

**BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY**

**School of Education**

**Students' Safety Feeling at School: The Contribution of Physical Violence,  
Gender and Security Measurers at School**

Itzik Lizmi

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in the  
School of Education, Bar Ilan University

Ramat-Gan, Israel

2021

## **Abstract**

Feeling safe at school is an important factor on the student's wellbeing (Ben-Arieh et al., 2009) that contributes his self esteem, social relationship, academic achievements and more (Boulton et al., 2008; Hughes et al., 2015; Schreck & Miller, 2003; Tillyer et al., 2011).

Previous studies indicate that violence victimization harms the students' feeling of safety at school (Bowser et al., 2018; Parker & Ray, 1990; Schreck & Miller, 2003), and yet it seems that the relationship between violence victimization and feeling safe at school is not direct, and more research is needed to examine the contribution of possible moderated variables and the different kinds of violence to the students' feeling of safety (Yablon & Addington, 2018).

Among the different kinds of violence one of the most frequent at schools is the physical violence (Rama, 2018) which the present study is focused on. Gender is an important variable as well, boys are victimized more to physical violence and suffer from a lower feeling of safety at school comparing the girls (Rama, 2018).

In order to reduce the violence rates at schools and increase the students' feeling of safety, many schools started using security measures (Brady et al., 2007; Gottfredson et al, 2004). Security measures such as security cameras, school guards, locker and bag checks became more frequent at schools (Addington, 2009; Agron & Anderson, 2000; Dinkes et al., 2009; Kupchik & Monahan, 2006; Mowen, 2015), however previous studies indicate contradictions about the contribution of security measures such as above to students' feeling of safety, and it may be that using them is harming the students' feeling of safety at school (Bachman et al., 2011; Schreck et al., 2003; Schreck & Miller, 2003).

The present study focused on the contribution of the student's gender, the amount of security measures at school and student's victimization to physical violence to the student's feeling of safety at school. The background variables age and educational framework were also examined. The sample is based on 821 students on junior-highs and high-schools in Israel on the ages of 12-19 ( $M=15.04$ ;  $SD=1.63$ ). Data is from a pre-published research (Secondary Analysis).

The findings indicates that there is a negative correlation between the student's victimization to the different kinds of violence (physical, verbal and social) and the student's feeling of safety at school, so the more student is victimized to violence the lower his feeling of safety is.

Another finding is that boys are victimized to violence more than girls and yet, there is no difference at their feeling of safety at school. As for security measures at school, it has been found that the amount of security measures at school has no contribution to the student's feeling of safety at school, but when focused on the security measures that are frequent in use at schools in Israel, it has been found that there is a positive contribution of these security measures to the student's feeling of safety when the variables age and educational framework are added, so the more frequent security measures are active at school the higher the student's feeling of safety is.

More variables that have a significant contribution to the students' feeling of safety at school are age and educational framework. The student's age has a positive contribution to the student's feeling of safety so the older the student is the higher his feeling of safety is. In addition, it has been found that students who are going to

public schools (Mamlachti) have a lower feeling of safety at school from those who are going to public-religious schools (Mamlachti-Dati).

The present study findings indicate the complex relationship between security measures use and the students' feeling of safety at school. It seems that the importance of the security measures is central for the understanding of school climate, a variable that can independently explain the students' feeling of safety at school.