

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**The Contribution of Schools Security  
Guards to Students' Sense of Safety**

OR SEGEV

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

Ramat Gan, Israel

2017

## **Abstract**

Even though there is a decrease in overall violence rate, school violence is still widely spread.

Many students report exposure to physical, verbal and social violence (Harel-Fish and colleagues, 2013; National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education, 2016). A known result of exposure to violence at school is a negative impact on the students' sense of safety (Brown, 2006), which considered to be one of the most important aspects of students' mental wellbeing (Pebly & Sastry, 2004).

While the subject of violence in school is being extensively studied, the number of studies on the contribution of school security guards to students' sense of safety is very limited (Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013). A review of the literature on the subject does not show a distinctive correlation between students' sense of safety and the use of security measures such as the presence of a guard at school (Brown, 2006; Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013).

Israel's government decreed that a security guard is to be stationed at every school entrance due to the Israeli unique security situation, regardless of school violence (Israeli Government Decree no. 5719, 1995).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the correlation between the presence of a school guard and the students' sense of safety at school.

The study uses two types of research methodology. The first is the usage of conventional questionnaires concerning youth exposure to violence

in school. The second is an interview based on method of functional measurements (Anderson, 1996).

The research hypotheses deals with the correlation between the presence of an armed/unarmed security guard and students' sense of safety in regards to violence.

The study included 139 students; 72 boys (51.8%) and 67 girls (48.2%) ages from 11 to 16, the average age is 13.2. The students' were randomly selected from schools throughout northern Israel. The interviews included 85 students; 44 boys (51.8%) and 41 girls (48.2%), out of which, 40 6<sup>th</sup> graders (47%), 18 8<sup>th</sup> graders (21.1%) and 27 10<sup>th</sup> graders (31.7%), randomly selected.

The research findings revealed a correlation between a presence of a guard and students' sense of safety regarding violence, as well as a strong correlation among female students between the presence of an armed security guard at school and their sense of safety.

It was also shown that students who are exposed to heightened levels of violence have a lower sense of safety.

Moreover, it was found that there is a difference between the type of violence the student is exposed to (verbal/physical/social), and students' sense of safety. For example, students subjected to physical violence reported a lower sense of safety than students who have been subjected to verbal violence.

The study shows that the type of violence exposure and the presence of the guard (no guard/armed guard/unarmed guard) changed the intensity of the students' sense of security. In terms of testing the relationship between gender and sense of

safety; female students reported a lower sense of safety in comparison to male students.

The research findings indicate that 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported the lowest sense of safety, comparing to 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, even though the 6<sup>th</sup> graders reported the highest level of violence victimization. It is possible that the most significant component is not the age of the students but their seniority at school.

The study indicates that even though it is not the main function of the guard, his presence contributes to strengthening students' sense of safety.

This finding may have implications for both policy makers and educators. The research recommendation is to explore other aspects of security guard presence at a school as well as his level of involvement and training. In addition, future research should explore the contribution of the guard presence at schools in the Arab sector, which was not covered by this study. These future studies will add an additional tier to the findings of this study.