



The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context

www.elsevier.es/ejpal



Effects of parenting practices through deviant peers on nonviolent and violent antisocial behaviours in middle- and late-adolescence

Olalla Cutrín*, José Antonio Gómez-Fraguela, Lorena Maneiro, Jorge Sobral

Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 September 2016
Accepted 16 February 2017
Available online xxx

Keywords:

Parenting practices
Deviant peers
Antisocial behaviour
Adolescence
Mediation effects

Palabras clave:

Prácticas parentales
Compañeros desviados
Comportamiento antisocial
Adolescencia
Efectos mediadores

ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study was to analyse in two age cohorts the presence of mediation effects of parenting practices (i.e., parental knowledge, parental support, parent-adolescent conflict) through deviant peers on youth antisocial behaviour (i.e., nonviolent antisocial behaviour, violent behaviour). The final sample was subdivided in a younger group ($n = 377$), aged 14 to 16 ($M = 15.27$, $SD = 0.72$), 45.9% males, and an older group ($n = 206$), aged 17 to 19 ($M = 17.30$, $SD = 0.54$), 48.5% males. The structural equation modelling results indicated significant mediation effects for both age cohorts. Family factors presented more influence for younger adolescents, whereas deviant peers showed more influence for older adolescents. The findings also indicated the reciprocal influence of selection and socialisation processes suggesting the need of early interventions for preventing the development of antisocial behaviour.

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Los efectos de las practicas parentales a través de compañeros desviados en los comportamientos antisociales no violentos y violentos en la adolescencia media y tardía

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio ha sido analizar en dos grupos de edad la presencia de los efectos de mediación de las prácticas parentales (es decir, el conocimiento y el apoyo parentales y el conflicto padres-adolescente) por medio de compañeros desviados en el comportamiento antisocial de los jóvenes (es decir, comportamiento antisocial no violento y el comportamiento violento). La muestra final se dividió en un grupo más joven ($n = 377$), con edades entre 14 y 16 años ($M = 15.27$, $DT = 0.72$), el 45.9% de los cuales eran varones, y un grupo más mayor ($n = 206$), de edades comprendidas entre 17 y 19 años ($M = 17.30$, $DT = 0.54$), el 48.5% varones. Los resultados del modelado de ecuaciones estructurales indicaban que había efectos mediadores para ambos grupos de edad. Los factores familiares influían más en los adolescentes más jóvenes mientras que los compañeros desviados influían más en los adolescentes mayores. Los resultados también pusieron de manifiesto la influencia recíproca de los procesos de selección y socialización, lo que indicaba la necesidad de intervenciones tempranas con el fin de evitar que se desarrollara el comportamiento antisocial.

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Evidence has confirmed the influence of peer group and the effect of parental knowledge and quality of family relationships in the development of antisocial behaviour and delinquency in youth (e.g., Derzon, 2010; Farrington, Ttofi, & Coid, 2009; Guillén, Roth, Alfaro, & Fernández, 2015; Hoeve et al., 2009). Moreover, research has demonstrated that parenting practices and peer group interact and jointly influence the development of antisocial and delinquent

* Corresponding author. Departamento de Psicología Clínica y Psicobiología. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. C/Xosé María Suárez Núñez, s/n. Campus Sur. 15782 Santiago de Compostela.

E-mail address: olalla.cutrin@usc.es (O. Cutrín).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpal.2017.02.001>

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Please cite this article in press as: Cutrín, O., et al. Effects of parenting practices through deviant peers on nonviolent and violent antisocial behaviours in middle- and late-adolescence. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context* (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpal.2017.02.001>

behaviours (e.g., Collins & Laursen, 2004; Trudeau, Mason, Randall, Spoth, & Ralston, 2012; Véronneau & Dishion, 2010). Specifically, several studies have found that certain parenting practices were indirectly related to antisocial behaviour through the mediation of deviant peers (e.g., Deutsch, Crockett, Wolff, & Russell, 2012; Haggerty, Skinner, McGlynn-Wright, Catalano, & Crutchfield, 2013; Pardini, Waller, & Hawes, 2015). Among other parenting practices, research has found that low levels of parental knowledge, low levels of parental support, and high levels of parent-youth conflict were directly and indirectly related to antisocial behaviour by increasing adolescent affiliation with a deviant peer group (e.g., Andrews & Hops, 2010; Ryzin, Fosco, & Dishion, 2012; Sitnick, Shaw, & Hyde, 2014).

However, the role of these social factors is not static, but changes through adolescent development. While adolescent autonomy and independence is being established, the influence of family context decreases and the influence of peer group rises (e.g., Cleveland, Feinberg, Bontempo, & Greenberg, 2008; Collins & Steinberg, 2008; Nurmi, 2004). Although the level of parental knowledge seems to remain relatively stable over the course of adolescence (e.g., Laird, Criss, Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 2009), the manifestation of closeness in parent-adolescent relationships decreases and the presence of parent-adolescent conflicts increases especially in early-adolescence (e.g., Collins & Laursen, 2004; Collins & Steinberg, 2008). Overall, the level of conflict in parent-youth relationships is reduced over time and closeness recovers in late-adolescence (e.g., Collins & Laursen, 2004; Collins & Steinberg, 2006). Therefore, the effects of parental knowledge, parental support, and parent-adolescent conflict on the involvement in antisocial behaviour appear to be especially influential in early adolescence.

On the other hand, research has suggested that friendships remain stable throughout adolescence. However, generally peer interactions seem to show great influence on antisocial behaviour in middle- and late-adolescence (e.g., Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006; Rubin, Bukowski, Parker, & Bowker, 2008; Van Ryzin, Fosco, & Dishion, 2012). Regarding this, some studies have found evidence for the socialization process. The socialization process refers to the direct influence of deviant peer group on the adolescent antisocial behaviour, that is, adolescents are involved in antisocial activities influenced by their antisocial peers (e.g., Keijsers et al., 2012; Negri, Ji, & Trickett, 2011). Other research has found support for the selection process. The selection process reflects the individual disposition to affiliate with similar peers, that is, adolescents with antisocial attitudes and problematic behaviours tend to select friends with similar antisocial characteristics (e.g., de Kemp, Scholte, Overbeek, & Engels, 2006; Hou et al., 2013). Generally, research has proposed the reciprocal and complementary influence of both processes in youth development, and specifically in the development of antisocial behaviour (e.g., Brook, Brook, Rubenstein, Zhang, & Saar, 2011; Burk, van der Vorst, Kerr, & Stattin, 2012; Dishion, Veronneau, & Myers, 2010).

Therefore, based on the previous empirical evidence, the main goal of the current study was to verify the presence of mediation effects of parenting practices through deviant peers on youth antisocial behaviour and the presence of differences in these relationships depending on two age cohorts. Thus, the direct and indirect effects of parenting practices (i.e., parental knowledge, parental support, parent-adolescent conflict) and affiliation with deviant peers on antisocial behaviour (both violent and nonviolent) were examined in Spanish community youth in middle- and late-adolescence. An additional objective of the current study was to analyse the presence of the processes of selection and/or socialization influence. In order to examine these processes, a measure of individual propensity towards violence was included in a structural model together with deviant affiliations to evaluate their effects on antisocial behaviours. This measure, composed of hostility and

violent attitudes, reflects the individual tendency of adolescents to get involved in violent behaviours and therefore to affiliate with antisocial peers. To the best of our knowledge, no studies in a Spanish sample have previously examined both mediation effects and processes of influence in two age cohorts. It is expected that family exerts more influence on the younger group, deviant affiliations exert more influence on the older group, and both selection and socialization effects are present in the younger and the older group.

Therefore, this study specifically proposed the following hypotheses: (1) the effects of parental knowledge, parental support, and parent-adolescent conflict on nonviolent and violent antisocial behaviours are mediated by affiliation with deviant peers; (2) parental knowledge, parental support, and parent-adolescent conflict are direct and indirectly more strongly related to antisocial behaviours in middle-adolescence; (3) a deviant peer group directly influences more strongly antisocial behaviours in late-adolescence; (4) controlling for the presence of individual propensity towards violence, the affiliation with deviant peers is directly related to youth antisocial behaviours supporting the socialization process for both age groups; and (5) the individual propensity towards violence is indirectly related to antisocial behaviours through the affiliation with deviant peers supporting the selection process for both age groups.

Method

Participants

The sample was composed of 584 Spanish young people from six state high schools of Galicia (NW Spain), 46.9% males ($n = 274$), aged 14 to 20 ($M = 15.99$, $SD = 1.20$), and 53.1% females ($n = 310$), aged 14 to 19 ($M = 15.98$, $SD = 1.17$). The only participant aged 20 was removed from the final study for comparison purposes. The final sample was subdivided in two age cohorts: a younger group ($n = 377$), aged 14 to 16 ($M = 15.27$, $SD = 0.72$), 45.9% males, and an older group ($n = 206$), aged 17 to 19 ($M = 17.30$, $SD = 0.54$), 48.5% males. Accidental sampling was carried out to select state high schools attempting to obtain data from the four provinces of Galicia.

Measurements

Parental knowledge. The degree of parental knowledge about the youth's activities or friendships was measured by a 6-item scale used in previous studies in Spain (Luengo, Villar, Sobral, Romero, & Gómez-Fraguela, 2009; Sobral, Gómez-Fraguela, Romero, Luengo, & Villar, 2012), using a four-point scale from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*always*) (e.g., "They know with whom you go out in your spare time", "They know what you do after school"; $\alpha = .80$). The lambda coefficients in the structural model were between .38 and .80.

Parental support. Parental warmth, responsiveness, and closeness were assessed by an 11-item scale based on the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979), adapted and used in previous studies in Spain (Pepe, Sobral, Gómez-Fraguela, & Villar, 2008). This scale was scored on a 4-point scale from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*always*) (e.g., "They make me feel loved", "They are affectionate with me"; $\alpha = .90$). The lambda coefficients in the structural model were between .51 and .81.

Parent-adolescent conflict. The presence of conflict in parent-youth relationships was measured by a shortened version of the Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ-20; Robin & Foster, 1989) used in previous studies in Spain (Cutrín, Gómez-Fraguela, & Luengo, 2015). This version was composed of 7 items and was scored on a 4-point scale from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*always*) (e.g., "The talks we have are frustrating", "We get angry over little

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