

The complex nature of school violence: attitudes toward aggression, empathy and involvement profiles in violence

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Abstract

Background: Aggressive behavior in adolescents has become a concern in education, where adapting to and going through high school may generate important behavior problems in adolescents. **Purpose:** Analyze the relationships between parental and adolescent attitudes toward aggression and empathy. Identify profiles of direct and indirect involvement in school violence and determine differences between groups with respect to the components of empathy and attitudes toward aggression.

Methods: The sample was comprised of 1287 high school students who were administered the Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives questionnaire, the Parental Support for Fighting and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. **Results:** The results show that beliefs in favor of the use of aggression in adolescents correlate positively with the perception of strong support from parents for aggression in response to conflict. Similarly, higher levels of support for the use of nonviolent strategies are positively related to the perception of strong support from parents. The relationships established with the components of empathy analyzed, both cognitive and emotional, were negatively correlated with favorable attitudes toward aggression. Results concerning the groups directly involved indicated that there were significant differences in the components of empathy between the groups. Furthermore, the multivariate analysis applied to the direct involvement groups showed significant differences between the groups in taking perspective. Between-group differences in empathic concern were also statistically significant for the group of active observers. **Conclusion:** Taking perspective and empathic concern are moderating variables both for observers and victims and their parents in situations of violence. © 2021 Martos Martínez et al.

Author keywords

Adolescence; Aggression; Attitudes; Empathy; School violence