

Ideological Tendencies of the Teachers about the Causes of Vandalism in Schools and Solution Proposals

Sevgi Birscl Nemliođlu, Hasan Atak

Abstract—Aggression is a behavior that cannot be approved by the society. Vandalism which is aggression towards objects is an action that tends to damage public or personal property. The behaviors that are described as vandalism can often be observed in the schools as well. According to Zwiier and Vaughan (1) previous research about the reasons of and precautionary measures for vandalism in schools can be grouped in three tendency categories: conservative, liberal and radical. In this context, the main aim of this study is to discover which ideological tendency of the reasons of school vandalism is adopted by the teachers and what are their physical, environmental, school system and societal solutions for vandalism. A total of 200 teachers participated in this study, and the mean age was 34.20 years (SD = 6.54). The sample was made up of 109 females and 91 males. For the analysis of the data, SPSS 15.00, frequency, percentage, and t-test were used. The research showed that the teachers have tendencies in the order of conservative, liberal and radical for the reasons of vandalism. The research also showed that the teachers do not have any tendency for eliminating vandalism physically and general solutions on the level of society; on the other hand they mostly adopt a conservative tendency in terms of precautions against vandalism in the school system. Second most, they adopt the liberal tendency in terms of precautions against vandalism in the school system. It is observed that the findings of this study are comparable to the existing literature on the subject. Future studies should be conducted with multiple variants and bigger sampling.

Keywords—Vandalism, School, Vandal, Turkey, Teacher, Tendency.

I. INTRODUCTION

AGGRESSION is a behavior that cannot be approved by the society. Freedman, Sears and Carlsmith (2), define the aggression as ‘all types of behaviors that hurt or may hurt others’. When these behaviors are blocked for different reasons, they may be directed to impotent people or objects/stuff. Vandalism which is aggression towards objects is the actions with aggressive nature that tend to damage public or personal property. People who act this way are called ‘vandal’. A ‘vandal’ person damages the public or personal property consciously by crashing, scrapping, spraying, scratching, or scraping (3).

The studies about the reasons of destructive behavior highlight either psychological characteristics and instincts of

the acting person (4) or environmental conditions that cause the destruction (5). Ward defines the vandalism as ‘absurd behaviors acted carelessly’. According to Samdahl and Christensen (4) the environment of a certain region gives clues about the appropriate behavior for that region. These clues orient people by implying whether that behavior is appropriate for that region or not. The design of the venue is another environmental effect for vandalism. De More, Fisher and Baron, claim that the design of a place that does not allow any user control of that place aggravate the vandalism. Vandalism can be seen in schools as much as it is seen in workplaces, streets, houses, and in public transportation.

Behaviors as defined as vandalism are very often seen in the schools as well. Vandalism in the school is damaging the school willfully and recklessly, and damaging the school and school’s annex while stealing the school’s property with the intent of gaining benefit (1). In the light of this definition crashing windows, cabinets’ covers, door handles, sockets, bulbs, furniture; writing on the desks, benches and walls, scratching, damaging the devices/materials in the library, BT classes, and labs are all considered as vandalism. Because vandalistic behaviors in schools hinder the accomplishment of goals, waste the educational efforts and cause economic loss they are undesirable behaviors.

The reasons for the school vandalism have been tried to be explained with different variants. These can be the characteristics of the environment, schools’ atmosphere, academic capacity etc. Publant & Baxter in a study of 32 schools in Houston that match in school sizes (enrolled number of the students), ethnicity and income level, found negative correlation between the levels of schools’ esthetic and the protection/preservation of the schools’ materials by the students (1). Grenber’s study shows that old devices and instruments in the school provoke the students’ aptitude for the vandalism. Stalling & Mohlman (6) confirm that vandalism is seen less if the teachers’ morality is high. There is a negative correlation between the vandalism and the school, if the school has clear policies, parents support discipline policy of the school, teachers stay away from hostile or autocratic behavior towards students, and they do not use the grades as a discipline instrument. (7). Flaherty in his study displayed that if the teachers are trained to form positive school atmosphere vandalism can be decreased. Finally, negative school atmosphere is one of the important variables that causes school vandalism.

According to Zwiier and Vaughan (1), school vandalism can be grouped in three different tendency categories:

Sevgi Birscl Nemliođlu is with the Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey [e-mail: sbirscln@hotmail.com].

Hasan Atak is with the Institute of Educational Sciences, Educational Psychology, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey

conservative, liberal and radical.

In conservative tendency, maintenance and preservation of the present institutions are emphasized. According to this tendency, vandalism in schools is the destroying of the school materials by one or more people. Vandalism in schools is a crime like any other and threatens the system at the same level (8). Liberal tendency accepts the point of view that vandalism's reasons can be found in the school system. Among the possible reasons of vandalism, incompetent educational program, aggressive leadership quality of the school's directors, competitive pressure of the evaluation system and the educational method of the teachers can be counted (8).

Based on the assumption in the radical tendency, the social system which the school is a part of it is a controversial system and by all means has to be changed. According to this tendency, the reason for vandalism of schools does not result from either individuals or the school system. The reasons for vandalism in schools must be searched in the immorality, harshness and the general apathy of the society (8).

Zwier & Vaughan (1) state that these three aforementioned tendencies are different from each other in terms of the reasons of the vandalism in schools and the precautions to prevent it. However, Ögülmüş (8) says that precautions against vandalism in schools are taken around the schools, within the school system and generally in the society. Reasons of and precautions for decreasing vandalism in schools are dealt with in three levels of tendencies: physical environment, school's system, and society.

Many methods are used to prevent vandalism in schools. Modifications in the school's discipline and awarding regulations are samples of these different methods. In primary and secondary education, while protecting school materials and instruments are rewarded to create model behaviors, actions like damaging school building and annexes, spotting walls and benches needed to be penalized. Application of the discipline procedure is one of the methods applied in the school to prevent vandalism. On the other hand it is not known what any other precaution the directors and the teachers use to prevent the vandalism in the school.

It is assumed that the teachers must have adopted one of the tendencies of three (conservative, liberal, & radical) which are defined by Zwier and Vaughan and the precautions they use must be appropriate based on the tendency they choose. It is not known that the teachers in Ankara perceive the school's vandalism as an important problem for their schools or not, know the reasons for the vandalism in the schools and the precautions against it.

In a similar study done in Nigde, Turkey (9) 94.4% of the teachers perceive the school vandalism as a problem in their schools. In this context the main aim of this study is to determine the accredited ideological tendency of the teachers and their precaution proposals against vandalism in schools based on levels of physical environment, school's system and the society. Based on this purpose the study tries to answer the following questions:

- a. Which ideological tendency of the reasons of vandalism in schools is mostly accepted

TABLE II DISTRIBUTION OF THE POINTS FOR THE REASONS OF THE VANDALISM IN SCHOOLS AND THE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST VANDALISM

	X	S
1. There is no righteous cause for the behaviors defined as vandalism: These are the behaviors that are acted out by hooligan and careless students.	3,6164	1,2870
2. The reason for the vandalism in school is ill or inefficient management of the schools.	3,1096	1,1851
3. Management styles and structures of the schools need a drastic overhaul; therefore vandalism is a normal reaction of some of the students to spoiled structure.	2,5068	1,0291
4. If enough people are taken into service for only securing the school buildings and instruments vandalism in the schools can be prevented.	2,7808	1,2610
5. Vandalism in the schools can be prevented with setting the school borders clearly and beautifying the school.	2,9726	1,0798
6. Vandalism in the schools can be prevented with changing school buildings' architectural structure radically and building smaller buildings instead of large ones.	2,6986	1,0631
7. If discipline procedure is applied precisely and students are motivated to abide by the rules, vandalism in the schools can be prevented.	4,0822	,9392
8. If the program and human relations in the school are revised and soft solutions are introduced for personal conflicts, vandalism in the schools can be prevented.	3,9726	,8494
9. By allowing students to participate in the decision making process (for example for the changing of the teaching and measurement and evaluation methods used in the school), vandalism in the schools can be prevented.	3,3973	1,1394
10. Vandalism in the schools can be prevented by assigning volunteers to monitor the school and ensuring the damage to the school is paid by the vandalizing students or their parents as long as these measures abide by legal terms.	3,5342	1,0940
11. Vandalism can be prevented by increasing extracurricular activities and using school facilities after the school time for social purposes.	3,7671	1,1489
12. Vandalism can be prevented if the schools prepare programs for their neighborhoods, provide the participation of the people in the activities prepared in the school and elevate the welfare of the society.	3,7534	1,0901

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Valid	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	109	54,5
	Male	91	45,5
Age	20-30 years	45	22,5
	31-40 Years	80	40,0
	41 years and above	75	37,5
Length of Service	0-5 Years	29	14,5
	6-10 Years	46	23,0
	11 Years and above	125	62,5
Domain	Teacher for branches	99	49,5
	Teachers for the grade 1-5 (Primary school teachers)	101	50,5
	Total	200	100,0

All the scales that had items with no response or more than one response to the same item were rejected. Participants were ensured of confidentiality. Questionnaires were presented by a single researcher in counter balanced order to workplaces of teachers. Administration lasted about 20 minutes. For the analysis of the data, SPSS 15.00, frequency, percentage, and t-test were used.

B. Instrument

Measure of teachers' tendency against vandalism: 'Measure of teachers' tendency against vandalism' which was developed by Zwiier and Vaughan (1) to measure the teachers' tendency on the reasons of the school vandalism and used by Öğülmüş (8) was used to collect the data.

Zwiier and Vaughan (1) suggested collecting the studies on school vandalism under three tendency categories: liberal, conservative and radical. Three tendency categories which are supported by these authors differ from each other on the reasons of vandalism in schools and precautions to prevent it based on the levels of physical environment, school system, and society. In order to test the reliability of the measure, Öğülmüş (8), asked five arbitrators to decide which of the 12 articles belong to which of the three ideological tendency categories. As a result of this reliability study it is found that the measure has fairly high correlation among grades. Finally, it is accepted that this measure is compatible with the Turkish culture.

III. RESULTS

a. Findings about adopted ideological tendency on the reasons of vandalism in schools

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the points that the experiment subjects received from each item on the measure.

The means of the points which teachers collected from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd article are compared with each other to define the ideological tendency categories of the teachers on the reasons of vandalism in schools.

As it is seen in table 1, the mean of points of the 1st article which represents conservative tendency is 3,6164, the mean of points of the 2nd article which represents liberal tendency is 3,1096, and that of 3rd article which represents radical

tendency is 2,5068. Dual comparisons were done to determine whether there was meaningful difference on .05 levels. The difference (.014) between the mean of the points of the 1st article (X=3,6164) which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 2nd article (X=3,1096) which represents the liberal tendency is found statistically meaningful. (Sd= 72, t=2,522, p<.05). The difference (.042) between the mean of the points of the 1st article (X=3,6164) which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 3rd article (X=2,5068) which represents the radical tendency is statistically found meaningful. (Sd= 72, t=5,180, p<.05). The difference (.004) between the mean of the points of the 2nd article (X=3,1096) which represents the liberal tendency and the mean of the points of the 3rd article (X=2,5068) which represents the radical tendency is found statistically meaningful. (Sd= 72, t=3,998, p<.05).

These findings explain which ideological tendency for the reasons of vandalism in school is adopted by the teachers. The teachers mostly prefer the conservative tendency then liberal tendency and finally the radical tendency for the reasons of vandalism in schools.

b. Findings and explanation about proposed precautions of the teachers against vandalism in schools based on the level of physical environment

4th, 5th, and 6th articles of the measure are about precautions against vandalism based on physical environment. As it is seen in Table 2, the mean of points of the teachers for the 4th article which represents conservative tendency is 2,7808, the mean of points of the 5th article which represents liberal tendency is 2,9726, and that of the 6th article which represents radical tendency is 2,6986. Dual comparisons were done to determine whether there was meaningful difference on .05 level. The difference (.340) between the mean of the points of the 4th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 5th article which represents the liberal tendency is not found statistically meaningful (Sd= 72, t=-.961, p>.05). The difference (.660) between the mean of the points of the 4th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 6th article which represents the radical tendency is not found statistically meaningful (Sd= 72, t=.442 p>.05). The difference (.091) between the mean of the points of the 5th article which represents the liberal tendency and the mean of the points of the 6th article which represents the radical tendency is not found statistically meaningful. (Sd= 72, t=1,713, p>.05).

These findings do not support the findings that come from the teachers on reasons of vandalism in schools. No meaningful difference is found between the means of the three articles. It cannot be determined which physical solution tendency categories that the teachers adopt based on these findings.

c. Findings and explanation about ideological tendency of proposed precautions of the teachers against vandalism in schools based on the level of school system

7th, 8th, and 9th articles of the measure are about precautions based on school system, against vandalism. As it is seen in table 2, the mean of points of the teachers for the 7th article which represents conservative tendency is 4,0822, the mean of points of the 8th article which represents liberal tendency is 3,9726, and that of 9th article which represents radical tendency is 3,3973. Dual comparisons were done to determine whether there was meaningful difference on .05 levels. The difference (.441) between the mean of the points of the 7th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 8th article which represents the liberal tendency is not found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=.775$, $p>.05$). The difference (.142) between the mean of the points of the 7th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 9th article which represents the radical tendency is found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=3.663$, $p<.05$). The difference between the mean of the points of the 8th article which represents the liberal tendency and the mean of the points of the 9th article which represents the radical tendency is found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=4.502$, $p<.05$).

These findings show that the teachers mostly prefer the conservative tendency among others for the precautions based on the school system level against school vandalism.

The findings show that they secondly adopt the liberal tendency in terms of precautions against vandalism based on the school system.

d. Findings and explanation about ideological tendency of proposed general precautions against school vandalism based on the level of community

10th, 11th, and 12th articles of the measure are about general precautions based on community level, against vandalism. As it is seen in table 2, the mean of points of the teachers for the 10th article which represents conservative tendency is 3,5342, the mean of points of the 11th article which represents liberal tendency is 3,7671, and that of 12th article which represents radical tendency is 3,7534. Dual comparisons were done to determine whether there was meaningful difference on .05 levels. The difference between the mean of the points of the 10th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 11th article which represents the liberal tendency is not found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=1.464$, $p>.05$). The difference between the mean of the points of the 10th article which represents the conservative tendency and the mean of the points of the 12th article which represents the radical tendency is not found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=1.380$, $p>.05$). The difference between the mean of the points of the 11th article which represents the liberal tendency and the mean of the points of the 12th article which represents the radical tendency is not found statistically meaningful ($Sd=72$, $t=.134$, $p>.05$).

These findings mean that the teachers do not adopt any of the tendency categories for precautions based on the level of community in general. On the other hand it can be said through findings that liberal tendency is more preferred among them.

IV. DISCUSSION

Vandalism in the schools has become a problem that concern educators, directors and citizens. As it has been abroad, vandalism has become an important issue in Turkey. For example, studies done in Turkey show that school benches are smudged scratched and marked in different levels of severity. In another study done by Ögülmüş (8) majority of the participants who are high school graduates (%74,6) say that they come across students who crash tables and chairs, scratch and smudge them, damage them by kicking and spoil the walls.

The point of views and solution proposals of the teachers on the vandalism in schools are analyzed in this study. The teachers have tendencies in the order of conservative, liberal and lastly radical for the reasons of vandalism. The teachers do not have any tendency for eliminating vandalism physically and general solutions on the level of society; on the other hand they mostly adopt a conservative tendency in terms of precautions against vandalism in the school system. Secondly, they adopt the liberal tendency in terms of precautions against vandalism in the school system.

The findings of this study are comparable to the existing literature on the subject. For example, Goldman in his research found a correlation between vandalism and teachers' perception of the school management. The teachers who suffer from vandalism think that school management behaves haphazardly and poorly. In schools that vandalism is observed seldom, teachers perceive the management of the school as strong and democratic. (1). In the same research it is found that there is a negative and strong correlation of vandalism in schools and the close teacher-teacher and teacher-director relations, level strength in the way teachers identify with school, and drop out rates. Leftwich have found strong relation between vandalism in schools and the ratio of changes of the teachers' school assignment (7).

In a similar way, Mayer and Sulzer-Azaroff, in their research define the school environment which vandalism appears as high levels as; a) frequent utilization of disciplinary control methods, b) vagueness of the discipline policy and classroom rules, c) insensitivity to individual differences among the students and insufficient interest to academic issues. There is a negative correlation between the vandalism and the school, if the school has clear policies, parents support discipline policy of the school, teachers stay away from hostile or autocratic behavior towards students, and they do not use the grades as a discipline instrument. (7). In other words, such attitudes of the parents and teachers lessen vandalism in schools.

Due to Zwier and Vaughan (1) vandalism in schools is an action against the school system. In this context, it is possible to deem the system or individuals responsible for vandalism in school. The view that deems individuals responsible emphasizes the importance of maintaining the system. According to this view, the system works properly and vandalism is the actions done by hasty, ill tempered and abnormal people. For this reason they stand

for maintaining the system but changing the individuals' behaviors.

As a result it is not an efficient approach to deem the system or individuals responsible for the vandalism in school. The reasons for vandalism have to be searched both in the school system and the individuals. Future studies should be conducted with multiple variants and bigger sampling. For getting consistent results, in the future studies both qualitative and quantitative methods must be used.

REFERENCES

- [1] Zwier, G., & Vaughan, G. M. (1984). Three ideological orientations in school vandalism research: Review of Educational Research Vol 54(2) Sum 1984, 263-292.
- [2] Freedman, J.L., Sears, D.O. ve Carlsmith, J.M.(1989) Sosyal Psikoloji,(Çev.) A. Dönmez, Ankara: Ara Yay.
- [3] Cohen, S. (1973), Property Destruction Motives and meanings vandalism (Ed. Ward. C), s.23-53. The Architectural Press, London.
- [4] Samdahl, D.M. and Christensen, H.H. (1985). Environmental cues and vandalism: An exploratory study of picnic table carving. Environment and Behavior, 17 (4),445-458.
- [5] Ward, C. (1973) Introduction. Vandalism (Ed.). 13-22. London: The Architectural Press.
- [6] Stallings, J., and G. Mohlman. School Policy, Leadership Style, Teacher Change, and Student Behavior in Eight Schools, Final Report. Mountain View, Calif.: Stallings Teaching and Learning Institute, 1981.
- [7] Goldstein, A. P. (2004). Controlling Vandalism: The Person-Environment Duet. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- [8] Ögülmüş, S. (1995). Violence and Aggression at High School. Şiddet ve Saldırganlık, Unpublished Research Report, Ankara University.
- [9] Yavuzer, H. (1998). *Yaygın Ana-Baba Tutumları, Ana-Baba Okulu*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.

Sevgi Birsal Nemlioğlu is Ph.D. Student [Educational Psychology], at Ankara University, Institute of Educational Sciences. She was born in Ankara. She received B.S. in Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Ankara University. She completed her master education between years 1976-1978. Her Ph.D. began in 2005 and continues now; both at Ankara University, Institute of Educational Sciences. Her academic interest areas are romantic relationships, and identity development.