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The Relationship Between Family Conflicts and Aggressive Symptoms in High School Students

Extended summary

The goal of this paper is to examine whether family conflicts can predict aggression symptoms in adolescents and to provide guidance for intervention and prevention. The research was conducted on a sample of 1036 respondents/high school students (grades 1-4) from Banja Luka and Čelinac (Bosnia and Herzegovina). 61.3% of the respondents were female and 36.9% male. The sample consisted of 86.4% respondents from intact families, 8.6% from divorced families, 4.7% from single-parent families and 0.3% respondents with no parents. Instruments for assessing the family climate experience, the Family Conflict subscale (FCI – Family Climate Inventory; Mihić et al. 2006), and the Questionnaire for Assessing Aggression Symptoms - BODTH (Dinić et al., 2014) were used in the research. The research tested the hypothesis that the existence of family conflicts is a predictor of aggressive symptoms in adolescents and whether adolescents differ in the level of exhibition of aggressive symptoms by gender. The findings partially confirmed the hypothesis that the existence of family conflicts is a statistically significant predictor for: anger (($F(1,1034)=73,81, p<0.000; R^2=0.067$), vindictiveness ($F(1,1034)=24,18, p<0.000; R^2=0.023$), domination ($F(1,1034)=63,55, p<0.000; R^2=0.058$) and hostility ($F(1,1034)=49,94, p<0.000; R^2=0.046$). The obtained results indicate that children who exhibit some form of aggressive behavior (anger, vindictiveness, domination and hostility) grow up in conflict-affected families. Conflict relationships in the family contribute to the development of a negative atmosphere and poor family relationships. In addition, the differences between male and female respondents were examined when it comes to forms of

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aggressive behavior and the obtained differences indicate that vindictiveness and domination are more common in men, while hostility is more common in women. The obtained results can be used in the context of early identification of aggressive symptoms and interventions at the level of educational institutions with mandatory family involvement.

Keywords: aggression symptoms, family conflict, adolescence, intervention, prevention.

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