

Manifestation of Teenage Aggression Toward Teachers: Its Prevalence, Factors, Consequences, and Prevention[‡]

Artur A. Rean, Anna V. Egorova^{*}

Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow, Russia

^{*} Corresponding author. E-mail: av.egorova1@mpgu.su

ABSTRACT

Background. The relevance of studying students' aggressive behavior toward teachers lies in the fact that despite the ongoing public discussion, modern research shows that this problem is not being given enough attention.

Objective. Our objective is to explore students' aggressive behavior toward teachers — *i.e.*, to assess the prevalence of this problem, analyze its background, and assess the consequences of such behavior.

Design. The paper analyzes foreign and Russian research on the problem of aggression toward teachers. In addition, we attempt to find the causes of students' aggressive behavior with reference to various psychological theories. We also offer recommendations for reducing and preventing aggression toward teachers on the part of students.

Results. The indicators that demonstrate the prevalence of aggression toward teachers raise the concern that this problem has negative long-term consequences for the lives of students, teachers, and educational institutions. The use of psychological theories, models, and concepts to explain the reasons for students' aggression in the teacher's direction, allows us not only to determine the reasons for the aggressive behavior, but also to consider this problem at different levels of the educational process. The influence of school climate on the victimization of teachers has been considered, and recommendations are made for implementing preventive measures.

Conclusion. On the basis of our analysis, we present possible directions for further study of this problem. In particular, it is necessary to study the prevalence of aggressive behavior toward teachers in Russian schools and develop a set of preventive measures aimed at the elimination of aggression toward teachers.

Keywords: Aggression, adolescents, teachers, school, school climate, prevention

[‡] This article is a modified version of a previous paper by Rean, A.A., Egorova, A.V. (2021). Proiavlenie podrostkovoi agressii v otnoshenii uchitelia: rasprostranennost', faktory, posledstviia, profilaktika [Manifestation of adolescent aggression against a teacher: prevalence, factors, consequences, prevention]. *Natsionalny Psikhologicheskyy Zhurnal* [National Psychological Journal], 2(42), 98–108. <https://doi.org/10.11621/npj.2021.0209>

Highlights:

- Research around the world indicates that in different countries, anywhere from 30% to 80% of teachers face teenage aggression. Its manifestations range from physical acts of aggression to insults, ridicule, or ignoring the teacher altogether.
- The consequences of teachers encountering teenage aggression are numerous: first, they can be reflected in the deterioration of the teacher's physical and psycho-emotional state; and second, such aggressive acts contribute to the deterioration of the school climate and a decrease in the teacher's ability to control the educational process.
- There is a shortage of research devoted to the study of teenage aggression toward teachers: in particular, research devoted to the study of the factors contributing to the emergence of teenage aggression, the prevalence of aggressive behavior in various forms in Russian schools, and research into the personal qualities and professional skills of teachers faced with teenage aggression.
- The introduction of preventive measures to avert student aggression toward teachers requires an integrated approach that involves all participants in the educational process: students, teachers, the administration, and parents.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Актуальность. Актуальность проблемы проявления подростковой агрессии в отношении педагогов обусловлена тем, что несмотря на её широкое социальное звучание в обществе, современная база исследований показывает, что данной проблеме уделяется крайне мало внимания.

Цель: рассмотреть проявление агрессивного поведения в отношении учителей, а именно: оценить распространенность данной проблемы, проанализировать предпосылки, которые предшествуют проявлению агрессии в отношении учителей, а также оценить последствия подобного поведения.

Описание хода исследования. В работе представлен анализ зарубежных и отечественных исследований, посвященных проблеме агрессии в отношении учителя. Кроме того, предприняты попытки найти причины агрессивного поведения учащихся по отношению к учителю, посредством анализа психологических теорий. В статье также предложены рекомендации для снижения и профилактики агрессии со стороны учеников в отношении учителя.

Результаты исследования. Было показано, что показатели распространенности агрессии в отношении учителей во всем мире подчеркивают масштабы данной проблематики и вызывают беспокойство тем, что данная область имеет пагубные долгосрочные последствия для жизни учащихся, учителей и образовательных учреждений в целом. Установлено, что применение психологических теорий, моделей и концепций в объяснении причин проявления агрессии в отношении учителя со стороны учеников, позволяют не только определить причины подобного поведения, но и помогают рассмотреть данную проблему на разных уровнях образовательного процесса. Также было рассмотрено влияние школьного климата на виктимизацию учителей и даны рекомендации по внедрению профилактических мероприятий.

Выводы. На основании проведенного анализа были представлены направления для дальнейшего изучения данной проблематики. В частности, отмечается необходимость исследования распространенности форм агрессивного поведения в отношении учителя в Российских школах и разработки комплекса профилактических мероприятий, направленных на борьбу с агрессией в отношении педагогов.

Ключевые слова: Агрессия, подростки, педагоги, школа, школьный климат, профилактика

Ключевые положения:

- Исследования по всему миру показывают, что в разных странах от 30% до 80% педагогов сталкиваются с подростковой агрессией в их адрес, при этом формы ее проявления разнообразны: от физических актов агрессии, до оскорблений, насмешек или игнорирования.
- Последствия столкновения педагогов с подростковой агрессией в их адрес многочисленны: во-первых, это может отражаться на ухудшении физического и психоэмоционального состояния учителя, во-вторых, подобные акты агрессии способствуют ухудшению школьного климата и снижению возможности управления педагогом учебным процессом.
- Наблюдается нехватка исследований, посвященных изучению подростковой агрессии в отношении педагогов, в частности: изучение факторов, способствующих возникновению подростковой агрессии в отношении учителя, распространенность различных форм агрессивного поведения в Российских школах, а также исследование личностных качеств и профессиональных навыков педагогов, сталкивающихся с подростковой агрессией в их адрес.
- Внедрение профилактических мероприятий по предотвращению агрессии учащихся в отношении учителя требует комплексного подхода, затрагивающего всех участников образовательного процесса: учащихся, педагогов, администрацию и родителей.

RESUMEN

Relevancia. La relevancia del problema de la manifestación de la agresión de los adolescentes hacia los docentes radica en que, a pesar de su amplia repercusión social, la base actual de investigación muestra que se presta muy poca atención a este problema.

El objetivo: examinar la manifestación de comportamiento agresivo hacia los profesores, específicamente: evaluar la prevalencia de este problema, analizar los antecedentes que preceden a la manifestación de la agresión hacia los profesores, así como evaluar las consecuencias de dicho comportamiento.

Descripción de la investigación. El trabajo presenta un análisis de investigaciones extranjeras y nacionales dedicadas al problema de la agresión hacia los profesores. Además, se han realizado intentos de encontrar las causas del comportamiento agresivo de los estudiantes hacia los profesores mediante el análisis de teorías psicológicas. El artículo también ofrece recomendaciones para reducir y prevenir la agresión por parte de los estudiantes hacia los profesores.

Resultados de la investigación. Se demostró que los índices de prevalencia de la agresión hacia los profesores en todo el mundo resaltan la magnitud de este problema y generan preocupación debido a que este campo tiene consecuencias perjudiciales a largo plazo para la vida de los estudiantes, profesores y las instituciones educativas en general. Se estableció que el uso de teorías, modelos y conceptos psicológicos para explicar las causas de la manifestación de agresión hacia los profesores por parte de los estudiantes no solo ayuda a identificar las causas de dicho comportamiento, sino que también contribuye a examinar este problema en diferentes niveles del proceso educativo. También se examinó la influencia del clima escolar en la victimización de los profesores y se proporcionaron recomendaciones para implementar medidas preventivas.

Conclusiones. Sobre la base del análisis realizado, se presentaron lineamientos para futuras investigaciones sobre esta problemática. En particular, se destaca la necesidad de investigar la prevalencia de formas de comportamiento agresivo hacia los profesores en las escuelas rusas y desarrollar un conjunto de medidas preventivas dirigidas a combatir la agresión hacia los docentes.

Palabras clave: Agresión, adolescentes, profesores, escuela, clima escolar, prevención

DESTACADOS:

- Investigaciones en todo el mundo muestran que en diferentes países, del 30% al 80% de los profesores se enfrentan a la agresión adolescente hacia ellos, siendo diversas las formas en que se manifiesta: desde actos físicos de agresión hasta insultos, burlas o menosprecio.
- Las consecuencias del enfrentamiento de los profesores con la agresión de los adolescentes son numerosas: en primer lugar, puede afectar la salud física y emocional del profesor, en segundo lugar, estos actos de agresión contribuyen a empeorar el clima escolar y reducir la capacidad del profesor para manejar el proceso educativo.
- Existe una escasez de investigaciones dedicadas al estudio de la agresión de los adolescentes dirigida a los profesores, en particular: el estudio de los factores que contribuyen al surgimiento de la agresión adolescente hacia los profesores, la prevalencia de diversas formas de comportamiento agresivo en las escuelas rusas, así como la investigación de las cualidades personales y habilidades profesionales de los profesores que se enfrentan a la agresión adolescente hacia ellos.
- La implementación de medidas preventivas para evitar la agresión de los estudiantes hacia los profesores requiere un enfoque integral que involucre a todos los participantes en el proceso educativo: estudiantes, profesores, administración y padres.

RESUME

Origines. La pertinence du problème de l'agressivité des adolescents envers les enseignants est due au fait que malgré sa large résonance sociale dans la société, la base de recherche moderne montre que très peu d'attention est accordée à ce problème.

Objectif. Le but de ce travail est d'envisager la manifestation d'un comportement agressif envers les enseignants, à savoir : évaluer la prévalence de ce problème, analyser les préalables qui précèdent la manifestation d'une agression envers les enseignants, et également évaluer les conséquences d'un tel comportement.

Description du déroulement de l'étude. L'article présente une analyse d'études étrangères et nationales consacrées au problème de l'agression envers les enseignants. De plus, des tentatives ont été faites pour retrouver les raisons du comportement agressif des élèves envers l'enseignant à travers l'analyse des théories psychologiques. L'article propose également des recommandations pour réduire et prévenir l'agressivité des élèves envers l'enseignant.

Résultats. Il a été démontré que les indicateurs de fréquence de l'agression contre les enseignants dans le monde entier mettent en évidence l'ampleur du problème et font craindre que ce domaine entraîne des conséquences néfastes à long terme sur la vie des étudiants, des enseignants et des établissements d'enseignement dans leur ensemble. On a déterminé que l'utilisation de théories, de modèles et de concepts psychologiques pour expliquer les causes de l'agression envers les enseignants de la part des élèves permet non seulement de déterminer les raisons d'un tel comportement, mais aide également à considérer ce problème à différents niveaux du processus éducatif. L'influence du climat scolaire sur la victimisation des enseignants a également été examinée et des recommandations ont été formulées pour la mise en œuvre de mesures préventives.

Conclusions. Sur la base de l'analyse, des orientations pour une étude plus approfondie de ce problème ont été présentées. Il est notamment nécessaire d'étudier la fréquence des formes de comportement agressif envers les enseignants dans les écoles russes et d'élaborer un ensemble de mesures préventives visant à lutter contre les agressions envers les enseignants.

Mots-clés: Aggression, adolescents, enseignants, école, climat scolaire, prévention

POINTS PRINCIPAUX:

- Des recherches menées dans le monde entier montrent que dans différents pays, de 30 à 80 % des enseignants sont confrontés à une agression adolescente à leur égard, et les formes de sa manifestation sont variées : des actes d'agression physique aux insultes, aux moqueries ou à l'ignorance.
- Les conséquences des confrontations des enseignants à l'agression adolescente sont nombreuses : d'une part, cela peut se traduire par la détérioration de l'état physique et psycho-émotionnel de l'enseignant, et d'autre part, de tels actes d'agression contribuent à la détérioration du climat scolaire et à une diminution de la capacité de l'enseignant à contrôler le processus éducatif.
- Il y a un manque de recherches consacrées à l'étude de l'agressivité des adolescents envers les enseignants, en particulier : l'étude des facteurs contribuant à l'émergence de l'agressivité des adolescents envers les enseignants, la fréquence de diverses formes de comportement agressif dans les écoles russes, ainsi que des recherches sur les qualités personnelles et les compétences professionnelles des enseignants confrontés à l'agressivité des adolescents à leur égard.
- L'introduction de mesures préventives pour prévenir les agressions des élèves envers les enseignants nécessite une approche intégrée qui touche tous les acteurs du processus éducatif : élèves, enseignants, administration et parents.

Introduction

Over the past decades, the problem of aggression in educational institutions has become particularly relevant. Moreover, the problem and its discussion has gone beyond the school space and drawn the public's attention. However, most studies examining this phenomenon focus on students and the relationships among them (Fisher et al., 2018; Farrell et al., 2018; Tillye et al., 2018). Little attention has been paid to the problem of students' aggressive behavior toward teachers.

The Russian media have described several cases in which a teacher became the object of minors' aggression. For example, on February 13, 2021, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), a tenth grader hit a Russian language and literature teacher in the face. As noted in the press, the teacher made a remark about the student. After the lesson, the teacher went out into the corridor, and the student hit her (In Yakutia, a schoolboy ..., URL: <https://ria.ru/20210215/shkola-1597562837.html>). An equally egregious case happened in Irkutsk, when a teenager stabbed a physics teacher 9 times, because the teacher did not give the student a credit. A similar case occurred in Krasnoyarsk involving an 8th grade student (Sobkin, & Fomichenko, 2012). Such manifestations of cruelty toward teachers are not isolated cases these days.

It should be emphasized that, as a rule, the media highlight cases of extraordinary physical acts taken against a teacher. But the aggressive behavior can also manifest itself in the form of threats, insults, damage to property, or ignoring the teacher. As noted in the study by V. Sobkin and A. Fomichenko, 46% of teachers reported encountering students' verbal aggression, and another 43% of respondents reported that indirect aggression was used toward them (Sobkin, & Fomichenko, 2012). The HSE Laboratory of Educational and Youth Journalism conducted a study in which 2,800 teachers from 75 regions of Russia took part. Its results revealed that 70% of respond-

ents had experienced various forms of bullying. According to half of the surveyed teachers, the adolescents' aggressive attitude was associated with the desire to increase their standing among their classmates. It was also found that 50% of teachers experienced bullying two or three times, and 6% were regularly bullied by students (Rean, Novikova, Konovalov, & Molchanova, 2019).

However, it should be highlighted that there are still very few studies devoted to this issue. The purpose of this article is to explore the problem of the manifestation of aggressive behavior toward teachers. Our specific objectives are: 1) to assess the prevalence of this problem; 2) to analyze the prerequisites of the manifestation of aggression against teachers; and 3) to assess the consequences of such behavior not only for teachers, but also for the entire educational process. The practical task is to come up with recommendations for reducing and preventing aggression on the part of students toward their teachers.

Results

Prevalence of Aggression Toward Teachers

Most of the studies that have addressed the problem of students' aggression toward teachers were pursued by international researchers (Longobardi et al., 2018; Woudstra et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2019; Moon et al., 2019; Berlanda et al., al., 2019; Curran et al., 2019; Maeng et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020, etc.). In a 2013 national survey of nearly 3,000 teachers in the United States, 80% reported experiencing aggression on students' part at least once during the year (Espelage et al., 2013). The US National Center for Education Statistics reported that from 1997 to 2001, 1.3 million acts of aggression were committed against American teachers; 473,000 of them were violent (Violence against teachers: A silent national crisis, URL: <https://www.apa.org/education/k12/teacher-victimization.pdf>). The results of a study conducted on a sample of Taiwanese students demonstrated that out of 14,000 students, 30% confirmed using at least one form of aggression toward their teacher.

Researchers have noted that the most common form of aggression toward teachers is intentionally confronting them with the intent to cause psychological harm (Chen & Astor, 2009). Not all acts of students' aggression toward teachers involve physical harm. Nevertheless, other forms of aggressive behavior, which may seem minor at first glance, can have serious consequences. Such actions include ridicule, insults, refusal to comply with the teacher's demands, threats, passive-aggressive behavior, etc.

A Canadian study of 571 teachers looked at 15 types of violence against teachers. In this study, 60% of teachers reported being subjected to name-calling and insults. Nearly 50% reported students using offensive and obscene gestures toward them; 41% reported comments or complaints directed at them that could damage their reputation; 40% reported being the target of intimidation; 34% experienced personal property damage; and nearly 20% reported receiving physical threats (Burns, 2020). A 2015-16 U.S. national survey found that about 10% of U.S. teachers had received death threats, and about 6% had been physically attacked during the previous year (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018).

McMahon and colleagues investigated physical aggression toward U.S. teachers and found that the most common form of aggression was physical contact (65%), which included kicking, punching, pushing, biting, and headbutting. Moreover, the researchers note that physical aggression using objects as weapons (e.g., chairs, pencils) is also fairly common (17%). Posturing was reported by 12% of teachers (it included obscene gestures and actions, intentional invasion of personal space, etc.), and 4% of teachers reported the use of weapons (McMahon et al., 2019).

In addition to research aimed at the prevalence of aggression toward teachers and the forms of its manifestation, attempts have been made to study the phenomenon taking into account the teachers' socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity. The results have been rather mixed. For example, Wei et al. mention that violence is more common against female educators (Wei et al., 2013), while other studies have found that violence is more common against male teachers (McMahon et al., 2014). The differences in results may be partially explained by the fact that teachers experience different forms of aggression. For example, female teachers are more likely to report verbal aggression compared to male teachers, while male teachers are more likely to report threats and physical aggression (Berg, & Cornell, 2016). Additionally, male teachers have been found to be more likely to experience multiple instances of victimization compared to female teachers (Martinez et al., 2016).

Aggression toward middle and high school teachers was examined separately. For example, Moon and colleagues state that middle grades' teachers are more likely to report higher rates of aggression than their counterparts in the higher grades (Moon, McCluskey, & Morash, 2019). These findings are consistent with previous research (Chen, & Astor, 2009; Moon, & McCluskey, 2016). The researchers explain this by saying that adolescents in secondary schools are going through puberty, which is more likely to lead to disobedience and aggression toward others, including teachers (Moon, McCluskey, & Morash, 2019). Although research findings vary, they all confirm that students' aggression toward teachers is a real, long-lasting, impactful problem that affects teachers around the world. The global prevalence of aggression against teachers highlights the problem's magnitude and raises concerns that this under-researched area has detrimental long-term consequences for the lives of students, teachers, and educational institutions as such.

Consequences

The ways in which students harm teachers are varied; in one way or another, they have an impact on the teacher's psychological, emotional, or physical state. Researchers have concluded that "teacher victimization can have significant negative consequences for the education's quality" (Wilson et al., 2011, pp. 2366-2367). And in our opinion, the issue is not the direct impact on the quality of education, but rather an indirect one. Teachers' victimization has an impact on the teacher's personality and his/her emotional state, and leads to a decrease in motivation for professional activity, which, in turn, affects the education's quality as such.

To date, there is a large body of research that confirms that aggressive actions against teachers carry a range of negative consequences (Anderman et al., 2018; McMahon et al., 2017b; Reddy et al., 2018; Huang et al. 2020; etc.). A literature review by Espelate and her colleagues indicated that teachers' victimization results in "fear, physical and emotional symptoms, disruption of personal relationships, and decreased job performance" (Espelate et al., 2013, p. 77). A study by Wilson and colleagues found that 86% of affected Canadian teachers reported a negative impact of student aggression on their teaching performance (job satisfaction, burnout, etc.), 84% on emotional well-being, and 61% on physical health. (Wilson et al., 2011).

Victimization has been identified as leading to decreased teacher job satisfaction, increased burnout, and increased intention to leave teaching (Kapa & Gimbert, 2018). Therefore, more detailed research of the associations between different types of aggression toward teachers and its consequences is necessary.

A survey conducted by Billett and colleagues revealed that students' aggression toward teachers resulted in severe consequences for teachers' mental health and well-being. Respondents said they experienced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and admitted that they needed psychological support. Some teachers took time off to cope with the stress and constant harassment from students, others noted that these situations had an impact on all areas of their lives, and several respondents reported feeling unsafe on school premises (Billett et al., 2019). Burns and his colleagues found that when teachers experience victimization by students, it contributes to a decrease in their self-confidence, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction (Burns et al., 2020).

As international research shows, aggression toward teachers entails very serious consequences, which manifest themselves in the deterioration of teachers' physical and emotional state and can lead to serious mental consequences. In addition, the consequences of a teacher's victimization can affect not only his/her state, but also the total educational process, and relationships in the classroom and with the school administration. Since the teacher plays an important role in shaping the child's personality, aggression toward him/her can provoke a loss of his/her professional authority in the class and a violation of role function. Essentially, the ability to control the educational process is lost or sharply reduced.

Thus, the problem of aggression toward teachers affects not only the teacher's personality, but also the entire educational process, which is why it is so important to find the causes of this phenomenon. Many international researchers have attempted such a search using various psychological theories.

Attempts to Explain the Reasons for Students' Aggressive Behavior Toward Teachers

Attempts to find the reasons for students' aggressive behavior toward teachers and ways to combat it have been made by several foreign researchers (SooHyun, & Wilcox, 2017; Moon, McCluskey, 2018; Kapa et al., 2018, etc.). As Espelage and colleagues indicate, the dominant theory that may explain violence against teachers comes from Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model (Espelage et al., 2013).

Based on this model, an individual's development proceeds in two directions. On the one hand, a person himself/herself restructures his/her living environment, and on the other hand, he/she is influenced by other elements of this environment. The environment of development consists of four ecosystems nested within one another. The first is a microsystem, which includes the subject himself/herself, his/her immediate environment, and the social structures to which he/she belongs (family, peers, school, etc.) (Hertler et al., 2018).

Next is the mesosystem. It is formed through the interconnections of two or more microsystems. At the mesosystem level, a child's development can be influenced by formal and informal connections between family and school, or family and peer group. For example, regular parent-teacher interaction can have a positive impact on a child's success in school (Kraig & Bokum, 2019).

Then, there's the exosystem, which includes those aspects of the social environment or social structures that are outside the sphere of a person's direct experience, but which affect him/her. And finally, there is the macrosystem, the environment's outer layer. It contains the ideology, attitudes, laws, traditions, and cultural values of the society in which a person lives. Despite the fact that interventions that stimulate and support the course of an individual's development can be carried out at each level of this model. Those at the macrosystem level play a more significant role, since they affect all of the others (Kraig, & Bokum, 2019).

As McMahan and his colleagues rightly note, from the socio-ecological model's point of view, aggression toward a teacher should be considered a multi-level system, and take into account the teacher's interaction with all subjects involved in the educational process (*i.e.*, students, colleagues, management, administration, etc.). It is by assessing these complex interactions that we can begin to understand and address the problem of students' aggression toward teachers (McMahan, 2017a).

In a study of teacher victimization predictors, Gottfredson et al. tried to use individual, school, and social factors (Gottfredson et al., 2005). His research included a sample of teachers and students from 254 middle and high schools in the United States. The results indicated that less teacher victimization was associated with consistent class order (including fairness and clear expectations) and a pleasant psychosocial school climate (*i.e.*, morale, administrative leadership, and planning). Multivariate analysis results demonstrated that schools with greater concentrations of poor students, African American students, and African American teachers reported less favorable psychosocial climates, which in turn were associated with greater teachers' victimization (Espelage et al., 2013).

Thus, for a more detailed consideration of the problem of students' aggression toward teachers, it is necessary to take into account not only the social-role interaction between teachers and students, but all aspects of the educational process.

Moreover, Finkelhor and Asdigian's theory of target congruence may be applicable to explain the causes of aggression toward teachers. This theory includes three key dimensions: target vulnerability, target gratifiability, and target antagonism. Target vulnerability refers to the inability of potential victims to resist aggression directed at them (Choi et al., 2020). It is characterized by the fact that a person is vulnerable due to certain of his/her individual qualities (physical characteristics,

emotional deprivation, psychological problems, etc.). If a teacher is significantly inferior to a student in terms of physical characteristics (gender, height, weight, etc.), for example, this may be an obstacle to the teacher's ability to defend himself/herself against an aggressor.

Target gratifiability is defined as the possession or attribute of the victim that aggressors can use as a means of victimization (*e.g.*, material objects, social status, power, etc.), which can subsequently be damaged or stolen by the aggressor. An example would be a situation in which a student, in order to improve his/her reputation in the class, may humiliate or insult the teacher, thereby undermining his/her authority. Target antagonism indicates that the victims possess those skills, attributes, or characteristics (including personal ones) that cause negative reactions in the aggressor. For instance, a teacher's racial background may increase the likelihood that he or she will be the target of anti-ethnic hate violence on the student's part. Target congruence theory postulates that various personality traits increase the likelihood of certain types of victimization due to variations in these three key dimensions (Moon & McCluskey, 2018).

Recent research has tested the applicability of target congruence theory. Our study, conducted on a sample of over 4,100 teachers, examined whether target vulnerability and target antagonism were significantly associated with teachers' victimization. The results showed that teachers who demonstrated hesitation when confronting students (emotional and psychological vulnerability) were more likely to be subjects of victimization, in contrast to those teachers who demonstrated authority (emotional and psychological invulnerability). Additionally, research has revealed that punishing students for misbehaving caused antagonism on the aggressors' part, thereby increasing the teacher's likelihood of becoming a victim (SooHyun, & Wilcox, 2018).

There are other theories that have been used to identify the mechanisms of aggression toward teachers, such as Crick and Dodge's model of social information processing. This model consists of several interrelated information-processing stages, such as perception, decoding, interpreting information, clarifying goals, predicting and constructing possible counter reactions, and selecting possible counter-reactions and their implementation (Guy et al., 2017). Each of these stages can lead to information distortion due to the personal characteristics of the participants in the communication, and their accumulated experience of social interaction, as well as to the communication forms used. Thus, those same aspects that, from the teacher's point of view, are positive directives, may be interpreted by students as hostile, and thereby lead to them choosing and implementing destructive reactions toward the teacher. Conversely, there may be situations where a teacher interprets a student's neutral or positive actions as negative or hostile. The development of this problem is related to the social-perceptual mechanisms of aggression. Here it is important to highlight the subjectivity of the interpretations of the communication participants' behavior. As stated by A. Rean, those actions that a person may regard as threatening may not actually be so. (Rean, 2016).

Currently, there are a significant number of insufficiently studied issues related to the problem of students' aggression toward teachers, both in international and

(especially) Russian psychology. For a deeper understanding of this problem in Russia, research is needed that focuses on revealing the extent of aggressive influence on teachers; in addition, it is important to understand what forms of aggressive behavior are common in Russian schools. The questions of the features of the personality of the teachers toward whom aggression is manifested and determining the causes of this phenomenon also remain open.

In-depth research on the phenomenon of aggression toward teachers will allow us to develop the necessary conditions for changing the current situation in the school environment. Educational institutions must pay due attention to prevention and implement a set of measures aimed at creating a favorable school climate. In this regard, A. Rean and M. Novikova mention the need to introduce comprehensive programs for the prevention of aggression in schools, including work with all the school community representatives – from students to school administration – emphasizing that a good school climate is the most important factor not only for the emotional well-being, but also the intellectual development of students (Rean, & Novikova, 2019).

Prevention

To date, there is a lot of research investigating the association between school climate and aggressive behavior (Turner et al., 2018; Reaves et al., 2018; Acosta et al., 2019; Varela et al., 2019). Negative school climate has been found to precede lower well-being scores (Aldrup et al., 2018; Aldridge et al., 2019; Lázaro-Visa et al., 2019), while a positive school climate has the potential to mitigate teachers' victimization (Grey et al., 2017; Bear et al., 2017; Espelage, Hong, 2019; De Cordova et al., 2019; Teng et al., 2020).

The empirical studies by A. Rean and colleagues have demonstrated that a positive school climate is negatively associated with students' levels of aggression at school. Moreover, nature of school rules has a significant association with student aggression and school relationships (Rean et al., 2020). A positive school climate consists of various components, which include relationships among members of the entire school community, as well as the clarity and predictability of the school environment as such. Therefore, the introduction of clear school rules and focusing on the relationships between participants of the entire educational process, not just on those participants involved in bullying, are integral components of most anti-bullying programs in various countries (Molchanova, & Novikova, 2020).

Combating aggression toward teachers requires a comprehensive effort across the entire school system. Such efforts must consider multiple layers of influence and complex interactions between systems. A holistic approach to combating aggression in school must involve all participants of the educational process, namely: students, teachers, administrators, parents, etc. First, it is necessary to monitor the prevalence of aggression and its manifestation at the educational institution. Understanding the general situation will allow us to develop the necessary preventive measures for a specific case.

It is also necessary to take into account that in situations of aggression toward teachers, the teacher may feel unsafe at the educational institution premises, and experience anxiety or fear. Therefore, support from the school administration for those teachers against whom aggressive actions were aimed is very important. Research demonstrates that lack of support from management is associated with higher victimization rates (Martinez et al., 2016; McMahan et al., 2017b).

The main goal of any preventive program is to create a favorable atmosphere in which all participants of the educational process can feel comfortable and safe. Preventive measures may include creating positive school norms and climate, training teachers in coping skills and emotional responses to student bullying, organizing student and parent classes to increase awareness of bullying and its consequences, and promoting communication and support at all levels of the educational system.

Conclusion

Aggression toward teachers at school is a fairly common problem, but it is rarely mentioned, except in cases where physical violence is used against a teacher; these are the cases that get covered in the media.

The prevalence of aggression toward teachers around the world raises concerns that it has serious and long-term consequences for the lives of students, teachers, and the education system as such. To further study the problem, research is needed that would expand and deepen understanding of this aggression. The research should be aimed at identifying the prevalence of aggression, determining its forms, and studying all participants within the educational system.

In addition, it is necessary to analyze and develop new psychological theories and models that explain the causes of aggressive behavior toward teachers, which would help not only to deepen the understanding of this area, but also to develop a set of preventive measures aimed at combating it. Teaching in itself is quite stressful. The emergence in modern conditions of an additional factor – students' aggression toward teachers – aggravates the problem of teachers' stress-tension and professional burnout. Therefore, increasing attention to this problem and finding ways to reduce the prevalence of aggression toward teachers is an extremely urgent task in both a scientific and practical sense.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Acosta, J., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Malone, P.S., Phillips, A., & Wilks, A. (2019). Understanding the relationship between perceived school climate and bullying: A mediator analysis. *Journal of School Violence, 18*(2), 200-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2018.1453820>
- Aldridge, J.M., McChesney, K., & Afari, E. (2019). Associations between school climate and student life satisfaction: resilience and bullying as mediating factors. *Learning Environments Research, 1-22*.

- Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Göllner, R., & Trautwein, U. (2018). Student misbehavior and teacher well-being: testing the mediating role of the teacher-student relationship. *Learn. Instr.* 58, 126–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.05.006>
- American Psychological Association, Center for Psychology in Schools and Education. *Violence against teachers: A silent national crisis* [Online brochure]. Retrieved from: <https://www.apa.org/education/k12/teacher-victimization.pdf>
- Anderman, E.M., Eseplage, D.L., Reddy, L.A., McMahan, S.D., Martinez, A., Lane, K.L., ... Paul, N. (2018). Teachers' reactions to experiences of violence: An attributional analysis. *Social Psychology of Education, 21*(3), 621–653. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-018-9438-x>
- Bear, G.G., Yang, C., Mantz, L.S., & Harris, A.B. (2017). School-wide practices associated with school climate in elementary, middle, and high schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 63*, 372–383. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.01.012>
- Berg, J., & Cornell, D. (2016). Authoritative school climate, aggression toward teachers, and teacher distress in middle school. *School Psychology Quarterly, 31*, 122–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000132>
- Berlanda, S., Fraizzoli, M., de Cordova, F., & Pedrazza, M. (2019). Psychosocial risks and violence against teachers. Is it possible to promote well-being at work? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(22). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16224439>
- Billett, P., Fogelgarn, R. & Burns, E. (2019). Teacher targeted bullying and harassment by students and parents: Report from an Australian exploratory survey. La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Burns, E., Fogelgarn, R. & Billett, P. (2020). Teacher-targeted bullying and harassment in Australian schools: a challenge to teacher well-being. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 41*(4), 523–538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2020.1755227>
- Chen, J.K. & Astor, R.A. (2009). Students' reports of violence against teachers in Taiwanese schools. *Journal of School Violence, 8*(1), 2–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220802067680>
- Choi, J., Krusis, N. & Lee, J. (2020). Applying target congruence theory to victimization risk of students from multicultural backgrounds: A comparison of South Korean, North Korean, and other multicultural family adolescents. *Children and Youth Services Review, 118*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105392>
- Curran, F.C., Viano, S.L. & Fisher, B.W. (2019). Teacher victimization, turnover, and contextual factors promoting resilience. *Journal of School Violence, 18*(1), 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2017.1368394>
- De Cordova, F., Berlanda, S., Pedrazza, M. & Fraizzoli, M. (2019). Violence at school and the well-being of teachers. The importance of positive relationships. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1807. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01807>
- Espelage, D., Anderman, E., Brown, V., Jones, A., Lane, K., McMahan, S.D., ... Reynolds, C.R. (2013). Understanding and preventing violence directed against teachers: Recommendations for a National research, practice, and policy Agenda. *American Psychologist, 68*(2), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031307>
- Espelage, D.L. & Hong, J.S. (2019). School climate, bullying, and school violence. In M.J. Mayer & S.R. Jimerson (Eds.) (pp. 45-69), *School Safety and Violence Prevention: Science, Practice, Policy*, 45–69. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000106-003>
- Farrell, A.D., Goncy, E.A., Sullivan, T.N., & Thompson, E.L. (2018). Victimization, aggression, and other problem behaviors: Trajectories of change within and across middle school grades. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 28*(2), 438-455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12346>
- Fisher, B.W., Viano, S., Curran, F.C., Pearman, F.A., & Gardella, J.H. (2018). Students' feelings of safety, exposure to violence and victimization, and authoritative school climate. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 43*(1), 6–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-017-9406-6>
- Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Payne, A.A., & Gottfredson, N.C. (2005). School climate predictors of school disorder: Results from a national study of delinquency prevention in schools. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 42*(4), 412–444.

- <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427804271931>
- Gray, C., Wilcox, G., & Nordstokke, D. (2017). Teacher mental health, school climate, inclusive education, and student learning: A review. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne*, 58(3), 203–210. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000117>
- Guy, A., Lee, K., & Wolke, D. (2017). Differences in the early stages of social information processing for adolescents involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 43(6), 578–587. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21716>
- Hertler, S.C., Figueredo, A.J., Peñaherrera-Aguirre, M., Fernandes, H.B., & Woodley of Menie M.A. (2018). Urie Bronfenbrenner: Toward an Evolutionary Ecological Systems Theory. In *Life History Evolution*. Palgrave Macmillan (pp. 323–339). Cham. Systems Theory. In *Life History Evolution*. Palgrave Macmillan (pp. 323–339). Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90125-1_19
- Huang, F.L., Eddy, C.L., & Camp, E. (2020). The role of the perceptions of school climate and teacher victimization by students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(23-24), 5526–5551. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517721898>
- In Yakutia, a student hit a teacher in the face* [RIA News]. Retrieved from: <https://ria.ru/20210215/shkola-1597562837.html>
- Kapa, R.R., & Gimbert, B. (2018). Job satisfaction, school rule enforcement, and teacher victimization. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 29(1), 150–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2017.1395747>
- Kapa, R.R., Luke, J., Moulthrop, D., & Gimbert, B. (2018). Teacher victimization in authoritative school environments. *Journal of School Health*, 88(4), 272–280. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12607>
- Kraig, G., & Bokum, D. (2019). *Psychology of Development*. Saint Petersburg: Piter.
- Lázaro-Visa, S., Palomera, R., Briones, E., FernándezFuertes, A.A., & Fernández-Rouco, N. (2019). Bullied adolescent's life satisfaction: personal competencies and school climate as protective factors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1691. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01691>
- Longobardi, C., Badenes-Ribera, L., Fabris, M.A., Martinez, A., & McMahon, S.D. (2018). Prevalence of student violence against teachers: a meta-analysis. *Psychol. Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000202>
- Maeng, J.L., Malone, M., & Cornell, D. (2020). Student threats of violence against teachers: Prevalence and outcomes using a threat assessment approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 87, 102934. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102934>
- Martinez, A., McMahon, S.D., Espelage, D., Anderman, E.M., Reddy, L.A., & Sanchez, B. (2016). Teachers experiences with multiple victimization: Identifying demographic, cognitive, and contextual correlates. *Journal of School Violence*, 15(4), 387–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2015.1056879>
- McMahon, S.D., Reaves, S., McConnell, E., Peist, E., Ruiz, L., Task Force, A.P.A., et al. (2017b). The ecology of teachers' experiences with violence and lack of administrative support. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60(3-4), 502-515. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12202>
- McMahon, S.D., Martinez, A., Espelage, D., Rose, C., Reddy, L.A., Lane, K., ... Brown, V. (2014). Violence directed against teachers: Results from a national survey. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51(7), 753–766. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21777>
- McMahon, S.D., Martinez, A., Reddy, L.A., Espelage, D.L., & Anderman, E.M. (2017a). Predicting and reducing aggression and violence toward teachers: Extent of the problem and why it matters. *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119057574.whbva100>
- McMahon, S.D., Peist, E., Davis, J.O., et al. (2019). Physical aggression toward teachers: Antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. *Aggressive Behavior*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21870>
- Molchanova, D.V., & Novikova, M.A. (2020). Countering school bullying: analysis of international experience. *Sovremennaja analitika obrazovaniya* (Contemporary Education Analytics), 1, 1–72.
- Moon, B., & McCluskey, J. (2016). School-based victimization of teachers in Korea: Focusing on individual and school characteristics. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31, 1340–1361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514564156>

- Moon, B., & McCluskey, J. (2018). An exploratory study of violence and aggression against teachers in middle and high schools: Prevalence, predictors, and negative consequences. *Journal of School Violence, 19*(2), 122–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2018.1540010>
- Moon, B., McCluskey, J., & Morash, M. (2019). Aggression against middle and high school teachers: Duration of victimization and its negative impacts. *Aggressive Behavior, 45*, 517–526. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21840>
- Moon, B., Morash, M., & McCluskey, J. (2019). Student violence directed against teachers: Victimized teachers' reports to school officials and satisfaction with school responses. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36*(13–14). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519825883>
- Musu-Gillette, L., Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., Kemp, J., Diliberti, M., & Oudekerk, B.A. (2018). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2017. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf>
- Rean, A.A. (2016). *Psychology of Personality*. St. Petersburg.
- Rean, A.A., & Novikova, M.A. (2019). Bullying among high school students: the prevalence and influence of socio-economic factors. *Mir psikhologii [World of Psychology], 97*(1), 165–177.
- Rean, A.A., Novikova, M.A., Konovalov, I.A., & Molchanova, D.V. (2019). *Rukovodstvo po protivodeistvii'u i profilaktike bullinga [Handbook for countering and preventing bullying]*. Moscow.
- Rean, A.A., Shagalov, I.L., & Konovalov, I.A. (2020) Relationship Between Retrospective Estimations of School Climate and Readiness for Aggression in Young People. *Psikhologicheskaya nauka i obrazovanie [Psychological Science and Education], 25*(6), 126–143. <https://doi.org/10.17759/pse.2020250611>
- Reaves, S., McMahon, S.D., Duffy, S.N., & Ruiz, L. (2018). The test of time: A meta-analytic review of the relation between school climate and problem behavior. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 39*, 100–108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.01.006>
- Reddy, L.A., Espelage, D.L., Anderman, E.M., Kanrich, J.B., & McMahon, S.D. (2018). Addressing violence against educators through measurement and research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 42*, 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.06.006>
- Sobkin, V.S., & Fomichenko, A.S. (2012). The reasons of student aggression toward the teachers as understood by the educators. In V.S. Sobkin (Ed.), *Sociology of Education. Works on Sociology of Education* (pp. 137–147). Moscow: Institute of Sociology of Education RAO.
- SooHyun, O., & Wilcox, P. (2017). Routine activity theory, target congruence, and school context: A multilevel analysis of teacher victimization. *Victims & Offenders, 13*, 349–372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2017.1329174>
- Teng, Z., Bear, G.G., Yang, C., Nie, Q., & Guo, Ch. (2020). Moral disengagement and bullying perpetration: A longitudinal study of the moderating effect of school climate. *School Psychology, 35*(1), 99–109. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000348>
- Tillyer, M.S., Wilcox, P., & Fissel, E.R. (2018). Violence in schools: Repeat victimization, low self-control, and the mitigating influence of school efficacy. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 34*(2), 609–632. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-017-9347-8>
- Turner, I., Reynolds, K.J., Lee, E., Subasic, E., & Bromhead, D. (2018). Understanding aggression and victimization: Negative binomial modelling with supportive school climate, mental health, and social identity mediation. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science, 4*(4), 380–402. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000174>
- Varela, J.J., Sirlopú, D., Melipillán, R., Espelage, D., Green, J., & Guzmán, J. (2019). Exploring the influence of school climate on the relationship between school violence and adolescent subjective well-being. *Child Indicators Research, 12*(6), 2095–2110. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-019-09631-9>
- Wei, C., Gerberich, S.G., Alexander, B.H., Ryan, A.D., Nachreiner, N.M., & Mongin, S.J. (2013). Work-related violence against educators in Minnesota: Rates and risks based on hours exposed. *Journal of Safety Research, 44*, 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2012.12.005>
- Wilson, C.M., Douglas, K.S., & Lyon, D.R. (2011). Violence against teachers: Prevalence and consequences. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(12), 2353–2371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510383027>

- Woudstra, M.H., van Rensburg, E.J., Visser, M., & Jordaan, J. (2018). Learner-to-teacher bullying as a potential factor influencing teachers' mental health. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n1a1358>
- Yang, C., Jenkins, L., Fredrick, S.S., Chen, C., Xie, J.S., & Nickerson, A.B. (2019). Teacher victimization by students in China: A multilevel analysis. *Aggressive Behavior*, 45(2), 169-180. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21806>

Original manuscript received September 10, 2023

Revised manuscript accepted November 15, 2023

First published online December 30, 2023

To cite this article: Rean, A.A., Egorova, A.V. (2023). Manifestation of Teenage Aggression Toward Teachers: Its Prevalence, Factors, Consequences, and Prevention. *New Ideas in Child and Educational Psychology*, 3(3–4), 66–81. DOI: 10.11621/nicep.2023.0504