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School Violence Prevention Education for Lower Secondary School Students

Nguyen Thi Anh Thu[1*]

[1]University of Education – Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Abstract: School violence has become an alarming social issue, directly affecting the mental and physical health as well as the overall development of students, especially those at the lower secondary level—a stage marked by significant psychological and behavioral changes. Therefore, providing school violence prevention education for lower secondary students plays a particularly crucial role. This is not merely about delivering knowledge on the consequences of violence, but more importantly about fostering appropriate awareness, positive attitudes, self-defense skills, civil behavior, and a sense of responsibility among students toward themselves and their communities. The study was conducted on 250 teachers and parents regarding education on school violence prevention for students. The analysis results show that the majority of parents and teachers have a good awareness of this issue. This provides a favorable condition for organizing educational activities on school violence prevention for lower secondary school students.
Keywords: Prevention Education, School Violence, Students, Lower Secondary School.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lower secondary school students (aged 11–15) are in a psychologically sensitive developmental stage where personality, core values, and self-awareness are strongly forming. At this age, students are easily influenced by peer pressure, social media, impulsive emotions, and tend to imitate behaviors or react negatively. Without proper education, they may become either victims or perpetrators of school violence. The issue of school violence, particularly in lower secondary schools, is on the rise. Forms of school violence include not only physical harm but also psychological bullying (mockery, exclusion, threats), cyberbullying via platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Zalo, or abuse of group power. In reality, many students do not recognize what constitutes violent behavior or are reluctant to share, which causes the issue to persist quietly. Moreover, many students are not equipped with prevention or self-defense skills, so when they face school violence, they often feel confused and helpless, unable to respond appropriately.

Furthermore, school violence prevention education contributes to creating a safe and healthy school environment. A violence-free classroom fosters a more positive learning atmosphere; students become more united and respectful toward one another; teachers can manage classrooms more effectively; and it reduces the risk of school dropout, low self-esteem, and depression among students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

School violence is currently one of the most pressing issues in educational environments across many countries, including Viet Nam. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), school violence includes behaviors involving physical force, verbal abuse, or psychological harm aimed at others within the school setting. Such behaviors negatively affect the holistic development of students. Particularly, students in lower secondary school are at a critical stage of psychological and emotional development, making them more vulnerable to negative influences and increasing the likelihood of conflicts and violence.

Nguyen Van Hong (2017) emphasizes that school violence is not limited to physical fights but also includes bullying, social exclusion, threats, verbal abuse, and cyberbullying. If not promptly addressed, these behaviors can lead to long-term psychological issues, behavioral problems, and declining academic performance. In this context, violence prevention education should not be viewed solely as a reactive measure but rather as a proactive strategy aimed at

*Corresponding Author: Nguyen Thi Anh Thu
University of Education – Vietnam National University, Hanoi

fostering a safe, friendly, and positive school environment. School violence prevention education refers to the intentional process of equipping students with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to identify, prevent, and appropriately respond to conflict situations. According to Tran Thi Thu Ha (2020), such education should be integrated into subjects like moral education, civic education, and extracurricular activities, with content tailored to the developmental needs of lower secondary students. Essential skills include positive communication, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, critical thinking, and the ability to seek help when necessary. UNICEF's Safe and Non-violent School Model (2019) highlights the important role of teachers, administrators, and parents in setting clear behavioral expectations, early detection, and timely intervention in cases of violence. Organizing training programs, awareness campaigns, and building a positive school culture are considered key components in reducing school violence. School violence prevention education for lower secondary school students addresses not only an urgent social issue but also contributes significantly to building a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. This, in turn, facilitates the comprehensive development of students.

The Role of School Violence Prevention Education for Lower Secondary School Students

School violence is a growing concern in many educational systems around the world, and Viet Nam is no exception. At the lower secondary level, students experience significant psychological, emotional, and social changes, making them more vulnerable to peer pressure, misunderstandings, and conflicts. Therefore, school violence prevention education plays a vital role in ensuring the physical and psychological well-being of students, while also contributing to the overall quality of education and the creation of a safe, inclusive learning environment. One of the primary roles of violence prevention education is to raise awareness among students about the different forms of school violence. These include physical aggression, verbal abuse, social exclusion, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying. Many students are unaware that certain behaviors, such as teasing or spreading rumors, can be considered acts of violence. Through educational programs, students can gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes violence, recognize its harmful effects, and learn to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Moreover, violence prevention education empowers students with essential life skills such as empathy, effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation. These skills are particularly important during adolescence, when emotions can be intense and difficult to control. By learning how to express themselves respectfully and resolve disagreements peacefully, students are better equipped to handle challenges in their interpersonal relationships. As

a result, the frequency and severity of violent incidents in schools can be significantly reduced.

Another crucial function of school violence prevention is fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and mutual support. When students are taught to value diversity, respect differences, and support their peers, schools become more than just academic institutions—they become communities that nurture character development and positive social behavior. In such environments, students are less likely to engage in or tolerate violent behavior, and more likely to intervene or seek help when they witness violence. In addition to benefiting students, violence prevention education also supports teachers, school staff, and parents in addressing this issue. It provides them with the tools and strategies to identify early warning signs, respond appropriately, and work collaboratively to maintain a safe school climate. Teachers who are trained in violence prevention are more confident in managing classroom conflicts and can act as role models for their students in promoting peaceful behavior.

Furthermore, this form of education contributes to long-term societal change. Students who grow up in safe, respectful environments are more likely to become responsible, empathetic citizens who reject violence and value cooperation and dialogue. In this way, school violence prevention education not only addresses immediate safety concerns but also lays the foundation for a more peaceful and just society. School violence prevention education plays an indispensable role in the development of lower secondary school students. It promotes safety, enhances social and emotional learning, builds a positive school culture, and equips students with the skills they need to thrive both in school and in life. As such, it should be considered a core component of modern education systems. The process of educating lower secondary school students about school violence prevention aims to achieve four specific objectives: First, to raise students' awareness of school violence, common forms of violence, and their consequences; Second, to equip students with the skills to recognize, respond to, and prevent violent behaviors; Third, to build a safe, positive, and violence-free school environment; Fourth, to encourage students to actively participate in activities that promote a culture of respect and peace.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey study was conducted with 250 parents and teachers regarding school violence prevention education for lower secondary school students. The questionnaire was developed based on the... Likert Scale (1–5): 1 – Strongly Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

Method: Calculated the average score for each item and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative feedback.

Table 1: Survey Content

No.	Survey Item
1	I clearly understand the common forms of school violence today.
2	School violence prevention education is necessary and urgent for lower secondary students.
3	Children need to be equipped with psychological and physical self-defense skills when facing school violence.
4	I can recognize the roles of victim, perpetrator, and bystander in school violence.
5	I support organizing nonviolent communication training activities in schools.
6	Schools, families, and communities must closely collaborate to prevent school violence.
7	I am willing to participate in training or communication programs on this topic.
8	I believe school violence prevention education contributes to building a safe and positive learning environment.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Survey on Awareness and Evaluation of School Violence Prevention Education (for Parents and Teachers). Total participants: 250 (including 120 teachers and 130 parents).

Table 2: Survey Results

Survey Item	Average Score (1–5)	General Evaluation
1	4.12	Fairly good understanding of forms of school violence.
2	4.75	Nearly unanimous agreement on the urgency of education.
3	4.55	Self-defense skills considered highly important.
4	4.21	Decent awareness of roles in school violence scenarios.
5	4.62	Strong support for nonviolent communication training.
6	4.80	Very high agreement on the importance of collaboration.
7	4.33	Willingness to join related programs is high.
8	4.70	Strong belief in the positive impact of prevention education.

Survey results indicate that both parents and teachers demonstrate a high level of awareness and strong agreement on the importance of school violence prevention education. Item 6 (school-family-community collaboration) received the highest average score (4.80), reflecting a consensus on the need for coordinated efforts. All other items scored above 4.1, showing broad support for implementing training on self-defense skills, nonviolent communication, and awareness campaigns. However, Items 1 and 4 had slightly lower scores compared to the others, suggesting the need to enhance communication and training specifically focused on recognizing school violence behaviors and clarifying individual roles in such situations. These findings reinforce the necessity of implementing structured, interdisciplinary, and sustainable school violence prevention programs, particularly at the lower secondary level. This is a critical stage for character development, where students are highly impressionable and influenced by their environment.

4.2. Content of School Violence Prevention Education for Lower Secondary School Students
4.2.1. Definition and Classification of School Violence
Objective: To equip students with a clear understanding of school violence and its various forms, including physical, emotional, social media-related, and group-based violence.
Content: According to UNESCO (2019), school violence encompasses acts of physical, psychological, social, or gender-based abuse within or related to the school environment. Such acts infringe upon students' rights to a safe learning environment and holistic development.

Forms of School Violence:
Physical Violence: Includes behaviors such as punching, kicking, slapping, choking, or using objects to cause physical harm.
Psychological/Emotional Violence: Encompasses insults, threats, mockery, verbal abuse, and intimidation that damage a person's self-esteem or mental state.
Social Violence: Involves isolation, exclusion, or spreading rumors to damage a student's social relationships.
Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Includes sexual harassment or violence rooted in gender bias, such as inappropriate comments, physical contact, or assault.
Cyberbullying: The use of digital platforms (e.g., Facebook, TikTok) to humiliate, threaten, or slander others through private photo sharing, fake accounts, or harmful videos.

These forms of violence can overlap and often result in lasting psychological consequences. Students from vulnerable groups (e.g., LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, or those with disabilities) are at greater risk.

Victims may experience physical injury, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, academic decline, social withdrawal, and suicidal thoughts; Perpetrators may exhibit deviant behavior, face disciplinary or legal consequences, and struggle with future social integration; Bystanders may feel fear and insecurity,

become passive accomplices, and lose trust in schools and adults.

4.2.2. Role Identification in School Violence: Victim, Perpetrator, Bystander

Objective: To help students recognize their roles and responsibilities in school violence situations.

Content: Victims are individuals subjected to harmful actions. They may be targeted due to personality traits, family background, or physical differences; Perpetrators intentionally inflict harm for dominance, control, or attention, often influenced by peer pressure or lack of emotional regulation; Bystanders are witnesses who may ignore, support, or intervene. Their actions significantly impact the outcome and school climate.

4.2.3. Self-Defense Skills in Violent Situations

Objective: To develop students' ability to respond to violence in safe and lawful ways.

Content: *Psychological self-defense (*Recognizing violence, managing emotions, seeking help, and documenting incidents); *Physical self-defense (*Staying in groups, maintaining safe distance, saying "No" firmly, calling for help, and reporting to trusted adults or hotlines (e.g., Hotline 111))

4.2.4. Nonviolent Communication Strategies

Objective: To foster effective and respectful communication in conflict situations.

Content: Following Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's four-step method: Observation without judgment; Feelings expression; Needs identification; Request for behavioral change.

4.2.5. Student Actions toward a Violence-Free School

Objective: To promote student responsibility in creating a positive school culture.

Content: Recognizing school violence; Practicing respect, empathy, and nonviolence; Participating in awareness campaigns and peer support initiatives.

4.3. Educational Pathways for Violence Prevention:
Integration Into Academic Subjects: Civic Education (Human rights, values); Literature (Empathy through stories); Social Sciences (Laws, consequences of violence).
Through Educational Activities: Themed events, contests, class meetings, and assemblies; Integration into experiential learning and community programs.
School Counseling Services: Specialized psychological support teams; Individual and group counseling; Seminars with experts.
School-Family-Community Collaboration: Parent education programs; Three-party commitment agreements; Cooperation with authorities for out-of-school safety.

4.4. Influencing Factors in Preventive Education
Student-Related Factors: Psychological development and peer influence; Awareness of violence and exposure to harmful content; Teacher and School-Related Factors: Teacher awareness, competence, and classroom environment; Family-Related Factors: Parenting styles, home environment, and parent-school cooperation. Preventive education against school violence for lower secondary school students must be a multifaceted effort involving schools, families, and communities. Its success depends on how well students are equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes; how engaged teachers and schools are in prevention efforts; and how supportive families and external agencies are in creating a safe and friendly environment. Such education fosters not only immediate safety but also the long-term well-being and development of students as responsible citizens.

III. CONCLUSION

Preventive education against school violence for lower secondary students is an urgent and essential task in building a safe, healthy, and holistic educational environment. At this age, students undergo various changes in psychology, cognition, and behavior. Without proper knowledge, skills, and attitudes, they can easily become victims, perpetrators, or indifferent bystanders to violence. School violence prevention is not solely the responsibility of schools but requires close cooperation from families, communities, and society as a whole. It demands a coordinated and long-term effort through multiple approaches: formal instruction, experiential activities, school counseling, and especially, the creation of a positive, respectful, loving, and non-judgmental school climate.

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