



Perception Differences in Violence Against Child

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Abstract

Mostly, people who apply violence do not realize the effects of it, especially child victims give strong emotional responses to violence. Behaviors without any intention of abuse or neglect can mostly be seen among the people, who are dealing with children intensely like teachers and parents. Aim of this work is to determine the perception differences of parents, teachers and children in violence. Revised form of Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and also 17 parameters related to violence were applied to children, parents and teachers and then their answers were compared with each other. Questionnaires were responded by 411 children, 135 parents and 85 teachers. In each three groups, it was noticed that the ratio of perception of violence in parameters related to physical violence was higher than in parameters related to emotional violence. While the teachers had the highest perception of violence, children had the lowest perception of violence. Sensitiveness in perception of violence and education on this subject are not enough to stop violence. It must be prevented to apply violence in society for an aim of discipline and education and violence must not be seen as a way of teaching good manners. It also must not be applied as a tool for solving problems, gaining power and control. The rights of violence victims, especially children's rights must be protected and there must be intimidating sanctions for people who practice violence on the others.

Key Words: Child abuse, behavior, neglect, victim

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Introduction

Violence is a global and public health problem having roots in cultural, economic and social lives [1-3]. Most of the children who experienced the violence do not have healthy growing [4]. World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” [3]. A large number of the violence incidents occur at home, in family, at school or in an institution such as workplace. Therefore places, where the people feel safe themselves can be the most risky places at the same time.

Violence behaviors against children differ from place to place according to tolerance to different forms of violence, socio-cultural views, society and family structure, parents and children [2,5,6]. In Turkey, child abuse and neglect are evaluated legally according to Turkish Penal Code (2005), Turkish Civil Code (2005), Law on The Establishment and Trial Procedures of Juvenile Courts (1979) and Law on Social Services and Child Protection Institution (1983) [7-10]. In Turkey, perspective about violence against children has been changing in a positive manner by the works of institutions, organizations, media, educational publications and legal regulations on violence against children. Nowadays, the violence behaviors against children still take place in Turkey. Most of the people, who abuse children perceive and accept these behaviors as a method of child discipline. These violence behaviors done without any intention of abuse or violence perception, typically can be seen especially among the people, who are dealing with children intensely like teachers and parents. Even there are people, who apply violence but not sense its effects, the children experienced violence give strong emotional reactions.

The study on violence against children is separated in two parts. The aim of this work is to determine the differences in perception of parents, teachers and children in violence against to the children. In the successive work, aspects of these three groups about punishment methods will be examined.

Material and Methods

Izmir is the third biggest metropolitan city of Turkey with a population of approximately 3,500,000. For this study, one of the largest districts of Izmir named Cigli, which has high ratio of immigration and a population mostly having low and middle income levels and is known as an industrial area was chosen for applying questionnaires. The questionnaires were applied to children, parents and teachers after taking approval from Deanery of Medicine Faculty at Ege University and getting necessary permissions from Directorate of Izmir National Education. Here, it is not possible to provide a one-to-one correspondence between parents and children since identity information were not taken for gathering intimate answers to the questions. Because of this, to determine the significance of statistical values, comparison between the frequencies of the answers given by children, parents and teachers were done by using Fisher's exact test and significance of the data was calculated [11].

By using randomized cluster sampling, it was chosen 4 schools from 27 elementary schools in Cigli. By the same method, there had been chosen randomized sampling of students from 7th and 8th grades of these 4 schools. The minimum number of students for representing the population in 95% confidence interval by sampling were determined. In this study, questionnaires supported by 411 children, 135 parents and 85 teachers were evaluated. In the applications, the reason of reaching to 135 parents when the number of children attending to the questionnaires was 411, is that the questionnaires were applied in "parents meeting" at schools but most of the parents were not attending to these meetings.

The questionnaire, which is based on Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-CTQ that conducts a reliable, valid screening for a history of child abuse and neglect was applied [12,13]. CTQ's range of age is 12 and older. It has five scales; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect and emotional neglect [12,13]. The validity and reliability of CTQ for Turkey was analyzed in [14].

Here, CTQ was revised by changing the answers' options to "Yes – No" instead of using 5-point Likert type scale and eliminating the questions about sexual abuse. Revised questionnaires with cross-examination approach were applied on parents and teachers as well

as children. Children were asked to determine their parents' and teachers' behaviors to themselves. Teachers were asked for determining their behaviors towards their children and finally parents were asked to understand their behaviors to their children. Behaviors were examined in two separated parts-positive and negative behaviors.

Also, 17 violence featured parameters that frequently encountered in daily life were added to the questionnaires then children, parents and teachers were asked to mark which parameters have violent featured behaviors. All data were analyzed by using statistic program.

Results

In this study, which is about perception differences of children, parents and teachers about violence, the descriptive statistics for three groups were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The distribution of children (n=411), parents (n=135) and teachers (n=85) according to their socio-demographic data.

			Children	Parents	Teachers
Range of Age (years)			12 – 16	29 – 65	22 – 55
Mean of Age (years)			13.3 ± 0.8	38.6 ± 5.5	37.9 ± 8.1
Sex	Male	(n,%)	188, %45.7	29, %21.5	24, %28.2
	Female	(n,%)	223, %54.3	106, %78.5	61, %71.8

Children, parents and teachers' responses about 17 violence featured parameters were given in Table 2. The physical violence featured parameters have higher perception rates than emotional violence featured parameters. Beating, slapping on body / head, throwing slipper, baton, etc. were the most checked parameters.

Table 2. The distribution of the parameters evaluated as violence by children (n=411), parents (n=135) and teachers (n=85).

Parameters		Children		Parents		Teachers		
		%	n	%	n	%	n	
Physical Violence Featured Parameters	Harsh	Beating	90.0	370	79.2	107	98.8	84
		Slapping on body / head	79.6	327	74.8	101	95.3	81
		Throwing slipper, baton, etc.	77.8	320	71.8	97	92.9	79
		Tying up	63.9	263	71.1	96	92.9	79
	Soft	Pulling ear	52.0	214	59.2	80	87.1	74
		Pulling hair	46.9	193	57.7	78	84.7	72
		Pinching	36.7	151	52.5	71	84.7	72
		Pushing roughly	35.0	144	47.4	64	84.7	72
Emotional Violence Featured Parameters	Insulting	46.9	193	51.8	70	84.7	72	
	Yelling	43.0	177	45.9	62	57.6	49	
	Forcing child to act against his/her will	41.6	171	34.8	47	67.1	57	
	Vituperating	38.6	159	45.9	62	81.2	69	
	Embarrassing	34.3	141	37.0	50	63.5	54	
	Blackballing	31.3	129	42.2	57	65.9	56	
	Ridiculing	28.9	119	39.2	53	70.6	60	
	Nicknaming	24.8	102	33.3	45	60.0	51	
Not giving permissions for his/her demands	16.5	68	23.7	32	36.5	31		

When the answers of the children and parents about these parameters were compared with each other, statistically significant values were determined in the parameters of beating ($p=0.0025$), pulling hair ($p=0.0370$), pinching ($p=0.0017$), pushing roughly ($p=0.0109$), blackballing ($p=0.0277$) and ridiculing ($p=0.0324$). In these parameters “beating” was perceived as violence by most of the children. Besides, it was seen that children’s perception of violence were less than their parents in “pulling hair”, “pinching”, “pushing roughly”, “blackballing” and “ridiculing” parameters.

When the violence perceptions of the children and teachers were compared with each other, p values were found as $p < 0.05$ for “beating” and “yelling”, for other parameters p values were found as $p < 0.01$. It was clearly noted that teachers' perceptions of violence significantly higher.

When the violence perceptions of the parents and teachers were compared with each other, statistically significant differences were determined for all parameters except “yelling”.

p value was $p < 0.05$ for “Not giving permissions for his/her demands”, for other parameters, p values were $p < 0.01$. It was also noted that teachers' violence perceptions were higher than parents.

Parents' behaviors that are perceived by children and stated by parents were compared with each other (Table 3, Table 4). For all positive featured parents' behaviors except “making to feel important”, parents said that they behaved in a positive manner more than their children mentioned. In negative featured behaviors which had statistically significant differences between parents and children, it was noticed that children had more sensitive perceptions than their parents for the behavior of “calling names”.

Table 3. Comparison of positive featured parents' behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411) and stated by parents (n=135).

Positive featured parents' behaviors	Perceived by children		Stated by parents		p-value
	%	n	%	n	
Making to feel important	95.6	393	91.1	123	$p > 0.05$
Feeling loved	93.4	384	98.5	133	$p = 0.0247$
Looking out for danger	92.9	382	97.1	131	$p > 0.05$
Family feeling close	87.4	359	96.3	130	$p = 0.0019$

Table 4. Comparison of negative featured parents' behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411) and stated by parents (n=135).

	Negative featured parents' behaviors	Perceived by children		Stated by parents		P-value
		%	n	%	n	
Emotional	Calling names	18.3	75	8.9	12	0.0097
	Not giving importance to decisions, ideas and opinions of child	10.7	44	8.9	12	> 0.05
	Saying hurtful things	8.8	36	15.6	21	0.0340
	Sometimes hating child	5.6	23	3.7	5	>0.05
	Making derogatory comments	4.9	20	10.4	14	0.0375
	Wishing to be never born	4.4	18	3.7	5	>0.05
Physical	Beating	6.4	26	45.2	61	0.0001
	Punishing by hitting	4.6	19	6.7	9	>0.05
	Hitting hard enough to leave bruises	1.9	8	1.5	2	>0.05
Neglect	Not to be taken to doctor	7.5	31	8.2	11	>0.05
	Wearing dirty clothes	1.2	5	3.7	5	>0.05

Comparison of teachers' behaviors perceived by children and stated by teachers was given (Table 5, Table 6). It was determined that teachers were stated to do the positive featured behaviors more than children perceived.

Table 5. Comparison of positive featured teachers' behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411) and stated by teachers (n=85).

Positive featured teachers' behaviors	Perceived by children		Stated by teachers		p-value
	%	n	%	n	
Looking out for danger	85.4	351	92.9	79	p>0.05
Feeling loved	85.2	350	97.6	83	p=0.0006
To be source of strength	81.5	335	88.2	75	p>0.05
Feeling close	75.9	312	85.9	73	p=0.046
Making to feel important	53.5	220	95.3	81	p=0.0001

Table 6. Comparison of negative featured teachers' behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411) and stated by teachers (n=85).

Negative featured teachers' behaviors		Perceived by children		Stated by teachers		p-value
		%	n	%	n	
Emotional	Not giving importance to decisions, ideas and opinions of child	21.7	89	1.2	1	p=0.0001
	Sometimes hating from child	16.8	69	5.9	5	p=0.0075
	Saying hurtful things	12.2	50	24.7	21	p=0.0057
	Making derogatory comments	10.7	44	11.8	10	p>0.05
	Calling names	6.3	26	5.9	5	p>0.05
	Emotionally abusing	5.8	24	14.1	12	p=0.018
Physical	Beating	9.5	39	44.7	38	p=0.0001
	Punishing by hitting	4.1	17	8.2	7	p>0.05
	Hitting hard enough to leave bruises	2.9	12	0	0	p>0.05

When the parents' and teachers' behaviors that perceived by children was compared with each other, it was detected that children perceived parents' positive featured behaviors and teachers' negative featured behaviors much more (Table 7, Table 8).

Table 7. Comparison of parents' and teachers' positive featured behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411).

Positive featured behaviors that are perceived by children	Parents' behaviors		Teachers' behaviors		p-value
	%	n	%	n	
Making to feel important	95.6	393	53.5	220	p=0.0001
Feeling loved	93.4	384	85.2	350	p=0.0002
Looking out for danger	92.9	382	85.4	351	p=0.0007
Feeling close	87.4	359	75.9	312	p=0.0001

Table 8. Comparison of parents' and teachers' negative featured behaviors that are perceived by children (n=411).

Negative featured behaviors that are perceived by children		Parents' behaviors		Teachers' behaviors		p- value
		%	n	%	n	
Emotional	Calling names	18.3	75	6.3	26	p=0.0001
	Not giving importance to decisions, ideas and opinions	10.7	44	21.7	89	p=0.0001
	Saying hurtful things	8.8	36	12.2	50	p>0.05
	Hating from himself/herself	5.6	23	16.8	69	p=0.0001
	Making derogatory comments	4.9	20	10.7	44	p=0.0025
Physical	Beating	6.4	26	9.5	39	p>0.05
	Punishing by hitting	4.6	19	4.1	17	p>0.05
	Hitting hard enough to leave bruises	1.9	8	2.9	12	p>0.05

Discussion

Every human being has life, health and education rights. Especially, these rights of the children should be protected firstly by their parents and government whose one of the main responsibility is providing this protection. Hence it is the most important thing to prevent violence which is one of the main factors effecting the basic rights of the children.

Violence that is a huge problem of a society was accepted as a public health problem by World Health Organization in 1996 and also it has become a popular research subject of science [1,15].

In the evaluation of the violence perceptions of the children, parents and teachers through 17 parameters, it was seen that the physical violence featured parameters have higher rate of violence perception than emotional ones. Similar to this study, in another study on the students attending to elementary schools in Turkey, the answer of the question "what does violence mean according to you?" was mostly physical featured behaviors like "fighting and beating"

[16]. In 1986, Ney et al. pointed out the fact that oral violence which is a kind of emotional violence was perceived much positively than the other kind of violence by the children [15].

Except the parameters “beating, slapping, throwing slipper, baton etc., tying up, and pulling ear” other each 12 parameters had rate of violence perception by children below 50%. If “pulling hair, pinching and insulting” parameters were added to above 5 parameters, it was seen that except these parameters, other 9 parameters had rate of violence perception by parents below 50%. Moreover, except the parameter “beating”, it was found that other 16 parameters had rate of violence perception below 75%. On the teachers’ side, it was noted that “not giving permissions for his/her demands” had rate of violence perception was 36.5, but all other parameters had the rates above 50%. This shows that teachers have the highest rate of violence perception but the children have the lowest. Having statistically significant differences in violence perceptions between children and teachers and between parents and teachers in all parameters except “yelling” supports this result. There is no statistically significant difference between parents’ and teachers’ answers about “yelling” and this result causes to think that they use this method on their children and children with some rates as they do this as a proper behavior. Due to the fact that the news about the violence at schools in Turkey were considered in detail. Especially in media in recent years, people focused much more on this subject. To prevent violence and fight against it, studies are started to be done by at first Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, administration of schools and guiding services. By these studies, it is tried to improve awakening about preventing violence. It is thought that because of the education seminars about violence given to the teachers make their perception of violence higher than children and parents.

Violence is seen as a natural notion in lots of countries, also in Turkey. Mostly, people who are not capable to protect themselves encounter to the violence. Children take the first place who have to deal with violence. They often come across violence mostly at home, then at school and in the streets. In this study, through the given parameters it was seen that the children had the lowest rate of violence perception besides the teachers and the parents. This result is correlated with that children think violence is a natural event.

Physical violence featured behaviors have a wide range from serious physical abuse injuries to culturally acceptable physical punishment methods [17]. In this study, it was seen that soft

physical featured behaviors had low rate of violence perception than harsh physical featured behaviors. It was thought that this result is related to the fact that soft physical featured behaviors are often used to a punishment method in daily life and they are seen as acceptable punishment methods culturally.

Here, it was noted that according to the teachers' answers emotional violence featured parameters had a rate of violence perception which was so close to the rate of physical violence perception. But the answers of parents and children were analyzed it was seen that the rate of emotional violence featured behaviors did not leave any physical findings that could be realized by others on the body. Emotional violence featured behaviors are related to one's psychological condition closely and this yields differences in perceptions between the groups.

When the answers of the children and parents were compared about positive featured parents' behaviors, it was seen that only "making to feel important" had the rate of perception for children (95.6%) more than it was for parents (91.1%). This result could be explained by the thought of the parents about not be able to fulfill of their children's expectations and not giving enough attention to their children in daily life. But in any case there was no statistically significant difference between these two groups. For the behaviors "feeling loved" and "feeling close" perception rates of children were (93.4% - 87.4%) and for parents these rates were (98.5% - 96.3%). As it was seen there were statistically significant differences for these behaviors and it was thought that this result occurred because the parents couldn't reflect their positive emotions to their children.

It was noted that the perception rates of children were higher in some negative featured parents' behaviors (not giving importance to decisions, ideas and opinions of child, sometimes hating child, wishing to be never born), which are depending on feelings. This result can be connected to the fact that the parents do not consider and predict consequences

of their behaviors. The behavior "calling names" were perceived by children with the rate 18.3%. It is the most concrete notion between the other behaviors which have higher rates.

Parents often call name to their children without thinking and just because they find this is funny. But the rate showed that some words said unawares could easily affect the children.

After comparing the answers for the physical violence featured behaviors of parents and children, it was noted that there was a big difference between these two groups in the rates of “beating” (parents 45.2% - children 6.4%) and it was the unique behavior in the physical violence featured behaviors in which it was detected a statistically significant difference. Since it could be thought that the parents do not want to share that they beat their children, it was really interesting that the rate of the children’s answers was lower than the rate of the parents’ answers. This is interpreted as the children thought that they deserve to be beaten because of their wrong behaviors and they get used to this. It was thought as children feel that it is worth to tell if they get abrasion and ecchymosis after they were beaten.

Compared to the children’s answers, the reason of having higher rates about negligent behaviors of parents in parents’ answers was thought as the parents want to do more for their children but most of the time they cannot manage to do that because of their low-medium socio-economical levels block themselves.

In all positive featured behaviors of teachers, teachers’ answers had higher rates than children’s which might be because the children perceive positive feelings with lower rates in class crowded than home and the teachers are not successful in reflecting positive feelings in classes as they think.

In negative emotional featured teachers’ behaviors, behaviors like “saying hurtful things” and “making derogatory comments” had higher rates in the answers of the teachers. This shows that awareness of the teachers about how they behave is higher than the awareness of them about how the children perceive these behaviors.

In negative physical behaviors, “hitting hard enough to leave bruises” were never announced by teachers. But 2.9% of the children declared that this behavior happened. “Beating” and “punishing by hitting” were declared by teachers in higher rates. This result was commented as teachers do not notice the consequences of their physical behaviors.

When parents’ and teachers’ behaviors perceived by children were compared, it was seen that in all positive featured behaviors the parents’ behaviors and in all negative featured behaviors the teachers’ behaviors had higher rates. Even the aim of this study is not detecting how often the children come across violence at home and school, it can be concluded that the children are

abused both physically and emotionally at school in higher rates than at home. Different than this conclusion, it was found that in Elazig (a southeastern city of Turkey) children were abused physically mostly at home by their parents [18]. This different result can be explained by the fact that the studies were made in different cities of Turkey.

Perception consists properties both coming from birth and gained by learning during life. In this study, the reason why the violence perceptions of teachers are the highest is that they are educated about violence and attend to awareness programs. This shows the sensitivity in perception of violence can be provided by education. It will be effective in providing common perception in society if people are educated about not to use violence and how the violence affects the other people. It is a very well-known truth that children who were abused in their childhoods especially by their parents would behave violently in future and tendency to aggression is high [19-24]. By these reasons, it is an obligation to provide unity and improve awareness of society not to accept violence as it is a natural notion and to prevent children who were abused in their childhoods to become violence applicators in future. In this study, it is analyzed that three groups –children, parents and teachers- have different perceptions of violence even though they live in same society. It is trivial to have these differences since perception is dependent to personal point of view. But in such a subject which damages people and also whole society, there should be common statements accepted by everyone to minimize dimensions of damages. Otherwise, violence applicators cannot figure out how the ones who are abused may be the closest person to him/herself are affected and so the violence and its effects will grow instantly. But this is also a reality that it is not enough just to improve awareness in perception to prevent violence. Violence should not be applied for discipline and education method, not be evaluated as a right. Violence should not be seen as a problem solver and a tool to gain power and control. Physically and emotionally abused people's and especially children's rights should be protected and there should be disincentives for violence applicators.

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