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Silent Crisis: Examining the Alarming Trend of Violence against Teachers in Moroccan High Schools

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ABSTRACT

In learning environments where knowledge is produced, and futures are shaped, a growing epidemic remains largely hidden from the public view, which is violence against teachers. Teachers confront a multitude of challenges in the classroom including the difficult reality of experiencing violence at the hands of their own students. Such acts of aggression, whether overt or subtle, destabilize the holiness of the educational environment and destroy the trust and respect that are essential for effective teaching and learning. Using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, this article aims to shed light on the frequency, causes, and consequences of violence against teachers. Furthermore, this article explores the various forms of aggression teachers encounter, with a focus on the most targeted gender. The findings reveal that school violence is a pervasive issue that occurs daily in various forms including verbal, physical, psychological, behavioral, and sexual aggression against teachers. Contrary to common assumptions, the study revealed that this phenomenon is not influenced by teachers' gender. Key contributing factors include students' academic struggles, exposure to violence, lack of morals, media influence, peer pressure, and acts of revenge. Additionally, teacher-related factors, such as weak personalities, humiliation of students, and criticism, exacerbate the problem. The consequences of such violence are profound as it leaves teachers feeling insecure, altering their behavior, reducing interactions with students, and diminishing their self-esteem. In severe cases, this leads to absenteeism or even resignation. Given the alarming nature of these findings, this article advocates for proactive measures to address the issue and create a safe, supportive, and violence-free environment in Moroccan schools.

INTRODUCTION

For ages, there has been no country or society that was exempt from violence. The latter was and is still a non-separate phenomenon from our lives to the extent that violent acts and behaviors are reported on a daily basis. That is, violence invades almost all spheres including institutions, companies, houses, streets, etc. and is often utilized by members within a society regardless of their social status, age, class, etc. As an example, history was very marked with the use of violence which is manifested in colonialism, slavery and extermination. However, with the emergence of human rights, violence has approximately decreased, yet, it is still practiced by those who hold the power over those who do not. The exercise of violence is reflected in the Japanese proverb of "the weak are meat; the strong eat," and other proverbs that connote that the possession of power is more likely to lead to violence. For instance, violence occurs between a woman and her partner, an employee and his/her boss, old people and their caregivers, newborn babies and their sitters, etc. Violence as an exertion of power over powerless is not limited to physical violence but rather it takes place via different forms of oppression including verbal violence, psychological violence and behavioral violence.

In the world of academia where knowledge and development take place, a disturbing reality sneaks under

this idealization; it is violence against teachers. In the past, teachers enjoyed some prestige and honorable status as mutual respect was the dominant makeup of the inter-relationship of teachers and students. Students used to be shy, lower their gaze whenever they talk to or be in the presence of their teachers. However, in the present time, the teachers' position has changed dramatically since they are not respected as it used to be to the extent that students do not only disrespect, disturb, and harass but also beat, confront and even threaten their teachers within the confines of their classrooms. This phenomenon not only weakens the fundamental principles of education but also shakes the well-being, morale, and professional efficacy of those tasked with shaping the minds of future generations. When gender arose in a social issue, it becomes very clear that women are the focus of the attention. Culturally speaking, unlike men who enjoy and exert power, women are not only used to be hidden in the private sphere, but also exposed to violent treatments due to being categorized as vulnerable. Along with various objectives, this article aims to focus on gender within the phenomenon of violence against teachers.

Exploring the Phenomenon: An Overview of Violence in Educational Settings

The current chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview on violence. The second

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section defines school-related gender-based violence and explores its types. The third section explores the reasons that push students to exercise violence on their teachers. Lastly, the fourth section focuses on the consequences and impacts of this violence on teachers.

Unveiling Violence: Defining and Understanding the Problem

Violence is a universal issue that affects every society globally including Morocco. It refers to “mistreatment, injury, insulting and coarse language; to hurt by treating badly.” (Kashani & Allan, 1998). It is safe to say that violence designates an aggressive action wherein individuals exercise their physical or psychological strength to harm others. Violence manifests in numerous environments, with schools being one significant setting. This environment has been and is still marked with incidents of violence involving educators, students, and administrators. In this regard, school violence is “an alarming issue involving a range of negative behaviors that threaten the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of all individuals on school campuses.” (Watson & Skinner, 2004). It is also a “student-on-student and student-on-teacher acts of physical harm.” (Henry, 2000). Therefore, school violence pertains to any aggressive behavior by a student towards their teachers or vice versa within an educational setting.

To illustrate, violence may occur between students, professors, administrators, etc. However, a new form of violence emerged lately in which students dare to exercise different forms of violence namely psychological violence (verbal, non-verbal ...) and physical violence (beating, injuring ...) against their teachers. For instance, in the United States of America, “a twelve-year-old from Surprise, Arizona, smashed his teacher with a computer keyboard and then kicked and punched the teacher until a police officer restrained him.” (Nelson, 2016). Furthermore, violence extends beyond verbal insults or physical attacks to include the use of weapons. To be clearer, in the USA, “a student repeatedly struck his teacher in the face with a hammer, leaving her in need of serious reconstructive surgery.” (Nelson, 2016). However, violence does not always result in physical injuries; tragically, it can also lead to fatalities, as evidenced by the fact that “a fourth-grade teacher collapsed and died of a heart attack after a physical altercation with a nine-year-old student.” (Nelson, 2016). It is impossible to overlook the fact that teachers also face violations from their students in Middle Eastern countries like Jordan where “schools and universities have been strongly involved in hundreds of violent incidents due to social and personal reasons.” (Alzyoud *et al.*, 2016). In Moroccan schools, the phenomenon of violence against teachers is widespread as regularly reported on social media platforms. Instances of students perpetrating violent acts against their teachers are documented on a daily basis.

Gender-Based Violence in Education: Exploring the Phenomenon

School violence has long been a controversial topic, especially when linking it to gender which is “a collection of cultural norms and actions that are connected with an individual’s biological sex.” (Lehfid, 2024). This relationship has given rise to the term School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV). By definition, it refers to “acts or threats of physical, sexual or psychological violence or abuse that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex, sexuality or gender identities.” (USAID, 2016). Therefore, School-Related Gender-Based Violence refers to any form of violence based on gender stereotypes. It sheds light on power relations between males and females. Additionally, it can take place in various settings within the school environment such as dormitories, restrooms, classrooms, corridors, and beyond.

Moreover, School-Related Gender-Based Violence can manifest in a multitude of forms, one of which is bullying. It refers to “frighten or hurt a weaker person; to use your strength or power.” (Hornby, 2010). To simplify, bullying designates any disrespectful or rude behaviour that is directed towards others including name-calling, humiliation, verbal intimidation, and exclusion. Another form of School-Related Gender-Based Violence is corporal punishment. It is defined as “a form of physical violence—physical punishment—that involves the deliberate infliction of pain to discipline or reform a child or to deter attitudes or behaviors deemed unacceptable or inappropriate.” (USAID, 2016). Corporal punishment is the use of physical means to discipline a student such as beating with a stick. Other forms of corporal punishment include shaking, slapping, pulling ears, pinching, and forcing children to stand for extended periods.

Last but not least, School-Related Gender-Based Violence can escalate from psychological and physical violence to include sexual violence. The latter is described as “forced or unwanted sexual activity where there is no consent, consent is not possible, or power or intimidation is used to coerce a sexual act.” (USAID, 2016). To elaborate, sexual violence manifests in two distinct forms; The first which is known as sexual harassment targets the psychological well-being of the individual since it includes gestures, winks, comments on one’s body, and dirty jokes and stories. The second form which is named sexual abuse involves physical acts such as unwanted touching including grabbing and rubbing specific parts of the body like the buttocks, thighs, or breasts. Unfortunately, sexual violence can evolve to more severe forms such as sexual assault and rape. This can be exemplified in instances of transactional sex wherein a teacher, regardless of his/her gender, may promise a student to improve his/her grades in exchange for sexual favours. (USAID, 2016).

However, it is important to acknowledge that School-Related Gender-Based Violence is not only concerned

with violence perpetrated by teachers against students but also extends to include students' violence against their teachers. That is to say, all forms of violence mentioned above can be directed towards teachers regardless of their gender. Nowadays, particularly in Morocco, instances of students' violence against their teachers have taken on more serious dimensions. This extends beyond psychological forms which is manifested in students' gaze or making verbal insults and threats, to physical violence through which teachers are subjected to physical assault. This was tragically exemplified in the case of "Ouarzazate's Sidi Daoud high school when a 17-year-old student violently beat one of his teachers during a class." (Kasraoui, 2017). A shocking video uploaded on social media exhibited the severe and repeated physical assault on a male teacher including punches to the face. One of the most alarming aspects of these incidents is that some students escalate beyond mere physical violence to attempts at seriously injuring or even killing their teachers. Such cases are viewed as tragic because they contradict both the Moroccan law as well as the values of Islam as being Morocco's official religion. One such case involves a teacher from the same city previously mentioned who was attacked in the middle of the street when two hooded men threw acid on him and fled [...] The victim, who was badly wounded in the face, was later transported to the Ibn Tofail University Hospital of Marrakech due to the deterioration of his health state. (Elouazi, 2018).

Moving to the Moroccan capital of economy Casablanca, a female teacher was "gruesomely attacked with knife by her 17-years-old student upon leaving the institution Wednesday evening" (Lahsini, 2017) due to her indirect involvement with the school board's decision to transfer him to another school as a punishment for beating an Islamic education teacher. The phenomenon of School-Related Gender-Based Violence has become a nightmare in Moroccan educational institutions to the extent that authorities, civil society, and associations were alarmed and seek satisfactory answers through in-depth investigation of this phenomenon. Therefore, the following section will primarily focus on highlighting the major factors behind school violence.

Exploring the Roots: Understanding Factors That Lead to School Violence

The emergence of students' use of violence against their teachers can be attributed to a variety of factors. To start with, drug and alcohol addiction is a significant contributor to students' violent behaviors towards their teachers. These substances have the ability to cause a hypnotic state and impair consciousness that leads students to lose control of their actions and become unaware of their behavior. For instance, in Morocco, "the student who repeatedly stabbed his teacher in the neck in Salé lately was claimed to be addicted to drugs." (Jalal, 2013). Moreover, media plays a crucial role in increasing the rate of violence due to broadcasting programs that depict various forms of aggression. Globally, children, especially

students, are captivated by international channels such as MBC2 and MBC Action which feature violent content like action movies. Additionally, violent video games like GTA V, as well as certain cartoons and animations contribute to an increase in aggressive behaviours as children often imitate the actions of characters. At the local level in Morocco, several television channels air violent shows that are unsuitable for child and adolescent audiences. Examples include reality shows like "The Most Dangerous Criminals" on 2M and "Crime Scene" on Medi1TV which depict and transmit violent acts and behaviours to viewers. (Jalal, 2013). It is undeniable that Moroccan society is characterized by the use of violence to the extent that it serves as an environment for various forms and manifestations of aggression that range "from obscene language to fighting with knives and swords." (Jalal, 2013). Hence, schools as being a part of Moroccan society, inevitably bear the impact of the escalating phenomenon of violence.

Similarly, households are not exempt from the culture of violence with numerous examples that highlight this reality. For instance, a significant number of students witness domestic violence on a daily basis within their own homes. Others experience the stress of parental separation or divorce accompanied with a loss between two households or neglected altogether. Many endure uncomfortable living situations as they grow up between parental insults and frequent fights. Furthermore, there are households that are deemed unsuitable for students where one or both parents may struggle with constant abuse or engage in extramarital affairs. This idea was highlighted by Gázquez *et al.* (2015) who contend that "looking at family factors, [...] emphasize lack of love, attention and communication, that is, little family attachment, and little time shared [...]. Intraparental conflicts, separation, divorce or absence of parents [...]. Poverty and unfavourable situations would also have to be stressed. Another of the most predominant factors that occur in violent situations is a negative climate and continuous stress in the family".

Additionally, the government's role in perpetuating violence against teachers cannot be overlooked. For instance, the Ministry of Education is viewed as a contributing factor to school violence particularly due to its dependence on teachers to not only educate but also understand the psychology of students rather than "providing schools with psychologists and psychiatrists" (Jalal, 2013) who have the power to transform students' aggressiveness into something from which they can benefit. Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that some teachers also contribute to the factors behind violence through their use of unethical deeds and practices such as "using abusive language in class or using the grading system for money-spinning purposes." (Jalal, 2013). Having outlined the primary factors contributing to violence in Moroccan educational institutions, particularly schools, the following section will delve into the effects of school violence.

Wounds of the Aftermath: Exploring the Consequences of School Violence

School violence has detrimental effects on the Moroccan educational community since it affects both teachers and students. At the physical level, school violence can result in injuries, scars, and even disabilities, particularly when weapons are involved. Furthermore, school violence impacts mental health as it causes anxiety, permanent thinking about the experience and a fear of returning to teaching as exemplified by a female teacher from Casablanca who expressed in a video that the emotional injury inflicted by her student's attack using a knife would never heal. She stated while crying: "it is difficult to overcome the fact that you teach your student and wish the best for him, and he hits you" (Kifache tv | 3:09, 2017, كيفاش تيفي). Furthermore, school violence can also result in low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is "a mental disorder that may develop after exposure to exceptionally threatening or horrifying events" (Bisson *et al.*, 2015). This means that it is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event. Furthermore, teachers who are exposed to violence may change their behaviours to hostility, anger and other violent acts towards their colleagues as well as students. Teachers' educational abilities are also affected by school violence. That is to say, teachers' recall of any bad experience while giving lessons may cause them to lose focus and concentration. Furthermore, the classroom itself can become an unhealthy environment for education where teachers lose safe interaction with their students and students in turn may lose interest in school. Teachers' absence from school would be regular and many of them would abandon their jobs. Last but not least, it should be noted that school violence has financial consequences on teachers. To illustrate, teachers find themselves obliged to pay the costs of not only treatments and visits to the hospital, but also those of the lawyer in order to prosecute offenders (Mazoyer, 2016).

It is indeed evident that the phenomenon of violence poses a significant and serious threat that manifests in various forms and impacts teachers regardless of their gender. This issue stems from a multitude of causes and yields dangerous effects on teachers' health, psychology, finances, and more. The following chapter will delve into the methodology through outlining the research hypothesis, objective, questions, sample population, approaches, and data collection procedures including the utilization of questionnaires and interview guides.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Hypotheses and Objectives

In this study, it is hypothesized that the more teachers are exposed to school violence, the more their performance inside the classroom decreases, and the more their relation to their students is damaged. Additionally, it is assumed that female teachers are more likely to be targeted by school violence compared to their male counterparts because the conventional perceptions of masculinity and femininity control their students.

The objective of this study is to identify the frequency and different forms of violence experienced by teachers in their workplace. It also aims to detect whether there is a gender disparity in the prevalence of violence, specifically whether male or female teachers are more frequently targeted. Finally, this study aims to identify the factors behind and the impact of school violence on teachers' self-esteem and performance.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1 – To what extent are teachers exposed to violence?
- 2 – What are the types of violence teachers are exposed to in the workplace?
- 3 – What is the most victimized gender by school violence?
- 4 – What are the factors behind students' violence against male and female teachers?
- 5 – What are the impacts of school violence on the teachers?
- 6 – What are the recommendations that help at reducing school violence against teachers?

Sample Population

In this study, the population sample chosen combines high school teachers within Fes, Taza, and Taounate directorates. This selection was made because this population directly interacts with students and thus is exposed to violence. Random sampling was employed to ensure the selection of a representative sample of teachers. This method was chosen for its objectivity and fairness as it allows equal opportunity for all teachers to participate in the study.

The study has a total of 100 contributors who are high school teachers from Fez, Taza, and Taounate directorates. In terms of gender, the population is distributed as the figure below illustrates:

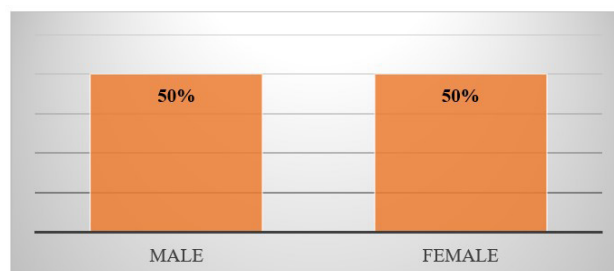


Figure 1: Gender of the respondents

When it comes to the age of the respondents, it is distributed as follows:

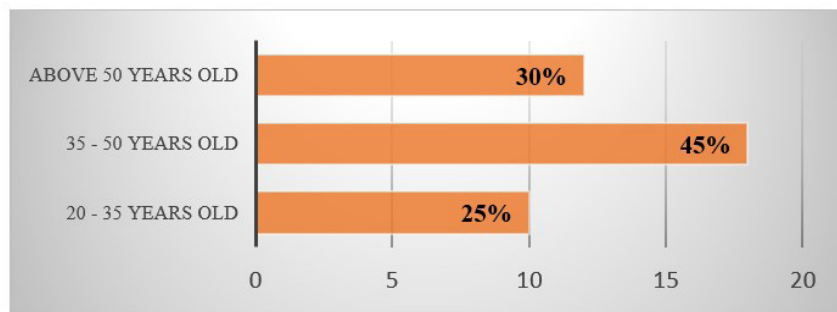


Figure 2: The age of the respondents

As for the period of teaching, it is distributed as the figure below demonstrates:

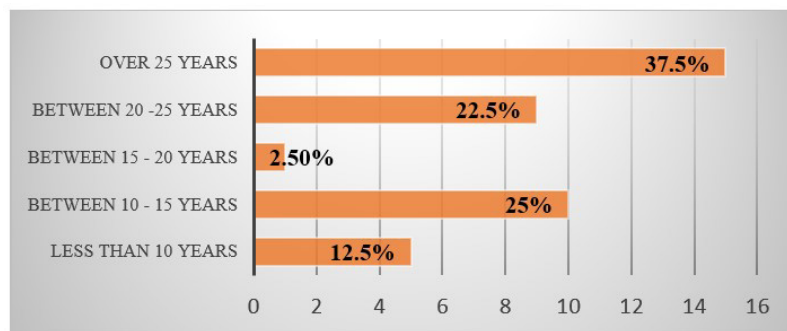


Figure 3: The period of teaching of the respondents

Research Approaches

Both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches will be used in this study. The qualitative approach will be helpful in determining the profiles of the teachers who express their attitudes towards violence practiced by students, in measuring the extent to which they are affected by this violence, and in finding out the different factors behind and the impacts of this genre of violence. On the other hand, the qualitative approach will be useful in eliciting in depth explanations about why some students practice violence against their teachers, and the frequency of violence implemented and practiced against them.

Mixing both approaches will increase the validity and the reliability of the data, and thus the quality of the findings.

Data Collection Procedures

The initial data collection method employed in this study is the questionnaire which serves as a quantitative tool for measuring the frequency and quantity of various aspects related to violence against teachers. One of the advantages of using a questionnaire in this context is its ability to gather quantitative data on the existence of violence, as well as the profiles of teachers, their attitudes, the underlying reasons and impacts of this violence.

Since one of the weaknesses of the questionnaire is its limitation with respect to eliciting in depth answers from the respondents, interviews will also be used to

collect data. This qualitative data collection procedure allows respondents the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject, and it allows the researcher to elicit in-depth information around the topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This present section is devoted to the presentation of the data collected in this research. It will be providing an analysis and discussion of the major qualitative as well as quantitative data which will be divided into six sections. The first section deals with the frequency of violence against teachers. The second section is devoted to the demonstration of the different types of school violence. The third section is for the discussion of gender and violence. The fourth section is concerned with the factors behind school violence. Sections five and six deal successively with the impacts of school violence as well as some recommendations.

Assessing the Incident: Examining the Frequency of Violence Towards Teachers

Violence is a widely debated issue in the whole world generally including Morocco. Teachers are exposed to violence by their students who are typically expected to show them respect akin to that of their own children. Starting with an examination of the frequency of violence against teachers, the following diagram illustrates the distribution of opinions among respondents.

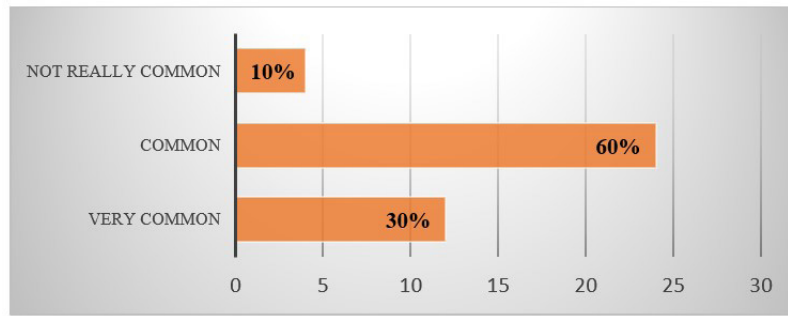


Figure 4: The Frequency of Violence against Teachers

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents believe that violence is often perpetrated by students on their teachers as 60% of them agree that violence against teachers is common. Moreo intensely, 30% of respondents believe that students consistently engage in violence against their teachers, considering it a very common phenomenon. However, only 10% of respondents view this phenomenon as not particularly common while none of them perceive violence against teachers as uncommon at all. These results exhibit that violence exists in our society including schools.

Selecting the option which indicates that the frequency of violence is common suggests that respondents perceive violence as an existing phenomenon within schools, particularly during exams. In this context, students may view teachers as enemies who hinder their success by imposing restrictions on cheating and collaboration during exams. When answering whether she experienced violence, female interviewee number 1 affirms: “yes sometimes especially for the final exams [...] especially that students they consider that the teacher is the person who prevents them from getting good answers the cheated answers and they suppose that it he/she is an enemy”.

Additionally, a significant number of participants contend that violence takes place on an everyday scale as many respondents state that it is a very common phenomenon. Numerous respondents indicate that their daily lives are harmed by violence, particularly in the form of verbal aggression which is clearly noticed when students encounter difficulties with their teachers. Male interviewee number 2 asserts on this stance by clarifying that “yes I was exposed to violence so many times I can say verbal violence by some students”.

The minority who views violence against teachers as less common emphasized that despite maintaining positive

relationships with their students, their professional careers are not entirely devoid of violence. They recount some cases when some students have been compelled to attend school. Having no interest in school pushes students to look for the tiniest chance to begin problems and exert violence on teachers. To reinforce this idea, male interviewee number 4 further elaborates: “I throughout my professional career did not been exposed to any direct form or forms of violence [...] a student never dares to insult me or beat me but there are forms of violence which remain simple”.

In brief, the data collected in this section revealed that teachers become more exposed to violence than ever since as manifested in the fact that nearly all the respondents emphasize on the existence of violence in Moroccan schools. This is revealed in the fact that 60% as well 30% of them choose that violence is common and very common respectively. This fact ultimately demonstrates a decrease of the once-held position and status of teachers in the perception of the Moroccan people in general and students in particular.

Decoding School Violence: Diverse Manifestations and Forms

The previous section was concluded with a remark that the majority of the respondents emphasize on the existence of school violence in Moroccan schools. The current part further asserts this premise by reflecting on the major types of school violence namely verbal, physical, behavioral, psychological and sexual. To achieve this purpose, this section is mainly devoted to describe and analyze the data collected according to the already mentioned types.

Focusing on the types of school violence, the following figure reflects respondents’ standpoints.

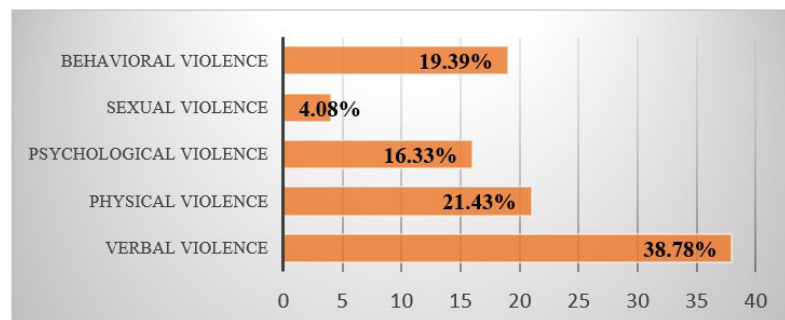


Figure 5: Types of School Violence

Concerning the types of school violence, the above figure indicates that 38.78% of respondents perceive verbal violence as the most occurred type in Moroccan schools. Following behind, 21.43% select physical violence as the second most common form. Behavioral violence ranks third with 19.39% while psychological violence is chosen by 16.33% of respondents. Sexual violence is reported to occur less frequently with only 4.08% of respondents who select it. Selecting verbal violence as the most occurred type of violence against teachers in Moroccan schools reflects a concerning societal shift where this type of aggression is becoming normalized particularly among students. In the past, there was a culture of respect towards teachers to the extent that they were considered as sacred figures as illustrated in the opening lines of Ahmed Chaouki's poem where the teacher is likened to a prophet. (Al-Diwan, n.d.) However, there has been a noticeable escalation in students' aggression towards teachers especially with verbal violence which becomes increasingly common to the point where it is seen as acceptable behavior. Male interviewee number 2 asserts that "the verbal confrontations or verbal violence are exercised normally and successively". Female interviewee number 1 further supports the earlier statement by emphasizing that verbal violence often emerges as the initial response during misunderstandings; she elaborates that "first it starts verbally". This type of violence frequently manifests in the form of curses, insults, offensive language, and immoral remarks, all aimed at undermining the teacher's worth in addition to causing harm. Female interviewee number 3 reinforces this by mentioning that "it takes often the form of insults and curses and pronouncing bad and non-respectful words".

Moreover, respondents reveal that physical violence tends to follow verbal aggression as highlighted by female interviewee number 1 who clarified that "later on it could become physical". Indeed, physical violence that is exercised on teachers manifests in various forms including direct confrontations, beating and inflicting injuries. Male interviewee number 4 asserts this stance by stating that "physical violence and we have this case through what media shows us so students beat and use sharp weapons against their teachers".

Behavioral violence follows and emerges as another widespread form of aggression that is directed towards teachers in Moroccan schools. Similar to the previously mentioned types, behavioral violence manifests in diverse

forms. Male interviewee number 2 sheds light on this by expressing that "there is behavioral violence that is represented in certain movements exercised by some students". To provide further insight, behavioral violence differs from direct confrontations with teachers, yet, it equally harms them. That is to say, this type of violence has negative effects on teachers since it involves students hitting tables, kicking trash bins, throwing supplies on the ground, or aggressively slamming doors.

Psychological and sexual violence are reported to be less frequent. Psychological violence typically involves students who are hesitant to directly confront their teachers. Instead, they opt to target their teachers' mental well-being by attempting to plant fear. Additionally, this type of violence may manifest in behaviors such as prolonged staring at teachers as explained by male interviewee number 2: "there is behavioral violence that is represented in certain movements exercised by some students like staring". Concerning sexual violence, it is predominantly perpetrated by male students against their female teachers as a form of disrespect. This behavior often manifests in the form of harassment as highlighted by male interviewee number 2: "there is sexual violence exercised through students harassing their female teachers and so on".

In brief, the data collected in this section shows that teachers are exposed to different forms of violence giving the majority of their choices to verbal violence, then physical violence, behavioral violence while psychological violence as well as sexual violence were the least chosen. By doing so, it is crystal clear that teachers' values and positions are no more recognized and appreciated by students since the latter is more likely to confront their teachers rather than respect them. More intensely, some dare to harass their female teachers which means that they see them as mere bodies to be looked at and harassed rather than intellectuals who serve in educating them.

Which Gender Bears the Burden? Identifying the Primary Victim of School Violence

The previous section demonstrates that teachers face violence at school through different forms and shapes. This section, however, is dedicated to explore which gender is targeted by this phenomenon, whether it is male teachers, female teachers, or both.

The diagram below illustrates the distribution of opinions in accordance to the respondents vis-à-vis the most targeted gender by school violence.

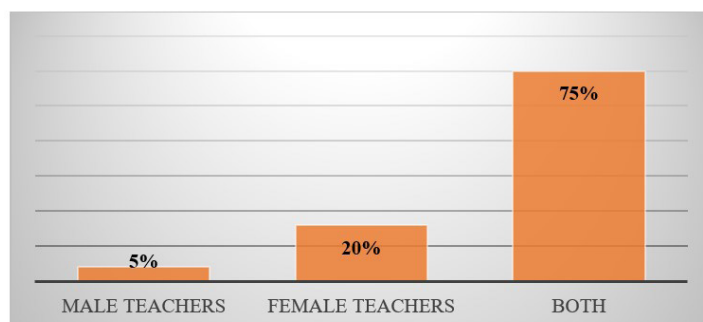


Figure 6: The Most Targeted Gender

Regarding the most targeted gender, the majority of respondents which is represented by 75% believe that both male and female teachers are subject to violence. However, 20% of respondents indicate that female teachers are the primary targets, while only 5% identify male teachers as the most targeted.

In terms of the most targeted gender, female teachers tend to be more targeted by this phenomenon than their male counterparts. That is to say, this preference for female teachers as primary targets suggests that students avoid exerting power over men because they are more likely to respond with violence rather than submission or fear. Female interviewee number 5 emphasizes this stance by stating that “female teachers may encounter aggressive behavior from their students more than men because men are more powerful and they know how to handle students and the class”. Hence, targeting female teachers reflects the patriarchal mindset which is rooted in Moroccan society and controls people including students. This social mindset categorizes females as vulnerable beings who are incapable of defending themselves. Furthermore, there are some individuals who still believe that women belong primarily to the private sphere. Consequently, male students tend to be more aggressive towards their female teachers in an attempt to assert their masculinity in a cultural context where males are perceived to occupy the top of the hierarchy while women are relegated to the bottom. Male interviewee number 4 supports this viewpoint by arguing that

the Moroccan society is a patriarchal society and the patriarchal values are the dominated values in the framework of social relationships and this patriarchal tendency is a tendency that leads to devote a superior vision of males against females and this is common here in the eastern societies in which there is the Moroccan society and this tendency is translated inside the educational environment and therefore the female is the targeted one in the operation of violence and here the

student tries to practice his nodes against the weak side which is the woman and statistically the woman remains the most violated inside the Moroccan society and its cause is the nature of the socialization always we see the woman as a weak component she is that short wall on which we can put our psychological and social nodes.

To reinforce this perspective, women are often stereotyped as mere vessels for emotions. Male interviewee number 6 asserts this notion by responding to the question of which gender is targeted by school violence: “the female the female the female due to being emotions that cannot defend herself.”

However, the majority of respondents assert that school violence is not inherently tied to one’s gender, but rather it is related to the personality of the teacher and their ability to effectively manage the classroom with a charisma. This sentiment is echoed by female interviewee number 1 who elaborates that “it depends again on the personality of the teacher it doesn’t depend I think on the gender”.

In brief, the collected data indicates that all teachers face school violence regardless of their gender. However, it is important to acknowledge that Moroccan society is still, to some extent, influenced by patriarchal norms as evidenced by many respondents who identify female teachers as more targeted by this phenomenon when compared to their male counterparts.

Into the Depths: Exploring the Factors of School Violence

In the previous sections, it was concluded that teachers regardless of gender are exposed to various forms of violence. Of course, every fire has its fuel. Therefore, this section will primarily focus on describing and analyzing the factors that lead to school violence.

When examining the reasons behind this phenomenon, the following figure illustrates the opinions of respondents as far as the responsible for violence against teachers is concerned.

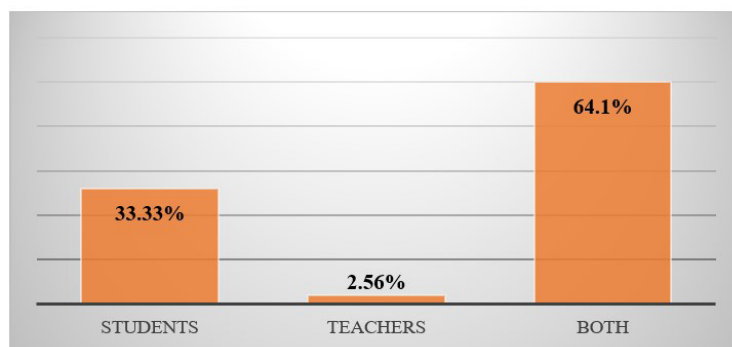


Figure 7: The Most Responsible for Violence against Teachers

In terms of the primary responsibility for violence against teachers, 64.1% of respondents believe that both teachers and students share responsibility for this phenomenon. However, 33.33% attribute the blame solely to students, while only 2.56% hold teachers solely responsible.

Choosing ‘both’ as the main responsible parties for

violence against teachers indicates a recognition that this issue is not solely the fault of one party, but rather, it reflects a shared responsibility between students and teachers who are both integral components of the educational process. Interviewee number 3 supports this perspective by stating: “the responsible for the

phenomenon of violence against teachers the student and the teacher both.”

However, many respondents attribute responsibility to students since they are not supposed to violently treat their teachers under any circumstance. Consequently, the majority of respondents place blame on societal influences and the environment in which students are raised. Female interviewee number 5 explains this viewpoint by stating: “sometimes some students speak in a violent way it is a way they learnt at home it is the way they use ordinarily.”

The minority who chose teachers as the sole responsible for this phenomenon believe that it is the treatment of students by teachers that determines whether students become calm or aggressive. Female interviewee number 5 reinforces this viewpoint by stating: “sometimes they don’t respect the student okay that’s why he feels of course that he is the victim and that’s why he become aggressive.”

To provide further insight, the following figure is concerned with the reasons behind school violence from the part of students.

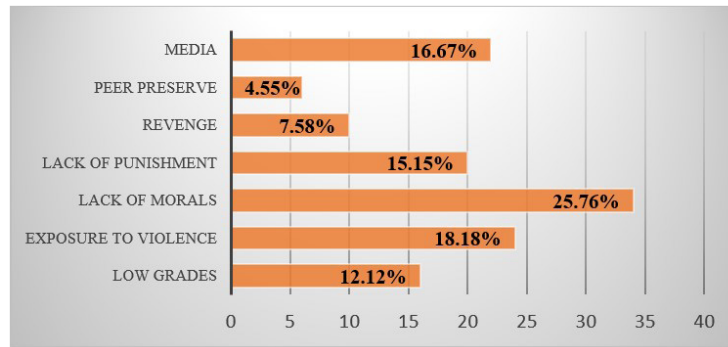


Figure 8: The reasons behind School Violence from the Part of Students

As for the reasons that push students to violate their teachers, 25.76% of the respondents choose ‘lack of morals’ at first. 18.18% of the respondents choose ‘exposure to violence’ as second. 16.67% of them believe that ‘media’ is also a crucial factor. ‘Lack of punishment’ follows with 15.15% of the respondents. Then, ‘low grades’ follows with 12.12% while ‘revenge’ and ‘peer preserve’ come last with 7.58% and 4.55% respectively.

Selecting ‘lack of morals’ as the primary reason that drives students to violate their teachers highlights the concerning nature of this issue. Lack of morals can manifest in various detrimental behaviors including disrespect towards teachers as pointed out by female interviewee number 3: “violence against teachers is represented in lack of respect and appreciation of the position of the teacher.” Being highly associated with behavior, laziness can also be considered a contributing factor in this category as hardworking students generally exhibit less aggression compared to their lazier counterparts. This viewpoint is supported by the same interviewee who asserts: “when the classroom is very full and the majority of its students have lack of education and behavior and educational weakness because we rarely find a hard worker student with a bad and violent behavior.” Generally, society is also one of the main causes behind the crisis of morals that has become noticed in students. Specifically, families start to give up their roles in raising children with good manners and behaviors. Male interviewee number 4 asserts this stance by saying that

the first party is the family and unfortunately the Moroccan family gave up on its roles in educating, rather the Moroccan family is overwhelmed by new and strange values [Now] the family’s own focus is to insure the financial needs of the student or the child and of

course [the family] forgets other dimensions of education the thing that pushes to produce to us a student who is profiteer in his/her nature he/she has to wear in a good way as their peers wears snickers cost 1000 dirhams or 1500 dirhams and a jacket with so and so but on the level of values through which he/she is put inside the society in a correct way unfortunately the Moroccan society does not give much importance to this case

The environment in which students are raised and grow up significantly influences their morals, manners, and behaviors. Consequently, the majority of respondents strongly emphasize that both the general environment and the family have the power to shape students conduct for better or for worse. Male interviewee number 5 further clarify this viewpoint respectively by stating: “there is the street the street as you see now is creating a lot of corrupted values.”

Media plays a critical role in facilitating the violation of teachers by transmitting certain messages and ideologies that undermine their positions. Interviewee number 4 reinforces this perspective by clarifying: “media with all its types the audio visual and the internet and so on start transmitting corrupted values to the student”. Moreover, social media as a platform without supervision encourages students to harm their teachers, particularly when following a trend. This is revealed in male interviewee number 6’s statement: “there are a lot of videos in Facebook or Instagram in which students mock or beat their teachers. Then the video can become a trend followed by a lot of students.”

Moreover, the absence of adequate punishment is considered one of the crucial factors that encourage students to engage in harmful behaviors. When punishments are perceived as too lenient, it diminishes

the sense of fear among students, the thing that leads to an increase in aggression towards their teachers. Male interviewee number 6 elaborates on this point by clarifying:

the punishments are too simple even if the teacher is exposed to beating and abuse from some of his/her students the student as the ultimate punishment he /she may be exposed to and this happens in many times is to change the school and this is not good rather it increases students' tyranny and daring on his/her teachers.

'Low grades' are also seen as a factor that drives students to resort to violence against their teachers. Poor academic performance can be perceived as a barrier that hinders students' success. One interviewee shares their experience of being insulted by students because they did not achieve the grades they desired; he states: "I was exposed to violence I can say verbal violence by some students who have not got good grades." The same applies to exams as well. Students may become more aggressive because they perceive teachers as hindering their success by preventing cheating during exams. Female interviewee number 1 further supports this viewpoint by illustrating: "students consider that the teacher is the person who prevents them from getting good answers the cheated answers and they suppose that it is an enemy".

Lastly, 'revenge' as well as 'peer pressure' were not selected by many respondents. Regarding revenge, it refers to "something that you do in order to make sb suffer because they have made you suffer." (Hornby, 2010). Seeking revenge may resort to physically harming or violating teachers as discussed in the first chapter. For instance, a student took extreme measures by causing a serious injury to his teacher's cheek due his belief that she played a role in the school board's decision to transfer him to another school after he had engaged in physical violence against his Islamic studies teacher. (Lahsini, 2017). As for 'peer pressure', female interviewee number 5 defines it as "aggressive students especially who push others to be more and more violent in the class." These students are more likely to have a primary goal of encouraging others to engage in negative behaviors. This idea is discussed by male interviewee number 4 who argues that: "he/she is going to be put inside the school he/she will be an item that motivates problems inside the school and not the opposite".

Having addressed the factors that contribute to school violence from the perspective of students, the following figure will unveil the factors that emanate from the side of teachers and that may push students toward such actions.

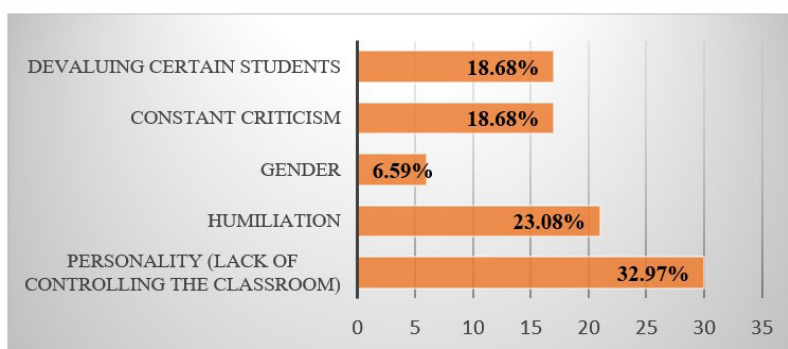


Figure 9: The Reasons behind School Violence from the Part of Teachers

Concerning the factors that push students to violate their teachers from the latter's part, 32.97% of the respondents choose the teachers' 'personality'. 23.08% choose 'humiliation'. 'Constant criticism' as well as 'devaluing certain students' go on the same footing as they are equally chosen by 18.68% while gender remains at the bottom with 6.59%.

Selecting the teacher's personality as the primary reason indicates its significant impact on the educational process. A weak personality can result in inadequate performance in their role. Male interviewee number 6 reinforces this perspective by contending: "the teacher's weak personality leads to not doing the job in a complete and perfect way". Furthermore, it is essential for the teacher to possess a strong personality as it grants them the authority to effectively manage students in the classroom. This sentiment is echoed by male interviewee number 2: "the more the teacher does not control his/her class the more he/she is incapable of holding the class and is

exposed awfully to violence".

Furthermore, when teachers humiliate their students, it often provokes feelings of anger and can potentially lead students to resort to violence as a means of defending their pride. Humiliation can manifest in various forms, but its underlying objective is to mock students. Sometimes, it takes the form of a lack of respect as indicated by male interviewee number 6 who reveals instances where teachers' relationships with their students are rooted in power relations and are devoid of any mutual respect by stating: "there are a lot of teachers who do not respect their students". In addition, some teachers go beyond lack of respect and resort to using offensive language which can significantly harm students. Female interviewee number 3 reinforces this viewpoint by stating: "some teachers violently treat the student like cursing and insulting and mocking from him/her in which he/she humiliates the student and reduces from his/her value". As a result, male interviewee number 2 contends that "when you

provoke the student in front of his peers and specifically when you attempt to minimize him in front of his female peers so here he may transform into a predatory beast who can exercise on you all forms of violence.”

‘Devaluing certain students’ and ‘constant criticism’ are perceived with equal concern among respondents. Similar to the previous factor, teachers may devalue certain students as a means of asserting power and authority over them. Engaging in such power-based behaviors can lead students to feel victimized which may in turn increase the likelihood of them becoming more aggressive towards their teachers. Male interviewee number 4 asserts this perspective by stating:

societies suffer from a collection of collective and psychological nodes and one of these collective and psychological nodes which control the underdeveloped societies is the node of authoritarianism [...] is when every person feels inside with an amount of power which he/she tries to exercise it on whom are weaker than him/her and here when the teacher evokes that he/she has this power over the student and is not conscious with the danger of this case tries to exercise his/her power with a shocking forms which may lead to forms of mutual violence.

Regarding teachers’ constant criticism, most respondents argue that teachers employ an ineffective approach by publicly criticizing students. Consequently, students may become more aggressive towards their teachers as a means of preserving their ideal image among their classmates.

However, one respondent suggested that teachers should change this approach to engage in private discussions instead. Male interviewee number 4 argued that: “when you criticize him/her face to face he/she can accept your critique and he/she even excuse but if you criticize him/her in front of his/her peers so just wait any form of the various forms of reactions from him/her”.

Selecting gender as the least influential factor in encouraging students to exercise violence against their teachers indicates that respondents are aware of the fact that violence against teachers has nothing to do with one’s gender. This notion is reinforced by the examples provided in the earlier part of this research which featured instances from Moroccan schools that involve both male and female teachers. This highlights that teachers, regardless of their gender or position, can be vulnerable to the phenomenon of school violence.

Wounds Unmasked: Examining the Ramifications of School Violence

Having dealt with the factors that push students to exercise violence against their teachers, the current part is devoted to display the impacts of school violence on teachers namely ‘insecurity’, ‘lack interaction with students’, ‘behavioral change’, ‘loss of self-esteem’, ‘absence’ and last but not least ‘quitting’.

To shed light on the consequences of school violence on teachers, the following figure presents the opinions of respondents vis-à-vis the impacts of this phenomenon.

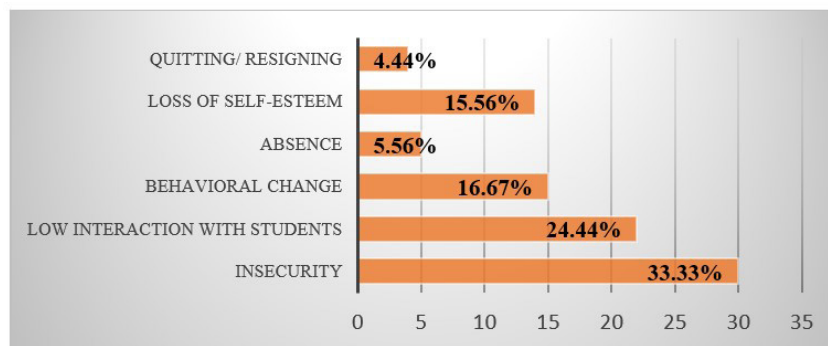


Figure 10: The Consequences of School Violence on Teachers

As far as the consequences of violence against teachers are concerned, 33.33% of the respondents choose ‘insecurity’. 24.44% choose ‘low interaction with students’. Next is ‘behavioral change’ being chosen by 16.67% of the respondents. ‘Loss of self-esteem’ follows as being chosen by 15.56% of the respondents while ‘absence’ and ‘quitting/resigning’ remain at the bottom as 5.56% and 4.44% of the respondents choose them respectively. Choosing ‘insecurity’ as the major impact of school violence on teachers highlights the profound sense of lack of confidence which is experienced by teachers when violated by their students. This sentiment is echoed by female interviewee number 3 who states that “violence against teachers is represented in lack of respect and appreciation of the position that the teacher enjoys the

feeling of humiliation the feeling of lack of security”. Experiencing this feeling is more likely to lead teachers to restrict communication channels with their students and withdraw into themselves. This sentiment is articulated by male interviewee number 4 who contends: “violence leads to devote a violent look between the student and the teacher and when this violent look is devoted between the student and the teacher channels of communication are separated”.

Furthermore, teachers are inclined to change their behavior inside the classroom when interacting with their students by becoming more fearful. This shift in behavior frequently leads teachers to make appointments with psychiatrists as they begin to suffer from severe depression and fear which stem from the hurt and violation that are

experienced from those who were supposed to respect them. Male interviewees number 2 contends: “the violence exercised on teachers ends with many of them in psychiatric clinics some of them suffer from depression and suffer from psychological crises.” As a result of the damage which is inflicted upon their personalities and psyches, teachers often experience a loss of self-esteem. Male interviewee number 6 further reinforces this viewpoint by stating: “the most important consequences is that the teacher gets psychologically damaged which negatively influences on his/her job and the quality of his/her job”. As an explanation for the absence of teachers as a consequence of this phenomenon, violated teachers often find themselves recall the traumatic experiences while giving lessons which can lead to a loss of focus and concentration. Consequently, the classroom itself can transform into an unhealthy environment for education. Thus, regular absences may occur, and many teachers may ultimately choose to abandon their jobs. More intensely, teachers find it increasingly difficult to fulfill their duties to educate and teach students as they initially had a positive perception on teaching and interacting with students. Thus, teachers are more likely

to quit their jobs as they deem it impossible to continue being exposed to a setting where they are violated by those who should be under their care. Female interviewee number 1 emphasizes this perspective by clarifying: well I suppose that there are very very bad consequences when we see the teachers are beaten by students I sometimes think about those teachers and I try to imagine how this teacher would continue teaching after this incident maybe it would be impossible for teachers to look again into the eyes of students and continue working.

Creating Change: Proposed Measures to Alleviate School Violence Against Teachers

The preceding sections comprehensively addressed many aspects of the phenomenon of violence against teachers including its frequency in schools, its manifestations, the gender which is most affected, factors from both students and teachers, and the impacts on educators. Thus, it is fitting to conclude this chapter by presenting recommendations and solutions to mitigate this issue. Examining potential remedies to reduce this phenomenon, the following figure presents the perspectives of the respondents.

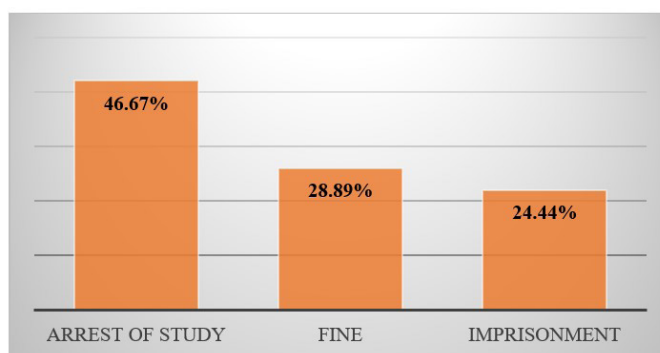


Figure 11: The Measures to Reduce Violence against Teachers

Concerning the measures that aim at reducing violence against teachers, 46.67% of respondents advocate for the expulsion of students who dare to violate their teachers. 28.89% suggest imposing fines while 24.44% believe that sending these students to jail is more appropriate. Some respondents argue that students who intentionally harm or violate their teachers should be banned from attending school and even face imprisonment. This sentiment is expressed by male interviewee number 6: “the recommended ministry must look for its role in curbing the students who dared to damage the teachers and beat them and abuse them through repressive and restraining methods and maybe most notably expulsion” before he continues, “and why not prison whoever is proven to want for example hurt his/her teachers must be judicially pursued so as to be a lesson for others”. However, the majority of respondents reject these solutions when dealing with such students by viewing them as measures that may aggravate the issue rather than resolve it. They argue that attempting to address violence with further violence is not a feasible solution.

Instead, some suggest the interference of several parties instead of depending solely on teachers as a means to prevent this phenomenon. Female interviewee number 1 is among those who advocate for this approach as she clarifies:

the direct solutions is the entry of the civil society on-line through the contribution in organizing the behavior inside schools the entry of the parents association on-line as being considered an essential partner in its children’s future and the school’s future [...] the educational administration of the school should have roles and direct responsibility inside the school in order to understand the dishonorable behaviors and violent behaviors of students and also the councils inside the school should be active and effective like the council of strategy and the educational councils.

Others advocate for the establishment of support institutions within schools where students can seek assistance to alleviate stress and address problems that originate from home. This approach aims to provide students with a supportive environment to address

their issues constructively. Female interviewee number 3 expresses support for this idea by stating: “we want and we beg those responsible to create and build some listening institutions and accompanying students with violent behaviors”.

In brief, school violence poses a significant threat to Moroccan schools since it occurs on a daily basis and manifests in various forms including verbal, physical, psychological, behavioral, and sexual violence against teachers. This study’s respondents revealed that the phenomenon has no relation with teachers’ gender. Several factors contribute to violence against teachers namely students’ academic struggles, exposure to violence, lack of morals, media influence, peer pressure, and revenge. Conversely, teacher-related factors include weak personalities, humiliation, and criticism. These factors result in numerous consequences for teachers such as insecurity, limited interaction with students, behavioral changes, loss of self-esteem, absenteeism, and even resignation. Given the severity of this issue, proactive measures are necessary to create a safe and violence-free environment in Moroccan schools.

Discussion

It is worth mentioning the results that this research paper has yielded. Starting with the frequency of school violence, the majority of the respondents asserted that school violence exists to the extent that it becomes a normal and common deed in Moroccan schools. Moreover, most of the respondents assert on the existence of school violence in different types as it mostly takes the verbal form through insults and curses. Then, it can develop to direct confrontations through beating or injuring. This phenomenon can also be behavioral as manifested in the fact that certain students aggressively behave inside the classroom through kicking trash bins, throwing school supplies, hitting on tables, etc. Besides, school violence may be psychological through gazing and staring at the teacher and it rarely takes the sexual dimension through harassing female teachers. It should be noted that the majority of the respondents chose that this phenomenon has nothing to do with one’s gender. Concerning the reasons that push students to attack their teachers, they emanate from different perspectives according to the respondents’ perceptions on this issue. That is, some argue that it is the students’ mistake as being lazy, not well-raised, living in inappropriate arenas, not expecting serious punishments. In contrast, others believe that it is teachers’ mistake as having weak personalities, devaluing, criticizing and humiliating their students in front of their peers. Yet, the respondents stressed on the fact that no matter what teachers do, there is no convincing justification for students to exercise violence against them. Furthermore, this study reveals that this phenomenon has severe consequences on teachers which vary from the feeling of insecurity inside the classroom and limiting the scope of interaction with students to quitting their job. Last but not least, the study comes with the fact that there

are many suggestions to reduce this phenomenon which range from using rationality to heavy punishments.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is safe to say that school violence is a serious issue that occurs within the corridors of Moroccan schools. This phenomenon is manifested in various forms within our society as broadcasted by social media platforms. The phenomenon which students exercise towards their teachers stems from diverse reasons and has profound psychological consequences for educators. Importantly, while traditional stereotypes may suggest that this phenomenon targets female teachers, empirical evidence suggests that violence against educators transcends gender boundaries. Both male and female teachers are vulnerable to various forms of aggression. This fact demands the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address school violence in order to guarantee safe and supportive environments for all educators. Effective interventions may include the implementation of strict disciplinary policies, promoting awareness and education about the impacts of violence, and providing psychological support and counseling services for affected teachers. At last, we hope to create a secure and nurturing educational atmosphere where teachers feel respected and protected, enabling them to fulfill their critical role in shaping the future of Moroccan society.

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