

Aggression behavior in 5th year high school students from educational institutions in Lima, Peru.

Conducta de agresión en estudiantes de 5to año de secundaria de instituciones
educativas de Lima, Perú

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to establish the level of aggression in fifth-year high school students from educational institutions in Lima, Peru. The sample was 274 adolescents aged 15 to 18 years. The Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire was used, adapted to the context, the evidence of content validity was obtained with the Aiken V coefficient (0.80) for each item and dimension and the reliability with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient (0.85). High levels of aggression were found in students (54.8%), with a predominance in men equivalent to 43%, compared to 34% in women. In the dimensions studied, it has been found that students achieved high scores, in verbal aggression (40%), followed by physical aggression and hostility (38%) and finally in anger (37%).

Keywords: Aggression, students, educational institutions

RESUMEN

La investigación tuvo como objetivo establecer el nivel de agresión en estudiantes de quinto año de secundaria de instituciones educativas de zonas periféricas de Lima, Perú. La muestra fue de 274 adolescentes de 15 a 18 años. Se utilizó el Cuestionario de Agresión de Buss y Perry, adaptado al contexto, la evidencia de validez de contenido se obtuvo con el coeficiente V de Aiken (0.80) por cada ítem y dimensión y la confiabilidad con el coeficiente Alfa de Cronbach (0.85). Se encontró niveles altos de

agresión en los estudiantes (54.8%), con un predominio en los varones equivalente al 43%, frente a un 34% en las mujeres. En las dimensiones estudiadas, se ha encontrado que los estudiantes alcanzaron puntuaciones altas, en la agresión verbal (40%), seguido de la agresión física y la hostilidad (38%) y finalmente en la ira (37%).

Palabras clave: Agresión, estudiantes, instituciones educativas.

1. Introduction

Aggressive behavior has become common in society, often becoming a means of communication between people. In this regard, the Inter-American Development Bank-IDB, the Pan American Health Organization-PAHO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean-ECLAC (2017) referred that violence is a diverse phenomenon with complex edges. In this sense, it can be attributed to culture and a patriarchal society that has been disassociating and widening the gaps between human beings, translated into thousands of crimes or attacks against personal integrity. The World Health Organization-WHO (cited by Salas and García, 2016) refers that in recent years it has been presented as one of the major problems worldwide.

Aggression among schoolchildren is a growing problem that affects in different ways, in different contexts such as school, social and cultural, becoming a variable of study in the social sciences from different approaches. A reference study that has gained consensus is that of Bandura (1975), on the social learning of aggression or learning by observation, which shows how knowledge and practices are incorporated by imitation of the environment; and aggression does not escape from this. In this context, children become aggressive by observing the behavior of adults and other children involved in acts of violence; here the influence of the context on human behavior is given importance, unlike instinctivist theories that explain aggression as the result of an internal force.

The intensity of this problem has been causing very negative events in children and adolescents. Numerous studies report that the events of violence and/or aggression in schools can generate physical and emotional damage in schoolchildren, difficulty in learning due to post-traumatic stress, demotivation, absenteeism and school dropout (Henao, 2005; Rodríguez, Seoane & Pedreira, 2006; Oteros, 2006; Rodríguez et al, 2015; Damas, 2016, Caza & Galarza, 2014, Barrionuevo, 2016). A phenomenon is being experienced in schools called *bullying*, or systematic aggressions among classmates in the classroom, this dynamic of aggression and victimization only becomes visible when it represents a major problem and generates difficulties for the educational community, mainly for the authorities. Some authors refer that this problem constitutes the weakness of one and the strength of the other; and it is in this situation where

violence finds fertile ground to develop in school contexts (Cerezo, 2006; Acevedo, 2012; Gonzales, 2018 et. al).

Violence and aggression at school give rise to numerous interventions in different areas. For its part, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), (2017) in studies conducted on the violence suffered by children and adolescents in the school environment, reports anachronistic and despicable practices, such as physical punishment and sexual abuse, while showing the growing trend of emotional abuse to position itself as a nefarious replacement for physical blows from educators to their students.

It has become evident that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the population group of children is exposed to high levels of violence on a daily basis in different areas of their lives, school being one of the most important (Soto and Trucco, 2015). The authors find that around 30% of school-age children and adolescents in the region claim to have experienced situations of violence at school, both in the form of physical aggression and teasing for different reasons. Events that make the school distant from its main function of teaching, protection and guarantee of rights; which contravenes the rights of boys and girls to grow up physically and mentally healthy, as well as the right to protection against abuse and discrimination, confirmed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this regard, UNESCO (2016) through the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE), conducted in Latin America, reports that in most countries (10 out of 15), the most violent environments in the school environment are one of the factors associated with lower academic performance among students.

In this region of the Americas, this problem of aggression in schoolchildren has been of great concern, as evidenced by the presence of this problem in multiple studies, with around 49% of schoolchildren having been victims of aggression by a classmate during the school year and 16% having been victims of aggression on more than three occasions. Likewise, in an annual study of youth violence, information on 2000 homicides among adolescents between the ages of twelve and nineteen years old was found, and violence was the fourth leading cause of death among adolescents of this age. In 83% that includes males with serious consequences both in the psychological, physical and of course social functioning of these people (World Health Organization, 2016).

In the school context this type of behavior, not only affects the emotional sphere of students, but also affects coexistence and academic performance, causing concern in educational institutions. (Domínguez, Álvarez & Vásquez, 2017).

Aggression, from a social perspective, based on experiments it has been determined that it can be learned by imitation, demonstrating that not only knowledge but also hostile practices are incorporated, taking as a reference children who were exposed to

aggressive movies, then they reproduced the same aggression they had seen in the movie, Bandura (1982). From this it can be argued that aggressive behavior is not only learned but also taught as a characteristic that can occur from childhood in family and school environments, as well as in other environments in which children and adolescents interact. Papalia, Wendkos and Duskin (2009) state that adolescents manage to improve their social adaptation skills by developing the ability to understand points of view both similar and divergent to their own, and also learn to adapt their language according to the context and those who hear them. Also, adolescents think that everyone is waiting for what they do or say and sometimes feel vulnerable and take as offenses or provocations insignificant or non-existent acts by the other person; feeling attacked in many cases.

In Peruvian society, violence is a current problem and is associated not only with organized crime but also with common crime, which is the most visible form of aggression and has a direct impact on children and adolescents. The National Institute of Statistics - INEI (2019) reported that, in the second half of 2018, of the urban population nationwide 85.7% perceive that in the next twelve months they may be the victim of some violent criminal act that threatens their safety. This reflects the perception of latent insecurity, where children and adolescents are part of the social interaction and are directly involved as victims or perpetrators. The Specialized System for Reporting School Violence Cases - SISEVE of the Ministry of Education (2018) reported in the last five years 26,403 of cases of school violence nationwide of which 57% correspond to the capital city of Lima. These data evidence events of aggression at school as a form of harmful socialization among students. This socialization, to which it seems that schoolchildren are subjected, incorporates and builds ideas, habits, beliefs, feelings and attitudes that can modulate their behavior inappropriately.

These data demonstrate the validity of the problem to be explored, which generated the concern to know the aggression behavior, specifically in schoolchildren. The study had complementary information for its development, having available sources of information from the incident notebooks used by teachers and assistants and the coexistence notebook, used by the coordinator of Tutoring and Educational Guidance.

2. Materials and Methods

A total of 274 students participated in the study, of whom 139 (51%) were female and 135 (49%) male, from public educational institutions in the peripheral areas of Lima, with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years ($SD = 16.5$, $SD = 1.33$). No significant differences were found when considering the analysis according to sex ($t = 1.658$, $p = .071$).

Data collection was performed with the 29-item Buss and Perry's 29-item Adapted Aggression Questionnaire (AC) for adolescents that integrates four dimensions.

Physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. The response number is characterized by Likert scale where 1=Never, 2=*Almost never*, 3=*Almost always* and 4=Always. Permission was obtained from the directors of the educational institutions that were part of the study sample. Informed consent was also obtained from the parents and students respectively, thus complying with ethical aspects.

According to the results obtained from the descriptive analysis of the instrument, they presented values of skewness and kurtosis within the expected range $[-2, 2]$. Regarding the reliability evidences, we worked through the alpha and Omega coefficient, acceptable values were obtained as: CA ($\alpha = .87$, $\omega = .88$). The content validity was obtained with Aiken's V coefficient of 0.80 for each item and dimension, which confirms that the instrument is valid.

The results presented here on aggression behavior in schoolchildren are the product of a systematic classroom-by-classroom data collection and a thorough analysis of data on a population of 274 students, of whom 135 were boys and 139 were girls.

First, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was performed, as shown in Table 1, where $p < 0.054$ was obtained, which means that the distribution of the population is not normal.

Table 1. Normality test for the aggression variable

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	
Statistic	gl Sig.
Aggression	0.054 274 0.001

Table 2. Levels of Aggression in students

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Very low		4.7%
Under		12.4%
Medium		28,1%
High		38,6%

Very High		16,2%
TOTAL	274	100%

Source: Results of the application of the Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire.

With regard to the specific objectives proposed, also in coherence with the hypothesis formulated: Male students in the fifth year of secondary school present a high level of aggression, as opposed to female students. In Table 3, it is observed that in the male gender the high level predominates with 43%, while in the female gender the high level predominates with 34%.

Table 3.

Levels of aggression by gender

Sex		Frequency	Percentage
Male (n=135)	Very Low		9%
	Under		12%
	Medium		20%
	High	58	43%
	Very High		16%
Female (n=139)	Very Low		12%
	Under		
	Medium		
	High		34%
	Very High		20%

Source: Results of the application of the Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire.

Continuing with the specific objectives referred to the dimensions of the variable, consistent with the hypotheses formulated: Fifth year high school students present a high level of physical and verbal aggression, a high level of anger and a high level of hostility. In Table 4, it can be observed that the levels of aggressiveness according to these dimensions, reached high scores for verbal aggression (40%), followed by physical aggression and hostility (38%) and finally anger (37%).

Table 4.

Levels of aggressiveness according to dimensions

Dimensions	Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Physical aggression (n=274)	Very low		10%
	Under		14%
	Medium		20%
	High		38%
	Very high		18%
Verbal aggression (n=274)	Very low		9%
	Under		13%
	Medium		
	High		
	Very high		

Ira (n=274)	Very low		11%
	Under		16%
	Medium		
	High	102	37%
	Very high		17%
Hostility (n=274)	Very low		9%
	Under		
	Medium	58	21%
	High	103	38%
	Very high		17%

Source: Results of the application of the Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire.

3. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine the behavior of aggression in fifth year high school students, in this sense an exploratory level and the survey technique was used to collect information.

It has been found, that in the study sample predominates a high level of aggression, a finding similar to other research (López, 2014, Ponte, 2010, Gutiérrez 2016, Hermoza, 2017). These data may show that the problem of aggression is a current and latent issue in educational institutions that, despite prevention campaigns or programs aimed at

students, this problem subsists in the school, which becomes visible through mistreatment among them, it would even seem that this way of living together among students has been legitimized. In this regard, Piñuel and Oñate (2005) in a study on aggressiveness, determined as mistreatment or abuse aggression among peers or equals, represented by verbal, physical and psychological harassment behaviors that occurs systematically and permanently among classmates, causing the victim to remain silent and not to inform on the aggressor.

Over time, it is observed that aggression has invaded school environments, from 2013 to April 2019, 28,148 cases of school violence have been registered, being the majority (83%) of public institutions (SISEVE, MINEDU. 2019). Although the educational system has strategically generated attention programs such as strengthening the tutoring area or creating the coordination of school coexistence, they are still not reflected in the decrease of cases. Here it is important to analyze that this problem is not due to an isolated factor, probably if we find violence in schoolchildren as this and other research shows, it is because there is violence in society, in the family and in individual behavior. Olweus (1980) referred that aggression can have two causes: the first one referred to the difficult temperament of the child, as a result of some rejection by the parents, which then, when it becomes excessive, tends to accede to their requests, which can result in a permissive management of the behavior, thus increasing the possibility that the child behaves aggressively. And secondly, due to the family dynamics that are becoming more and more accentuated, referred to the fact that both parents usually work long hours, which in some way causes them to withdraw from their paternal and maternal role, referring to affection and genuine attention, an event that can also be seen as rejection.

On the other hand, we find the studies of Bandura (1975) who states that all rejected behavior can have a charge of aggression, his studies on the learning of aggression through observation or imitation contribute to the understanding of this problem, its mechanism of social interaction and personality development.

If parents, teachers or adults in general are models contrary to solidarity, respect and good treatment, it is likely that children will visualize indifference, indolence, disaffection that can be recurrent initiators of aggression, establishing in them patterns of behavior by observation.

Regarding gender, a predominance of aggression in high level in males has also been found, finding a slight increase in four percentage points in the very high level that distinguishes women of 20% compared to 16% in males, a finding similar to Hermoza (2017) who found a greater burden of aggression in female schoolchildren, results that may denote that women use a more indirect type of aggression, not so visible, but of greater impact. Evidence that requires further studies to reach a real empirical

knowledge, which is probably in "harmony" with everything referred to emancipation or the so-called "women's liberation", which should be handled with clear concepts in educational settings

4. Conclusions

According to the results analyzed in the present investigation, high levels of aggression were found, equivalent to 38.6%, and at a very high level, 16.2%, which adds up to 54.8% of students. Regarding aggression and gender, a predominance of aggression has been found in a high level in males equivalent to 43%, and very high in 16%. In contrast, 34% of women showed a high level of aggression and 20% a very high level. Regarding the studied dimensions of the aggression variable, it was found that students reached high scores in verbal aggression (40%), followed by physical aggression and hostility (38%) and finally anger (37%).

These high levels of aggression in students may be related to emotional management or control, which in turn not only affects physical and mental health, but can also hinder the learning process in school environments. This finding also shows the need for teachers to be close to their students within a framework of respect and commitment to the teaching role, oriented to gender equity and peace building, making use of artistic tools as a source of reflection and self-discovery and the potential of empathy for a healthy social interaction.

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