication in life, and therefore the stability and advancement of the individual's personality depended entirely on what prevails in different relationships, both quantitatively and qualitatively. (Al-Nujihi, 1988, p. 82).

4- Family factors:

Family upbringing is a dynamic and continuous process that starts from the birth of the child and continues until the advanced stages of his life and plays a great role in achieving good psychological and health compatibility.

It is defined as "a process of social interaction between parents and children, through which children acquire their social personality, and the process is carried out by following a set of methods in raising their children and how to deal with them regarding the situations and issues they face, considering the parents as the source of authority that should be obeyed and a source of knowledge and the ideal that they represent" (Fathy, Al-Zalitif, 2008, p. 28).

The factors affecting family upbringing refer to a set of circumstances and influences within the family, including social, economic and social aspects that have a positive or negative impact, the most important of which are:

- Family Size: The size of the family affects child-rearing, as social relationships become more complex and conflicts increase in families with many members, and parents' attention to each child's matters and their ability to raise them properly decreases. Conversely, in a small family, order prevails and more attention is given to each child's matters. Family size also affects the type of communication and interaction among its members and the effectiveness of the level of care, which tends to be higher in small families, unlike larger families.
- Socioeconomic Level of the Family: The economic, social, and cultural level of the family plays a significant role in upbringing methods, in terms of the development of various aspects of a child's personality, behaviours, and interactions. "The social and economic level surrounding a child may either contribute to their progress or hinder it. It may help in creating a type of adaptation that raises the individual's ambition level or make them feel insecure, leading to certain psychological disorders" (Al-Dhafri & Al-Eisri, 2016, p.28).
- Type of relationships within the family: Relationships within the family play a significant role in shaping the personality of children and influence their development intellectually, either positively or negatively (GHOSLIN, 2006, P25)
- Parenting styles: These are the set of methods and approaches that the family follows in raising their children, representing what parents see as important and adhere to when dealing with their children in various life situations.

- Parental personality: The emotional balance of parents, their self-acceptance, and their general life harmony, particularly within the family setting, affect their attitudes towards their children (Al-Sawafi, 2021, p.4)
- Parental relationship within the family: The bonds between parents and their relationship with each other affect the prevailing atmosphere in the family. Moreover, their agreement on parenting methods is a fundamental condition for the success of the family socialization process and the achievement of its goals.

Chapter Two: The Relationship Between the Family Environment and Student Violence

The school represents a part of the social environment established by society to provide the youth with the type of education intended for them and to socialize its members, making them productive members of society. The relationship between the school and society is reflected in its relationship with the family, which collaborates with it in the socialization process, the effects of which, whether positive or negative, influence the child and contribute to the formation of healthy or unhealthy personality traits. This is due to the social upbringing the child receives over a long period, during which they absorb the habits, traditions, and customs of their society. Therefore, the family bears a significant responsibility in cultivating and reinforcing noble social values such as cooperation, solidarity, loyalty, and honesty, especially since "the relationship between the family and the school is complementary; they coordinate their efforts without conflict or contradiction in their roles to guide students, raise their awareness, and encourage parents to adopt proper upbringing methods, such as encouragement, acceptance, tolerance, and other healthy practices" (Belaamri, 2015, p.12). However, we often hear families criticizing schools for being too strict in examinations or for their own shortcomings in raising their children.

On the other hand, we find that the opposing side accuses the family of not fulfilling

its role in the upbringing of its children, especially after the changes that have affected the family in terms of its structure and function due to the transformations experienced by society in various aspects of life. Social change has also led to a conflict between the values and customs of the older generation and those of the new generation, with the new generation revolting against the old and the old criticizing the new for being permissive and undisciplined.

In this chapter, we will address a set of family factors in relation to violent behaviours among students through two main axes:

1. The social, economic, and cultural conditions of the family and their relationship to students' violent behaviours
2. The relationship of violence to improper educational methods within the family

1-The social, economic, and cultural conditions of the family and their relation to students' violent behaviours:

Cultural capital and the family's social and economic status have a significant impact on its members. This was confirmed by Pierre Bourdieu, who highlighted the strong relationship between the educational system and the economic and social relations in society. In this context, Muhammad Labib Al-Najihi states, 'The social and economic status of the family affects the personality of its members in terms of formation and orientation. A family with a high social and economic status provides its members with opportunities to enjoy various social services easily and smoothly, which allows these individuals to fully exploit their energies and capabilities. In contrast, a low social and economic status constitutes a barrier that prevents these family members from enjoying social services, especially educational ones.' (Al-Najihi, 1988, p. 83).

1-1 Aggressive behaviours and their relationship with social and economic status:

The social and economic status of the family reflects the social and economic situation in which individuals and groups live, including income, occupation, and social environment. It has a significant impact on the members of the family.

From a sociological approach, both Pierre Bourdieu and Bastron emphasized the existence of a relationship between the educational system and the economic and social relations in society, and how children from privileged classes reach the educational institution already possessing linguistic capital and values that are closer to the taught language, unlike children from underprivileged classes whose success rates are much lower than those of the dominant classes. Additionally, educational practices vary according to the economic and social level of the parents, as shown by the research conducted by Smilamski (1968), which indicated that the parents of privileged and underprivileged children differ in the educational practices they employ. In privileged families, parents strive to fulfill their educational mission in the best possible way, often encouraging their children and treating them as full partners. In contrast, parents in underprivileged families often use authoritarian educational practices, making decisions for the child rather than with them. (Mahjoub, 2001, pp. 115–116).

"Boudon" emphasized that individuals' attitudes are determined by the social environment and the groups to which they belong and feel close. In the same context, proponents of the "cultural deviance" theory in their study on deviance pointed out how a family's low living standards may cause the student to feel frustrations and thus express them through aggression toward classmates or by damaging educational institution property, and that there is a relationship between deviants and poor families, to the extent that some deviant acts, such as theft, are considered normal among the children of such families and are often approved by their parents.

Also, the social pressure theory considers that the continuous frustration experienced by children of the lower class generates a drive toward delinquent behaviour as compensation for the lack of self-esteem.

Our reading of these various approaches regarding the phenomenon of school violence and its connection to the family's economic factors is sufficient to provide us with a common denominator: that the material situation in which an individual lives can be a factor in the emergence of aggressive behaviours. A poor family environment, lack of basic resources, difficulty in accessing proper healthcare, fulfilling essential and additional needs to ensure an adequate standard of living, leads to the child feeling difficulties, deprivation, and increasing frustration. This negatively affects their psychological and mental development, making the child more likely to develop violent aggressive behaviour during childhood and channel these pressures, which interact and overlap within them, against individuals or property. Additionally, difficult economic conditions generate continuous stress, causing difficulty in meeting basic needs, which leads to exacerbated conflicts, family disintegration, and psychological disorders in children.

From a social perspective, studies have shown that family rupture resulting from the death of parents or divorce leads to deprivation, failure, or frustration in family life. This, in turn, causes children to lose trust in their parents and in themselves, weakens family belonging, and hampers their ability to adapt to social life, which drives them towards delinquency, deviation, instability, and hinders their growth physically, mentally, and emotionally (Al-Badawi, 2009, p.46). Divorce and widowhood cases are among the most difficult social situations that families face and have a significant impact on both parents and children.

1-2 Family Cultural Capital and Its Relation to Aggressive Practices:

The family cultural level represents one of the main elements that greatly influence individuals' evaluations and perceptions of the educational process, its participants,

and teaching methods. Michel Crozier pointed out that family cultural heritage makes each participant differ in their assessment of organizational structures (Fridberg, Crozier, 1977, pp.25-26.).

Many studies confirm the existence of a close relationship between parents' educational level and their parenting practices. A low educational level of parents may lead them to use inappropriate parenting practices such as neglect or lack of attention, or, on the contrary, to adopt authoritarian practices, especially since many of them wish to compensate for their modest educational level and achieve personal dreams that were not fulfilled, considering a diploma as the only way to achieve these dreams and improve their social status. They may believe that strictness and severity are necessary in raising their children, which negatively affects the children, making them feel significant pressure. Individuals are particularly affected by evaluations received from close people; for example, an intelligent child who constantly receives reprimands from their parents may be affected psychologically, developing a perception that they are incapable of realizing their potential. This can lead to aggressive behaviour as a reaction to the parents' insistence on success and excellence beyond the child's abilities.

Ahmed Shabshoub says in this regard: "The cultural gap between the adolescent and his parents, as is often the case in Third World societies, tends to exacerbate the psychological crisis that the adolescent experiences. This gap may generate:

- A real lack of understanding in familial social issues, which could create a power problem in decision-making—should the older or the more knowledgeable parent decide?
- Embarrassment felt by the adolescent regarding his family background. Psychologists emphasize that this situation creates a conflict within the adolescent's psyche between the desire to escape from a culturally poor family

environment and the sense of guilt resulting from not acknowledging the hardships parents endured to educate their child." (Shabshoub, 1986, p. 242).

2- The Relationship Between Violence and Incorrect Educational Methods in the Family:

The family represents the most influential group on an individual's personality, shaping their behaviour with a social dimension and refining the early features of their character. Although absent from the classroom in practice, the family still affects the educational process. Families differ or resemble each other in the educational methods they adopt to raise their children, depending on their social status, class, geographical environment, and culture. This is particularly significant, as many developments have led to changes in values, customs, and relationships that regulate the behaviour of family members, and to the transition from the traditional extended family, characterized by mutual support and cooperation among its members, to the nuclear family.

Many studies have confirmed that students who have poor relationships with their parents feel dislike for school and show less interest in what they are studying. The educational role of the family, its prevailing atmosphere, and the relationships among its members affect an individual's behaviour, social development, and interactions both inside and outside school. Bordizensky argues that children who were harshly punished by their parents in the past became aggressive towards others, and it is expected that children who were subjected to abuse will become deviant or exhibit behaviours contrary to their society (Hasran, 2021, p.3). Exposure of children to abuse by their caregivers makes them susceptible to many psychological disorders and behavioural deviations.

A negative family environment, including conflicts between parents, cruelty or neglect, and witnessing mutual violence between parents, whether verbal or physical, as well as the regular use of abusive language and lack of parental attention to their

children, has significant effects. As a result, a student may come to school carrying these repressed pressures and problems, which they express through aggressive behaviours. This is supported by the work of Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, who confirmed the existence of a relationship between aggression and the frustration an individual experiences in their family life. Aggression is fundamentally based on environmental conditions such as:

- Parental permissiveness toward aggression.
- Use of physical punishment.
- Mother's lack of self-esteem (Lorenz and Miller, 1986, p.53).

The theory of social learning focuses on the principle of simulation, saying that watching violence increases the likelihood of aggression, considering that the child acquires behaviour from those around him, and therefore when he is exposed to watching aggressive models, especially from his parents, he works to emulate them, and therefore the experiences that the child lives in his family are very important and affect his behaviour. Verbal violence is a ground for the emergence of an aggressive personality who suffers from an internal conflict that may escape a certain degree of incitement to create a conflict with the other, or it is stored to wait for an opportunity to be a stronger aggression than it was, causing harm to the other, self-harm, distorting reference values, and thus reproducing improper behaviours in a society that needs the purity of its language and the preservation of moral values that are specific to the Arab-Islamic society. " (Benjama, 2004, p. 51).

As many studies indicate, a violent child is a victim of incorrect behaviours occurring within the family, such as neglect, lack of supervision, authoritarianism, and favouritism among children. As mentioned in the works of Siers, MacCoby, and Levin, aggression is a behaviour resulting from environmental conditions, such as parental leniency toward aggression or, conversely, the use of corporal punishment

(Lerner et al., 1986, p.52).

Bandura conducted a number of experimental studies on the relationship between different socialization methods and personality style and concluded that an individual's experience of a nurturing and tolerant style of upbringing is likely to foster a balanced personality in the child. Conversely, experiencing an upbringing characterized by authoritarianism and strictness is likely to reinforce the practice of aggressive behaviour (Abu Layla, 2002, p.14).

Parents who do not understand the needs and tendencies of their children tend to be overly controlling, often relying on insult, beating, and oppression. They get angry over trivial reasons, which leaves their children feeling frustrated and turns the family into a psychologically harmful environment that negatively affects the adolescent's growth and mental health. The child's personality becomes a fertile ground for psychological disorders and disturbed behavioural patterns, paving the way for aggressive and violent behaviour towards peers, school property, and even teachers as a means of releasing anger and reacting to the harsh treatment received from parents.

Bibbenson's study concluded that "excessive strictness and parental control hinder children's attempts at autonomy and make them shy, whereas love and autonomy in children often lead to proper social upbringing, and this is usually achieved through the family" (Zaghiba, 1997, p.7).

Consequently, the educational methods used by parents play an important role in shaping a child's healthy or unhealthy personality. However, many families lack awareness of proper child-rearing methods and the requirements for healthy development, which affects their psychology, academic achievement, and can manifest in violent behaviours due to the consequences of parental upbringing, such as threats, pampering, neglect, and authoritarianism.

Some of the incorrect educational methods that have a negative impact on children include:

- Overprotective parenting: Where parents excessively care for their children and have extreme anxiety about their safety from dangers, which leads to children not bearing responsibility and being deprived of opportunities that help them learn and be self-reliant.
- Authoritarian parenting: Relies on harshness, strictness, and punishment to intimidate children, leading to feelings of tension, resentment, hatred, and behavioural deviations in adolescents.
- Permissive parenting: Leads to a lack of responsibility and immaturity.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of violence is considered one of the most prominent, complex, and controversial educational and social issues, directly affecting the quality of the educational process and the stability of the school environment, due to the negative impacts it leaves on educational and social actors. Despite the multiple factors and reasons behind the spread of this phenomenon, the family factor remains at the forefront because of the significant role the family plays in achieving sound mental and social development for children and in instilling well-rounded personalities that protect them from violent behaviours, whether in experiencing or practicing them.

Finally, we propose a set of recommendations to reduce the spread of school violence:

- Strengthening effective and proper dialogue methods between the family and the school in light of discussion, understanding, and clear definition of educational goals.
- Supporting forums and studies on this topic.

- Raising awareness among all stakeholders about the seriousness of this phenomenon and calling on them to engage in collective action to confront it.
- Activating the role of cultural spaces that can guide young people towards proper behaviour.
- Monitoring parents of their children and ensuring they strengthen their children's confidence.
- Activating and developing the role of educational guidance within educational institutions to achieve the desired objectives, develop the student's personality, modify their attitudes and behaviours, help them achieve a balance between mental and emotional aspects and their environmental conditions, and contribute to social supervision of students who exhibit deviant behaviours or are at risk of deviation in order to follow up with them and rehabilitate them.

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