

Evaluation of the Impact of Harmony-Meter as a Global Strategy to Reverse Bullying

Gabriela Flores Talavera (Corresponding author)

Graduate School, Transdisciplinary Institute of Consciousness Studies

Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

E-mail: gabriela.ftalavera@gmail.com

Received: April 8, 2019 Accepted: May 26, 2019 Published: June 19, 2019

doi:10.5296/jei.v5i1.14642 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v5i1.14642>

Abstract

Descriptive Pre-Post study with a single group intervention assesses the impact of the Harmony-meter as a global strategy of intervention to reduce violent behavior in school, improve the harmonic coexistence rates and promote the development of the socio-emotional skills of the members of a school community. The hypothesis is checked. It's based on the assumption that "everything that focuses attention multiplies" therefore, if attention is focused on positive behaviors, then they will be promoted and multiplied, significantly reducing violence in school. That is, there is an inverse relationship proportional to greater positive behaviors less is the violent behavior in the school. The study was worked with 100% of students of a school with serious social problems of vulnerability, family disintegration, gang activity, drug sales and violent behavior among neighbors. Changes in behavior of the different actors are described, raising the quality of healthy coexistence; strengthening family ties, improving teacher-student relationships and converting violent behaviors into harmonic behaviors.

Keywords: Harmony-meter, Intervention program, Didactic strategy, Climate school, Bullying

1. Introduction

In our society, after the family, the school is in charge of performing the functions of socialization in a wider scope. It is in the school where the development of positive values is increased and paradoxically it is in the same educational institution where the negative values and behaviors that within the family have been fostered are reflected.

School violence is a very complex phenomenon that occurs and evolves in the context of social coexistence, whose organization and common norms generate processes that often

escape the conscious and rational control of the institution itself and of those who promote it. It is a phenomenon that has always existed, and that currently, through the mass media, there has been a rapid and extensive dissemination of this.

1.1 Problematization: Bullying and School Climate

The analysis of the phenomenon of school violence already has a long history in other parts of the world. Countries such as France, Spain, Norway, England, United States (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012), Among others, they have conducted research and have strategies and programs to improve the conditions of school life and curb violence.

Heinemann (1972) in Sweden and later Olweus (1978) in Norway exposed to the public through research the phenomenon of peer violence in schools and the existence of students who mistreated others. Study figures in 27 countries are alarming. 60% of 13-year-olds had carried out acts of violence against their peers. In the United States they refer up to 70% (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012). The Ombudsman (2002) in Spain mentions that 30% of the students suffer violence. 5% with physical aggression. 1% with weapon threats. The distribution in the roles of school violence is as follows: 5 to 40% are victims; 5 to 25% are aggressors; 66 to 84% are spectators. The data coincide with other authors (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017).

In Mexico, although there are no studies on the frequency of school violence, statistics are also impressive. The National Human Rights Commission receives, on average, a daily complaint related to student mistreatment by their classmates. In 2005, 2,993 complaints of human rights violations of basic education students were received; 90% corresponded to public schools. 50% of the children of a public primary school in D. F. stated that they suffer from physical abuse in the school environment by their peers. And 37% claimed to have been beaten (Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, 2005).

To understand the magnitude of the problem the consequences of school violence can be classified by the roles identified: for the victim, for the spectator, for the aggressor and for the Society.

Consequences for the victim of school violence:

- a) The tendency towards resignation among the victims of school violence;
- b) Weakening of their physical defenses and;
- c) Weakening of their psychological defenses (post-traumatic aftermath);
- d) Truancy, child victims no longer want to go to school, as they are sent by their parents they do not enter, exposing themselves to accidents on the street;
- e) Increased health problems: headaches, stomachs, changes in feeding rhythms;
- f) Social inadaptation, poor perception of themselves, low self-esteem;
- g) Emotional Problems: Depression in 20% of cases and in extreme cases;

h) Suicide in victims;

All this prevent them from maintaining good relations with their peers and often adopt risky behaviors such as the use of addictive substances, premature or violent sexual relations.

i) Sociopathy in the aggressors when they become adults;

Studies have shown that aggressive behavior is associated with other criminal behaviors such as vandalism, drug abuse (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012) and continues even in the adulthood to and many of them become potential criminals. Other studies describe the aggressive personality model of aggressors with low levels of empathy (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017) and very low levels of development of socio-emotional skills. *“An investigation carried out in Norway in 1993 showed that 60% of the aggressors who were from sixth to ninth grade had been criminally convicted at least on one occasion when they were 24 years old. Chronic aggressors seem to maintain their behaviors up to adulthood, which negatively influences their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships.”* (Henar, 2005, p. 91).

j) Inability to distinguish positive and negative behaviors.

Viewers or witnesses of school violence learn negative ways to relate and also inhibits their ability to distinguish acceptable or despicable behaviors. Desensitization of spectators to serious levels of violence is another consequence of this phenomenon. Children and young people may consider it acceptable for one partner to infringe pain on another.

In Addition, they may experience mixed feelings, on the one hand, they consider themselves safe from aggression and enjoy aggression to the other, (note that it is the spectators who record the violence and then upload it to the web for the dominion of all); Encourage aggression, and engage in violence to a lesser degree, with mockery, for example. But on the other hand, they have a sense of helplessness and fear similar to that experienced by the victim of aggression.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Norwegian Dan Olweus (1998) was one of the first to study the phenomenon of school violence in a methodical manner. He refers to the phenomenon of bullying, in which two students of similar ages and forces are confronted or contended, but in such confrontation there is an imbalance of forces that results in a situation of abuse of power or victimization to one of the protagonists who is called victim by another called aggressor; a third protagonist of the event is the spectator who watches the violent event.

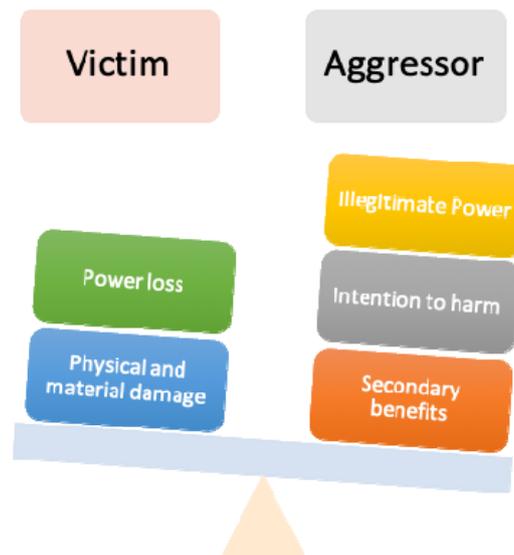


Figure 1. Elements of process of the behavior of bullying

The process of the behavior of violence between equals has several elements (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010, p. 560): 1) Existence of an imbalance of power between victim and aggressor (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). It is the dishonest, arrogant and opportunistic use of power on the contrary without being legitimized for it. 2) The frequency of aggression is at least once a week and lasts approximately six months. 3) You have a benefit that can be social, material or personal. About point three, we will return later when we talk about the causes of school violence. 4) There is an intention to harm.

2.1 Definition of Violence between Equals

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (2003) as: “...*Intentional use of force and physical power of facts or with threat against oneself, or a group, or community, which causes or is likely to cause injury or death, psychological damage, developmental disorders or deprivations*”.

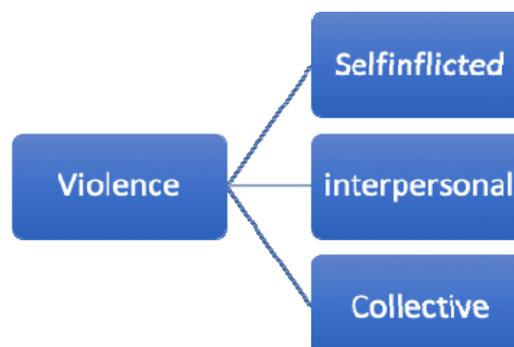


Figure 2. Types of violence

Violence is divided into three main categories: self-inflicted, interpersonal and collective. Among the interpersonal violence is the juvenile violence that affects children, adolescents and young adults and is a constant concern for the number of both assaulted and those who discuss violent acts (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010).

Violence is a public health problem (World Health Organization, 2003), and Latin America is one of the regions that suffers the greatest impact. The same WHO has types of violence and one of them is Social Violence; it is precisely this kind of social violence where violence is found in educational institutions.

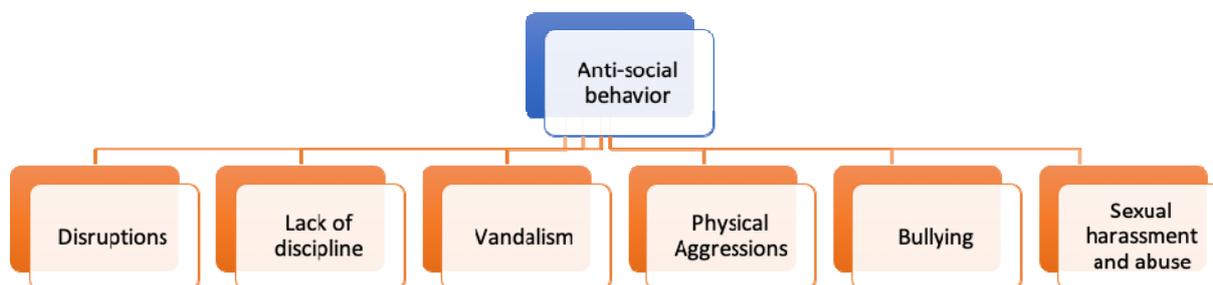


Figure 3. Types of social violence from WHO, 2003

Barragán Ledesma in his research mentions that there are six types of antisocial behavior that occur in schools (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010, p. 555):

- 1) The disruption. It is when one or more students impede with their behavior the normal development of the class forcing the teachers to spend time in the disciplinary control.
- 2) Lack of discipline. Conflicts of relationship between teachers and students. Behaviors involving greater doses of violence such as challenge or insult to teachers.
- 3) Vandalism. Destruction or theft of belongings to teammates or infrastructure of the campus.
- 4) Physical Aggression towards classmates.
- 5) Intimidation and victimization among equals Known as “Bullying”. One or more students attacks another at different levels: insults, rumors, vexations, social isolation, nicknames, bruises, among others, and is carried out for prolonged periods of time. *Peer violence* is defined as: “A set of physical and/or verbal behaviors that a person or group, in a hostile manner and abusing a real or fictitious power, direct against a colleague in repetitive form and durable with the intention of causing harm” (Olweus, 1998; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010, p. 560).
- 6) Sexual harassment and abuse.

2.2 Causes of Violence School

Acts of violence in schools paradoxically are subject to the same rules governing the system of interpersonal relations and they are the reflection of the learning within the family. These relationships are based on emotions, prejudices, feelings and cognitive aspects and are part of the educational field.

Human coexistence within school institutions provokes relationships in which situations are presented that favor the abuse of power by some of its members. Allen (2010) mentions that the way the teacher manages organizes and manages him/her class is a determining factor and are 3 the variables that intervene to form an environment conducive to violence in the classroom: punitive disciplinary methods, low quality of the communication of the instructions, disorganization of the classroom, and even teachers with aggressive behaviors, (symbolic violence). When in the relations between the actor's school it breaks the balance of forces, they become abusive and favor the processes of victimization.

The problem is multi-causal and must be approached in a multidisciplinary way. The *family* plays an important role, as it is an example and immediate reference to imitate the behavior of parents and siblings; if there is violence between parents; there is violence between siblings; there is violence at home, the child will tend to reproduce what he sees at home, and reproduction can be on both sides of the process of violence; whether you act as a victim or as a perpetrator.

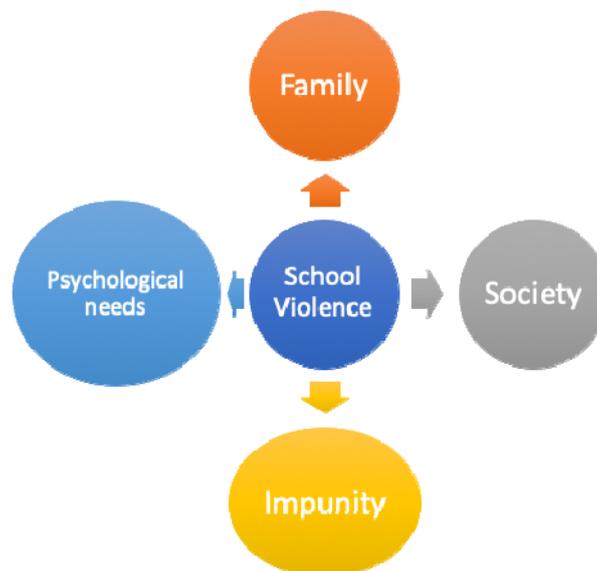


Figure 4. Different causes of school violence

Society is also an important reference in imitating behaviors for children and young people attending school. You Just need to flip and see all the examples of the violence that exists; on the streets how we attack each other; and violence among equals in the Chamber of Deputies;

or violence between countries.

But, in addition, we as adults generate violent behaviors and encourage them: aggressive games who have the mission to kill, eliminate the enemy. Who is the enemy? Classmates? And Violent games are promoted as “kicked snout” that with the only name we can deduce the nature of the game and its purpose. When children exceed their levels of tolerance, they go and report that they were beaten.

From a social perspective the culture of denunciation and *impunity* even at micro levels like the school is another important reference. If there is impunity at macro levels with serious crimes that occur in society, such as when violent women denounce their partner and the authorities ignore her complaint; or violent acts like kidnapping and murder; there is also impunity for violent behavior behind the school walls. Many violent acts are not denounced and/or remain anonymous; situations that remain at the discretion of teachers, the question is: Is there impunity in schools for openly aggressive behaviors of students? The answer is yes. Many complaints are ignored or undervalued by teachers, for example: “Miss, a child took me my pencil away”; or “Miss, this child hit me”; The fastest response of the teacher that is most frequently heard: “What were you doing?”; “;Sit down! Don’t listen to him anymore”.

Although teachers are encouraged in the school by the culture of denunciation, when violent behaviors are reported, they are not heard, nor attended. Then, two things could happen: one, which the child attacked be done justice by him/her own hand and respond to aggression with another aggression. Second, that is assume in the role of victim and the aggressor will become frequent.

But also, when teachers, directors or inspectors act in the face of a clear situation of violence in the school, they have no support from educational authorities neither from society. Four are the most commonly used strategies: 1) direct sanctions, 2) restorative practice, 3) mediation (including peer mediation), 4) support group and shared concern (Rigby, 2014).

Unsatisfied psychological needs are perhaps the most profound cause of the violence that is experienced in society and in schools (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010). And that’s why, what it is stated that society is sick and also sick to younger members. In this study it was revealed that the child aggressors are lonely young people who have a deficit in the satisfaction of some of their needs and generally are lack of love and social acceptance.

Group affiliation is a significant part for children who make up their identity and for young people who reaffirm their self-Concept is for this what, there is a great need to achieve social acceptance of groups within the school. When you don’t get it generates frustration.



Figure 5. Description of the aggression generation process

Frustration is an aggression to the ego combined with the confusion of not knowing what is happening with himself; Aggression is generated and therefore violence towards whom he considers to have caused him discomfort; Deep down he feels miserable, unwanted, weak and helpless (From, 1989).

These needs should have been covered in the family and are not accepted by their parents or siblings for some hidden reason, but the child feels and lives and makes them exaggerately susceptible to loneliness and generates social anxieties because it is always in seeking the social acceptance of their fellows.

The strategies they use to obtain the acceptance from others are not the most appropriate for others and fails. They become aggressive with their peers by manifesting their impotence as they are socially marginalized from others, it's like a way of saying to them, "Don't ignore me Please" (Smith & Mackie, 1997, quote by Barragán Ledesma, 2010). It is a desperate action to achieve acceptance, this is ephemeral, therefore, the action is not successful in its ends.

Among the benefits that the aggressor has with the violent behavior (Juvonen & Graham, 2014) are found: the social, material and personal character. A social benefit is when the aggressor gains a secondary gain by gaining recognition, admiration of his peers when he makes clear display of power, even if it costs him a school sanction or his parents. Another benefit is to achieve their social integration, in an unconventional way and causing fear among their peers. Another psychological source of benefits is defending their social status within the group of equals. "They are afraid to lose their friendships to some stranger and defend him by attacking" or for example, "If I don't do what I'm asked for, they don't come together with me anymore."

The material benefit has to do with getting objects that are removed from their victims: money, lunch, school work, is a practical way to solve their needs and shortcomings. This is the beginning of the vandalism, the robbery with aggression and the pleasure that is obtained from it during the violent act.

Personal gain is more associated with the latter than receiving pleasure, having fun at the expense of others; although in the end is getting acceptance of others when they provide fun by mocking others.

Precisely because the aggressor is focused on this search for the satisfaction of his needs that he is not able to visualize the implications of his actions; The aggressors are not aware of their limits, and these never have been marked by their parents, nor do they see the future, even if the consequences of their actions are immediate (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010).

Barragán Ledesma's study showed that it is very common for the aggressor to be surprised of the effects of their actions when something serious happens to the victim or is discovered by the adults, or when the complaint is finally heard. The aggressor tends to justify his actions: "*Well, this time he touched the stone to him, but he could touch us, also was inadvertently, we were all playing*" (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010, p. 563).

The pursuit of their stability in the ego, their need for social belonging and the secondary gains blind the aggressor to the psychological damage they may cause because the only important thing is their well-being; because the only thing he was doing was defending himself. “*She sought for it, who commanded him to mess with us*”; “*She/He needed a lesson, She/He was always provoking*”; “*They don’t care when I want to hang out with them and they don’t listen to me, nobody cares, and there is no one doing anything.*” (Barragán Ledesma et al., 2010); “*We don’t get together with him/her, she/he is a...*”.

2.3 Some Solutions to Reduce School Violence and Improve Healthy Living Together

The aggressions suffered daily by our children and young people by their own companions have not diminished; The media have denounced the problem and have made it think that the school is guilty of this, and above all, responsible for eliminating it. The number of preventive programs to Bullying has increased since the 1990’s (Bradshaw, 2015) that have been assessed in their effectiveness (Farrington, Gaffney, Lösel, & Ttofi, 2017) and from them different policies have been generated with differentiated approaches that have a positive impact as the program Kiva in Finland (Juvonen, Schacter, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2016); or the Friendly School program (Cross et al., 2019). Other Programs with a focus of security measures (Gerlinger & Wo, 2016) as “Safe backpack” was a strong campaign that was implemented a few years ago in some delegations of Mexico City have had an impact limited or minimum.

They have been worked some school intervention programs that have different components with differentiated levels of influence (individual, group, school) that handle different methods as: a) Promotion of the complaint in which the whole society with installed capacity intervenes to attend school violence events, b) Practice of mother-gymnastics for the development of children’s socio-emotional skills and sense of belonging; c) Fomentum of the culture of peace, d) Physical exercise, among others that in general have been effective between 17 to 23% (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017) and between 17% and 20% the decrease in victimization (Bradshaw, 2015).

Three are the key elements for success of the programs: 1) The intervention time, more time greater success, for a more positive and lasting effect; 2) involvement of parents, and 3) disciplinary methods (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017).

How do we think teachers and managers have an obligation to do something when DO NOT have educational policy support to solve this problem as laws defend the human rights of aggressors in violence between equals? However, teachers are not considered to be the culprits of school violence. And even in spite of the social devaluation with which they count they are seen as the main actors in the solution of this social problem (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012). Teachers are not social workers, they are not psychologists, they do not have the tools and knowledge necessary to stop a social problem so strong and rooted in our society (Rigby, 2011). However There are human beings who want society to heal, for this ample and sufficient training and qualification is needed (Bradshaw, 2015) so that they become an important player in the prevention of high impact of the school violence.

3. Methodological Framework

3.1 Project Description

Research Question: What is the impact of the Harmony-meter on the decrease of violent behavior in the school community? How to reduce school violence?

Hypothesis: Harmony-meter, as a global strategy, impacts on the increase in positive behaviors presented by the students. It is part of the assumption that “Everything that focuses attention multiplies” Therefore, if you focus on positive behaviors, then they will be encouraged and multiplied, significantly reducing violence in the school. That is, there is an inverse relationship proportional to greater positive behaviors less is the violent behavior in the school.

Objective: To Assess the impact of Harmony-meter as a global strategy of intervention to reduce violent behavior in the school. The purpose of this study is to test the effectiveness of Harmony-meter to improve harmonic coexistence indexes, Promote the development of the socio-emotional skills of members of a school community and as a measure to decrease school violence.

3.2 Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The participants are children between 6 and 12 years of age who attend a primary school. The context of this primary school is in the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara, shift morning. The community, with scarce resources, with serious social problems of vulnerability, family disintegration, gangs, drug sales and behavior violent among the neighbors.

3.3 Sampling Procedures

Target population: We worked with 100% of the population of a primary school as a case study. Subjects: 470 children from first to sixth grade distributed in 14 groups. 14 primary-to sixth-grade teachers. 2 English Teachers as a second language. 1 Physical education teacher. 1 Principal.

3.3.1 Research Design

The study is descriptive, Pre-experimental Pre-post with single group intervention.

$$O_1 - X - O_2$$

3.3.2 Stages of the Process

1) Organization and preparation of the intervention. Duration 2 months. Survey of data in the field using the pre-record instrument of violent behavior during the first months of work of the school year, August-September 2017. Work in advising and training area of the school staff of the school with socio-emotional education, use and management of the harmony-meter, other didactic work materials.

2) Teaching intervention through the School Project. Duration 3 months. The activities were in the classroom, “Live Harmony” campaign. There were also activities with parents. During

this stage observation records are kept on the role of each of the actors in the school community. and use of the post instrument for observing and recording violent behavior.

3) Organization and interpretation of the Data. Duration 2 months. Comparison frequency index of violent behavior before and after the intervention. Analysis of results of positive behaviors and writing of the research report.

3.3.3 Measures and Instruments

1) Pre-post Observation Record in a frequency table of the number violent events in the school to stablish the rate of violence presented by the members of the school community. Before and after the intervention. The instrument is organized into 5 strata: Disruption, lack of discipline, vandalism, verbal and physical aggression towards classmates, bullying among peers and sexual harassment and abuse and was observed in two areas: inside the classroom and outside the classroom (inside the school).

2) The Harmony-meter is an instrument that measures harmonic behaviors and has a weekly calendar to record the behaviors that are presented.

H A R M O N Y M E T E R

Program to Promote Harmony at School

Levels	Behaviors	Score	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Take care of life	Save a life	36							
	Ask for forgiveness, offer an apology	35							
	Take responsibility and reflect on our acts	34							
	To show solidarity with a noble cause	33							
	Visit and take care of a sick person	32							
Human Values	Hug someone harmonically	31							
	Caress healthily	30							
	Be reciprocal (return a favor and/or help)	29							
	To do a favor	28							
	Help someone with problems	27							
Social and civic values	Express words of encouragement to someone	26							
	Enjoy someone's company	25							
	Collaborate with others (teamwork)	24							
	include, socialize and accept everyone in your group of friends (Acceptance of diversity, race, gender, sexual preference, religion, social status, different abilities)	23							
	Have friends and take care of them	22							
Close coexistence Living nearby	Be thankful (Knowing how to thank)	21							
	Saying: I like you. I love you	20							
	Share the time	19							
	Play peaceful, cordial, harmonic games	18							
	Share your savings	17							
	Share food, toys, things	16							
	Sincerely praise others	15							
	Telling the truth to create harmony	14							
	Laugh with someone	13							
	Respect to others	12							
Rules of courtesy and politeness	Respect and value personal items	11							
	Ask for help kindly (Use. The word "please")	10							
	Trust on everybody else	09							
	Tell jokes in a healthy way	08							
	Socialize and talk with everyone	07							
	Help someone in need (if someone is falls, or if someone pulls heavy or foggy things)	06							
	Offer a glass of water	05							
	Give the seat	04							
	Greet	03							
	Smile	02							
TOTAL	Announce the harmony	01							
	Denounce violence	00							

Figure 6. Harmony-meter. This Instrument measures positive behavior per day

Measures 36 Positive behavior indicators organized into 5 strata. A) Courtesy, basic urbanity rules, 10 indicators. B) Close coexistence, 10 indicators. C) Social Values, 5 indicators. D) Valuing The Human Being, 6 indicators. E) Value life, 5 indicators.

3.3.4 Intervention Program at School: THE HARMONY-METER

The Intervention Program is global, multi-dimensional, multi-level (Farrington, Gaffney, Lösel, & Ttofi, 2017) and inclusive. Its implementation was through A Global Project School that led by name: HEALTHY CoEXISTENCE from the use of a didactic model for the development of socio-emotional skills. The Project included an intense campaign called LIVE THE HARMONY-METER as a lifelong strategy throughout the school. The purpose of the project was to improve harmonic relationships between peers in and out of the classroom, increasing positive attitudes that regulate emotions and behaviors, as well peacefully establishing agreements for the management of school conflicts. The goal was to get the number of incidents of violent behavior to be reduced during the school year 2017-2018.

The intervention was carried out from 5 areas of work:

- a) In the classroom. Each class has a Harmony-meter calendar and the teacher worked with the children every day encouraging and motivating the positive behaviors working with civic education and teaching values;
- b) At school. A call was generated to compete by the most harmonious group and the most harmonious child. The school yard was the little to encourage during recess, input and output positive behaviors;
- c) Between Teachers. Teachers motivated, monitored and observed positive behaviors, they served as judges and ambassadors of harmony;
- d) With parents. They received information about implementation of the strategy during parent school sessions; in addition, they monitored their children's behavior at home, reviewed their harmony-meter calendar and motivated their child to promote positive behaviors;
- e) Training and Counseling. All school personnel were trained which explained the way of working, the use of harmony-meter and socio-emotional skills development activities through case situations to relate better with students and find alternative ways to managing the class. In each of the areas was present as the main instrument of work the harmony-meter calendar.

From a call called "Live Harmony-meter", children, teachers, parents observed positive behaviors and recorded them with a score. The individual or group that has shown the highest score with verifiable evidence was the winners. The idea is that children will focus on positive behaviors, at first as a game and then as a habit for them to reproduce and multiply in a natural way.

4. Results

One of the first findings was in the change the school climate and in the configuration of the role of the actors (Figure 7). The focus was on who produced positive behaviors. Three types

of actors are considered: 1) protagonist of harmony, children showing positive behaviors, 2) witness of harmony. Children who observe that others have positive behaviors, 3) beneficiary of harmony. Children who are benefited from the positive behaviors of the protagonist.

This change promoted that the feeling of victimization would be diminished and seen as an opportunity to have high-value harmonic acts, as will be described later; as well as greater empathy on the part of the spectators towards the children attacked (Limber, Olweus, Wang, Masiello, & Breivik, 2018).

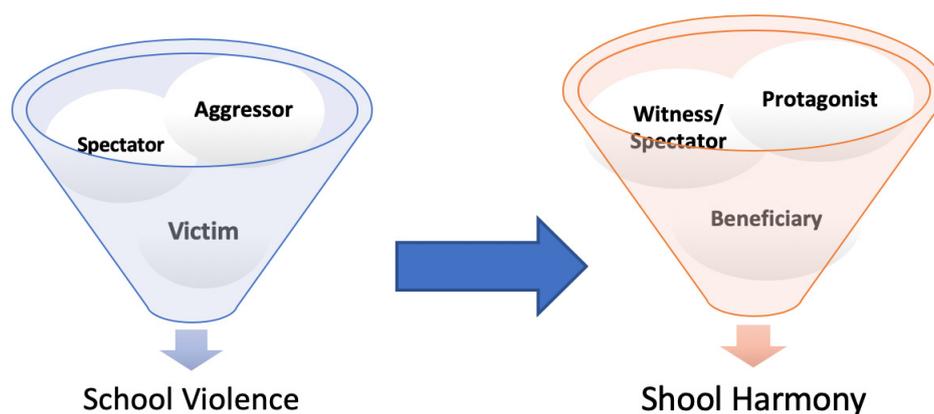


Figure 7. Changes in actors' behaviors

Negative trinity aggressor-victim-spectator was modified into protagonist-beneficiary-witness of the harmony.

The second finding was the significant decrease in violent behaviors in school on an average of 56% less incidences in observation and post-registration.

Table 1. Record of violent behavior at school

Indicators of Violence	PRE (Base line data)			POST		
	Inside the Classroom F	At School (f)	Total F	Inside the Classroom F	At School F	Total F
1. Disruption	2600	-	2600	1456	-	1456
2. Discipline Faults	1300	520	1820	845	130	975
3. Vandalism	130	75	205	26	15	41
4. Physical aggression towards classmates	780	390	1170	117	58	175
5. Bullying	120	60	180	48	24	72
Total	4930	1045	5975	2492	227	2719

Note. Comparison of violent behaviors before and after of the intervention project in absolute frequencies.

Each of the incidents was recorded for a month before and after the intervention and incidences were sorted in categories by type of school violence observed. The classes that were presented in the classroom and the incidences in the school outside the classroom were classified: playground, at the entrance and the exit. The disruptions only appeared inside the classroom by the very nature of the type of violence which consists of disrupting the class.

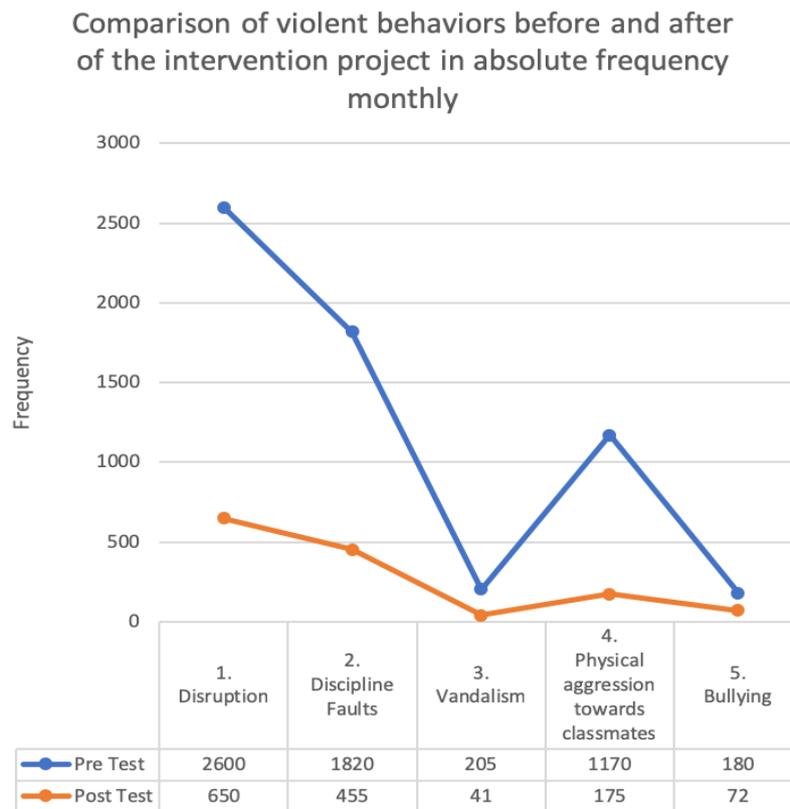


Figure 1. Comparison of violent behaviors before and after of the intervention project in absolute frequency monthly

The chart shows the significant decrease in violent behavior at school. The disruption dropped a 56%; The lack of discipline fell by 75%; Vandalism decreased by 80%; Physical aggressions 85% and Bullying or violence between equals 60%. It is should be mentioned that during time of Intervention some violent behavior dropped to zero. Eliminating 100%. During the period of observation and post-registration were presented but to a lesser extent.

4.1 Children's Reactions

There were presented qualitative changes in the behaviors of school children. One of the first reactions and more evident was that the children showed enthusiasm for participating in the contest to win the prize. And this led them to generate situations where they produced behaviors that are marked in the harmony-meter, the goal was to mark the corresponding box to win. They started playing, maybe even exaggerating the greeting, over and over again, but that's how the habits are formed, from repetition, to create a healthy school climate.

The children focused their attention on the behaviors marked in the harmony-meter and tried to find the opportunity to produce it, so that the prophecy was fulfilled, the assumption that "In what you focus your attention multiplies" and the children multiplied the Harmonic behaviors throughout the time that the project was carried out.

The students were alert to positive actions and harmonic behaviors and were very demanding

at the time of registration. In particular, the group of sixth grade “A” presented high levels of competitiveness, multiplying the evidence of harmonic behavior presented at home.

The children gave the Contest Evaluating Committee their harmony-meter calendar, marked day by day, with evidence that they really had that harmonic behavior, and with testimonies of the witness of the harmony. There were hundreds of evidences received per group, having several groups with the same score and winning the contest.

4.2 The Role of Teachers

The motivation of the academic plant, as a key element for the adoption of intervention programs and their effective implementation (Bradshaw, Pas, & Debnam, 2015), increased. A change of attitude was identified when teachers dimensioned the problem of school violence by accounting for violent behaviors by category during the pre-test, and they took awareness of the severity of the problem and realizing what they had the tools to prevent violent behavior (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012).

Likewise, changes in classroom management were evidence in many of them; calls disruptions significantly decreased; improving the discipline and relationships between the teacher and the students. The teachers modified the way in which they organized the group and the time spent reviewing the harmonic behaviors. As mentioned by Allen (2010) the teacher creates a learning environment in which violent behaviors are encouraged or not. School activities focused on these harmonic behaviors which allowed the classroom environment to have more freshness and an interest in everything that was done.

Teachers had three main functions: 1) Motivating participation of children from classrooms in the project of healthy coexistence through the harmony-meter. The teachers sensitized to students from the benefits they could have in the group and also by the level of competence that this implied. 2) Monitor and record violent behaviors before, during and after the intervention. 3) Use the harmony-meter as didactic strategy for working with healthy living together, for the space of Civic Education and the teaching of values.

These initial functions were added two more that were not planned and spontaneously emerged: 4) The Children asked the teachers to witness the harmonious behavior they had to win the contest, in such a way that in the teacher-student relationships improved in their communication, trust and coexistence. In Addition, teachers had to spend time reviewing the evidence and its registration; focusing their attention on harmony and therefore, multiplying it. 5) Make constant reference to the harmony-meter from the opportunity that students presented when they suddenly had violent behaviors.

Teachers became more observant and attentive to convert any violent act into a harmonic behavior; they had the opportunity to: 1) Encourage in children in their own mediation (Connolly et al., 2015) in the face of these situations from reflection always having as a reference the harmony-meter; 2) Decrease the feeling of victimization (Juvonen, Schacter, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2016) from having the opportunity to have high-value harmonious acts in its different indicators such as Asking for forgiveness (35), recognizing their mistakes, to forgive the other and to continue playing in a harmonious way, without grudges or feelings of

aggression or victimization.

It should be noted that during the time of the intervention lasted there was an impact on the curriculum since the students managed to have a high level of attention, not only to harmonic behaviors but also to classes in general, engaging in all school activities.

4.3 Parents

Parent involvement is essential for the formation of values. They were shared the harmony-meter and were asked to get involved in the Project supporting their children in two ways: 1) Helping to record the harmonic behaviors presented by their children at home in the harmony-meter calendar; 2) Witnessing the harmony of their children. The positive effect of the intervention project transcended the walls of the school and some of parents expressed that they used the harmony-meter at home with their other children; these actions motivated their entire family to take into account the harmonic behaviors. The harmony-meter was a pretext to have moments of closeness between parents and children that is fundamental, as it strengthened family ties or began to create these family ties that before this experience were weak or non-existent. They focused their attention on the harmony-meter and the harmonic behaviors multiplied at home.

4.4 Principal and Others Educational Actors

The educational leadership of the principal is essential for the success of a school project. The functions of the principal were: 1) Motivate the participation of all the actors of the community school in the Healthy Coexistence project. It was difficult to persuade teachers to keep track of violent behaviors before-during and after the intervention. 2) Train teachers in the use of harmony-meter for their civic education classes; and auxiliary materials such as drawings and calendars. 3) Monitoring Children's behaviors within the school during recess. 4) Follow up and monitoring personnel attention towards the healthy coexistence project; that is to say constantly focus the teachers towards the project. Promote harmony-meter between parents and in the social networks of the school; generate a report on the rates of violence and the school climate (Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2018).

English Teachers translated the harmony-meter from Spanish into English and reinforced the attention to him during their English classes. The Physical Education teacher used the harmony-meter during his classes and not only during the time that the school project lasted but throughout the school year, promoting healthy coexistence.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research question: How to reduce school violence? it can be answered that through the involvement of the entire school community in a project where the harmony-meter is used as a didactic tool. The work hypothesis was checked at various times and from the quantitative point of view as qualitative since the actors "Focuses their attention on harmonic behaviors and these Multiplied" significantly reducing violence in the school. The purpose of this study was achieved by testing the effectiveness of harmony-meter to improve the harmonic coexistence indexes, to promote the development of the

socio-emotional skills of the members of a school community and as a measure to reduce school violence.

The program demonstrated its effectiveness by considering three key elements from its design (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017): 1) The application time, originally one month, which was voluntarily extended by participants to the rest of the school year (8 months); 2. Involvement of parents in the intervention project; 3) Teacher training to manage harmony-meter; 4) the work with witnesses of harmonic behaviors under the principle of: “*Everything that we focus our attention multiplies*”, certainly Positive and harmonic behaviors is increased substantially.

Currently in all public or private institutions, companies and businesses are aware of the need to work with the Human Development of their workers. Schools do not escape this need, and the school staff is aware that if the schools have healthy teachers a healthy society will be generated; so it is imperative to work with the emotional health of the teachers; develop their skills to work on strategies that allow understanding and harmonizing relationships in the school and be the engine that prevents violent behaviors, Teach children to focus their attention on harmonious behaviors. Harmony-meter is the instrument for measuring actions, behaviors that generate harmony in relationships with others inside and outside the school. Create a school climate where a friendly smile, support to perform a difficult task, through words of encouragement, acts of solidarity, collaboration, tolerance, and respect be the behaviors that remain.

Acknowledgements

The Research is financed by ITEC Postgraduate School. Thankful to the school community of Lazarus Cárdenas del Rio, Elementary School and its Teachers.

References

- Allen, K. (2010). Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices. *The Professional Educator*, 34(1), 1-15.
- Barragán Ledesma, L. E., Valadez Figueroa, I. D., Garza Aguilar, H. R., Barragán Amador, A. L., Lozano de la Cruz, A. J., Pizarro Villalobos, H., & Martínez Trujillo, B. (2010). Elementos del Concepto de Intimidación entre iguales que comparten protagonistas y estudiosos del fenómeno. *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, 15(45), 553-569.
- Bradshaw, C. (2015). Translating Research to Practice in Bullying Prevention. *American Psychologist Association*, 70(4), 322-332. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039114>
- Bradshaw, C., Pas, E., & Debnam, K. (2015). A Focus on Implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in High Schools: Associations with Bullying and Other Indicators of School Disorder. *School Psychology Review*, 44(4), 480-498. <https://doi.org/10.17105/spr-15-0105.1>
- Connolly, J., Josephson, W., Schnoll, J., Simkins-Strong, E., Pepler, D., MacPherson, A., ... Jiang, D. (2015). Evaluation of a Youth-Led Program for preventing Bullying, Sexual

Harassment, and Dating Aggression in Middle Schools. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 35(3), 403-434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431614535090>

Cross, D., Runions, K., Shaw, T., Wong, J., Campbell, M., Pearce, N., ... Resnicow, K. (2019). Friendly Schools universal Bullying Prevention Intervention: Effectiveness with Secondary Schools Students. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, 1, 45-57 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-018-0004-z>

Farrington, D., Gaffney, H., Lösel, F., & Ttofi, M. (2017). Systematic reviews of the effectiveness of developmental prevention programs in reducing delinquency, aggression, and bullying. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 33(2), 91-106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.11.003>

Federal District Human Rights Commission. (2005). *Federal District Human Rights Commission*. Retrieved May 28, 2006, from <http://www.cd hdf.org.mx>

Gerlinger, J., & Wo, J. (2016). Preventing School Bullying: Should Schools Prioritize an Authoritative School Discipline Approach over security measures? *Journal of School Violence*, 15(2), 133-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2014.956321>

Henar, L. (2005). *Bullying: A fear of death*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from <http://www.enpprimaria.profes.net/especiales>

Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2014). Bullying in Schools: The power of Bullies and the Plight of Victims. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65(1), 159-185. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030>

Juvonen, J., Schacter, H., Sainio, M., & Salmivalli, C. (2016). Can a School-Wide Bullying Prevention Program Improve the Plight of Victims? Evidence for Risk X Intervention Effects. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 84(4), 334-344. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000078>

Kennedy, T., Russom, A., & Kevorkian, M. (2012). Teacher and Administrator perceptions of Bullying in Schools. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership*, 7(5), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.22230/ijep.2012v7n5a395>

Limber, S. P., Olweus, D., Wang, W., Masiello, M., & Breivik, K. (2018). Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: A Large scale study of U.S. students in grades 3-11. *Journal of School Psychology*, 69, 56-72 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2018.04.004>

Menesini, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2017). Bullying in schools: the State of knowledge and effective interventions. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22(Suppl. 1), 240-253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740>

Olweus, D. (1998). *Behaviors of harassment and threat among equals*. Madrid, Spain: Morata.

Rigby, K. (2011). What can schools do about cases of bullying? *Pastoral Care in Education*, 29(4), 273-285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2011.626068>

Rigby, K. (2014). How teachers address cases of bullying in schools: A comparison of five reactive approaches. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 30*(4), 409-419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2014.949629>

Shakeel, M., & DeAngelis, C. (2018). Can private schools improve school climate? Evidence from a nationally representative sample. *Journal of School Choice, 12*(3), 426-445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2018.1490383>

Witnesses Protected against Bullying. (2011). *El Occidental* (p. 4A).

World Health Organization. (2003). *World Report on violence and Health*. World Health Organization, Washington, D. C.: Panamerican Health Organization-Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization.

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).