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## Original Article

## Pathways, Situations, and Factors Associated with Youth Violence in Educational Settings

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### Abstract

This qualitative research aimed to understand the pathways of youth violence in educational settings in Thailand, both on and off the school grounds, to study situation and patterns of youth violence, and to elaborate on factors associated with such violence. This study employed a life-history approach, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observations at six schools. The key informants were 6 administrators, 30 teachers, 30 students, and 30 parents. The results found that there are two pathways of youth violence: one in which some youths are caught in a cycle of violence; and the other in which they have reached a turning point and were able to stop being violent, with support from adults, and by having clear goals for their future. As for the situation and patterns of youth violence, typically the children and youth in this study easily resorted to violence. Generally, male youngsters are more violent than females, and they tend to use violence outside of school. They think that carrying a weapon is normal behavior. They feel that the laws are not fair, which causes them to prefer taking revenge. There are six relevant dimensions of violent factors, including youths, family, friends, schools, the community, or society, and one's culture, beliefs, and values. Each dimension can contribute to violent behavior and is related to the others. The findings have implications for youth behavior promotion and modification by involving various social groups, using socialization focused on appropriate psycho-social development, managing environment for stimulating positive behaviors, as well as cultivating good models, values and cultures for children and youth.

Youth violence has been a social problem in Thailand and other countries for a long time and, unfortunately, the situation nowadays is getting worse. According to a survey on violence in schools around the world, violence has increased significantly. It was also found that a great number of young people in Thailand are bullied; this country is second in the world, with 600,000 victims annually, and the proportion of students bullied by their classmates is about 40%, second only to Japan. The Director General of the Department of Mental Health in Thailand (Department of Mental Health, 2018) has pointed out that students who are bullied have a high tendency to become aggressive and resort to violence to solve their problems. Also, most bullied children are quite stressed and depressed. The

bullied ones often have difficulty blending in, and they may end up assaulting others or hurting or killing themselves. Moreover, according to data of Child Watch in 2012 (Compassion Thailand, 2015), certain conditions tend to increase the rate of youth violence. For instance, about 34 percent of Thai youth regularly carry weapons, and they regularly witness violence in school and/or at home. Additionally, violence broadcast on various media, including television and the internet, can lead to an imitation of violent behavior.

According to the research study conducted by the Thai Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection (2011), the risk factors of violence are age, the parents' marital status, the parents' relationship, their level of education, occupation,

gambling involvement, living and economic conditions, family history of offenses, delinquent friends, and engaging in deviant behavior before. This finding is similar to that of The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2011), Thailand, which found that factors that can lead to youth violence are having a violent background; drug, alcohol, and cigarette abuse; peer pressure, and a low socio-economic background. Similarly, research conducted by Canada's Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence (2001) indicated that the factors that can prevent young people from using violence are violence-free family conditions, close and loving relationships with caregivers, parental supervision, and having a high school education.

As mentioned above, multiple factors causing youth violence include oneself, friend, community, and schools. Major factors causing youth violence are individual problems related to kids' behavior surrounding with environment conditions. Most previous studies have been quantitative research, questionnaire survey, which have given various perspectives on the problem, but may not adequately account for the complexities of this crisis. Furthermore, most previous studies on the factors leading to and the effects of violence were conducted separately, so the correlations of the problems and consequences on the society could not be established.

Therefore, this study used a qualitative methodology to gain in-depth insights into all the dimensions including youths, family, friends, schools, the community or society, and culture, beliefs, and values. To understand the pathways of youth violence in school, a life-history approach was also employed because its dynamic process can portray the cycle of violence from its earliest stage. This approach can explain the correlations among various factors associated with violence, to offer a better understanding of the roots and dimensions of the problem. The researchers aim to discover the concrete causes of this problem, case by case. This dynamic approach can lead to the introduction of preventive measures.

## Literature Review

### Types and Patterns of Violence

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002), violence can be categorized into three types: 1) self-directed violence; 2) interpersonal violence; and 3) collective violence. Furthermore, patterns of violence can be categorized into four

groups: 1) physical violence, which means any acts which bodily injure or otherwise harm others; 2) sexual violence, which means any forced sexual acts, attempts at such, harassing comments, or advances made using coercion; 3) psychological violence, which means any insulting conduct or coercion that causes embarrassment, feelings of worthlessness, or a devaluation of one's humanity; and 4) violence causing loss, deprivation, or neglect, which means a lack of essential care or provision of necessities; not being taken care of when sick; or not being protected when in danger.

For youth violence, WHO (2002) define it as violence occurs with people aged 10-29 years old between youth themselves in any acts include bullying, assault, sexual abuse, and murder or attempted murder which influence living, cognitive and social problems, as well as financial lose for health care, social work, and justice process. This research study violence in youth aged not over 18 years old who are studying in primary, secondary, and vocational schools. This study also covers violence both between persons and between groups.

### Youth-Violence Theories

There are several psychological theories that explain the use of violence by focusing on the development of young people. For instance, the psychosocial development theory of Erikson (1950, 1968) explains that adolescence is a highly critical stage, in that teenagers' psychological development is at a turning point when they are developing their sense of self and establishing their identity. During this time, they may try different roles and different ideas which sometimes can cause confusion. Teenagers who cannot establish their identity and coordinate it within their social structure can have a weak sense of themselves, can be confused, make too many bad decisions, and possibly become delinquent.

Another prominent model is the cognitive-development theory of Piaget (1952). Piaget proposes that there are four stages of mental development in children. Elementary students ages 7 to 11 are typically in the concrete operational stage, which means they have cognition and imagination. At this stage, children need to be inculcated with positive social values. Teenagers are generally in the fourth stage, the formal operational stage, which means they are ready to learn new things using rational thinking, and they dare to learn things by trial and error. If they experience challenging

situations, especially when they are in a violent environment, they can easily become violent themselves (Katawanich, 2013; Tengtairath et al., 2011). The moral development theory of Kohlberg (1969) explains that, in early childhood, kids do not have a concept of morality, so they can be persuaded to do bad things more easily. They cannot judge whether their acts are right or wrong. When they get older, they often comply with their social group to be accepted as members. In this stage, they are often persuaded by peers to behave in inappropriate ways. In contrast, those in their late teens tend to have the moral development to judge right from wrong. If they are well-socialized, they can behave in the right way.

Other important psychological theories include the psychoanalytical theory of Freud (1910), the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) and the attachment theory of Bowlby (1982). The psychoanalytical theory stresses how early childhood experiences can have an influence on intra-psychic conflicts, which can lead to inappropriate behaviors. In addition, Freud emphasized that violent behavior is related to instinct (the id), which sometimes overrides the superego (the voice that says not to cause harm, not to violate norms) and the ego, which mediates between the id and superego (Katawanich, 2013; Kaekangwan, 2018). The social learning theory of Bandura (1986) argues that human beings learn by observing and imitating; it is a cognitive process. When people are stimulated, they feel interested in the stimulators. They then decode, manage the knowledge, and practice and express responses by imitating (Bandura, 1986). Influential models are parents, siblings, teachers, or friends. Symbolic models can be from people in various media such as television, movies, or social media, as well as from verbal instructions such as giving guidance, or advising. The attachment theory of Bowlby (1982) stresses how the emotional attachment between children and their caregivers is the foundation of children's emotional development. Children who are raised with love have more attachment to their caregivers, and this attachment tends to develop into their valuation of themselves and others. On the contrary, children who are raised without enough love and care can feel paranoid (Hongsaungsri & Limsuwan, 2015). If the children are neglected or raised with estrangement, they can become unattached. Children who are raised with aggression often have aggressive relationships with others. Most theories place

importance on the conditions of individuals and their surroundings as stimulators, especially their immediate surroundings in childhood.

In addition to psychological theories, there are important sociological ones. There is the socialization theory, which explains a process of socializing members of the society so that they learn a code of conduct, rules, attitudes, and values through social institutions. However, violent behaviors can also be passed on through articulated values or various types of violence itself. If people are socialized well, they have fewer chances to express violent behaviors. However, there are many small groups in society that deviate from the standard criteria of being good citizens. The key agents of violent transfer are friends (Punahitanon, 2015). Another theory is the theory of social control by LaPiere (1954), who argued that people need clear social controls to prevent violations of social criteria (Gillin et al., 1954). Similarly, The Social-bond theory of Hirschi (1969) postulates that children will cause less trouble if they have a higher degree of social bonds in these areas: 1) attachment to family, friends, and society; 2) imagining a future occupation, believing in success, and having personal goals 3) involvement in school activities, the community, a religious group 4) beliefs that consist of morality, justice, and responsibility. Youth violence is caused by weakened or broken bonds with one's society. Cultivating a strong and positive environment and larger society for children to integrate into plays a central role in preventing kids from becoming violent.

The human-ecology theory of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) is another important contribution. The stress here is how one's surroundings and social relationships influence human development and behavior in interrelated systems (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). These surroundings and relationships can be grouped into five environmental systems that have different impacts on children's behaviors: 1) the microsystem, which is the most immediate one, and is comprised of elements such as the family, school, friends, and community, 2) the mesosystem, which combines microsystems such as interactions between teachers and families, 3) the exosystem, which is a distant system made up of social settings that can affect children or their microsystems, such as parents' workplaces or social networks, 4) the macrosystem, which is created by a combination of ethnicity or race, culture, the socioeconomic status of the family, the conditions of the country, historical

events, and so on that merge to comprise the culture of each child, and which affect his or her behavior in various ways, and 5) the chronosystem, which involves the chronological order of events and changes that affect children's behavior, such as divorce. In general, violence is caused by individuals, social interactions, psychosocial interactions, and the cultural situation. The four sociological theories above explain violent behavior and focus on social processes to identify the causes of violence, whereas psychological theories focus more on social influences than on individuals.

Criminology theories that can explain offending and violent behavior include the sub-culture theory of Cohen (1955), which holds that members of sub-cultures have beliefs, values, and codes of conduct that are different from those of the dominant culture. The members consider the sub-culture's concepts as being correct, and reject the mainstream (Reid, 2018). Violence is then learned when individuals are members of violent groups, and this can be passed from generation to generation. The differential-association theory was proposed by sociologist and criminologist, Edwin Sutherland, who focused on how people learn violent behaviors from people they are close to. In such a context, the young absorb attitudes which endorse violating rules. Members also have the motivation to act violently (Sutherland, 1939, 1947; Sutherland & Cressey, 1978). This theory stresses not only the influence of certain individuals, but on a person's general surroundings. This means that having close relationships with violent people is not always a determining factor. Instead, what is crucial is the sharing of beliefs, values, and behaviors among close individuals, rather than whether they touch individuals' hearts (Hollin, 1989). One's attachment to friends can lead to violent behaviors. Therefore, criminological concepts emphasize both the individuals and his or her surroundings.

All the theoretical concepts mentioned above discuss the conditional factors that cause youth violence. This violent problem results from mental and cognitive problems linked to the conditions of relationships and social environment at the family to the meso and macro levels, as well as social influence arising from the learning of violence from model, cultivating violence in subcultures, and lack of social bonds to keep children or young people away from violent behavior. Youth violence does not arise from only one social dimension but a variety that influences children to have violent behavior.

Consequently, this research aims to study condition factors and social dimensions that cause the violence of Thai children and youth in educational institutions and how the pathways of violence is related to these various conditions.

### Related Studies

Previous research on violence among youth in educational settings was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and it provided a great deal of information about factors associated with youth violence. For example, Sripa & Nilphet (2020) studied the phenomenon of violence among Thai children by referring to the experiences of police officers and multidisciplinary teams and from the perspective of various disciplines. The findings show that the factors or conditions related to youth violence can be divided into seven dimensions: (1) the identity of children (2) the family (3) peers (4) school life (6) the community (7) the educational/social/economic system. Atano (2018) studied factors affecting the quarrelsome and violent behavior of vocational students in Mahasarakham province. In addition to the obvious role of the society and immediate environment, the factors from the parties, time and place, and one's emotional intelligence. It was found that social and environmental factors are relatively influential. In addition, a study conducted by Songkiatkul (2018) found that the causes of conflict involving vocational students include personal factors such as problems with restraint, anti-social personality, self-discipline, misleading beliefs about the dignity of their school, peer pressure, revenge, life goals, and substance abuse. The environmental factors are family, reference groups (friends, seniors, and teachers), educational institutions, communities/societies, media, social networking, and the judicial process and law.

Golshiri et al. (2018) investigated youth violence and related risk factors in Isfahan, Iran by conducting a cross-sectional study of 2800 middle and high school students, aged 11-18, in urban and rural areas. The prevalence of verbal and physical violence in the study was 45% and 33.3%, respectively. The prevalence of verbal and physical victimization was 45.8% and 23.6%, respectively. The prevalence of physical violence was higher in middle school students than high school students, and among boys. Being a boy, carrying a weapon out of home or in school, experiencing victimization, feeling unsafe at school, and violence in the family

are major risk factors ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, Chen and Chen (2020) examined the similarities and differences among three distinct Chinese communities regarding the connection of gender and grade level to school violence. The results revealed that verbal violence is most frequent. Male students are most likely to be aggressive. Grade-level differences involving school violence were shown to be weak or insignificant. The findings imply that the contextual differences may not account for different effects of gender and grade level on school violence and the behavioral patterns of school violence. Lastly, Nickerson et al. (2020) examined the effects of early childhood physical aggression and violence exposure on bullying victimization/perpetration and attitudes toward guns and violence in early adolescence in a high-risk sample from an ongoing longitudinal study. The results supported the concept of a developmental pathway from early adversity (i.e., prenatal narcotic substance absorption) to aggression at kindergarten age to bullying perpetration and gun-violence attitudes (aggressive responses to shame) in early adolescence. Higher peer victimization was also associated with aggressive responses to shame in early adolescence. The results were discussed considering the complexity of the motives for aggression and the need for prevention and early intervention.

The literature review shows that youth violence is still a major problem here in Thailand and abroad. Most importantly, several research gaps still exist. First, the knowledge about pathways of youth violence in educational settings is still sparse, not fully captured youth life path nature. Second, situation and patterns of youth violence is not yet well-explained, particularly in terms of forms of violence and its effects. Third, factors associated with youth violence is not completely elaborated since most studies used questionnaire survey collect data, while youth violence is complicated and involve a variety of phenomena at various levels, individually and socially. To fully understand the problems and related factors in the present context, the researchers therefore examined these research questions including, 1) what is the path of violence against young people in educational institutions? What is the sequence of life and what are the changes in life related to violent situations?; 2) what is the situation of youth violence in schools? What are the patterns? What effects will such violence engender?; 3) what are the related factors of youth violence in schools? The purposes of this research were thus to,

1) understand the pathways of violence in children through a life-history approach; 2) to study the situation and patterns of youth violence in educational institutions, including its impacts; and 3) to explain the factors related to youth violence in schools.

## Methodology

This study of youth violence in schools involved investigating the use of violence, the specific situations in which it occurs, the patterns, effects, and the conditions related to the use of violence by children in educational settings in Thailand at the primary, secondary, and vocational levels both on and off campus. The scope of the study included seven types of violence – namely, quarrel, assault, intimidation, extortion, murder, or attempted murder, sexual harassment, and carrying weapons or explosives.

## Research Design and Data Collection

In order to get a deep understanding of the life paths of youths with intensely violent experiences, and to gain insight into the dynamics of life-path changes, this research study used a qualitative approach employing life-history case studies which can explore one's life experiences and meaning he/she gives to those experiences under historical context (Goodson, 2001; Punzo, 2000). The data were mainly collected by using in-depth interviews and focus groups, with observations during interview and focus group were used to collect behavior and environment data for supplementing and triangulation purposes. The data collection was conducted in 2019.

## Participants

Participants were selected from six schools in Bangkok which has high prevalence of youth violence problem: three primary through secondary schools and three vocational schools. To select the schools, criterion-purposive selection was applied with three criterion, including the academic institutes 1) formerly face or are still facing youth violence; 2) have demonstrable activities or measures to prevent or to correct violent behaviors, or have been awarded good/best practice; and 3) have network collaboration in order to prevent or to correct violent behaviors. Purposeful sampling was used in choosing the key informants. The selection criteria for each school included, 1) an administrator or representative from each educational institution; 2)

five guidance counselors/ homeroom teachers per school; 3) five students who had at least one time engaged in violent behavior (based on school behavioral record database and selected by teachers); and 4) five parents of the selected students per school. The total number of participants including the key informants was 96. As for the study of life histories, 8 out of 30 students were chosen due to their seriously violent behavior. All key informants had to give consent in providing data.

### Research Instruments

Three types of instruments were employed as normally used in life-history case study: 1) semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from students, families, and administrators individually; 2) the focus group guideline was used to gather data from 30 teachers with 5 teachers per group; and 3) the observation guidelines focused on the contexts related to aspects of families and academic institutes, in order to gain supporting information and to verify the data gained from interviews and the focus-group guidelines. These instruments were created by researchers and reviewed by three experts in violence content and measurement.

### Data Analysis and Credibility

The data analysis consisted of 1) content analysis which was used to analyze the life histories of violent children in school to determine their paths of violence and 2) typological analysis which was used to discover the circumstances, types, and effects of youth violence, as well as the related factors. Credibility for this study can be divided into two types: internal and external. Internal credibility was assessed to confirm that the data were analyzed appropriately that the data had proof behind it, and that the methodology and procedures for data analysis were clearly stated, in order to be rechecked. External credibility was assessed by using triangulation, including 1) data triangulation, by collecting data from various locations and people; 2) researcher triangulation, by involving multiple researchers in an investigation; 3) theory triangulation, by using more than one theoretical framework in the interpretation of the phenomena; and 4) methodological triangulation, by using more than one approach to gather data, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations, and so on.

### Research Ethics

This research was determined to be ethical by the Institutional Review Board, the IRB Faculty of

Social Science, Royal Police Cadet Academy, documented as SSRPCA-REC No.1-001/2019. Prior to collecting the data, the researchers informed the subjects about the background information of the study by passing out an information sheet. The subjects agreed and signed a consent form. The researchers were aware of the need to protect the informants' privacy, so the information was kept confidential to avoid any negative impact on the study. Pseudonyms were used to preserve the anonymity of eight key informants. The researchers used appropriate access to collect data, and only transcribed statements given by the informants.

## Findings

### Pathways of Youth Violence through a Life-History Approach

Data on violent behaviors and the life history of eight violent youths are shown in Table 1. All of them are male, aged ranged from 16-18 years old. Most of them are in vocational education. Various family backgrounds are reported. The pathways of violence sound different for each person.

The findings from these life histories can be used to determine the pathways of youth violence in academic settings. Such violence is influenced by friends, families, schools, the media, and social structures (predisposing factors and precipitating factors). Some youngsters have engaged in violence since they were young. Some of these young people are still in the cycle of violence for various reasons (precipitating factors or factors that perpetuate violent behavior), such as hanging out with violent friends. Other conditions are related to their beliefs, values, sense of dignity, or revenge-taking. However, most teenagers experience a turning point and can get out of the violent cycle if they have social support such as relatives or schools (protective factors). Some of them have clear goals, especially regarding graduating, careers, and their parents' expectations. The path of life from this life-history study of youth violent is shown in Figure 1

### Situations and Patterns of Youth Violence

#### *The situations of youth violence*

**The violent situations are not likely to end,** student violence decreases some years, but violence happens every year. Children and youths themselves think that violence is not likely to disappear, specifically, fighting between students from different institutes. Asked if it's very violent?..." it's like one week with 3-4 fights with other schools" (Student No.1).

**Table 1***The Findings Regarding Youths' Violent-Related Life Experiences*

No.	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Family status	The pathways of violence
1	Male	16	1 <sup>st</sup> -Yr. Voc .Cert.	Parents live in the countryside. He is living in an apartment with his friends.	<p><b><i>“Not fighting means just lying down and being stamped.”</i></b></p> <p>He thinks that physical fighting is a sign of masculinity. Being arrested is also normal for him, since he had seen friends and family members going in and out of prison as if it is normal. He used to intimidate his friends with a pen gun when he was in elementary school, and a gang leader urged him to be daring. Most of his friends experienced violence. He was also a member of a local teenagers' gang and had been in at least ten fights. The only thing that may can prevent him from continuing like this is having a life goal. He wants to graduate school and have a bright future. However, if he gets hit first, he is still not sure if he can stop himself from hitting back.</p>
2	Male	16	2 <sup>nd</sup> -Yr. Voc .Cert.	Parents always fight and are separated .He lives with his father.	<p><b><i>“I don't attack first .If my friend is attacked, I do my best to help.”</i></b></p> <p>He is quite pressured from domestic violence. When he was in primary school, he started a lot of arguments. His group would never start a fight, but always fought back. He said gang-fighting was dedicated to honor, companionship, and gaining acceptance from the senior gang leader. After he got older, he said he decided to think more, to make a life goal, which is to graduate and find a good job.</p>
3	Male	17	1 <sup>st</sup> -Yr. Voc .Cert.	Parents are divorced . He lives with his grandmother.	<p><b><i>“Surrendering means death.”</i></b></p> <p>He is hot-tempered, daring, and tough. He said he'd rather be in prison than be bullied, as imprisonment is only temporary. He first got into a fight when he was a child and joined a gang in elementary school. When he was in college, he had a fight with a senior student in another department, but it was not a severe incident, as the teacher stopped the fight quickly. He believes in not starting a fight, but always fighting back. He says he has tried to avoid being an offender or a victim of violence.</p>
4	Male	17	2 <sup>nd</sup> - Yr. Voc .Cert.	He lives with his parents, who are quite comfortable financially.	<p><b><i>“If you are a smart student but you cannot fight, it means death.”</i></b></p> <p>He has believed in not starting a fight, but always fighting back and surviving. He also used to carry a gun, and tried using a firebomb, but not to initiate violence. He was beaten up by a gang and was about to fight all of them, but the senior gang members on each side intervened, resulting in only a one-to-one fight between him and his then-enemy. His senior gang member was a former student, while the enemy's senior members were involved in drug trafficking. When he got older, he realized that he should set a goal for his life, so he focused on education and part-time jobs to ensure he would never go back to his former life.</p>

**Table 1** (*Continued*)

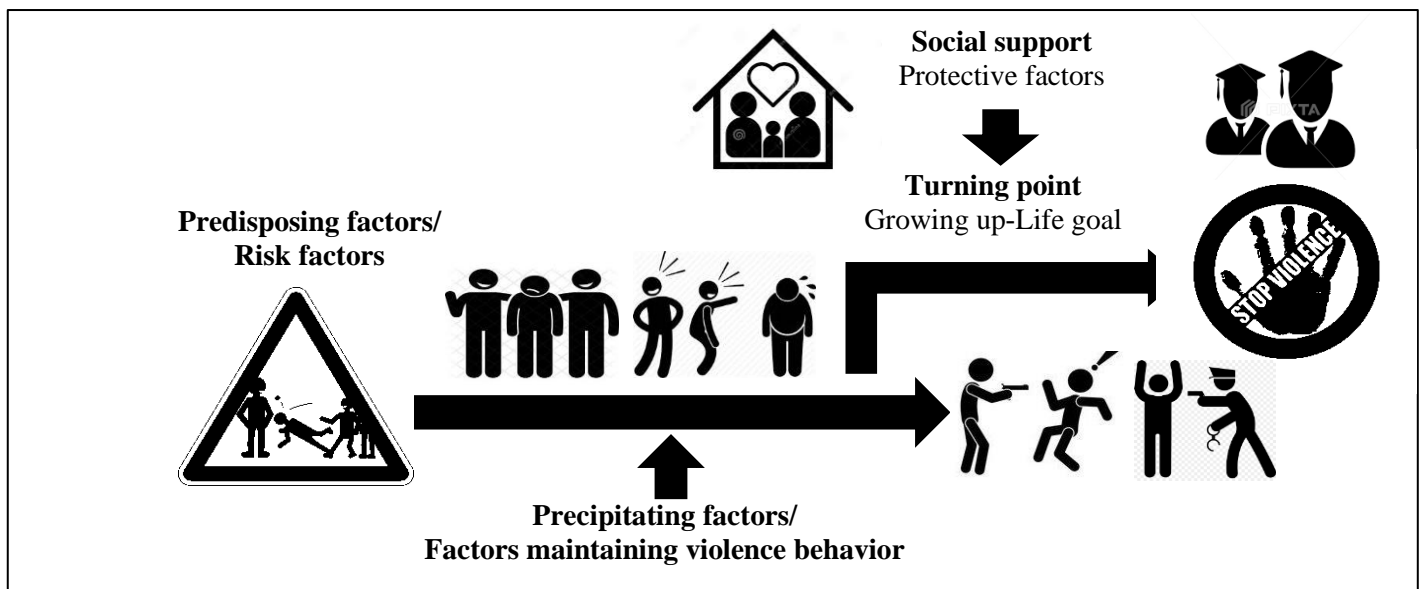
No.	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Family status	The pathways of violence
5	Male	18	Grade 10	Parents are quite comfortable financially. He is spoiled .His father has an affair, but his mother does not know about it.	<p><b><i>“Not afraid of death .If anything happens, I will commit suicide not to cause burdens to others. ”</i></b></p> <p>He was a bully gang leader who used weapons like a gun and knife. Violence was a part of his everyday life; he called it a “head-hunting”. He usually got together with his friends for unlawful purposes, including mixing and drinking the “4x100,” which contains a hypnotic drug, drinking soda, and Mitragynine, which he bought from his relative. He used to beat up people and participated in school gang fights. Also, he had several fights with his neighbors, and used a gun and knife. He said he never feared dying, and if he got badly injured, he would commit suicide so he would never be a burden. Today, he is a lot calmer because of his mother’s tears. He finally realized that being vicious is not worth it. He now has a life goal, which is to graduate and become a photographer.</p>
6	Male	18	Grade 11	Parents are separated. He lives with his mother.	<p><b><i>“Being in the same school means being brothers; I must help ”</i></b></p> <p>He is tough and never gives in, especially when someone starts a fight with him. He has always known the risks but says he has never feared death. He is often armed with a knife and a handmade grenade, which he has used in a school gang fight. The fight was only to obtain the enemy’s school badge to claim a trophy from his senior, and to be honored. He was once prosecuted for vandalism and assault and battery. Since then, he realized that he had been troubling his parents. So, he tried to improve himself, and is now focusing on his education. However, if he is bullied, he will definitely fight back.</p>
7	Male	18	3 <sup>rd</sup> - Yr. Voc .Cert.	He lives with his parents .He says he does not have any family problems.	<p><b><i>“If I am a real hot-headed guy, I must do as my heart tells me. ”</i></b></p> <p>He is hot-tempered and thinks that physical fighting is a sign of masculinity. He is often armed with a knife and a kind of grenade and has fought with students from other departments and colleges. He never listened to his parents’ warnings, but only to senior guys in his violent circle. His friends were also bullies. They are usually violent, often starting fights. The senior bullies frequently order younger ones to start a fight with other schools’ students, but he says they never meant to kill anybody. He thought he needed to fight back every time to maintain his honor. An enemy school gang attacked him with a machete, but the fight was stopped by police. As a result, he got only a small cut and decided to always carry weapons for self-defense. Today, he is more careful. He has a life goal to graduate and find a job to help support his family.</p>

**Table 1** (Continued)

No.	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Family status	The pathways of violence
8	Male	18	1 <sup>st</sup> -Yr. Voc .Cert.	He lives with his parents .He says he does not have family problems.	<p><b><i>“Being wounded is curable, but being arrested is not. ”</i></b></p> <p>He has friends with violence-related experiences. He loves his companions. Seeing his friends being arrested makes him feel pity. But seeing his enemies being arrested is pleasing, since he thinks they deserved it. He has been in many fights and been beaten up by other schools’ gangs; he fought back. He was not scared of being suspended or punished in any way, except for prosecution, as he did not want his parents to be affected, and he is still aiming to have a bright future. He claimed that he only followed his friends to fights. Now that is older, he has thought more about his future, and he wants to graduate. So, he decided to stop fighting.</p>

**Figure 1**

*Pathways of Youth Violence Through a Life-History Study*



**Students these Days Resort to Violence more Easily than in the Past**, although, they get minimal attacked or do not have any attack before, violence can be happened. “.... sometimes, just driving by, you can get shot easily and you don’t even know that guy” (Student No.1).

**Male Students are more Violent than Females**, particularly, vocational schools do not find female violence. High schools have some female violence which most of events happen between girls in the same schools and not severe. “There are some girls, but very rarely. I have been here for four years, and probably seen female violence only once or twice” (Administrator No.1).

**The Violence occurs Outside Schools, more often than Inside**, which usually are violence between students of different institutes and between groups rather than individuals. “There is no violence in school. It usually occurs outside schools which is fighting between groups of students” (Student No.2).

**Violence at or Related to Schools Usually involves Students from Different Departments**, and some students have been indoctrinated by their seniors, so this has been a chronic problem. “In this college, it’s like ... the first-year students in this department fight with those from another department. It’s probably about teasing girlfriends and then there’s a fight between departments” (Student No.3).

**Some Clashing Students do not Know each other**, but they know that the others are from a rival school wearing their symbols, so they fight. “They took out a knife and tried to cut our back. We didn't know them before ... They just saw our uniform” (Student No.4).

**Violence often Occurs while Commuting between Home and School**, especially after school. “Most violence happens when going to schools or going back home” (Student No.5). “There were technical students chasing us while we were in a minibus” (Student No.4).

**Carrying Weapons is Considered Normal for Self-defense**, and it is easy to get lethal weapons. Specifically, vocational students carry weapons since year one of their study because of senior's socialization. “Most of us have to carry weapons because, if we don't, we expect to be attacked. We and our rivals both carry weapons because we are so wary of each other” (Student No.6).

**There are some imposters wearing uniforms or symbols of other schools who seek to wreak havoc**, when the event was reported through medias, people misunderstand, and intuition brand is damaged. “I have heard that some students were not studying here or already dropped out but wore this school uniform and attacked other people. Our school is discredit” (Student No.7).

**Social Media is Used by many Youths to keep Track of Rivals so as Assault Them**, this makes violence easily spreads because youths can search information of each other and make a challenge through social media. “I have a group of people attacked but did not know who. Then, I saw on Facebook and knew who attacked me...so I can find them, including their names” (Student No.8).

**Violence is Considered Normal among these People**, many of children and youths perceive that violence is normal and manhood or get familiar with violence experiences. “violence happens frequently so I get used to it...in the past I was scared but now I feel just a little bit scared about it...I see violence about 4-5 times per year” (Student No.9).

**Feelings of having Suffered Injustice Trigger taking Violent Revenge**, children and youths who think that they get unfair police work,

think of violent revenge with their own way. “Private schools might get neglected by the police officers. Although we did not start the fighting but became wrong” (Student No.8).

### *The Patterns of Youth Violence*

**Patterns of youth violence by nature of violent acts**, include yelling and arguing, punching, chasing, extorting for money, attacking when seeing symbols of other schools, armed-assault with intent to murder or kill, carrying weapons or explosive device “Some people fight each other to end the problem. But others want to kill” (Student No.10).

**Patterns of Youth Violence by the Number of People Involved**, whether it's one-to-one, collective, or violence between one individual and a group. “There are many groups ... that can be divided into gangs such as the 147 Buses. We'll know that they will go back home on this bus after school, and then there will be fights” (Student No.9).

### *The Effects of Youth Violence*

**Effects on Children and Youth**, include kids are injured, killed, arrested, perform poorly academically, have a low social status, are worried about their safety, and are seen as hooligans. “Last year, my friend was shot and is now half-paralyzed and hospitalized. He was just going to get gas, and then a guy came up and shot him” (Student No.11).

**Effects on Family**, include parents are traumatized because of their children's acts. And they have to spend money to deal with problems caused by their violent kids. “When I got arrested ... my mom wouldn't say anything, but she would secretly cry ... Grandma too secretly cries and she wouldn't say anything ... Mom had to ask for money for my legal case. Debt has a negative effect on everything” (Student No.12).

**Effects on School**, include schools can get a bad reputation and number of students decrease because parents had low, or no, trust that schools could keep their children safe from violence. “In one fight, some kid got his arm cut off. It was a notorious case. Once the news spread, parents knew about it. They didn't want their kids to be enrolled at any such school” (Student No.13).

**Effects of Society**, include people are in trouble, and some students are drop out and become social problem. The society at large is obviously

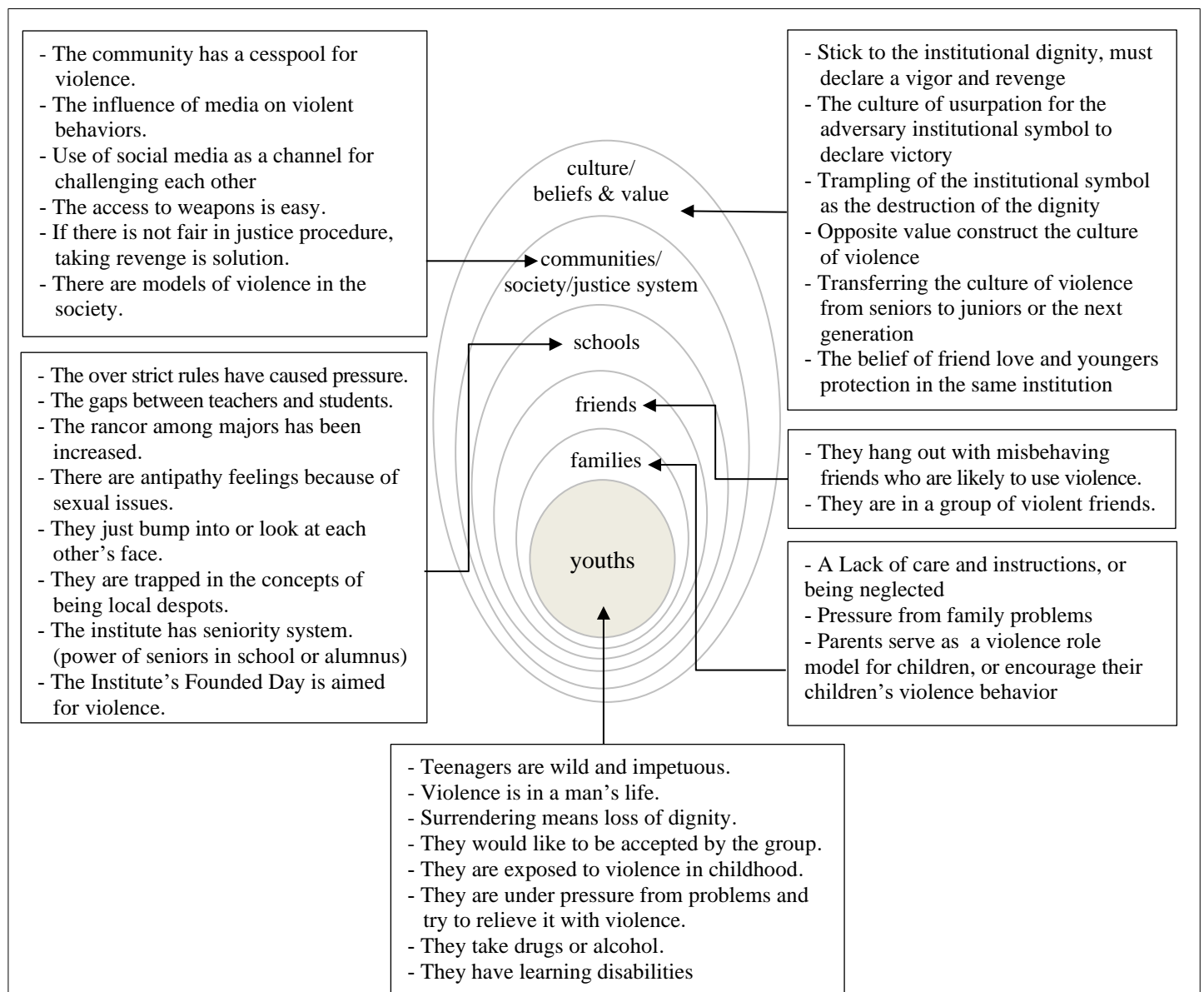
affected by all of this. The degree of the effects depends on the types of violence. With interpersonal and non-violent forms, the effects are only on the youths themselves, but when there is collective violence, the effects are more serious and more widespread. "Not graduated yet, these kids must be expelled halfway. So they go to live in the community and cause more trouble ... All levels of society are affected" (Administrator No.2).

### Factors Associated with Youth Violence

The factors associated with youth violence are divided into six related dimensions as children and youths, families, friends, schools, communities/society/the justice system, and culture/beliefs, and values. The details are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Factors Associated with Youth Violence in Educational Settings*



### ***The Family Dimension***

The family dimension is related to parenting, family context, and problems in the family “Most of the problem children are those who lack warmth, are living with their father, but not with their mom. Or they stay with mom but not with dad. Or with grandparents. About 80% of the troubled kids come from this kind of situation” (an administrator). “In the past, I didn't pay attention to him. In the morning, I just gave him money and went to work” (Family member No.1). “My parents just got separated ... They argued a lot and sometimes hit each other ... in front of us. It seems to have affected my mind” (Student No.7).

### ***The Dimension of Friends***

The dimension of friends involves being in a group of friends who are violent. “I hung out with a group of friends, and we roamed the streets, looking for trouble, picking up weapons ... I finally got arrested for carrying weapons” (Student No.6).

### ***The Educational Dimensions***

The educational dimensions involve the relationship between teachers and students, brawls in school, seniority rule (both the current seniors and alumni), and the desire to proclaim the grandeur of their institutions. “Because, partly, we're teachers and of a different generation, we don't get to know the students much” (Teacher No.1). “For example, I am in my second year. He is in his third year. He can order me like: “Hey, today you should attack some mechanics students. I have to do that. If I don't, I will be punished by older guys in my group”” (Student No.16). “Before the anniversary day of school, we have to go beat up students from other schools ... to let them know that tomorrow is the anniversary day” (Student No.4).

### ***The Dimensions of Community, Society, and Justice***

The dimensions of community, society, and justice are related to the environment in the community and the society at large, along with social media and a widespread distrust of the judicial process. “Most of the fights are about drugs. It's like a young man threatening and smacking ... I've seen it since childhood. It's like sticking to our memory about what we saw. We saw people arguing so much, adults beating each other” (Student No.3). “Like he had already been attacked and wanted revenge. He went to take pictures with the first-year peers, and he posted on Facebook about wanting one mechanics

student dead. And he asked for three sports-day jerseys of a rival school. They like to post about this” (Student No.8). “Right now, buying a homemade gun is very easy; you can learn how buy it on YouTube. And there are a lot of illegal things to buy on YouTube, if you really look for them” (Teacher No.2). “If the police can do justice, it may end. But if the system is not fair, we have to find justice ourselves” (Student No.7).

### ***The Dimension of Culture, Beliefs, and Values***

The dimension of culture, beliefs and values is attached to students' sense of institutional dignity. This involves the culture of violence that is passed from generation to generation, along with warped notions of courage. “As if he (an attacker) wants us to know that he is good, his institution is second to none ... like wanting to proclaim” (Student No.2). “Students from the belligerent school took away our wristband to exchange items with their seniors. I used to do it, as well, but, in my case, it was a ring to exchange with my seniors who have graduated and those who are still studying. I feel so proud” (Student No.12). “Just wearing a school uniform can lead to trouble. He likes to argue. He doesn't care who it is. He recognized that it was my school, and then he went there to provoke students because my school uniform is like no other” (Student No.17). “In each school, if anyone has won in a fight, he will be famous. People will know you. Respect you. If you are a senior, you need respect from the juniors” (Student No.4).

Conditioning factors in each dimension represent the causes of the problems. Not only do they lead to violent behavior among youths in educational settings, but they also affect each other inseparably. For instance, the dimension of youths with violence-related experience often results from poor parenting. Young people who are addicted to alcohol or any kind of drug tend to be drawn to those who use and sell drugs. Also, the seniority system in schools affects cultural beliefs and values regarding symbolic honor and competition. The role of social media is crucial these days, as well.

### ***Summary of Findings and Discussion***

This study found important findings covering the pathways of youth violence in educational settings, and situation and patterns of youth violence, as well as factors associated with violence. Two pathways of youth violence were found with staying in violence cycle and reaching the turning point and

moving away from the violence. Situations and patterns are complicated. Violent situations in one's immediate surroundings are not likely to end; youth use violence more easily now than in the past; violence is considered normal; and youths tend to congregate in proto-gangs or actual ones. The seven patterns of violence are found: quarreling, assaulting or attempted assault, coercion or extortion, collective fighting, murder or attempted murder, sexual harassment, or carrying weapons or explosive devices. Moreover, multiple factors are related to youth violence which are classified into six dimensions consisting of children and youths, families, friends, schools, communities/the society/justice procedures, and culture/beliefs.

### **Pathways of Youth Violence from these Life Histories**

There are two pathways of youth violence: one in which some teenagers are still in a cycle of violence, and the other in which most have reached a turning point and can get away from the violence through support from the society and by having clear goals for their future. The theories that can be used to explain this are the age-graded theory of Laub and Sampson (Kruekam, 2015), who indicate that the turning point can be reached when individuals have their own desire to change as their attachment to the larger society is increased. The social-control theory of Travis (Kruekam, 2015) holds that an individual will not commit an offense or violate regulations if he or she has social bonds. The social bonds with people who are essential. Young people will choose to change their behavior to escape from the violence because they care for their loved ones' feelings. Another thing that brings about such a change is the increasing social bonds as kids mature into young adults and develop a determination to achieve their life goals, such as graduation, a good career, and/or beliefs in righteous acts. Behavior changes due to having a noble goal in life can also be explained by the goal-setting theory of Locke and Latham (2019). This focuses on the cognitive process of decision-making and behavioral choices, with an emphasis on the fact that the motivation of a person to choose to behave better depends on his or her need to achieve higher goals. The higher goal for young people in this study is the desire to succeed in life. Parents and other loved ones play a vital role in a young person's ability to commit to a higher goal.

### **Situations and Patterns of Youth Violence**

The findings indicate that violent situations in one's immediate surroundings are not likely to end; youth use violence more easily now than in the past; violence is considered normal; and youths tend to congregate in proto-gangs or actual ones. These situations might be changed in accordance with social contexts, especially when the media has such an influence on violence. This is probably because teenagers are more suggestible than older people. Being in a group of aggressive peers and older kids can inculcate violence. This conclusion is relatively consistent with the study of Songkiatkul (2018) that looked at the causes of brawls among vocational students - things such as a lack of emotional maturity and a need for acceptance from the reference group, especially friends and seniors. It was also found that external factors such as social media encourage violent behavior among teenagers.

The patterns of violence are categorized by the characteristics of it, such as yelling to challenge, punching, chasing, extorting, or clashing over symbols of other schools, armed assault with intent to murder or kill, and carrying weapons, including explosive devices. The seven patterns of violence are quarreling, assaulting or attempted assault, coercion or extortion, collective fighting, murder or attempted murder, sexual harassment, or carrying weapons or explosive devices. The types of violence categorized by the number of people involved are interpersonal violence, collective violence, violence between an individual and a group of people. However, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) classifies types of violence differently, as follows: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence. Interestingly, the results of our research are not related to self-directed violence. Violence has been considered interpersonal or collective. The violence usually involves young males needing to express power. This is consistent with the research of Chen and Chen (2020). Although it was conducted in three distinct Chinese contexts which are different from Thailand, it was found that the use of violence in school is much more prevalent among male students. Biologically it can be explained that males have much more testosterone, which is connected to aggressive behavior. These hormones are at their highest-level during adolescence (Miller, 2012).

## Factors Associated with Youth Violence

The factors associated with youth violence are divided into six dimensions, including children and youths, families, friends, schools, communities/the society/justice procedures and culture/beliefs, which are discussed in the human-ecology theory of Bronfenbrenner (1977). This theory posits that there are five systems of human interaction ranging from microsystems to macrosystems. Moreover, the theory stresses that changes in life affect human behavior. This research separated microsystem factors such as children and youths, families, friends, schools, and communities, to illustrate their influences more clearly. The results show that each microsystem plays a crucial role. Separating each factor is useful in dealing with the problems because each group needs its own solutions and collaboration from different sectors.

Our research shows that the major factors that cause youth violence in schools are friends and senior students. Students place great importance on friends, senior students who are still in the school, and alumni. They tend to affiliate with their friends and seniors' values and conduct. The relevant situations can be explained by the differential-association theory (Sutherland, 1939, 1947; Sutherland & Cressey, 1978), which stresses that kids learn violent behaviors from people whom they are close to -- friends or senior students. The media is also a factor that causes violence. For instance, individuals who have been playing violent video or online games for a long period of time may subconsciously absorb violence from such games. The influence of peers, seniors, and the media is also explained by the social-learning theory of Bandura (1986), which claims that humans learn by observing and imitating behaviors and behaving accordingly because friends or seniors are models that children feel impressed by and think are useful to themselves. Following friends or seniors makes them feel good and accepted. Therefore, they repeatedly engage in violence, for example, and this becomes habitual. In addition, Bandura's experiments with the behavioral modeling of children revealed that imitation is more likely to occur when a model is of the same sex. Also, imitation is likely to occur when the model has influence on the thoughts and feelings of the younger person, and/or has the power to reward or punish, which is in line with the findings of our research. Several young people use violence to get rewards from their seniors. In addition to the human model, Bandura also elaborates on the symbolic model that

has influence on individuals. According to the findings, various media, especially social media, have a great influence on young people, with many youths being motivated to imitate violent behavior. It is not just a matter of the ubiquity of violence that kids see online, but the fact that there are many videos which show them how to make weapons.

Most parents of violent children are divorced. Violent children typically have a lack of care from their families, and/or they are exposed to violence in their families. In this respect, Bowlby's attachment theory focuses on how abandoned or neglected children can turn into unattached individuals. Children who are raised violently often get into violent relationships (Hongsangsuang & Limsuwan, 2015). A major cause of inter-school violence is the notion of this or that school's superior status. This phenomenon can be explained by Cohen's sub-culture theory (Cohen, 1955), which discusses how aggressive behavior and the sense that violence is acceptable often derive from these small groups. Students who fight kids from other schools are trying to show off the power of their group. And bullying, violent teenagers are often seen as so cool and even heroic in their group. This obviously breeds more violence.

## Recommendations

Schools and families should learn about and seek behavioral-modification methods for violent youth. For example, in the individual dimension, children should be trained to set goals in life, to achieve self-direction, self-monitoring, and the value of being assertive, rather than aggressive. As for the dimension of family, friends, community, and society, we must consistently give appropriate social reinforcement to good behavior, instead of praising a teenager who is defeating others. Parents must avoid using violent behavior towards one another. They must learn that their kids will copy their worst behavior. Kids must be taught to find friends and seniors who are moral, not bullies. Also, the media should be used as a means of teaching violence-prevention and problem-solving.

For further study, the research findings regarding the factors related to violence should be used to develop behavior-adjustment programs to retrain violent adolescents. The results can be used in creating media to promote desirable behaviors and to apply various approaches such as operant conditioning, the social-cognitive model, and the goal-setting, self-regulating, and expectation-theory

models. These can be so useful in fostering community involvement in reducing the epidemic of youth violence. Future research should aim to reduce and control risk factors and to cover all the dimensions by using an extensive knowledge of behavioral science and related fields in a participatory-action approach. Future research should also be conducted on the most effective incentives for participating in problem-solving, and there should be studies designed to use peer groups to jointly promote desirable behavior among our youth.

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