

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR MANIFESTATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS IN SCHOOL

Olga D. Moldovan, Ph.D.¹¹⁸
“Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad

Abstract: *Violent manifestations in young people’s behavior increased every year in the last decade. These manifestations take numerous aspects going from the simply verbal violence to severe physical violence and even crimes. One of the most important factor that determines violent behaviors in adolescents is the parental educational style.*

Our research tries to establish a correlation between the parental educational style and the violent behavior of the adolescents on a sample of 40 school adolescents. We applied personality inventories and other psychological tests to prove the existing relation between the educational style adopted by the parents inside the family and the violent behavioral manifestations of the adolescents in their school life.

The research has two usefulness: a theoretical one by its synthesis of the theoretic framework of the violence and a practical one, by the construction of psychological profiles that could determine the violent features of the adolescent personality and could prevent in this way the concret manifestation of this kind of behavior.

Key words: *violent behavior, school adolescents, parental educational style*

1. Theoretical approach

In the last decades the contemporary society registered a very lively rithm of evolution. This progress is more evident in the field of computers and of the informations quick spreading means. In this context the internet and the other important media field - the television, can convey informations about facts and events, sometime even in the moment of their production. Unfortunately, both field promote, in a groundless way the violence in the daily life. It is not surprinsing that different violence types, both on the own

¹¹⁸ Mail od_moldovan@yahoo.com

person (the suicid) and on the others, become models to be followed and to be imitated by the adolescents and the children

We can explain, taking into account these aspects, why the age level from which appear the suicid diminished very much and why the number of violences comitted by the adolescents alarming increased in the last years. Begining of the ancient history (by the religious offering and sacrifices), till the world wars or the contemporary wars from different corner of the world, the violence allways accompanied the humanity. The statistics show that „since the humanity has a written history, for a day of peace were registered 15 days of war, with 350 billions victims” (Scripcaru, Astărăstoae, 2003, p.171).

The negative aspects of the human behavior must be restrain by culture and norms which lead to the limitation of group violence or of the violence in the community by dialog, tolerance, compromise and understanding. The favouring of some stable traditions, of some real interhuman relationships and the application of preventive measures could lead to the significant diminishing of this phenomenon.

As a matter of fact to replace the violence with the force, to answer to the violence by force, is only a change of words, reason for which the society must be conscious regarding its future in which the prevention of the violence must be the effort of all the people and all the social institutions.

We consider that an important role in violence prevention must be hold by the family, the relations parents-children and the educational parental style. The first identification models for the child, from his infancy to the adolescence remains the parents. The parents incapacity to find a balance between the high authoritative attitude and the high protective one towards their children, now adolescents, determine them to consider the adults society as beeing ambivalent, contradictory, inadequate and hypocrite (Modrea, 2006).

The parental styles are, first of all, modalities of children education by the interaction parents-children. Each parent has his own style to educate the children, his own parental style. But the parental styles are not the same for all the people, not all the parents educate their children in the same way. Also, in the practice does not exist pure parental styles. Usually there are predominant parental styles, which put their mark on the child later development (Bonchiș, 2004).

The parental styles depend not only on the parents personality, on their educational model, but also on others factors like the general environment, the social conditions, the family structure, the parents professions etc. The development psychologists are interested in the way in which the parents influence the social development of the children and their instrumental competences. One of the most important concept in the field is that of the parental educational style.

The psychological literature propose a classification in five parental styles. We speak about the indulgent, peremptory, indifferent, protective and democratic styles. This parental styles are rarely independent, sometimes they are functioning together (Verza, 2000).

Moldovan and Bălaș-Timar (2010) propose a classification in only four categories of parental styles: the democratic-peremptory style, the dictatorial style, the neglecting style and the permissive one.

The violence in the adolescents category becomes almost a common fact in our days. There is no day in which the media does not present new cases of violence among the adolescents, regardless if it is agresivity on his own person (going from intentional mutilations to suicide), or agresivity towards the others (going from the goods distruction to physical agressions or even crimes) (Atger, 2001).

The adolescence is often associated with violent manifestations. But we must not forget that the adolescence is a period in which the young person is subject to many violente changes because of the psychic and physic transformation that he passes through. The body sexualization, the affective relations modification, the violent emotions of the separation from the parents to a social autonomy, all these bring a re-evaluation of subject psychic and physic identity. Moreover, any adolescent becomes fragile because of the transformations that take place in his personality and, as a consequence, he can react violent to a situation which is perceived as threatening for his integrity. The manifestation forms of this violence and their possible rehearsal, depend on the one hand on the subject personality organization and on the other hand on the answers which are offered by the environement (Radu, 1994).

The violence in school is an expression of the violence in society; when the violence take place in schools, it leads to other consequences like: victization, prejudices, sometime death. The violence in school reduces the chances of the pupils to develop completely their personality and to receive a qualitative education (Sălăvăstru, 2003).

2. Research

Field of research and hypopthesis. The field research was the violent behavior of adolescents and its relation to the educational parental style. The hypothesis from which we start our research was: we supposed that there is a correlation between the educational parental style and the violent behavior of the adolescent in school.

Sample. Our sample included 43 adolescents, from the XI-th class, from the National College „Vasile Goldiș”, from Arad. We selected the XI-th class because, according to the psychologic stadiality, they are at the middle of the adolescence, taking into account that in the professional literature the

adolescence is situated between 16 and 18 years old. From the 43 subjects, 23 were boys and 20 were girls.

Methods: To stand out the parental educative style and the adolescents violence we made a questionnaire of 14 questions which was applied to the sample subjects.

Results and discussions

To verify the hypothesis we synthetized the answers of the entire sample in tables and graphics to illustrate the appearance frequency of each answer and we calculated the Spearman correlation quotient. The answers of our subjects regarding the educational parental style are included in the table 1.

Table 1. The educational parental style (N=43)

	Educational parental style	Number
a	dictatorial	11
b	democratic-authoritarian	22
c	neglecting	2
d	permissive	8

The answers obtained from the subjects show that their majority (22 subjects) are grown in a democratic-authoritarian style in which the affective warmth and the control are exercised in the same time by the parents. It is the educational style which offers to the adolescent the possibility to develop himself and to become an independent person which can assume the responsibility of his acts. This is the most appropriate educational style to ensure a normal and harmonious development to the adolescent.

Unfortunately, a quarter of our subjects (11 subjects) benefited by a dictatorial parental style. The parents want to have the entire control on the acts and the life of the adolescent, without considering his own opinions and preferences. Their requirements and their exigences are at a high level, sometimes even exaggerated, which made the adolescents to feel frustrated because they work hard without any appreciation and because they do not have the freedom to participate to recreative or distractive meetings.

This kind of adolescents will have a negative attitude towards their parents and, implicit, towards all that could means a authority. They will feel constraint permanently when they must respect any rules and their modality of reaction is either to subjugate without any fight, or to transgress, in a demonstrative way, all the rules. Many times they have the tendency to manifest the same type of attitude and the same dictatorial style towards the smaller children or towards the wicker children. The border between this behavior and the use of the violence of any kind (verbal or physic) is very

fragil and may be passed easily in the situations in which the intrapsychic tension becomes insuperable for the adolescent.

At the neglecting style are included the answers of 2 subjects. This educational style is known by the lack of affective warmth and in the same time the lake of the control and that is why the value of parental education is almost null. The parents are not interested by the life and the activity of the adolescent, either because they could not manage this situation, or because they dont have time (they work in two or more places for having enough money for the family needs). As a consequence the adolescents become to consider themselves either as very important persons and react with violence at any fact which violate their supremacy, or become to consider themselves as persons without any value and in this way to accept all the violences of their colleagues.

For the last educational parental style, the permissive one, we have a number of 8 subjects which are included here. Although the affective warmth from the parents is present and it is manifested sometimes even in an emphasized way, but the control exercised by them is very wick and is not considered by the adolescent. „They do not assume responsibilities and have fluctuant and labile behaviors, frequently impulsive-agressive, without taking into account the opinion of the company” (Moldovan, Bălaș-Timar, 2010, p. 101).

The parents, and especially the grandparents, appreciate that they had enough suffered and that is why they let the adolescents to do what they want, when they want and how they want and suffocate the adolescents with their love. This kind of adolescents will not accept to be told what to do and when to do the things and they will react in a violent manner at the limitation of their independence.

For the agressive behavior the answers of our subjects are included in the table 2.

Table 2 Agressive behavior (N=43)

	Agressive behavior	Number
a	yes	15
b	sometime	24
c	no	4

Only four of our subjects never had an agressive behavior. It is possible that their answers really reflect the truth, but it could be possible also that the answers be influencing by different factors. First we mention the phenomenon of the social desirability: the society considers that is not good and adequate to be agressive and than the answers will be conform with what

the society desires. On the other hand the subjects from this category could not understand well the means of the question. For them the aggressivity means physic violence and the behaviors that are included in the verbal violence category are not considered as violence.

The great majority of our subjects say that they manifested violent behavior sometimes (24 subjects from 43). This are answers that we consider more close from the concrete reality, because the aggressive manifestation of the adolescents behavior are enough frequente and could not be allways controlled and voluntary repressed. The aggressive reactions to different situations, considered as threatening or humiliating, can be spontaneous, without the control of the censorship or of the self. As a consequence many adolescents have aggressive tendencies when they consider that their self image is threaten. Fifteen (15) of our subjects have an aggressive behavior frequently, fact that illustrate the lack of suppression of their immediate tendencies, the absence of the self –criticism spirit towards the own behavior and a disfunctional values system, in which the aggressivity is considered as a good method to solve the conflictual situations with the colleagues.

The data obtained by us are confirmed by the data from the speciality literature which affirme that more than 50% of adolescents have aggressive behavior. The kind in which the aggressivity is manifested is presented in table3

Table 3. Manifestation of aggressive behavior

	kind of manifestation	Number
a	screaming	9
b	fighting	24
c	object distruction	10

A great part of our subjects (a quarter of them, that means 10 subjects) manifest their accumulated rage on the objects that they have near them. That means that they throw the objects, tear them, soil them, tread on them. It is a current modality to discharge the rage, but the objects distruction could involve also other aspects: some kind of psychic tensions because they regret their reaction or they have to replace the other pupil objects. The violent behavior towards goods are more rare (Atger, F., 2001), although the adolescents if they do not have any person to confronte with or they are affraid of a direct confrontation, could utilise this kind of violence to revenge themselves on the ones who violated their physic or psychic integrity.

The category of the adolescents which utilise physic violence includes the greatest number of subjects (24 subjects, more than a half of our sample)

and we consider that this fact is significant for the attitudes and the reactions of our days adolescents. The majority of our subjects said that their agresivity was manifested by fighting, that means by phisic violence.

An important role in adopting this modality of answer in conflictual situations is hold by the social provenience environment of the adolescent, the familial environment and the mass-media. If the adolescent comes from an unfavorable social environment, with an increased risk quotient, where the most appreciate in the community is the most powerfull which impose his opinion with the force, than the adolescent will adopt this kind of behavior to solve the conflicts, considering that this one is the only way to achieve respect and consideration from the colleagues. A conflictual, tensioned family environment, where the tensions between the parents are frequent and lead to conjugal violence, determines the adolescent to utilise the same models that they saw in the family to solve their conflicts. In this way the aggressive attitudes towards the partners will be perpetuated during the time, exactly because there are adolescents which learn in their families this kind of solving the conflictual problems. For them will not exist the negotiation, the explications, but only the law of the force and violence.

The conditions which determine the violent behavior of our subjects are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Conditions which determine the violent behavior (N=39)

	Kind of conditions	Number
a	personal offences or offence of a family member	13
b	provocations, annoying	3
c	friends offences	15
d	denying of their point of view	8

The most frequent aggressive responses given by the adolescents, were in the situation when their girlfriend or friends were offended. At this age, when the friendship feeling has a great importance, when the first loves appear in the adolescents life, any act straghten towards the object or loved person obtains the significance of an attempt to the personal life of the adolescent. They do not react because they feel threaten by the dispossessing of the loved object or person, but because they appreciate as offending the other people behavior. Any bad word or denigrating appreciation are interpreted as direct personal offences and they respond with an aggressive behavior.

A second reason of the aggressive behaviors in adolescence is the offences brought to the family members. It is very interesting the fact that, even the adolescent are not allways in the best relations with their family,

though they dont accept any offence adressed to the family. The defence of the apartenance group, represented in this case by the family, becomes one of their major objective. The offence especially at the mother adresse are considered very grave, and determine the adolescent to fight for his family.

Agressive responses are registered also in the cases in which the point of view of the adolescent is not accepted. They can express different opinions, which are fight against by their colleagues. In this cases when they have nomore arguments to support their opinion, many adolescents had resort to violence as a modality to make their opinion to be listened or adopted. Unfortunately the logic arguments at this age are very poor, in a hand because of the poor life experience of the adolescents, and on the other hand because of the poor knowledge luggage that they have and of the insufficient development of the thinking logic and abstract system.

The fewer aggressive responses were to the category provoked (3 subjects). To the provocation the adolescents do not react aggressively and try in the great majority of cases to avoid them or to desconsider them. Though when the provocation surpasses a certain limit as intensity, or a certain period of time as persistence, the adolescents can be exasperated and can react violent. As a last step of our research we made the correlations between the two variables: the parental style and the degree of violence. This was calculated with the statistic program SPSS 17.0, on the data collected by us with the questionnaires.

Taking into account the number of the subjects of the sample, and their aleatory selection was utilised as correlation quotient, the r quotient of Spearman (Radu și col, 1993). The obtained results were include in a correlation matrix and were indicated the statistic significances of each value (table 5).

Table 5 The correlations matrix and the significance of the quotients

	Non-violent	low violence	moderate violence	great violence
dictatorial	-.039	.114	.289***	.303***
democratic	.429***	.135	.105	.081
neglecting	.078	.115	.187**	.351***
permissive	.128	.119	.138**	.133**

*** p < .01

** p < .05

The correlations matrix confirms us the research hypothesis from which w start our research: there is a significant correlation between the parental style and the degree of violence of the adolescents. So our hypothesis was validated. The quotients included in the matrix show that there is a

significant correlation between the democratic-authoritarian parental style and non violence ($r = .429$, significant for $p < .01$). No one of the other parental styles does not correlate with the non-violence. There is a correlation at different degrees of signification between the moderate violence and the dictatorial, neglecting and permissive styles. So, for the dictatorial style and the moderate violence $r = .289$, significant at a level of $p < .01$, and for the other two styles neglecting and permissive the correlation with the moderate violence is situated at a level of $p < .05$. This means that the dictatorial style gives the greatest number of adolescents with moderate violence, while the other two styles (permissive and neglecting) give a smaller number, but though a significant one. For the group of adolescents with great violence, the correlation quotient with the educational parental style is very significant al a level of $p < .01$ for the dictatorial style ($r = .303$) and neglecting style ($r = .351$), and significant at a level of $p < .05$ for the permissive style ($r = .133$).

The validation of our hypothesis obtained by the practical researche made by us allow us to underline the fact that there is a real correlation between the educational style utilised by the parents and the degree of violence of the adolescent behavior.

References

- Atger, F., (2001), Un adolescent sur cinq reconnaît une violence reguliere, în Impact Medicin Hebdo, nr. 546, 14 sept., pp. 4-9
- Atger, I., (2001), Violence a l'ecole. Un symptome de rejet, în Impact Medicin Hebdo, nr. 546, 14 sept., pp. 14-16
- Bonchiş, E., (2004), Psihologia copilului, Editura Universităţii din Oradea, Oradea
- Modrea, M., (2006), Imagine de sine şi personalitate în adolescenţă. Studii teoretice şi experimentale, Editura Aliter, Focşani
- Moldovan, O.D., Bălaş-Timar, D., (2010), Psihologia adolescenţei şi vârstei adulte, Editura Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad
- Radu, I. (coord), (1994), Psihologie socială, Editura Exe, Cluj – Napoca
- Radu, I., Miclea, M., Albu, Albu, M., Nemeş, S., Moldovan, O., Szamoskozi, S., (1993), Metodologie psihologică şi analiza datelor, Editura Sincron, Cluj-Napoca
- Sălăvăstru, D., (2003), Violenţa în mediul şcolar, în Ferreol,G., Neculau, A., (coord), Violenţa în mediul şcolar, Editura Polirom, Iaşi
- Scripcaru, G., Astărăstoae, V., (2003) Criminologie clinică, Editura Polirom, Iaşi
- Verza, E., (2000), Psihologia vârstelor, Editura Pro Humanitate, Bucureşti.