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School Violence Prevention in High Secondary Education in Kosovo and the Role
of School Psychologists

An Honors Society Project

Edita Karavidaj

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Abstract

This present study explores the prevalence of school violence in the pre-university level of education in Kosovo. Despite the underreported cases, school violence is common and a distressing issue. Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) in Kosovo has adopted prevention-based approach towards school violence since 2014 (with a revision in 2018) and regulated that each school must have at least one School Psychologist (SP). Despite the reform efforts, the implementation of such regulations is incomplete. The current study hypothesized that school violence rates are higher in urban schools thus prevention-based programs are more likely to be implemented in these schools; and that SPs do not take part in the implementation of prevention-based programs. The results, based on an analysis of secondary and primary data, did not provide enough support that urban schools tend to have higher implementation levels of prevention programs; whereas the second hypothesis was confirmed by the data, in that SPs' role is minimal to non-existent in school violence prevention. Since the role of SPs in violence prevention in Kosovo's schools is an under researched topic, this present study provides insightful evidence and serves as a starting point for further research and discussion on this issue.

Keywords: school, violence, school psychologist, higher secondary education, MEST

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Introduction

Overview

School environments at high secondary education levels are considered to be safe places where parents and caregivers expect that, besides gaining education, their children will also be in protected area where their well-being is secured (Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). This assumption, however, might be challenged due to a substantial rise of violence in schools across the world. In the United States (US), data from 2017 revealed that middle and high school students (aged 12-18 years old) reported about 827,000 cases of violence at school premises while there were more than 500,000 cases outside of school (Musu et al., 2019). Moreover, 6% of public school teachers in the US have reported on being attacked physically by a student (2019). Annually, two to five million children gain injuries due to school violence in educational settings in the US (Peters, 2004). A report published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2018, collected data throughout 122 countries and revealed that more than 50% of children aged between 13 and 15 years old around the world, experience school violence (“A familiar face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents”, 2018). Regardless the high incidence of school violence across the world, the students are still considered to be safer at school than outside the school environments (Miller & Kraus, 2008). European countries' data show varying school violence prevalence rates in that differing from 15% to 50% of the students having experienced school violence (United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, 2012; Megele & Buzzi, 2011). For example, 15% of the students from Sweden reported being a subject of school violence recently, while higher rates, such as 56% and 64% of students experienced school violence in Portugal and Lithuania, respectively (United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, 2012). In addition, data from France shows that 35% of the students report experiencing either psychological or physical violence at schools. The occurrence of school violence, however, should be minimized due to the negative consequences that can be experienced on children and society as a whole, due to this phenomena.

The high prevalence of school violence is also present in Kosovo. A report published by the Kosovo Police Force in 2018, targeted 1200 students across the country, and aged 12-16 years old (Feta, 2019). This revealed that 580 students were a victim of or witnessed cases of

school violence (Feta, 2019). During the year of 2017, 567 cases of school violence were reported while in almost 50 cases of these, students were reported to possess and use arms. Kosovo Police Force claims that even though these numbers are high, the cases are still underreported. The earlier-mentioned report found that a lot of students could not notify the police since they did not know their phone number (Feta, 2019). In addition, the schools' staff tends to report only the most severe cases such as those involving the use of arms or attempts of murder (Peters, 2004).

School violence, as adopted by Henry (2000), refers to a person's "use of power to harm another, whatever form that takes" (19). Thus, school violence may include child-to-child, child-to-teacher, or teacher-to-child exertion of power. The term of school violence has been broadened to include any form of violence that occurs through the cyber space (Miller & Kraus, 2008). The harm caused might be physical, psychological, or material. With the high potential of school violence resulting in long-term reduced psychological well-being and mental health issues such as depression or suicide, this issue is among the top priorities for countries around the world. Research has shown that school violence is perceived as a threat to school safety thus disabling the school's capacity to provide its primary goal, namely education (Callahan, 2008).

School teachers have claimed to be unable to deal with instances of school violence in that they have not received training and education for such issues. Lyne (1999) conducted a study to assess the way teachers perceived school violence and the teachers were divided into two groups, namely those who have not working yet and those who were in service for several years. Both groups claimed that they do not have the training they need to deal with school violence. Consequently, having to deal with school violence instances and the potential harms that might result from it might lead to teachers' resignation (Peters, 2004).

Researchers largely support the proactive measures as effective policy against school violence ("School Psychology", 2020; Miller & Kraus, 2008). Even though early measures focused on the intervention phase due to difficulties in identifying potential students who were more likely to engage in violent behavior, proactive measures has gained focus due to its ability to prevent violence. These proactive measures aim to reduce the likelihood of the students engaging in violent behavior through different means, such as anger management, stress- and anxiety-reducing activities, and group therapies ("School Psychology", 2020). These measures

are thought to increase collaboration between the children, school staff, and parents. Research has shown that school psychologists (SPs) are the most effective professionals when it comes to dealing with school violence issues and prevention programs (“School Psychology”, 2020, (“Who Are School Psychologists”, 2020; Peters, 2004; Lyne, 1999). According to the American Psychological Association (APA) (“School Psychology”, 2020), school psychologists possess the training to develop understanding of the educational systems and its populations (e.g. children, teachers) through psychological diagnosis and assessment. In addition, the scope of SPs’ work ranges from the individual to the school system; in that they can, for example, deal with individuals who are having difficulties (e.g. learning difficulties) or organize activities with whole groups. With respect to school violence, school psychologists are qualified to intervene in case of violence with the affected individuals but also to organize prevention programs at a school. This role of school psychologists is also confirmed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in the US, claiming that they are the suitable professionals for ensuring a healthy educational environment and to plan and implement proactive measures (“Who Are School Psychologists”, 2020). The definitions provided by the European Commission also supports the above-mentioned qualifications of SPs (Megele & Buzzi, 2011). Despite such regulations, not enough research exists regards to SPs’ involvement in school violence intervention and prevention. The existing research shows that even though SPs are usually the most informed personnel in education settings with regards to violent behaviors, very few of them are actually involved with intervening or preventing these issues (Miller & Kraus, 2008; Jones, 1998).

School Violence in Kosovo

The existence of very few data with regards to school violence in Kosovo makes the population less aware of such issues. There are few research articles and news articles to which we can refer. In a study conducted by Mustafa (2018) with 618 students in Prishtina, aged 16-18 years old, violence was divided into three categories, namely physical, psychological, and sexual violence. The share of students who reported being involved in at least one violence case throughout their education was high at 87%. The most common type of violence was the psychological violence (e.g. calling names, bullying, and cyberbullying) with almost 70% while physical violence was experienced for 50% of the students. Sexual violence had a 23% of

prevalence in the study. As Mustafa (2018) concludes, students at low and high secondary education are those who are at most risk of experiencing school violence in any form. Other forms of violence experienced includes cases of uses of weapons, and drug trafficking.

Despite the high prevalence of school violence, most of the cases are still underreported (Krasniqi, 2019). Many parents whose child has been a victim of school violence claim to not report the case to the police due to media coverage (Krasniqi, 2019; Kasapolli-Selani, 2019). In addition, the school staff sometimes chooses not to do anything claiming that school violence is not their problem. Morrison, Furlong, and Morrison (1994) claim that if school violence is defined as a crime problem, the educational institutions tend to believe that this is not the schools' problem. The issue of school violence has long been addressed this way in Kosovo. The way educational institutions responded to school violence cases were the equipment of schools with security cameras, constant police patrol around the schools, periodic control of students whether they are carrying dangerous weapons and capital punishment (Kasapolli-Selani, 2019).

Kosovo has taken several steps to reform their approach to school violence. As of June 2019, the Law on Child Protection was adopted by the Assembly that made corporal punishment of children illegal in Kosovo (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2019). Additionally, the Ministry of Science, Education, and Technology (MEST) has switched to prevention-based policies with regards to school violence (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2018). The policy plan was accepted in 2014, and revised in 2018 with a higher commitment towards its implementation. The goal of this document is to increase awareness about school violence inside and outside of the educational settings; the organization of workshops for positive learning environment; and the securement of a safe education institution.

SPs have not been included as the leaders of school violence prevention programs in Kosovo. According to the Kosovo Law of Pre-university Education (2011), every educational institution must have at least one SP whose responsibilities include providing psychological support, counseling sessions with students, and consultative sessions with parents. The employment of such professionals, however, has been unsuccessful in educational institutions. Many reports have showed that there are, on average, 63 SPs for approximately 700 schools in Kosovo (AlbINFO, 2018). Additionally, SPs have claimed that, on average, they have to work at three different schools, where they have to deal with a large number of students (Bekteshi, 2017).

This understaffing of SPs might explain the fact that MEST has not assigned SPs as the leaders of school violence prevention. According to the report prepared by MEST “The didactic manual of school violence prevention” (translated from “Manual didaktik për parandalimin e dhunës”), the prevention-based programs should be led by teachers and in case the school has a SP hired, then the SP might also assist in the implementation of those programs (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2018).

Problem Statement

School violence is an important phenomena that should be dealt with by qualified professionals such as SPs. Most research supports the high effectiveness of prevention programs and claim that they should be led by SPs (Agresta, 2004). The understaffed SPs in Kosovo pose problems for our society. Kosovo’s health care system is divided into three systems, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary providing health care at different levels of administrative state units, namely the capital city, municipalities, and cities, respectively. Psychologists and mental health counselors, however, has been under the recommended quota at these institutions (Krasniqi, 2019). The difficult access is coupled with the stigma around mental health since the society sees mental health issues as taboo (Bekteshi, 2017). School environments are the ones where students could turn to SPs easily. With the low number of SPs hired at the educational institutions, there is a possibility that students involved in school violence experience harm that would be left undealt with. Additionally, the possibility of the child being exposed to or a victim of violence at home adds to the trauma that must be dealt with (Agresta, 2004). The present study aimed at investigating two major questions:

1. Are prevention-based programs being adopted and implemented at high secondary education institutions in Kosovo?
2. How are SPs being utilized in educational institutions where they work?

Based on the data from research, the hypotheses are:

1. Urban schools have higher prevalence rates of school violence cases and prevention-programs are primarily implemented in these areas’ schools.

This hypothesis is based on the research, which suggests that the schools in urban areas, on average, have higher school violence cases than those in rural or suburban areas (Lunneblad et al., 2018; Klonsky, 2002).

2. School psychologists are not being used as leaders of prevention-based programs.

Based on the report by MEST (2018) mentioned earlier, it is assumed that SPs are neglected during planning and implementation of those programs. In addition, due to high understaffing of the schools, these programs are more likely to be led by teachers in the schools.

Although the issue of school violence in Kosovo has gained attention in the news and in some studies, the role of SPs in this issue has not been well-researched. The importance of the study is to give an insight into the way schools are handling school violence cases at pre-university institutions and where do SPs stand in this issue. Since very few studies have researched this issue with regards to Kosovo, this analysis will be important as a starting point.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of School Violence

Schools and teachers have had difficulties in determining which violence cases fall under their responsibilities. A definition of violence provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) states:

“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.” (WHO, 2020, para. 2).

This definition emphasizes the importance of intention on the violence thus enhancing awareness towards violence that is induced by intention. In addition, this definition emphasizes targeted violence in that when the violators have a specific target and act to cause harm to that target.

There has also been a distinction among the aggression types, namely proactive and reactive aggression (Kempes, Matthys, de Vries, & van Engeland, 2005). Proactive aggression is an aggression type driven by the wish to achieve a goal through the use of violence (Kempes, Matthys, de Vries, & van Engeland, 2005; Peters, 2004). This type of aggression has been linked

to situations involving perpetrators who know their target and use violence intentionally to achieve a goal. Reactive aggression is considered to be an emotional response to a particular situation; thus associated with anger, frustrations, disappointment (Kempes, Matthys, de Vries, & van Engeland, 2005). Reactive aggression is thought to be tied to emotions in that after committing the violent behavior, the person is able to calm down and reflect on the behavior. The importance of this distinction, namely the intentionally-driven and emotionally-driven aggression, lies in the approaches to deal with both types of violence (Buckner & Cain, 1998). Researchers have claimed that both types might need different prevention tools, such as reactive aggression being targeted with empathy-increasing activities and proactive aggression being addressed with prevention techniques that emphasize reasoning abilities (Buckner & Cain, 1998).

Research suggests that there are benefits to adapt the definition of violence to school settings (Johnson, Burke, & Gielen, 2011). The term “school violence” helps to assign responsibility to school staff if the violence happens inside the school environment. For a long time, the schools have adapted a behavior of stepping back and leaving violence issues in the hands of others. A study conducted by Morrison and his colleagues (1994) collected data on the responses to school violence cases from people in South Carolina campuses. The primary response to school violence was notifying and letting the law enforcement authorities to deal with such issues (39.1%); the other main responses was calling the parents of involved students (19.8%) or responding with reactive measures (e.g. expulsion/suspension) (19.8%). Only 6.9% of people responded with a measure of counseling services. This represents the fact that schools have not viewed violence cases as something they should deal with and have chosen a position of “sitting back”.

Violence occurring in educational settings should be viewed as responsibility of schools as well. Research, however, shows that school violence should not be seen as a one-dimensional issue in that viewing it only as the schools' responsibility is not enough (McKellar & Sherwin, 2008). Thus, researchers emphasize the importance of cooperation between schools, involved people, the parents, and security and legal authorities. The definition of violence should be adapted to schools and be a responsibility of the schools, and the prevention techniques be designed according to the violence motivation (e.g. proactive vs. reactive).

Proactive Measures: Responses to School Violence

Educational institutions can choose to react to school violence in two different ways: reactive or proactive way (Jones, 1998). Reactive responses are intervention-based responses where the schools deal with the violence cases after it has occurred (Jones, 1998; Buckner & Cain, 1998). Such reactive responses can be: instructing students to wear uniforms, equipping schools with detectors and security cameras; increasing police oversight of the school; increase control of the students by security teams. Although these kind of measures have decreased the occurrence of school violence, they are thought to be ineffective when it comes to decrease violence even outside of schools (Jones, 1998). So, the violent behaviors are simply taken out of educational institutions. Additionally, the measures have caused the alienation of the students from schools thus creating a non-welcoming environment in an institution where the goal was the contrary (Johnson, Burke, & Gielen, 2011).

Prevention measures has been proved to be effective for the long-term in that reducing the likelihood of school violence and the students' engaging in violence even outside the school (Jones, 1998). Researchers agree that environmental conditions play a big role in the students' engagement in violence, however, it is claimed that the tendencies to behave aggressively will be present since childhood (Ferrara, Franceschini, Villani, & Corsello, 2019). The purpose of prevention measure is to step in early in this process thus decreasing the likelihood of students' violent behaviors. There have been three main levels identified where schools can intervene: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Buckner & Cain, 1998).

Primary prevention programs are system-wide programs aiming to prevent school violence before it occurs (Buckner & Cain, 1998). Usually, these are built into the curriculum of the schools such as peer meditation programs, teaching of prosocial skills, and behavior improvement techniques. These programs are thought to need several years to manifest its effects, however, their benefits are long-term, contributing to raising healthier adults for the future. A longitudinal study analyzed the effectiveness of a group meditation program in a school consisting of 825 students where the study lasted for three years (Schellenberg, Parks-Savage & Rehfuss, 2007). The study showed an increase in the students' conflict resolution skills and a reduction in suspensions of students out of the school.

Prevention at secondary level will include students who are more likely to engage in violent behavior (Buckner & Cain, 1998). This knowledge could come based on the students' past behavior such as from teachers' referrals or parents' requests. The prevention at this level is very important since research suggests that children who display aggressive behavior patterns in the childhood, tend to keep these patterns throughout the lifespan (Buckner & Cain, 1998). Thus, the prevention would be a step-in before these children could end up at law enforcement agencies. Tertiary prevention refers to cases where students have already engaged in violent behaviors in the past (Buckner & Cain, 1998).

School Psychologists' Role

According to APA ("School Psychology", 2020), the role of SPs may be divided into three main categories: assessment; consultations; and prevention (primary, secondary, and tertiary). SPs have the skills to assess "cognitive abilities, achievement, social and emotional functioning, personality and developmental status" of the students ("School Psychology", 2018, par. 35). Thus, they can analyze the students' developmental background to see whether there are any risks factors. This could also contribute to threat assessment: to see whether any student is prone to engage in school violence acts. Additionally, the assessment phase could help SPs identify students who have been exposed to violence earlier thus intervening before the students learn this kind of behavior. They also possess the credibility and confidentiality needed to gain information about the students through consultations. This category involves consultations with school staff (e.g. teachers), parents, or other professionals, "concerning children's behavior and academic and social problems" ("School Psychology, 2018, par. 42). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) also adds that SPs are qualified to assist the school staff in the students' education while establishing an emphasized importance of mental health in schools ("Who Are School Psychologists?", 2020).

SPs also possess the skill set to develop and implement prevention phases at different levels. They can conduct primary prevention to "reduce the incidence of academic failure, school violence, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and programs to promote children's well-being" ("School Psychology", 2018, par. 39). These programs can develop in accordance with state requirements but research shows that more personalized prevention programs for a specific school might result in enhanced efficiency (Miller & Kraus, 2018). The SPs' actions in

secondary and tertiary prevention programs are to deal with students with “poor peer relationships, learning or behavior problems in the classroom, and adjustment to adoption, death or divorce” (Miller & Kraus, 2018, p. 40) or students who have been involved in school violence cases earlier. The assessment and consultation phases are great help for the prevention programs.

SPs possess the skills necessary to deal with school violence cases. Some lines of thinking indicate that other professionals might be more suitable to deal with school violence cases, such as school counselors or school social workers. Agresta (2004) conducted a study on the roles of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers in school violence cases, based on their perceptions. It was found that SPs were the group of mental health workers who preferred to conduct consultations with parents, teachers but also participate in counseling sessions with students. The other two groups, counselors and social workers, perceived themselves as more suitable to conduct counseling sessions with students rather than spend their time with consultations. The study also indicated that all three groups were of same opinion in that SPs were perceived as the most suitable professionals to deal with school violence issues. This is also supported by the APA's description on SPs' roles.

Analysis of Existing Data on School Violence in Kosovo

There are many challenges that are being faced by the educational institutions in Kosovo. Due to less developed infrastructure, the schools are working in multiple shifts in order to accommodate all of their students (Arënliu, Strohmeier, Konjufca, Yanagida, & Burger, 2019). In addition, the many courses are being taught by teachers who are not qualified for that specific course. The quality of education, while still improving, has been represented by the Kosovo schools' low achievement in the PISA assessment in the year of 2018 where Kosovo was among the lowest scoring countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2018). While struggling to increase the quality of education, documenting and dealing with school violence has not been a priority among the policymakers (Arënliu et al., 2019). Although stakeholders such as MEST and local governance have created drafts for the improvement in education, school violence has been mentioned only in few municipalities (Hyseni, 2009). Consequently, there is no database where school violence cases are reported thus limiting the possibility of comparing the school violence cases between time periods. The very few data that exists come mainly through studies or reports created by international agencies

(e.g. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)). The need for attention towards this issue comes mainly through news outlets where parents or school staff require measures to be taken (Arënliu et al., 2019). For the purpose of this paper, secondary data was collected through international agencies' and municipalities' reports.

UNICEF Coverage of School Violence during 2004 (2005)

UNICEF conducted a study on the school violence phenomena in Kosovo as part of UNICEF's program to combat and reduce school violence in the world. The results of the study were published in the report called "Research into violence against children in schools in Kosovo" (2005). The study was a mix of quantitative and qualitative data which was conducted with children, teachers, and parents from schools in Kosovo. 680 children participated from which two groups were created: 6-10 years old and 11-18 years old. In addition, 120 teachers participated and six focus groups with parents were created. The quantitative part of the study was conducted through questionnaires while the qualitative part through focus groups and in-depth interviews. The main goals of the study included exploring the prevalence of children violence at schools and the scope of violence.

A striking finding of the study was that different groups struggled with defining and conceptualizing violence with the majority counting only physical violence as violence. The report suggests that this might be in correlation with the low report of school violence. The study looked at the prevalence of violence types concerning children as based on teachers' perceptions. Among the most prevalent types of violence reported was physical violence with almost 58% and sexual violence with 54.8% (see *Figure A1*). These perceptions, however, include teachers' expectation of violence even outside school thus it takes into account domestic violence too. When asked specifically about prevalence of violence in schools, 41% of the teachers admitted that the phenomena is rather widely spread in the schools (see *Figure A2*).

The study also revealed that the teachers' concerns with regards to violence varied based on the location of the school (see *Figure A3*). In the dimension of bullying (e.g. calling names, making fun of someone), 73% of teachers report being worried about it being present in urban schools while 58% in rural schools. Physical violence is also seen as being more present in urban schools with 77% while 46% in rural schools. In addition, the study's qualitative part supported this since parents in the focus groups from urban schools were more concerned of cases of

bullying and physical violence than those from rural schools. In general, it can be seen that violence is potentially more common in urban schools than rural schools.

The study reveals the need for qualified professionals in educational institutions to deal with school violence cases. When asked to whom they return in case they were involved in school violence cases, 56% of children reported turning to parents while 52% to teachers (see *Figure A4*). From the in-depth interviews, teachers revealed that they do not feel qualified for dealing with cases of school violence so they tell children to turn to their parents. Parent, in addition, claimed that it is very overwhelming to not have professionals such as psychologists to deal with their children who have been involved in school violence.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Coverage of School Violence During 2014

A study conducted by UNDP in cooperation with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2014, aimed to investigate the state of school violence in the public schools of Municipality of Prishtina. This study was a mix of quantitative and qualitative data in that the research was conducted in the form of surveys and focus groups. The participants included students, parents, and teachers; 353, 82, and 84 respectively. In terms of school violence prevalence, large percentages of students reported the following acts: the teacher insulting someone (42% of the students reported this) and a teacher hit someone (45% of the students) (see *Figure A5*). In addition, almost 50% of the students reported that a student was expelled from the school as a response to school violence. The study also reported significant results on fights between students. 41% of the teachers reported that fights among students are common that escalate to physical violence.

The study also reveals that the most common response to school violence are the use of security cameras in schools buildings (see *Figure A6*). Other measures taken include the use of school uniforms, the increase of number in the school guards and the use of fire protection systems. As mentioned above, these are in line with intervention-based methods in order to decrease school violence which are thought to be ineffective in reducing children's violent behavior even outside of the school (Jones, 1998). In addition, Jones identifies such measures alienating students from schools rather than making them feel at home and decrease the students' sense of security at school. The UNDP report also reports that almost 30% of the students still

feel unsafe at the school. Other measures to respond to school violence has been the use of verbal punishment by teachers and informing parents or the director of the school (see *Figure A7*). Parents from the focus group discussions revealed that the school staff usually responds with violence when school violence cases happen and they expressed the need for psychologists at school that could help students deal with school violence cases and prevent them. Thus, it can be said that school violence prevention programs are not applicable in the schools examined in this report and school psychologists do not really play a role in this issue.

Kosovo Municipality Data on School Violence

Municipalities have adopted development programs with regards to educational institutions. Among the municipalities, only four of them (that can be found online), namely Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, and Gjakova, mention the need to deal with school violence prevention, the hiring of SPs and determine a specific budget for the arrangement of prevention activities (Kosovo Education Center (KEC), 2018a, 2018b, 2017a, 2017b). In the case of Municipality of Prishtina (KEC, 2018b), school violence is reported to be a priority and it adopted prevention-based programs. The program aims to stop the intervention-based measures with school violence and aims to prevent violence by organizing workshops and consultations with parents. The program emphasizes the teachers as the leaders of the prevention-programs and allocates a budget for the organization of workshops. Similarly, the case of Prizren (KEC, 2017b), the municipality identifies school teachers and school staff as leaders of prevention-based programs and determines that prevention will be done mainly through workshops. Here, too, the municipality allocates a budget amount for such activities. In the case of Peja (KEC, 2018), school violence is reported to be a very significant issue since they report a high degree of such occurrences in the schools of this municipality. The Municipality of Peja (2018a) and Gjakova (2017a), too, determines a specific budget for the upcoming years to prevent school violence. All of these reports mention that priority will be given to schools located in urban areas since they possess higher likelihood of experiencing school violence. Another important point of these programs is that they require reports for each year's state to conclude whether the targets set for each year were implemented or not. So far, no reports have been published on the state of school violence by the municipalities. However, news reports still emphasize the need to prevent school violence at schools.

Based on the analysis on secondary data, it can be seen that school violence is generally present in schools in Kosovo and it tends to be more common in urban schools than rural schools. In addition, it was explored that schools are still responding with intervention measures to school violence cases such as the use of security cameras, increase the number of guards, and the use of school uniforms. Although there is no database which provides collective data on school violence cases, the existing online municipalities' data was used for the purpose of this study. Four municipalities were examined, namely Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, and Gjakova that consider school violence as a priority of the municipality. They emphasize the immediate need to prevent school violence especially in urban areas where children are more likely to experience school violence. Although these municipalities have adopted prevention-based programs, the role of SPs is very minimal to non-existent. Only the municipality of Prishtina reports having 14 SPs in the schools while the other reports emphasize the need to hire SPs.

Methods

Participants. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. There were twenty participants that completed the survey. The age of the participants varied from 23 to 39 years old, with the majority (11 participants) being 28 to 32 years old. Based on the gender of the participants, 55% of them were female while 45% male. The participants' years of service as SPs varied from one to six years.

Measures. In order to study school psychologist's role in violence prevention in Kosovo, a survey based research was conducted. The research was done through surveys created in Google Docs platform (see Appendix D). The survey was published and distributed through Facebook groups. The first part contained demographic questions in that six questions; which asked to get information about the age, gender, service years, and school size at the school where school psychologists worked. The second part contained twenty-one questions; it started with a school violence definition as provided earlier in this paper (WHO, 2020). These questions were about school violence, prevention programs, and the role the school psychologists played in these. The survey was originally created in English and then translated to Albanian, so two forms of surveys were published. So, even non-English speakers could access the survey.

Procedure. The surveys were published in social media groups of psychologists in Kosovo noting that school psychologists are needed to complete the survey. Two links were

provided; one for the English version, one for the Albanian version. Upon clicking on the link provided, the participants were taken to the consent form (see Appendix C). The consent form informed the participants about the study's content and goals. No names or other identifiable information was asked for the study in order to ensure anonymity of participants. Confidentiality was also ensured by disclosing that the surveys will be destroyed one year after the completion of my thesis. Participants were not offered any compensation for their participation. Additionally, the participants could decide to withdraw from the study any moment they desired to, without any penalty. Only fully completed surveys were taken into account. After receiving the responses, the post on social media was deleted, and the availability of receiving responses was stopped. Minitab was used to calculate descriptive statistics.

Results

The independent variables were assessed through demographic questions (see Appendix D). The average age of the participants was around 31 years old ($M=30.85$, $SD=4.19$) (see *Figure B1*). The gender distribution of the participants was the following: 55% of the participants were females and 45% of them were males (see *Figure B2*). The majority of the participants have spent mostly 1-2 years at their current school, making up 45% of the participants (see *Figure B3*), however the average service years of SPs was 4.5 years ($SD=2.32$) (see *Figure B4*). The majority of the SPs are working at urban schools (see *Figure B5*) and the average number of the schools' students was 610 ($SD=479$) (see *Figure B6*). Since the latter data contained huge outliers, such as the lowest number being 120 and the biggest one being 2000, the median was also calculated to give a better picture of the data with a value of 475.

The first question after the demographic section asked about school violence types and their frequency at the school where SPs are currently working (see *Figure B7*). For a simplified overview, a pie chart was created to compare the types of violence that occurred either 'occasionally' or 'often' (see *Figure B8*). 'Intimidation or bullying of students by other students' and 'Fights among students' are the most commonly reported violence cases in schools, with 26% and 25% respectively. The responses given to the most common type of school violence cases where participants could choose only one option; 75% of the participants chose psychological violence (see *Figure B10*). The approximate number of school violence cases annually at the school ranged from four cases to 120, as reported by the survey. The average

number of violence cases was 47.6 (SD=34.07) but since there were large outliers present, the median was also calculated to get a better picture, with a value of 35 (see *Figure B9*).

The next three questions (4-6) asked about the way schools respond to school violence cases. The most common way schools respond to school violence was to 'notify parents' with 80% (see *Figure B11*). Since participants could select multiple options, common responses were also to 'suspension' with 60%, and 'increase security in the school' with 45%. The most common justification as to why such responses are selected by the schools were of due to: parents' request, safety increase, enhanced effectiveness, make students learn a lesson, lack of funds and resources, easiest solution, the traditional way of solving such issues, and multiple approaches are needed. The sixth question asked about the SPs' personal opinion on what the optimal response would be to school violence cases. The emerging themes were: individual therapies, counseling services, consultations with SPs, increase police control, workshops for mental health, group therapies, meditation groups, notify and cooperate with parents, prevention programs, and anti-violence group therapies.

The next four questions (7-10) explored the way schools stand with prevention programs. 40% of the participants responded that their school had prevention programs (see *Figure B12*). When asked about the types of prevention programs the schools had, the mostly selected responses were 'workshop-based programs', 'individual therapies', and 'cooperation with parents', with 30% each (see *Figure B13*). The ninth question included a statement regarding schools' working on preventing school violence of which 40% disagreed that their school is working on school violence prevention (see *Figure B14*). The tenth question asked about the way schools prevent school violence. The most common themes were the following: ignoring these issues, do not deal with them, workshop-based programs, individual therapies, suspension, monitor students' behavior, different programs and trainings to raise awareness, and parent cooperation.

The next ten questions (11 – 20) were about SPs' roles. In total, 30% of participants agreed that they are involved in their schools' prevention programs (see *Figure B15*). Additionally, 60% of the participants strongly agreed that SPs are the most qualified for school violence cases (see *Figure B16*). When it comes to SPs' involvement in the planning of prevention programs, 35% were moderately involved (see *Figure B17*). The fourteenth question

asked about the SPs' involvement in the implementation phase of prevention programs (see *Figure B18*) where 30% admitted that they were not involved. Also, 30% of SPs admitted that they never spend time on assessing children who are prone to violent behavior (see *Figure B19*).

The sixteenth question asked about SPs' involvement in tertiary prevention (see *Figure B20*). 25% said they were extremely involved, and 25% were moderately involved. Those who selected 'minimally involved' or 'not involved' in their previous question; their justifications could be categorized in three ways: leave it to parents, SPs working at multiple schools thus lacking the time to deal with it, and the stigma surrounding psychologists. The eighteenth question asked about SPs' involvement in secondary prevention (see *Figure B21*), with 30% choosing 'not involved'. Those who were 'minimally involved' or 'not involved', offered such justifications as stigma surrounding psychologists, and no cooperation with the students and their families. The last question asked respondents about the current role of SPs in Kosovo. The main responses were: SPs are extremely needed but not employed; SPs are given other tasks (e.g. administrative tasks, give psychology lessons) rather than what their qualifications offer; violence is increasing thus there is a great need for SPs; and schools would rather use their funds for other purposes rather than employing SPs. The twenty-first question asked for participants to express any comments related to the topic. Respondents' answers were: a greater governmental support is needed; a greater cooperation between different stakeholders to increase the numbers of SPs; implement a program of mandatory meetings/consultations between students and SPs at schools; and recognize the importance of SPs in developing a mentally healthy society for the future.

Discussion

The first hypothesis of this study stated that urban schools have higher prevalence rates of school violence, and that prevention-programs are primarily implemented in these areas' schools. By looking at the relation between school location and school violence prevalence we see that the school violence cases are more prevalent in urban schools than suburban and rural in our sample, even though there might be unique cases (see *Figure B22*). When looking at averages per school location type, the average number of school violence for urban schools was 61 cases, for suburban 34 cases, and for rural schools 24 cases. The higher prevalence of school violence in urban areas was also supported by the report of UNICEF (2005) (see *Figure A3*). The

UNICEF (2005) report showed that urban schools tend to receive higher scores on the likelihood of violence happening. The findings from the survey and UNICEF (2005) report are in line with what was expected in this study, however, the survey contains only three responses from SPs in rural schools which are not representative of the whole population. In addition, the UNICEF report measured the teachers' perceptions on the school violence in different school location which might not accurately describe the real situation. Garg (2017) conducted a study on the prevalence of school violence in rural and urban areas which showed that school violence was prevalent with high likelihood in both areas, without significant differences. Volungis (2016) adds another factor that is a mediating factor between school size and location and school violence, namely school connectedness. In other words, Volungis argued that an enhanced cooperation between school staff and the students, even in schools with larger number of students in urban areas, can lead to reduced school violence.

The location of school was analyzed with respect to responses to the question 'Does your school have a school violence prevention program?' whereby 11 schools from the sample were urban and 7 of them confirmed that their schools have violence programs. Of the remaining rural and suburban schools, only one suburban claimed that they have prevention programs, and the rest of them responded with no or maybe. To the statement 'My school works on preventing school violence', only one urban school agreed, the rest chose neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. From the remaining cases, three cases with either rural or suburban location responded with agree and strongly agree responses. Thus, there were more cases of rural/suburban who agreed that their school was working on preventing school violence than urban schools. Looking at the Educational Development Plans (2017/2018) from the four municipalities of Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, and Gjakova, it can be seen that all these plans emphasize the need for prevention-based programs with an enhanced focus on urban schools since they tend to have a higher prevalence rates of school violence (see p. 18). Thus, it might be seen that urban schools might be formally adopting these programs but rural/suburban schools working on them.

Based on the combination of primary and secondary data, it can be said that school violence prevalence rates tend to be higher in urban areas than schools in rural and/or suburban areas. Although the first part of the hypothesis is supported, prevention-based programs are not being fully implemented in those areas. The majority of urban schools claimed having prevention

programs but only a few of them is really implementing those. In addition, even though the reports from the Municipalities give an emphasis on urban schools, there is no existing data on whether those programs are being implemented or not. Despite the fact that several respondents selected the different types of prevention techniques being present at their school (see *Figure B13*) this might only refer to formalities. On the question referring to what the schools actually do as a response to school violence, the most common response was to 'notify parents' or 'apply suspension' (see *Figure B11*). However, when participants were asked about their opinion on how these issues should be approached, they suggested ideas such as personal therapies, workshop-based prevention programs, and parent cooperation. Thus, there might be a discrepancy of what the schools have built into their curricula and the actions they are taking towards preventing school violence. This is also supported by the responses given to the question 'How does your school prevent school violence from happening?' where most of the respondents stated that the school does not deal with school violence because it is not viewed as their problem. This is in line with the findings of the UNDP report (2014) where it was found that the most common response to school violence was the use of security cameras, school uniforms, and increasing the control by school guards. In many cases, schools tend to "sit back" in cases of school violence which can be seen in this study sample's responses (Johnson, Burke, & Gielen, 2011; Jones, 1998). However, it is important to note that two participants claimed that the schools were simply lacking funds and resources to choose other actions. Lunneblad, Johansson, & Odenbring (2018) also emphasize the importance of socioeconomic backgrounds of educational institutions. They claimed that those schools that are of lower socioeconomic situation tend to respond to school violence cases by notifying the police. However, schools with an enhanced socioeconomic situation are more likely to choose other methods such as mental health assessment, diagnosis, and counseling. Jones (1998), however, emphasizes the negative effects of such responses to school violence which ultimately results in students not feeling at home in schools and losing trust in educational institutions.

The second hypothesis of this study stated that SPs are not being used as the leaders of the prevention programs at the schools. The majority of SPs, namely 19 of them agreed or strongly agreed that SPs are indeed the most qualified professionals to deal with school violence prevention programs (see *Figure B16*). In total, 30% of them agreed that they are involved in prevention programs, however, 25% of them disagreed that they are involved in those programs

(see *Figure B15*). Thus, even though the majority believes that SPs should be leading those programs, there is not a definite majority in those who are actually involved. The questions of the survey have been constructed based on prevention steps: planning, implementation, assessment, secondary, and tertiary prevention. In terms of planning, the study expected that the schools have adopted the MEST's proactive programs into their curricula thus resulting in less to no involvement of SPs. Our study indicated that the majority's involvement in the planning of prevention programs ranges from none to moderate (see *Figure B17*). Splett, Fowler, Weist, McDaniel, and Dvorsky (2013) suggest that SPs feel like they do not possess the competencies for planning these programs thus they are better at implementing these programs. In addition, they suggest that SPs could use nationally-provided prevention programs and personalize them based on the school's specific characteristics. In our sample, however, the majority of SPs report none to moderate involvement in the implementation phase (see *Figure B18*). This may be justified by the comments that were added from the participants, namely that they do not have the resources needed, their skills are being used in other tasks (e.g. Psychology lessons, administrative tasks), and enhanced stigma surrounding psychologists in Kosovo which reduce the efficiency of these programs.

The assessment phase is very critical to primary prevention of school violence thus preventing school violence before it happens (see p. 14-15). The majority of the participants claimed that they conduct assessments "never", "rarely", or "sometimes" (see *Figure B19*). Thus, it can be said that they do not spend a lot of time in this critical phase of prevention. It may be related to the comments that SPs provided for the survey, namely that, due to the stigma, students and their parents do not provide any details from the students' background. In addition, since schools tend to take the "sit back" approach to school violence, SPs' process towards assessment might be stopped by the school officials. Kasapolli-Selani (2019) also claims that with an enhanced cooperation between educational institutions, SPs might be able to conduct assessment due to teacher referrals, or students' past behavior.

Secondary prevention has been key to stepping in when children have displayed risk factors towards school violence (see p. 13-14). In this case too, the majority of the participants claimed being "no" to "moderately" involved in secondary prevention (see *Figure B21*). The

responses as to their minimal involvement in this step, SPs provided several reasons. One of the respondents stated that:

“I once had a parent who told me that they will not allow their child to talk to a psychiatrist; since he is not crazy. So, there is still a stigma surrounding psychologists and sometimes psychologists are synonyms with psychiatrists. I think that even if we would have all the resources needed (which is far from reality) for prevention, we still have a long road to the awareness increase among people regarding mental health.”

In addition to the stigma, there were three other respondents who claimed that parents were not cooperative in many cases; one of them even stated that:

“One day I had two students physically attacking each other; and when I talked to the parents they told me that some fights did not hurt anyone. This is how we grow up, they said.”

Besides the stigma and very low parental cooperation, school violence is seen as a normal phenomenon. A study conducted by Arenliu, Kelmendi, and Hyseni (2016) in Kosovo found a high tolerance towards school violence both among students and parents: 52% of the students claimed that school violence is tolerable and 40% of the parents claimed the same. Thus, the study sample's SPs' involvement in secondary prevention is not significantly present.

Tertiary prevention played a key role in dealing with students who have had school violence involvement history (see p. 14). In this case too, the majority of the participants reported being “no” to “minimally” involved in such cases (see *Figure B20*). The responses to describe the situation were of two main themes: school does not want to deal with it and parents do not trust SPs. Thus, a repetition of the reasons provided above may be seen here too.

Based on the observations, it can be said that the second hypothesis is supported. SPs are not involved or may be minimally, or moderately involved in each step of the prevention but their involvement is not substantial. This is in line with the existing evidence since there is no mention of SPs in the UNICEF's and UNDP's data while the development plans of the municipalities emphasize the teachers being leaders of prevention-programs. Lastly, the SPs were asked to describe their current role in Kosovo. Some cases pointed out to the alarming rates of school violence in Kosovo and how tolerable that has become which raises a huge need for SPs. Other responses indicated that even though the institutions' and municipalities' funds are

limited, hiring SPs should be a priority of each school. It has also been said that the number of SPs who have graduated is high but most of them are unemployed or using their skills in other sectors due to the threat of unemployment. Others also said that even the low number of them that are being hired, they are certainly not taking a lead in school violence cases while they possess the skills to do so.

“I deeply believe that change for a better future lies in our educational systems. The change comes from our children and young people. I am a child of the times of war so I know the feeling of not having help out there. But I believe that this is the key thing that we need to change: to make people aware that there is help. To teach our younger generations that it's okay having problems because there is help. And when you're in a 9th grade, I'm the help.” (Comment left by a respondent)

The current study shows that despite the significant number of school violence cases at schools, prevention programs are not being implemented and the SPs' unique skill sets are not being used in the school violence prevention. Since the literature is very limited on school violence cases in the schools of Kosovo, this research can be used as a study that shows that this issue deserves attention and more in-depth research. Future research could expand the study by involving larger sample and more representative sampling techniques. It is also an important study that raises awareness of the MEST and policymakers that although the prevention programs have been planned, they are not being implemented.

This study has many limitations. Firstly, the sample size of the survey was very small which limits the representation of the population. Thus, the results of this sample might be specific to this sample only rather than for the population as a whole. Secondly, the survey was done through purposive sampling which targeted SPs that were a part of the Facebook group since this method was the most attainable one. Thirdly, the secondary data collected was reliant on international agencies' reports and very few municipalities' reports. The current lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemics limited the ability to search for more data through meetings with policy-makers and/or people involved in the policy-making decisions. Consequently, these issues limit the study's generalizability. Future research might consider having a bigger and more representative sample from each region of Kosovo. Reliance on random sampling is highly recommended which would ensure that each segment of the population is represented equally.

Furthermore, first-hand data could be collected through meetings with policy-makers who might have more information regarding the situation of school violence in the schools of Kosovo.

Conclusion

Despite the wide belief of school environments offering safety to children, recent trends show increasing number of school violence cases all around the world (UNICEF, 2018; Megele & Buzzi, 2011; Peters, 2004; Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). The high prevalence of school violence is present in Kosovo, too, where 580 cases were documented in 2018 which is still considered to be underreported (Feta, 2019). This rising number of school violence cases require professionals who are qualified to deal with such issues. School teachers have expressed their feelings of inability to deal with school violence cases since they do not possess the qualifications to solve such cases (Lyne, 1999). Thus, there is an increased emphasis on the SPs becoming the leaders of the prevention-based programs at schools ("School Psychology", 2018). The SPs possess the training needed for assessment, diagnosis, and therapy for students. Schools have been focusing on the intervention of school violence, however, research emphasized the benefits of proactive measures taken to prevent school violence from happening ("School Psychology", 2018; Miller & Kraus, 2008).

This study provides a historical background of school violence and the way it has been dealt with in Kosovo. Even though there is no database where school violence cases are reported by reliable sources, the news outlets emphasize and call for prevention actions (Krasniqi, 2019; Kasapolli-Selani, 2019). In the schools of Kosovo, however, the staff has rather taken a "sit-back" approach as a response to school violence which means that suspension, expulsion, police notification are employed to increase the discipline in the schools (Kasapolli-Selani, 2019). As a response to this, corporal punishment was prohibited in 2019 ("Law on Child Protection", 2019) and the policy-makers switched to prevention-based programs as a response to school violence ("The didactic manual to prevent school violence", 2018). Additionally, from 2011, the MEST has emphasized the need for at least one SPs for each educational institution in Kosovo ("Kosovo Law of Pre-University Education", 2011). Despite such reforms, school violence is still very common and schools have not been implementing the prevention-based programs. In addition, SPs are not being hired in the schools of Kosovo, and very few have the opportunity to

deal with school violence. Based on this phenomena, two hypotheses are proposed. Firstly, urban schools have higher prevalence rates of school violence and prevention-programs are primarily implemented in these areas' schools. Secondly, SPs are not the leaders of prevention-based programs.

In order to gain data for the hypothesis, this paper focused on secondary and primary data. Due to the lack of secondary data, this study focused primarily on studies conducted by the UNICEF (2005), UNDP (2014), and the Education Development Plans of four municipalities of Kosovo, namely Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, and Gjakova. Data from other municipalities could not be found online. Primary data was collected through an online survey conducted with twenty participants. The data collected through primary and secondary sources, confirmed high prevalence rates of school violence in urban schools, however, prevention-programs are not being implemented in urban schools despite the increased emphasize on doing so. In addition, the second hypothesis was confirmed since data indicated that SPs' role in prevention programs are minimal to non-existent (e.g. the majority of schools still have no SPs).

SPs are the most qualified professionals for dealing with school violence issues. Despite the high school violence cases in Kosovo, few SPs are being hired, and if they are hired, SPs cannot use their full potential. As a recommendation, all higher secondary education institutions of Kosovo must have at least one SP. This would ensure that each school has the capacity to deal with school violence cases and children who are involved in such cases. Additionally, since the prevention programs are stuck at the implementation phase, the hiring of SPs would ensure that those programs would be implemented in the schools. A second recommendation is the establishment of a database where the number of school violence cases would be published for each school of Kosovo. This could ensure higher transparency and would show the schools that need the most help.

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APPENDIX A

Tables and Charts

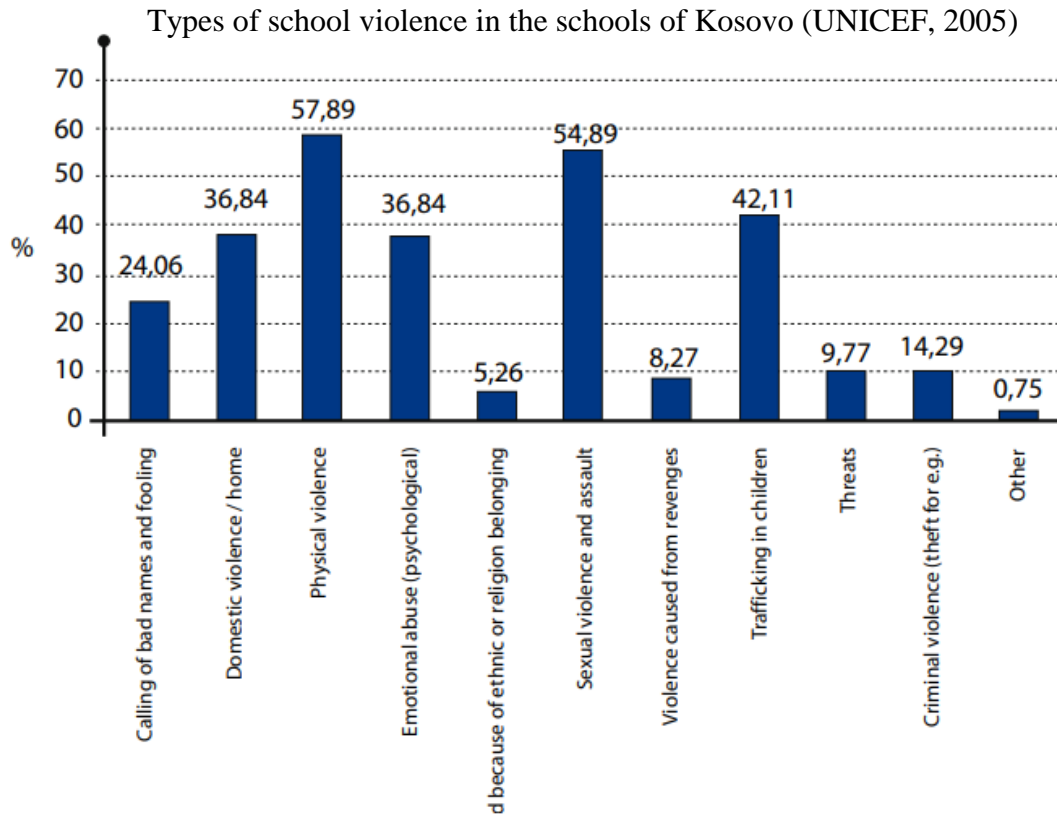


Figure A1. The most common types of violence reported. Adapted from UNICEF, 2005.

Spread of school violence in Kosovo schools (UNICEF, 2005)

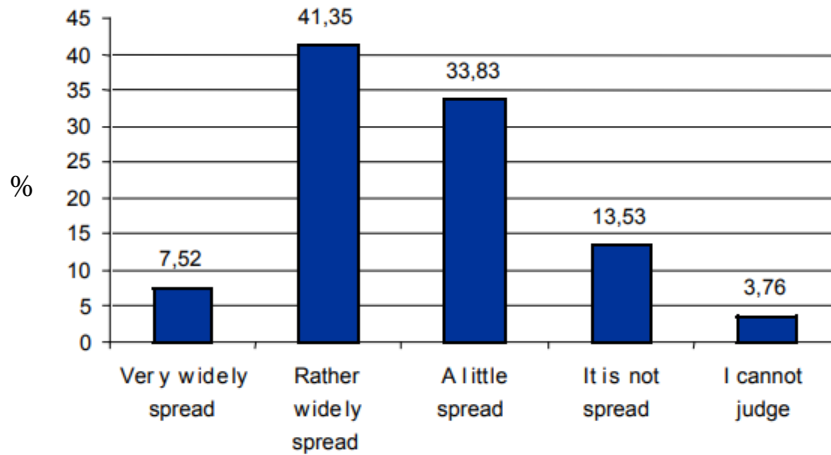


Figure A2. The spread of violence in schools of Kosovo. Adapted from UNICEF, 2005.

Teachers' perception of school violence occurrence in urban and rural schools (UNICEF, 2005)

Teachers' perceptions	Urban	Rural
Concerned about bullying (Violence that includes name calling, making faces or making fun of someone)	73 per cent	58 per cent
Concerned about physical violence	77 per cent	46 per cent
Concerned about domestic violence	50 per cent	28 per cent
Concerned about sexual violence & abuse	62 per cent	44 per cent
Concerned about child trafficking	52 per cent	27 per cent
Concerned about emotional abuse	43 per cent	27 per cent

Figure A3. A comparison between teachers' perception of violence in urban and rural schools. Adapted from UNICEF, 2005.

The children's response to school violence (UNICEF, 2005)

Parents	56 per cent
Teachers	52 per cent
Friends	25 per cent
Sibling	20 per cent
Authorities (police or other)	10 per cent

Figure A4. The primary response of children to school violence. Adapted from UNICEF, 2005

School violence types reported by children, parents, and teachers (UNDP, 2014)

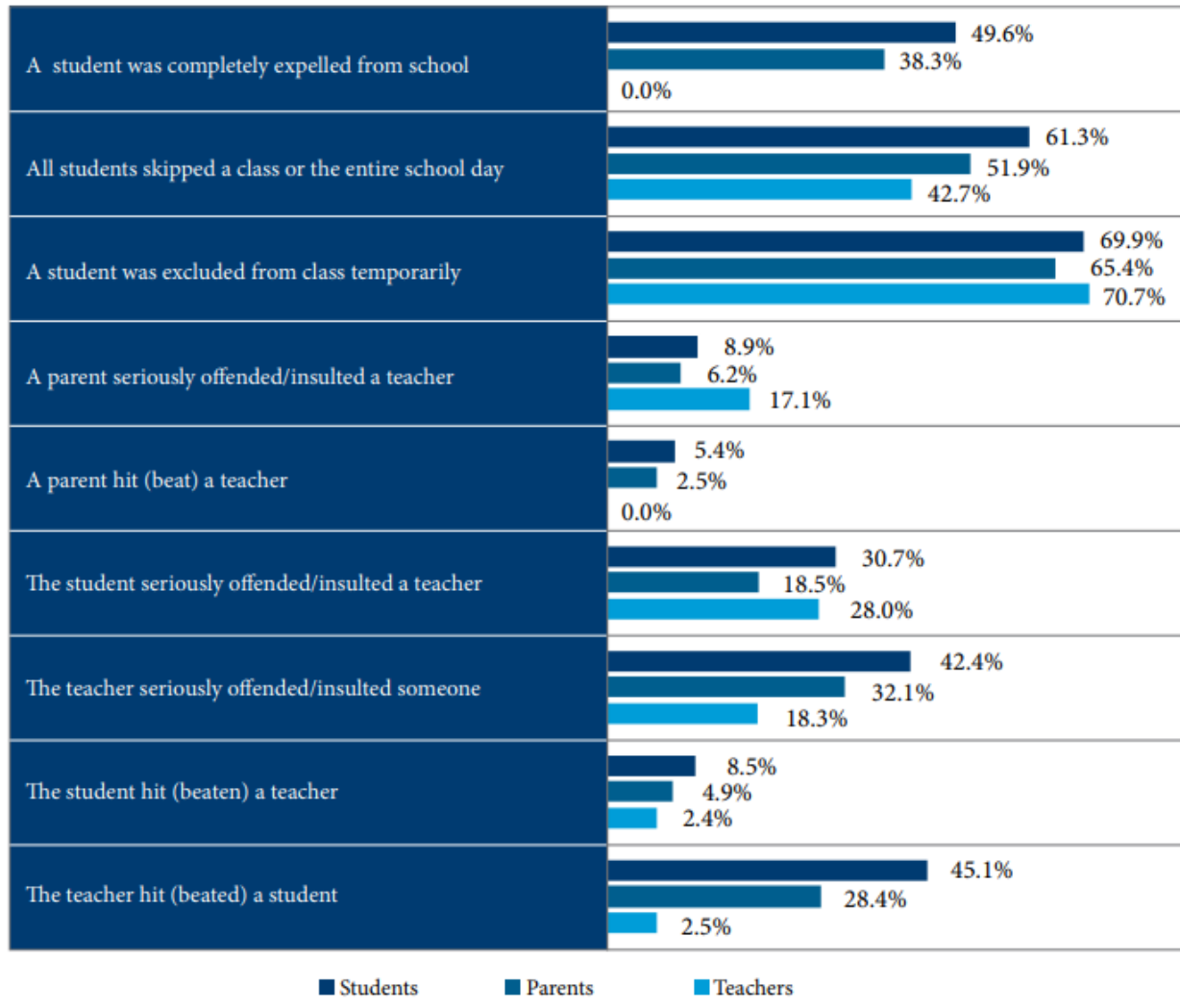


Figure A5. The types of violence experienced in school as reported by students, parents, and teachers. Adapted from UNDP, 2014.

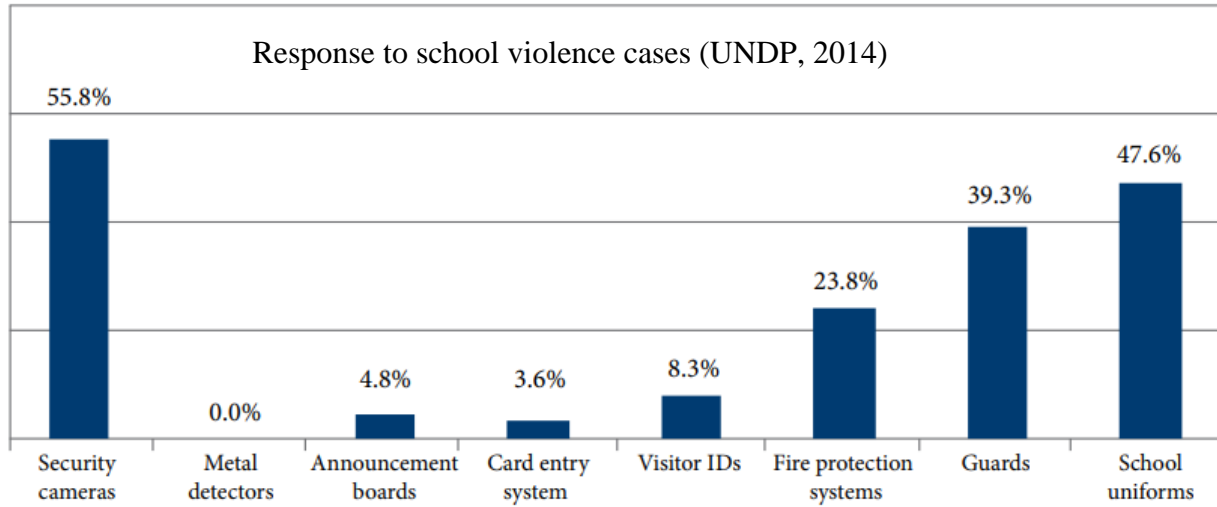


Figure A6. Measures taken by the schools as a response to school violence. Adapted from UNDP, 2014.

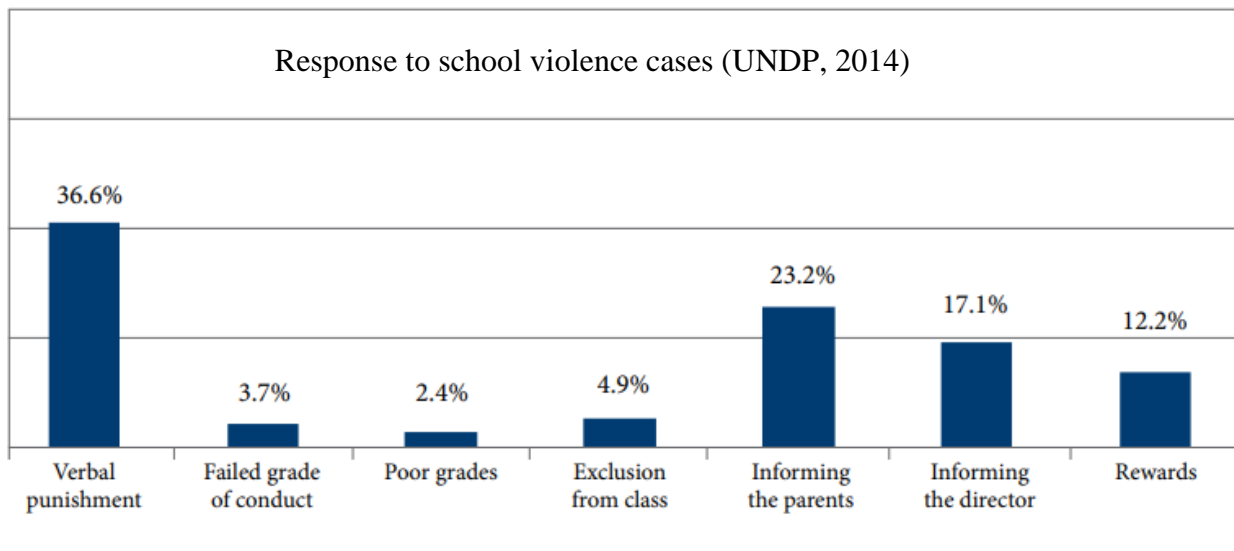


Figure A7. Further measures taken as a response to school violence. Adapted from UNDP, 2014

Appendix B

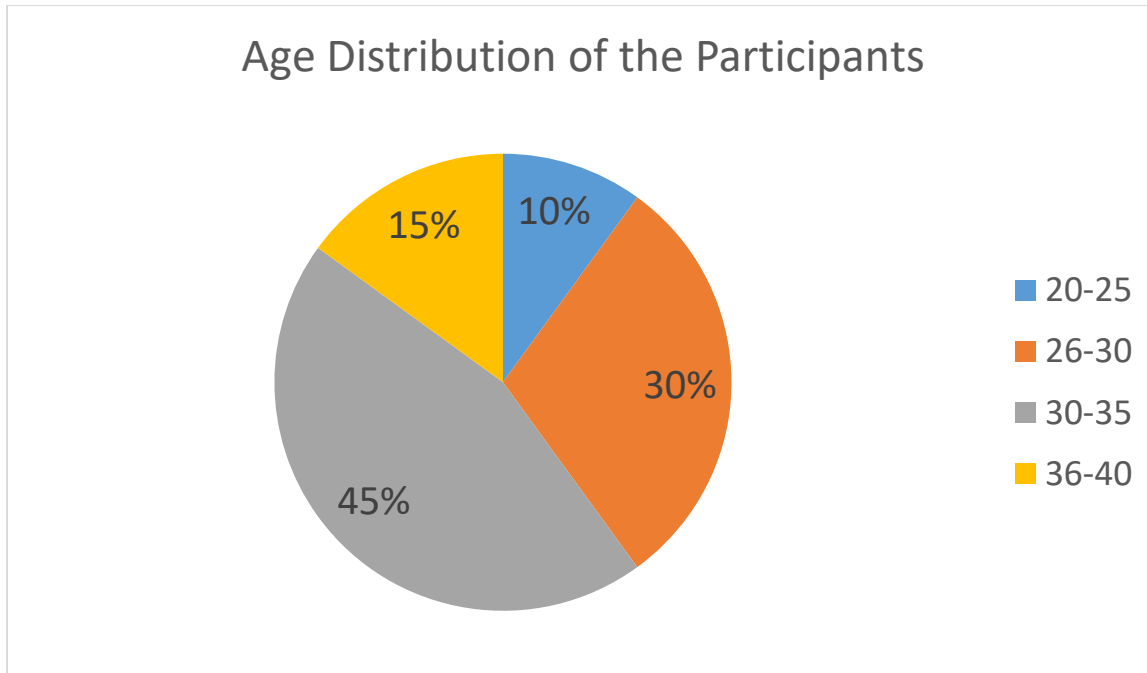


Figure B1. Age of participants

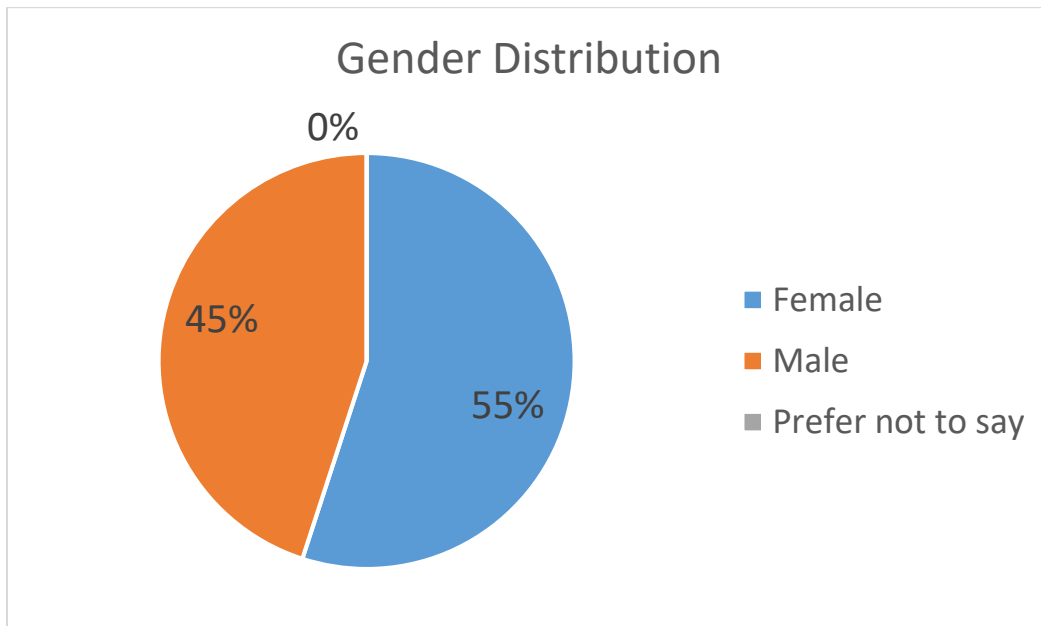


Figure B2. Gender distribution of participants

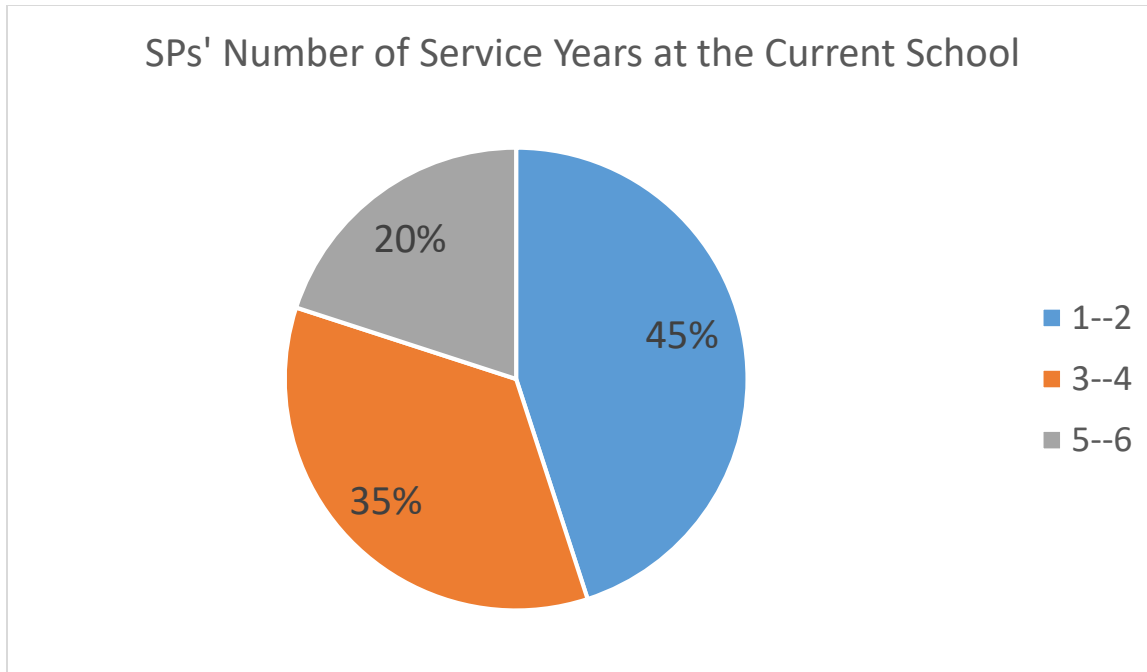


Figure B3. Number of years the SPs have been working at the current school

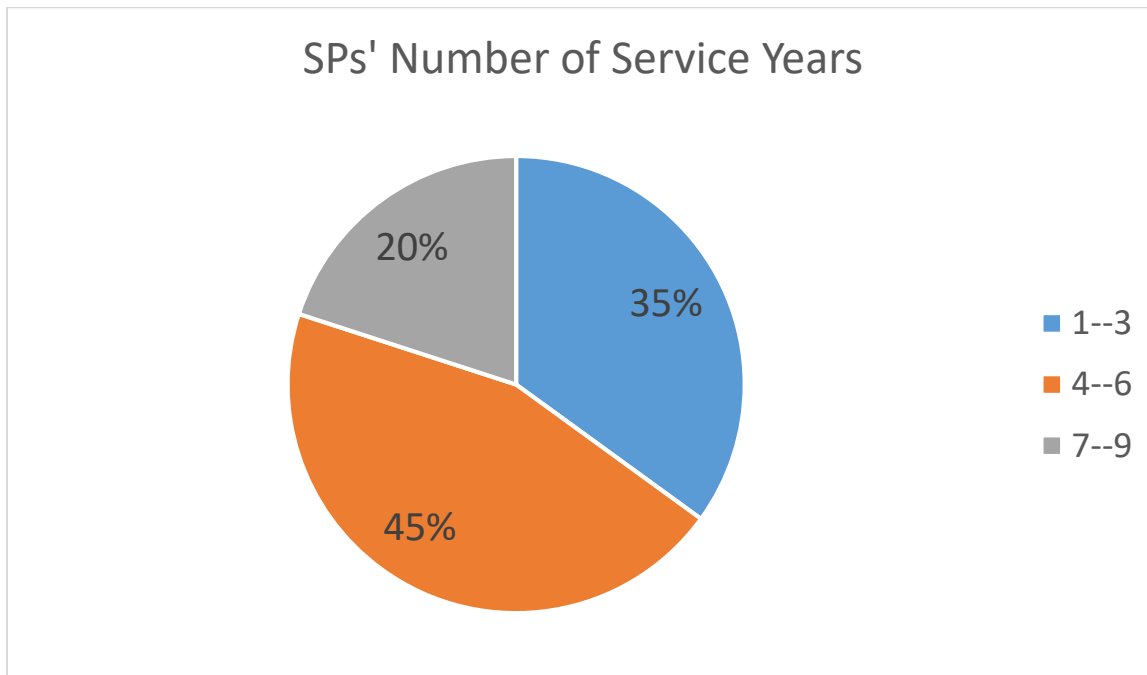


Figure B4. Number of years working as a SP

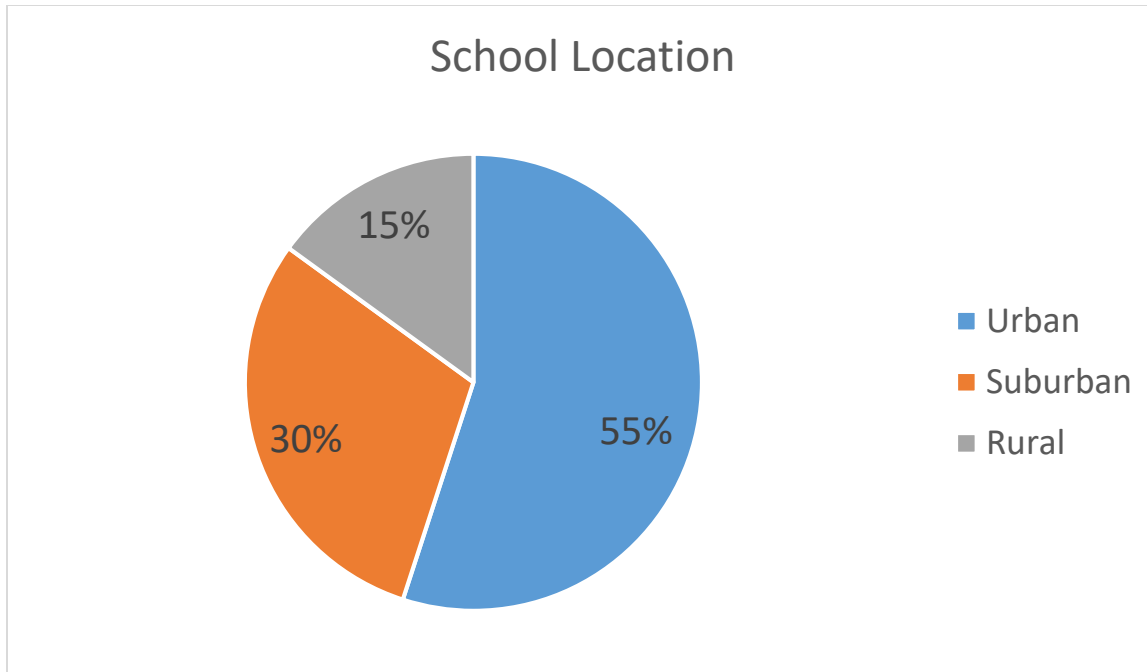


Figure B5. Location of the school

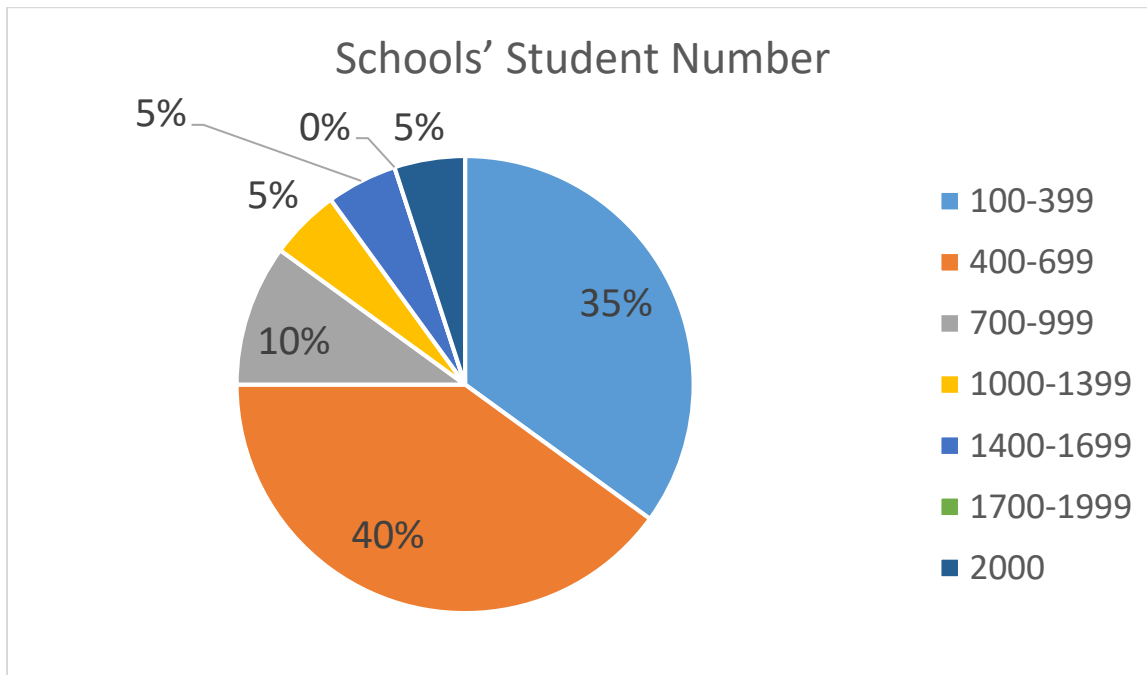


Figure B6. Number of students at the school

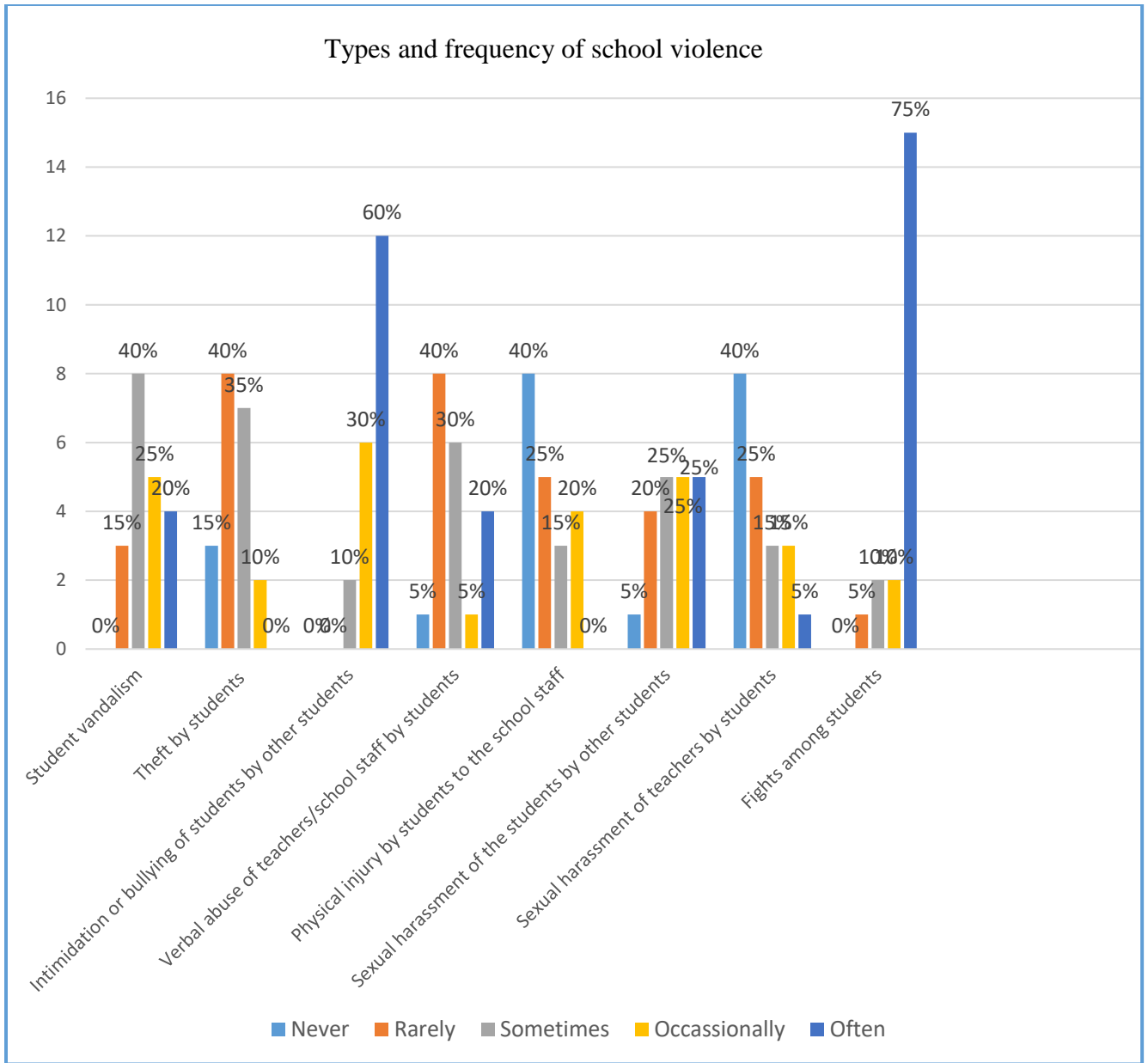


Figure B7. School violence types and frequency at schools

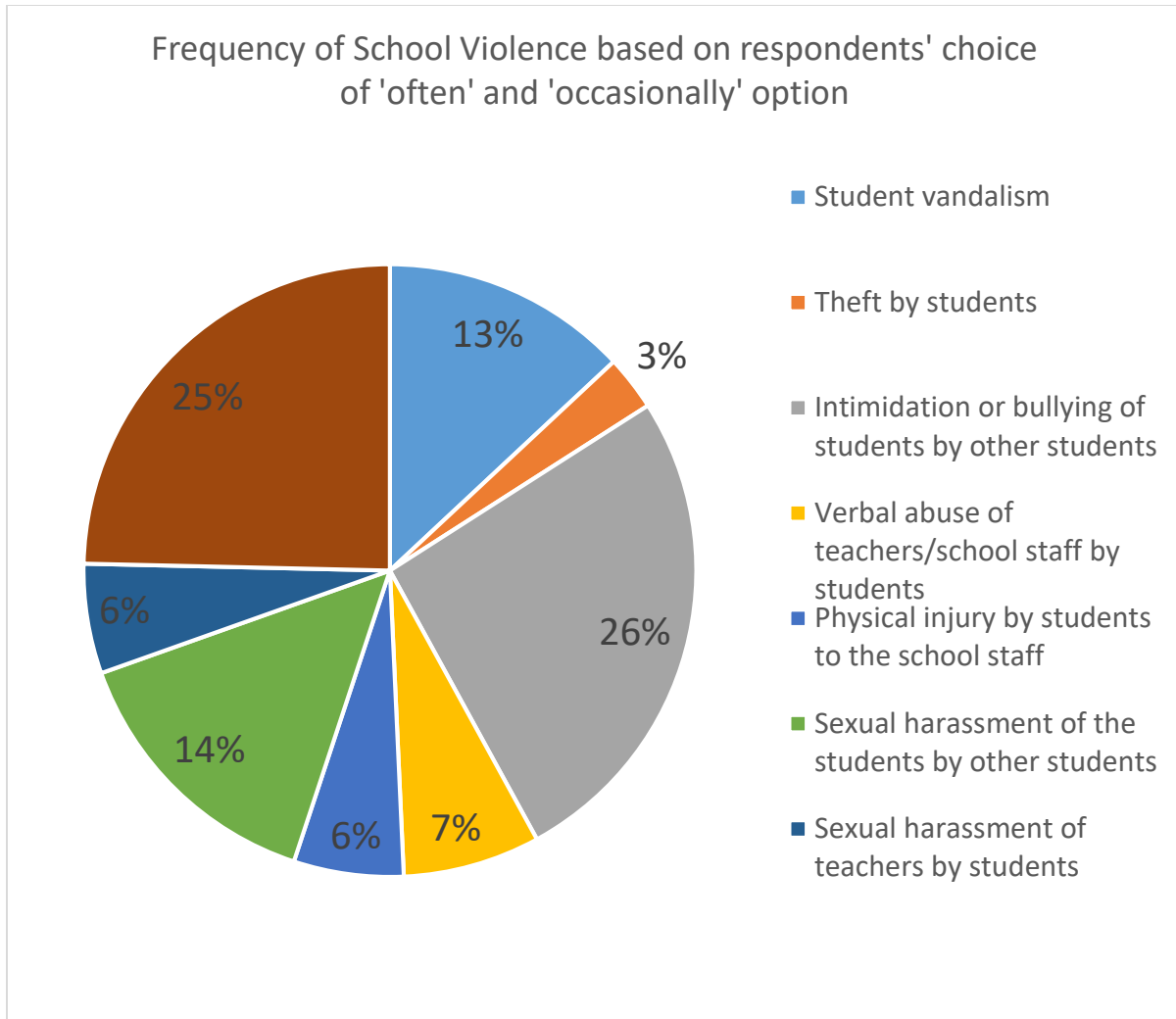


Figure B8. School violence types based on 'occasionally' and 'often' frequency

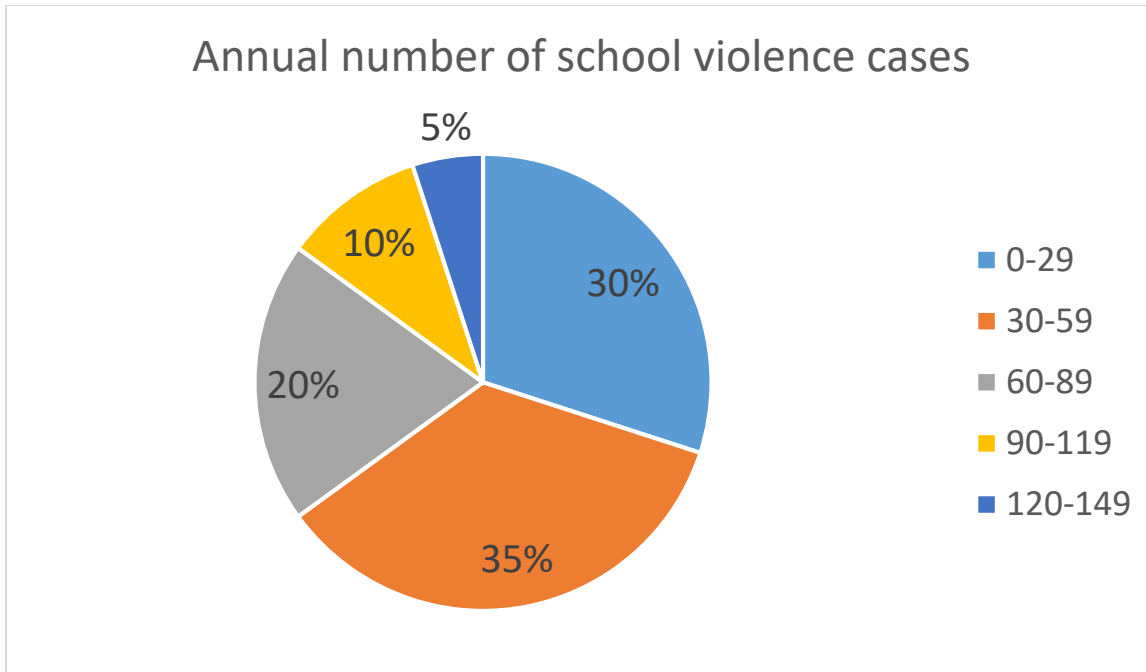


Figure B9. School violence cases at schools annually

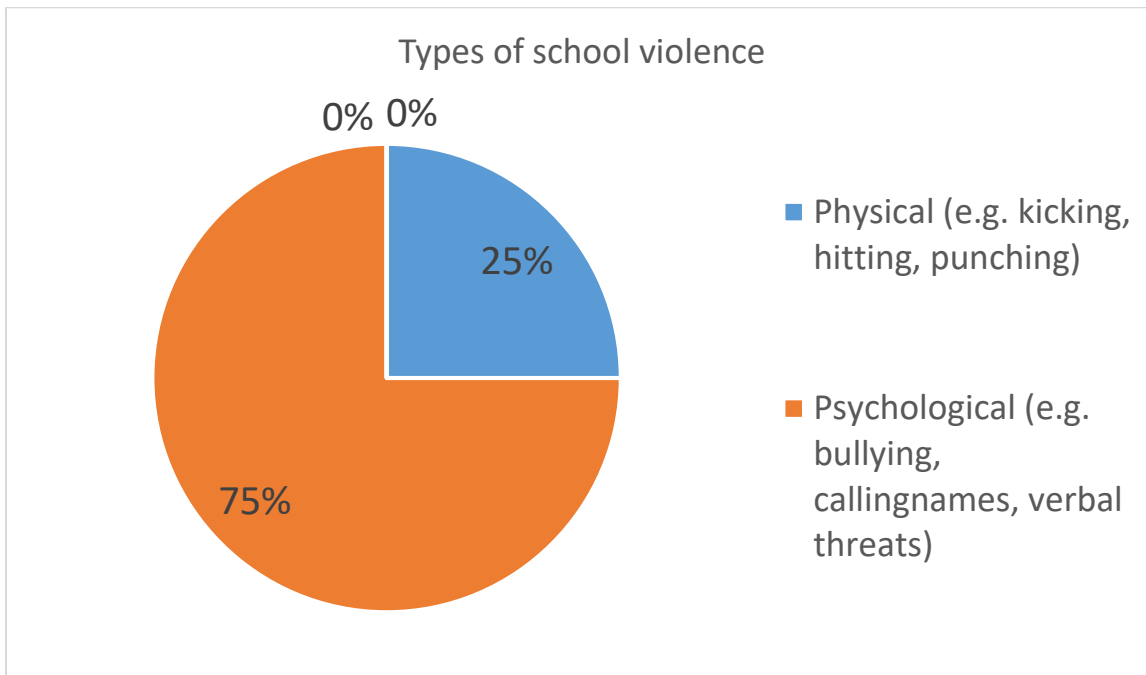


Figure B10. Most common violence types at school

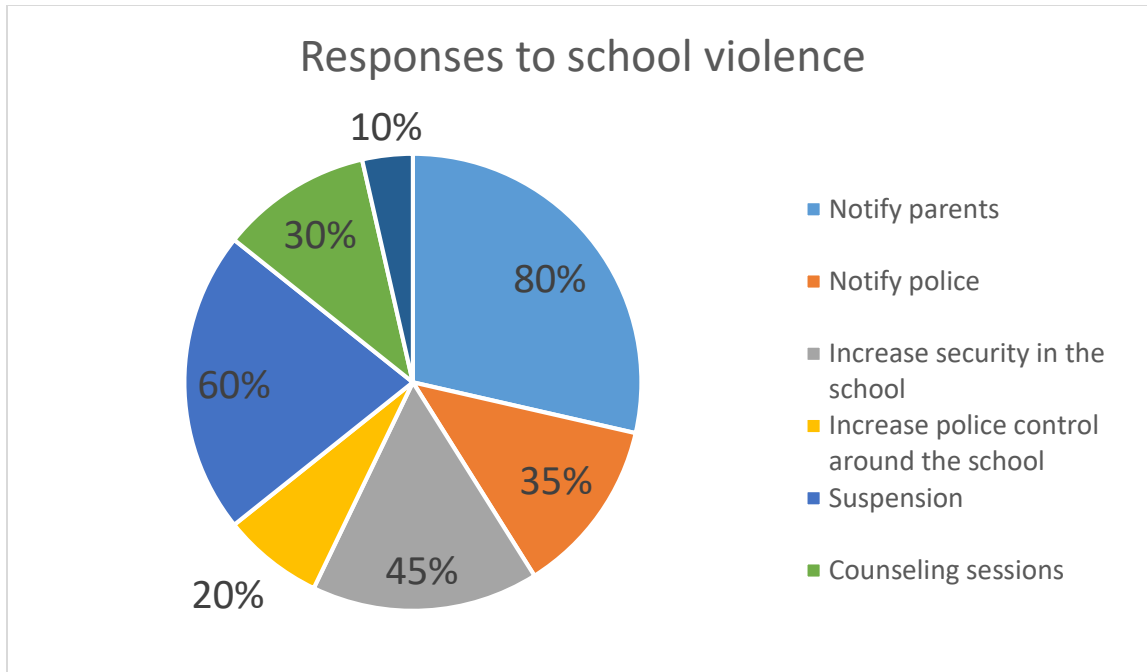


Figure B11. Common responses to school violence

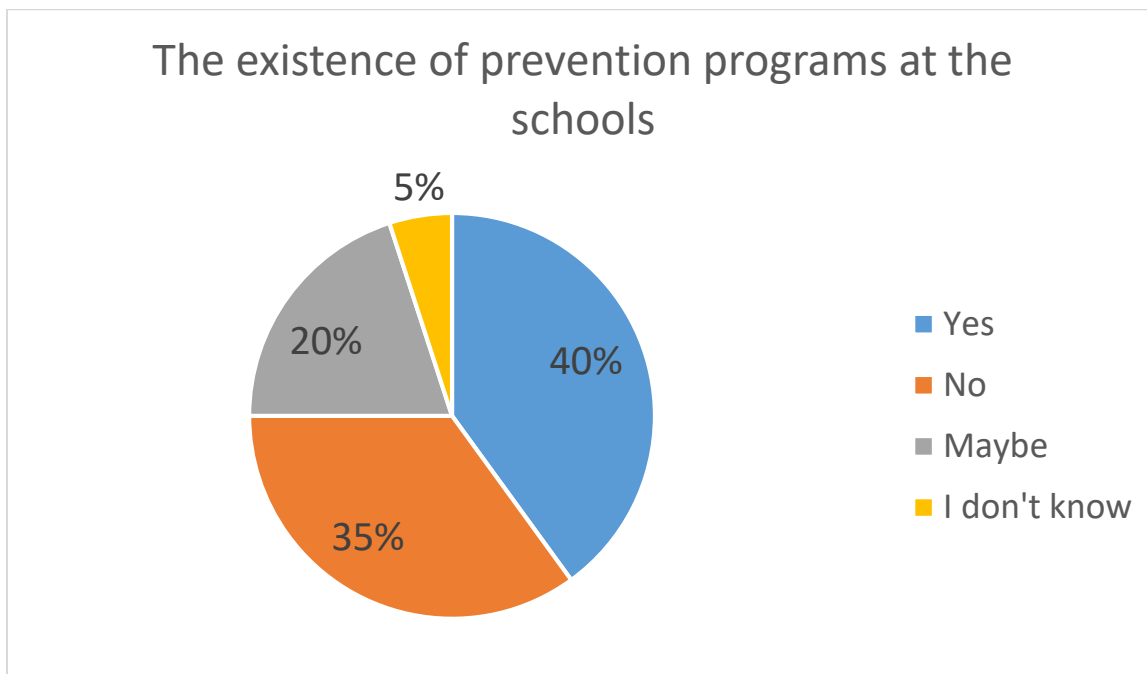


Figure B12. The percentages on whether school have prevention programs

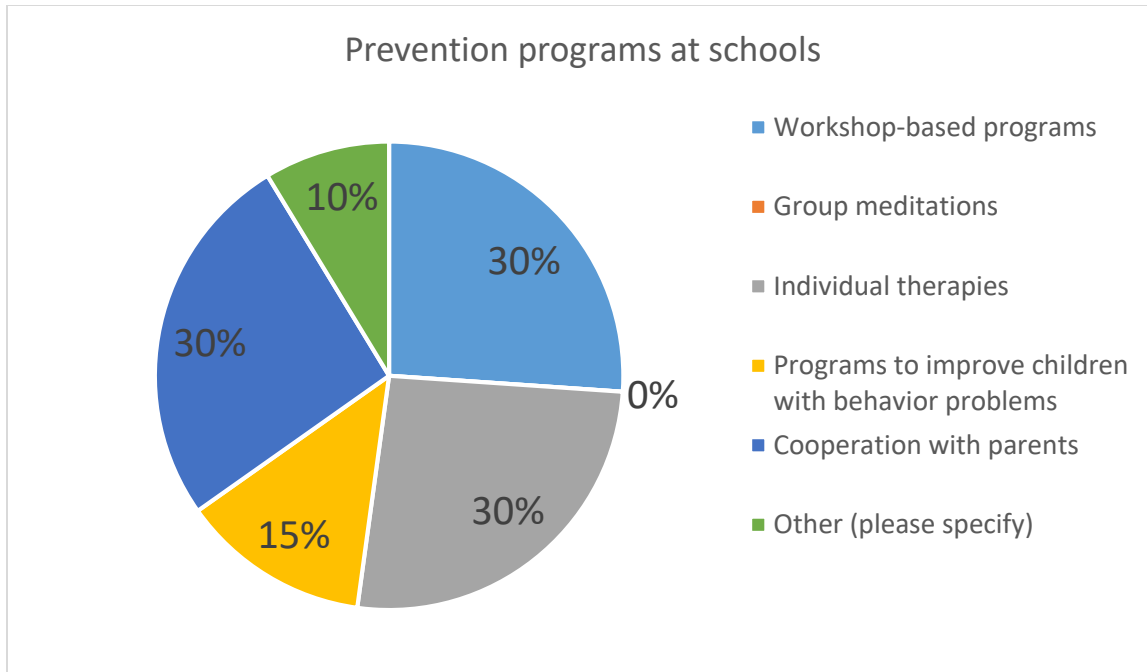


Figure B13. The types of prevention programs schools have

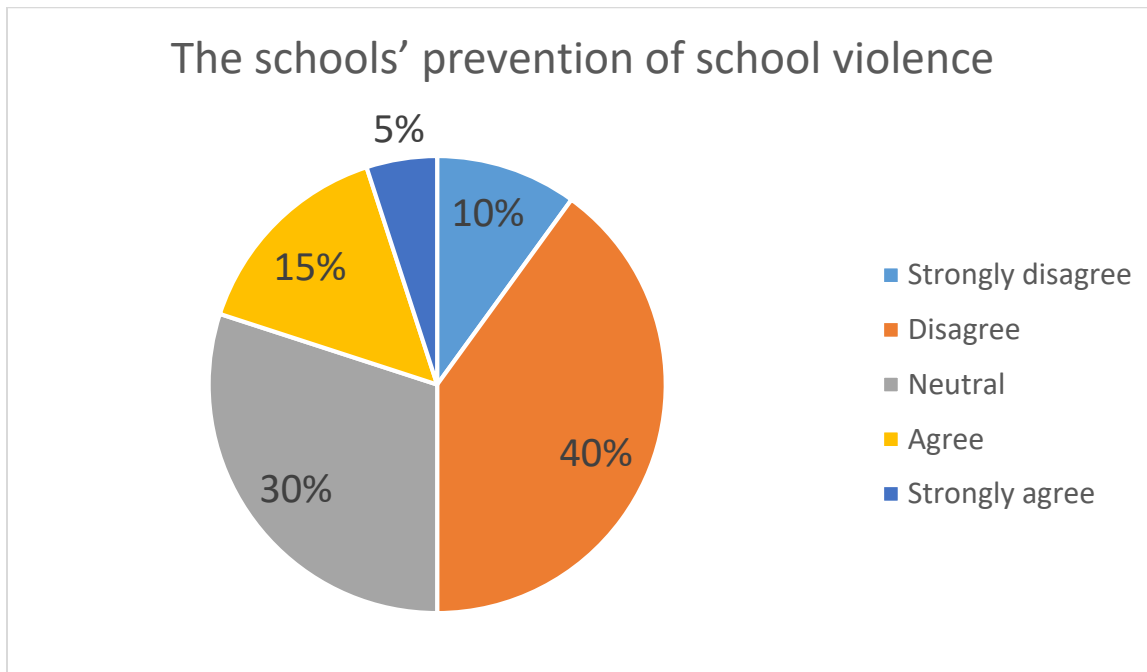


Figure B14. Whether the school works on preventing school violence

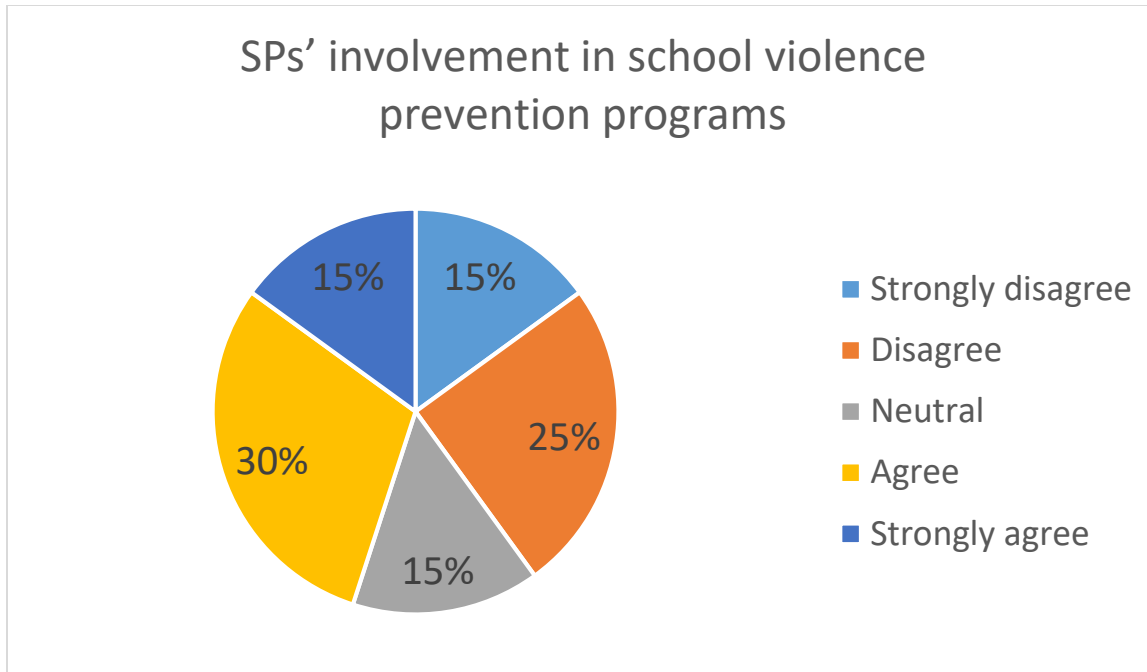


Figure B15. Whether the SPs' are involved in school violence prevention programs at their schools

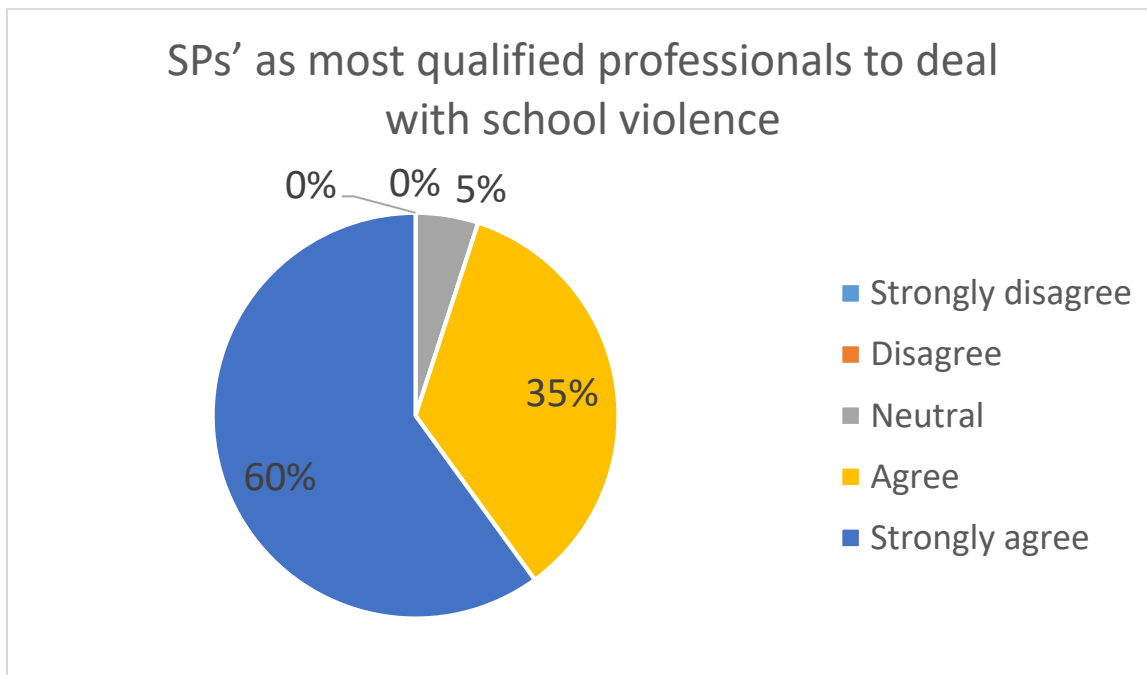


Figure B16. Whether SPs are the most qualified professionals to deal with school violence

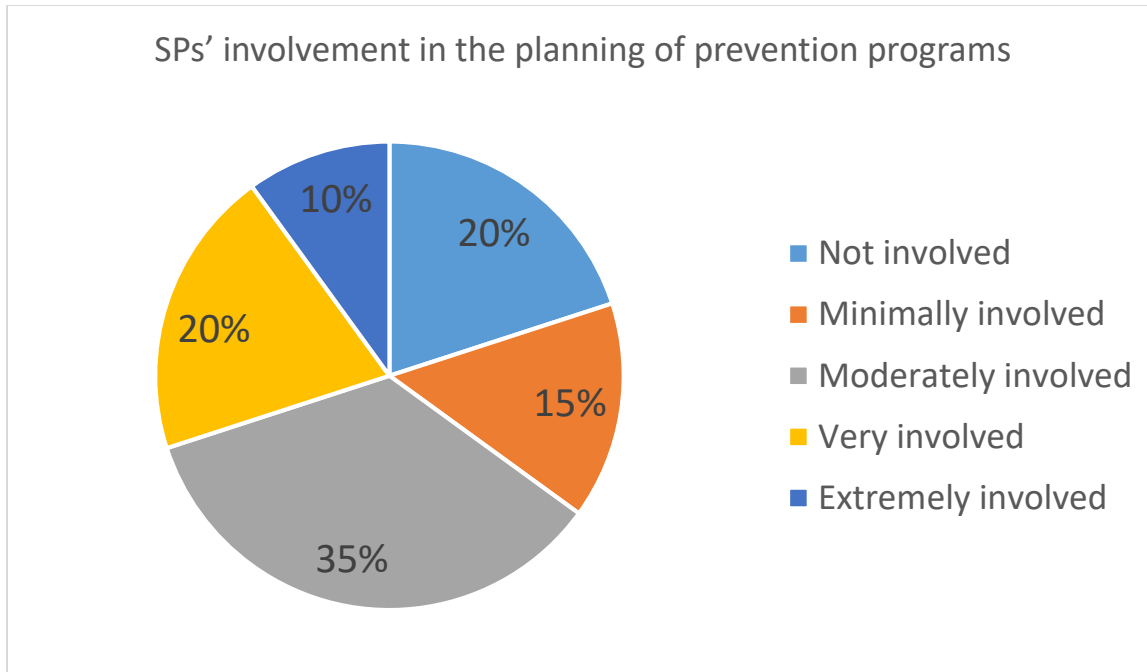


Figure B17. Whether the SPs are involved in the planning of prevention programs at their schools

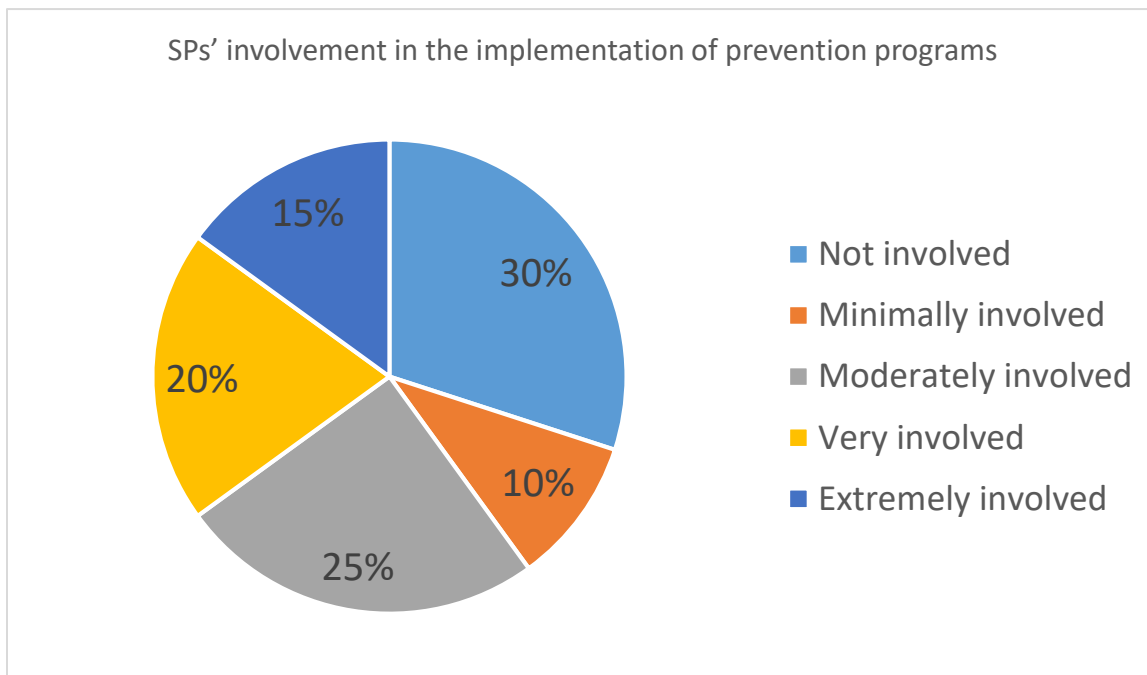


Figure B18. Whether SPs are involved in the implementation of the prevention programs

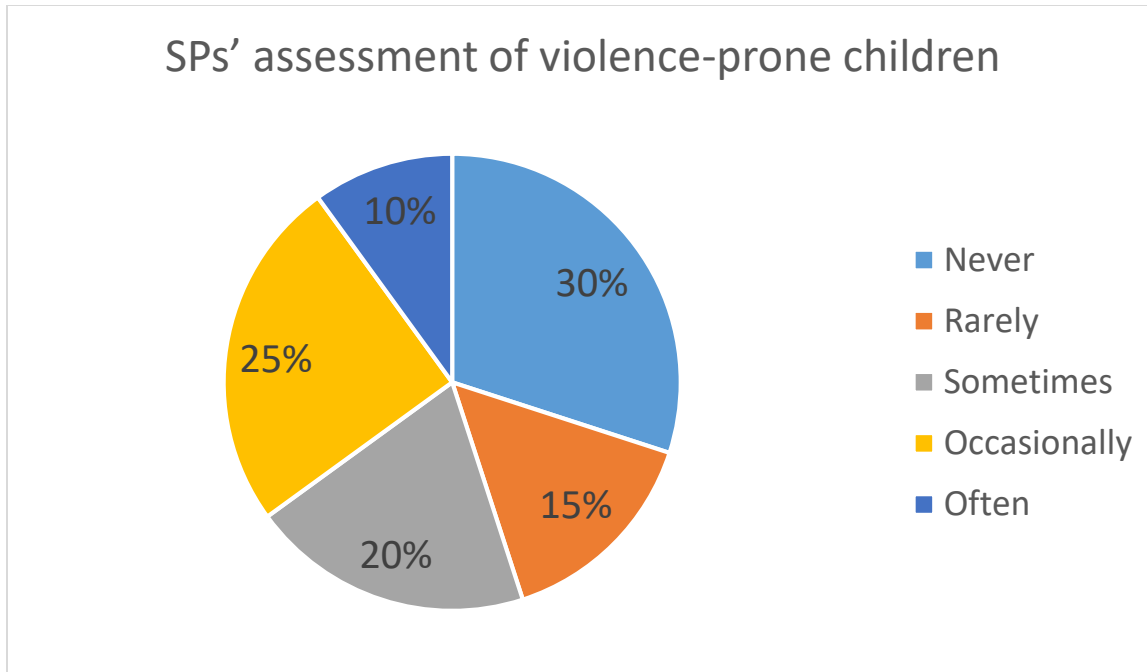


Figure B19. The time spent by SPs in the assessment of children who are prone to violent behavior

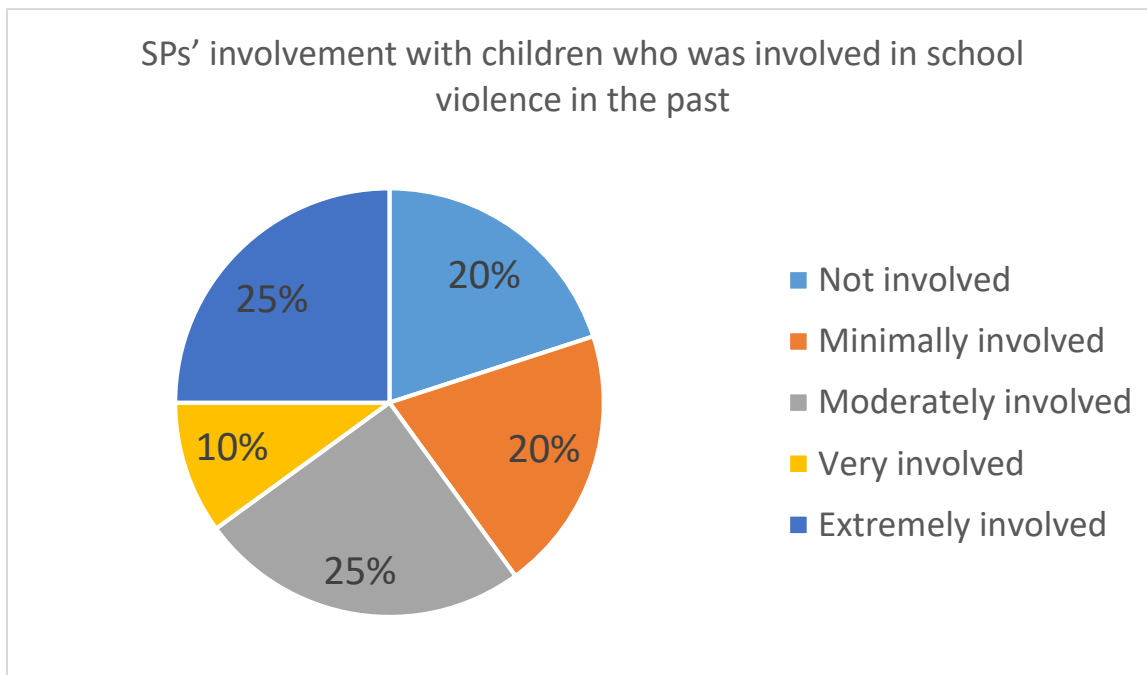


Figure B20. The involvement of SPs in violence prevention with students' who have a history with school violence

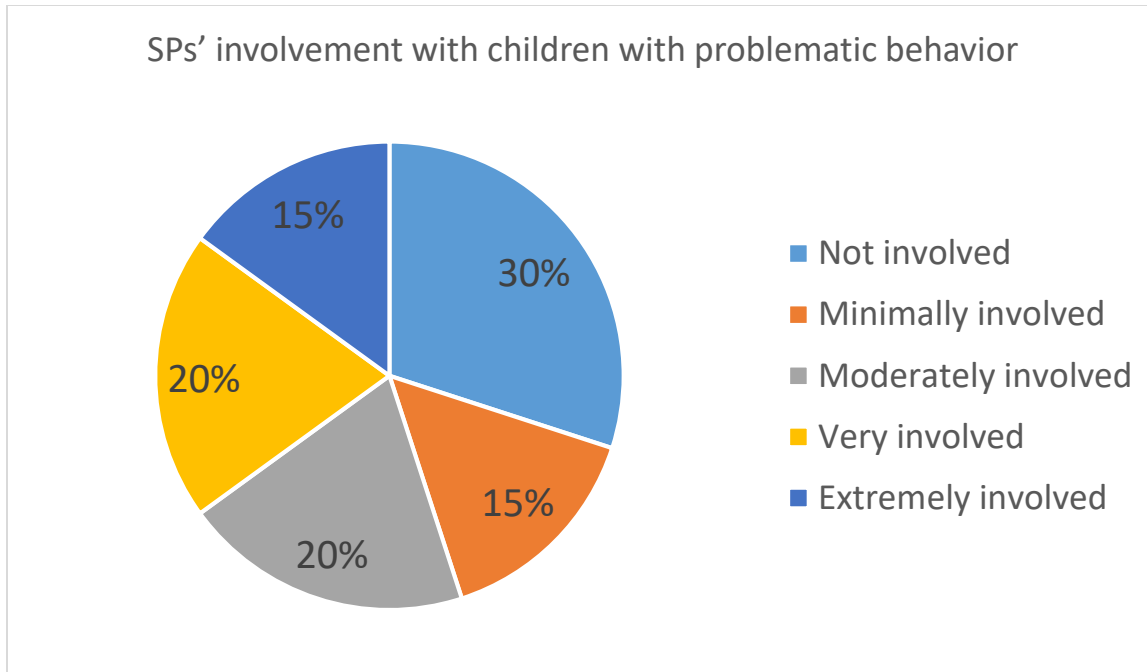


Figure B21. The level of SP involvement in violence prevention with students who have displayed problematic behavior

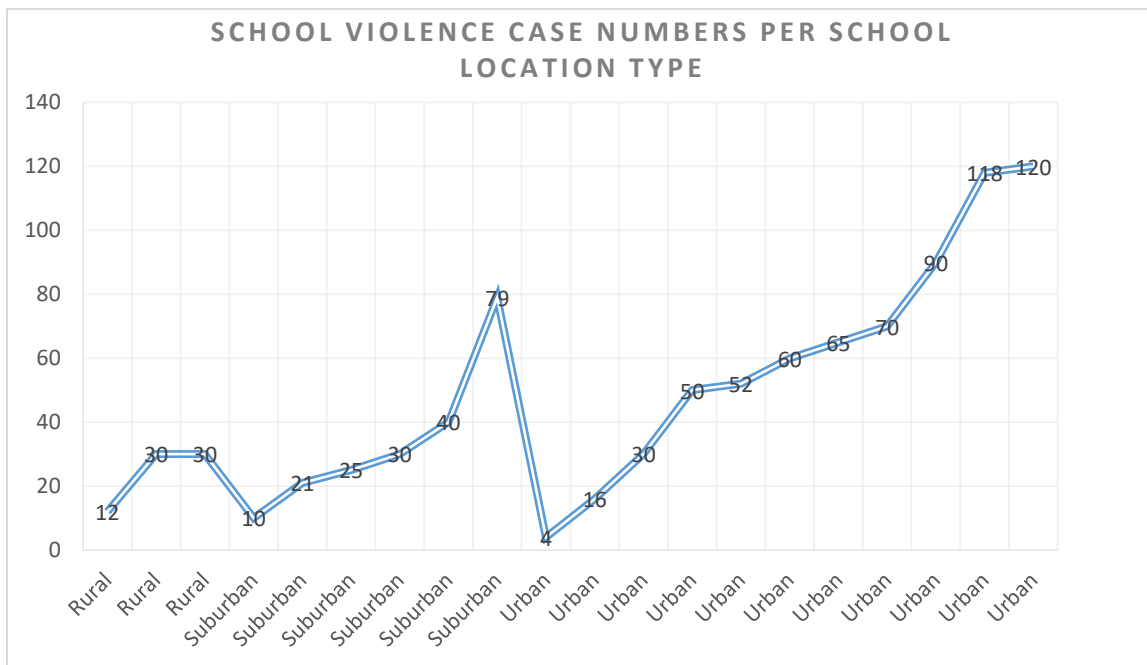


Figure B22. School location and school violence cases

Appendix C

Consent Form

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

School Psychologists' Role in School Violence Prevention at Lower and Higher Secondary Institution

Principal Investigator: Edita Karavidaj

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Venera Demukaj

Address: Rochester Institute of Technology-Kosovo, Dr. Shpetim Robaj Street (Germia campus), Prishtina, Kosovo 10000

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is about the role of school psychologists at preventing school violence at Kosovo's educational institutions. The purpose of this study is to better understand the situation of psychological services offered at the lower- and higher secondary educational institutions in Kosovo.

What is involved in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be filling a survey out which will approximately take 6-7 minutes. These questions will be about the cases of school violence at schools, the way schools respond to these cases, whether there are prevention programs at school, and the role of school psychologists in these cases.

Confidentiality

The surveys will be filled out anonymously. The surveys will be used to collect data and will be destroyed after 1 year. No identifiable data such as your name or contact information will be collected.

Your Rights as a Research Participant

Participating in this research is totally voluntary; you can choose not to participate. Your decision will not affect any of area of your life. If you choose to not participate, you will not suffer any penalty or punishment and it will not cause any negative consequence to the

researcher and the supervisor. If along the study you decide to withdraw from it, you are free to withdraw at any point.

Contacts for Further Assistance

If you have additional questions about the research study, you can contact the investigator, Edita Karavidaj at exk9141@rit.edu and/or the supervisor, Dr. Venera Demukaj at vdemukaj@auk.org.

If you agree to participate, please click the 'Continue' button.

Appendix D

Survey

Demographic Questions

Age: _____

Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Prefer not to say

Number of years in service at your current school: _____

Number of years working as a school psychologist: _____

Location of the School:

- a) Urban
- b) Suburban
- c) Rural
- d) Other

Approximate number of students at the school: _____

Study questions

In the following questions, please refer to this definition of school violence:

“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 [within the school environment].” (WHO, 2020).

1. About how often does the school have to deal with the following behaviors of the students? (Please select the appropriate scale for each sentence).

Never Rarely Sometimes Occasionally Often

Student vandalism

Theft by students

Intimidation or bullying of
students by other students

Verbal abuse of teachers/school
staff by students

Physical injury by students to the
school staff

Sexual harassment of the students
by other students

Sexual harassment of teachers by
students

Fights among students

2. What is the approximate number of school violence cases per year at your school?

3. What types of school violence are most common at your school (choose as many as apply)?

- a. Physical (e.g. kicking, hitting, punching)
 - b. Psychological (e.g. bullying, calling names, verbal threats)
 - c. Sexual violence
 - d. Other (please specify): _____
4. The common response(s) to school violence cases is (are) (choose as many as apply):
- a. Notify parent
 - b. Notify police
 - c. Increase security in the school
 - d. Increase police control around the school
 - e. Suspension
 - f. Counseling sessions
 - g. Other (please specify): _____

Based on your response to the previous question, could you please explain why is (are) that (those) the chosen actions?

5. In your opinion, which kind of programs would be appropriate in case of school violence?
6. Does your school have school violence prevention program(s)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. I don't know
7. If yes, what kind of prevention programs do you have (choose as many as apply)?
- a. Workshop-based programs
 - b. Group meditations
 - c. Individual therapies
 - d. Programs targeted at student with school behavioral adjustment problems
 - e. Create a cooperation with the students' parents
 - f. Other (please specify): _____

8. My school works on preventing school violence.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
9. How does your school prevent school violence from happening?
10. I am involved in school violence prevention programs at my school.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
11. I think that school psychologists are most qualified to deal with school violence cases.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
12. How involved are you in the planning of school violence prevention programs at your school?
 - a. Not involved
 - b. Minimally involved

- c. Moderately involved
 - d. Very involved
 - e. Extremely involved
13. How involved are you in the implementation of prevention programs at your school?
- a. Not involved
 - b. Minimally involved
 - c. Moderately involved
 - d. Very involved
 - e. Extremely involved
14. Do you spend time in assessing the children's development path to see whether there's a potential for violent behavior?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Occasionally
 - e. Often
15. How involved are you in dealing with students who have been involved in school violence cases before?
- a. Not involved
 - b. Minimally involved
 - c. Moderately involved
 - d. Very involved
 - e. Extremely involved

16. Based on your answer to the previous question, if you are not involved or minimally involved, why is that so?
17. Are you involved in consultations with students who have displayed problematic behavior?
- a. Not involved
 - b. Minimally involved
 - c. Moderately involved
 - d. Very involved
 - e. Extremely involved
18. Based on your answer to the previous question; if you selected not involved or minimally involved, why is that so?
19. Based on your observations, what is the current role of school psychologists in Kosovo?
20. Please provide any additional comments that you did not have the chance to express earlier.