

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INMATES' AGGRESSION AND THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

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In a sample of inmates in correctional facilities, the relationship between aggression components and different socioeconomic and family variables were examined. The independent variables were divided into two domains: the characteristics of the participant family of origin and the characteristics of the participant. In each domain there were three variables. The family of origin variables were socioeconomic background, social pathology, and physical violence; the participant variables included schooling, social pathology, and family. There were also three dependent variables: physical aggression, anger, and hostility. The results show that the family of origin variables and the participant variables had approximately the same predictive power. After compensating for the family of origin variables, the participant variables, especially schooling (i.e., school failure), still c

INTRODUCTION

Numerous scientific and professional papers have been published on aggression. The causes of aggression and the development of aggressive behavior in the life cycle have received the most attention from investigations. So far, the great majority of studies on aggression have referred to children and adolescents, while very few studies have dealt with the aggression of adults. Below we have provided a brief review of results attained in this research domain.

In many studies, investigators have reached the conclusion that there is a consistent relationship between low socioeconomic family status and the aggressive behavior of children (Dodge et al., 1990; Haapasalo and Tremblay, 1994; Dodge et al., 1994; Deater-Deckard et al., 1998). Farrington (1978, 1989, 1991) found a relationship between low socioeconomic family status and aggressive behavior of children and also aggressive behavior and violent offences in adolescence and adulthood.

Low family socioeconomic status imposes many restrictions and deprivations that causes

frustration in family members and stimulate aggressive behavior. It is presumed that in a disadvantaged social environment there are two general processes encouraging the aggressive behavior of children: first, frustration or negative affect (Berkowitz, 1993), and second, learning by modeling.

Dodge et al. (1994) found that socializing or care-giving practices are mediator variables in the relationship between family socioeconomic status and externalizing behavior disorders in children. According to Cohen and Brook (1998), socioeconomic status (SES) slightly influences the punishment of children, that is, mothers at or below median SES tend to punish their children more frequently than mothers with higher SES. The hierarchical regression analysis showed that family socioeconomic status variables and socializing variables had about equal predictive value.

Many studies pointed out the relationship between diverse forms of family social patho-

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