

## EXTENDED SUMMARY

### The role of friends and the personality in the antisocial behaviour of adolescents

Eva M<sup>a</sup> Andreu Simó

Tutor: Manuel Ignacio Ibáñez Ribes

TGF- Psychology

2017-2018

Antisocial behaviour in adolescents is characterized by deviant behaviours, breaking the norms in different areas such as at home and at school, including aggressive behaviour, robbery, vandalism, arson, school absenteeism, among other behaviours and, in general the violation of social rules or the rights of other people (Gairgordobil and Maganto, 2016; Peña, 2010). Antisocial behaviour represents a problem at different levels, including judicial, economic, school, family and also on a personal level (González, 1998, Peña, 2010; Gallardo-Pujol, Forero, Maydeu-Olivares and Andrés-Pueño, 2009). It is especially during the adolescence, when the prevalence rates tend to be higher (Rutter, Giller and Hagel, 2000; Moffit, 1993).

There are multiple biological, psychological, and social factors involved in the development and exacerbation of antinormative behaviours (González, 1998). These variables interact to each other and are mutually influential (Luengo, Romero, Gómez, Guerra and Lence, 2007). One of the most important risk variables for the antisocial behaviour is the peer group (Hoeben, Meldrum, Walker and Young, 2016; Pratt, Cullen, Sellers, Winfree, Madensen, Daigle, Fearn and Gau, 2010). Several studies have found that the antinormative behaviours of friends can be a strong predictor of behaviours that can put at risk the health of the adolescent (Prinstein, Boergers and Spirito, 2001), and thus, spending a lot of time with friends who perform violent behaviours correlates with their own violent behaviour (Bartolomé, Montañés and Montañés, 2008).

Another important variable in terms of the etiology, which is involved in the development of the antisocial behaviour is the personality. The personality is inheritable (Jones, Miller and Lynam, 2011) and may partly explain the antisocial behaviour. Therefore, it is an important aspect to bear in mind, whether certain personality traits influence the antisocial behaviour of adolescents. (Jones, Miller and Lynam, 2011). Nowadays, the most important and accepted personality theory on which we will draw, is the personality model of the Five Factors Model (FFM) of Costa and McCrae (1992), which includes the basic dimensions of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Sánchez and Ledesma, 2007). An important meta-analysis that examined systematically the association of personality and the antisocial behaviour and aggressiveness, described as the most important dimensions. Both involved in the behaviours of low conscientiousness and low agreeableness and, in a lesser extent, high neuroticism, which have been identified as traits related to delinquent behaviour (Jones, Miller and Lynam, 2011). Interestingly, a recent study has reported how personality and deviant peers may act synergistically in predicting antisocial behaviour with those adolescents of low conscientiousness and have delinquent friends with a high probability of committing antisocial behaviours 1 year later (Slagt, Semon, Dekovic, Haselager and Van Aken, 2015).

Thus, our objective consists of studying the additive effects of the group friends and the personality in the antisocial behaviour of young people. In addition, we will explore the interactive or moderation effects of these variables. The main hypotheses argue that the greater number of antinormative friends is, the more antisocial behaviours the participants will have. On the other hand, a low score in agreeableness and conscientiousness will be related to a greater number of antisocial behaviours. Last but not least, the interaction between antinormative friends and a risky personality profile will be related to higher antisocial behaviours.

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants have been 766 adolescents (50.5% women) from the province of Castellón. Some of them students from the IES Caminás and other ones from the IES Bovalar, where attend to Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and first baccalaureate course. The ages included in the sample have been from 11 to 19 years old (Mean = 14.53 SD = 1.44).

## Materials and procedure

In a first session, participants have carried out a socio-demographic survey (e.g. age, sex, course, among others) the Deviant Peer Scale (DPS; Gallego et al, 2011) and the Assessment System for Children and Adolescents (SENA; Fernández-Pinto, Santamaria, Sánchez-Sánchez, Carrasco and del Barrio, 2015). The DPS has assessed the antinormative behaviour of friends. It has been made up of 22 items, in which questions about the number of friends who have committed different deviant behaviors in the last 6 months have been asked. The questionnaire has assessed two kinds of deviant behaviours; serious and minor behaviours, and a total score of deviant peers. The reliability of the scale is high, with internal consistency indexes in the range of 0.82 to 0.92 (For the three scales, serious, mild and total). On the other hand, the SENA is a questionnaire aimed at the detection of most prevalent emotional and behaviour problems during the adolescence (such as depression, anxiety and attention problems), although in the present study we will focus uniquely on the antisocial behaviour scale. This scale assesses the presence of behaviours that violate basic rights and basic norms (e.g. I threaten others to get what I want or I take things from the stores without paying), with an internal consistency reliability from 0.82 to 0.85.

In a second session, the JS NEO-S has been administered (Ortet et al., 2010), the abbreviated version which has been adapted to the Spanish adolescents population of the NEO-PI-R. This questionnaire has evaluated the five dimensions of the personality and the thirty facets of the Model of the Five Factors of Costa and McCrae (1992). The version used in our study has been made up of 154 items, which should be answered by the participants according to what best fits with their personality and their way of behaving. The reliability of internal consistency and temporal stability are adequate.

The questionnaires have been administered to the different subjects of the secondary school in the tutorial hours and collectively. First, the informed consent has been given to the students' tutor. After having given the consent as well as the sessions and having provided the instructions to the students, the students have encouraged to complete the tests and answer all the items sincerely.

## Analysis

The first descriptive analysis has carried out, among others, the means and the standard deviation. Afterwards, we have estimated the correlations between all the variables. And lastly, we have performed a multiple regression analysis in different stages: firstly age and gender; secondly personality; thirdly peer's deviant behaviour; and last but not least all the interactions of personality and deviant peer's behaviour.

## RESULT

Regarding the multiple regression performed, it has been shown that age ( $\beta = 0.113$   $p = 0.004$ ) and gender ( $\beta = -0.108$   $p = 0.005$ ) are significantly associated with antisocial behaviours. In relation to personality, it has been shown that a greater neuroticism ( $\beta = 0.146$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), extraversion ( $\beta = 0.165$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and openness ( $\beta = 0.122$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) are related to antisocial behaviours of teenagers. On the other hand, a lower agreeableness ( $\beta = -0.376$   $p = 0.000$ ) and a lower conscientiousness ( $\beta = -0.156$   $p = 0.000$ ) are also associated with the antisocial behaviour. Regarding deviant peers' behaviour, the mild anti-normative friends' behaviour ( $\beta = 0.373$   $p = 0.000$ ), the serious anti-normative friends' behaviour ( $\beta = 0.397$   $p = 0.000$ ) and the total antinormative friends' behaviour ( $\beta = 0.423$   $p = 0.000$ ) are strongly related to the antisocial behaviour of adolescents. And finally, we have found a significant interaction between low agreeableness and minor ( $\beta = -0.132$   $p = 0.000$ ), serious ( $\beta = -0.084$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) and total ( $\beta = -0.108$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) antinormative friends' behaviour onto participants antisocial behaviour; and between low conscientiousness and minor ( $\beta = -0.110$   $p = 0.003$ ), serious ( $\beta = -0.095$ ;  $p = 0.008$ ) and total ( $\beta = -0.120$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) antinormative friends' behaviour onto adolescents antisocial behaviour. Other interactions found, (although very difficult to be interpreted) have been the high openness to experience and mild antinormative friends' behaviour ( $\beta = 0.067$   $p = 0.042$ ) and low neuroticism and the serious anti-normative friends' behaviour ( $\beta = -0.112$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) onto to the antisocial behaviour of the subject.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of our study has consisted of exploring the role of the personality characteristics of adolescents and the amount of the anti-normative friends they have in their antisocial behaviour. On the one hand, we have found that the number of anti-normative friends with both mild and serious deviant behaviours is a variable of the strong relevance in the antisocial behaviour of the subject, according to the

previous literature such as the meta-analysis of Hoeben, Meldrum, Walker and Young (2016). On the other hand, the results obtained from the personality (in which the low agreeableness and low conscientiousness have been described as the most important characteristics for the antisocial behaviours), agree with the previous studies, of the meta-analysis of Jones, Miller and Lynam (2011)

Regarding interaction, the results indicate that a group of anti-normative friends and a risky personality profile (-A and -C) are related to a greater number of antisocial behaviours. These results partly agree with our knowledge, the only study that has explored moderation effects, after having found that low responsibility together with an antinormative group of friends increases the probability of developing antisocial behaviours one year later (Slagt, Semon, Dekovic, Gerbert Haselager and Van Aken, 2015).

We think that the current findings are relevant, because they identify risky and protective variables involved in the development of the antisocial behaviour, especially during the adolescence, what it allows to carry out more efficient prevention and early intervention strategies.

Regarding the limitations and future directions of the study, it would be advisable to carry out a longitudinal rather than a transversal study, as we have done. On the other hand, one of the limitations is the fact that we have assessed the perception of the antisocial behaviour of their friends, instead of asking their friends directly (actual deviant behaviour). This is an important limitation, since several studies have shown that the perception of deviant peers' behaviour is more related to own antisocial behaviour than the actual or real deviant friends' behaviour (Weerman and Smeenk, 2005). Probably due to a "projection" process in which the similarity in the antisocial behaviour of the adolescent and their friends is artificially increased (Jussim and Osgood, 1989). Last but not least, we should have taken into account other variables such as parental styles or socioeconomic status, since both are vital factors to bear in mind in the antisocial behaviour (Hoeben, et al., 2016).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartolomé, R., Montañés, M., & Montañés, J. (2008). El papel de los amigos frente a la conducta antisocial en adolescentes. *International Journal of Developmental and Educational Psychology*, 3(1), 289-298.
- Fernández-Pinto, I., Santamaria, P., Sánchez-Sánchez, F., Carrasco M-A y del Varrio, V (2015). SENA. Sistema de Evaluación de Niños y Adolescentes. Manual de aplicación, corrección e interpretación. Madrid: TEA ediciones.
- Gallardo-Pujol, D., Forero, C. G., Maydeu-Olivares, A., & Andrés-Pueyo, A. (2009). Desarrollo del comportamiento antisocial: factores psicobiológicos, ambientales e interacciones genotipo-ambiente. *Revista de Neurología*, 48(4), 191-198.
- Gallego, S., Viruela, A., Camacho, L., Mezquita, L & González, A. (2011). Adaptación española del cuestionario de las conductas antinormativas de los amigos (DPS) en adolescentes.
- Garaigordobil, M., & Maganto, C. (2016). Conducta antisocial en adolescentes y jóvenes: prevalencia en el País Vasco y diferencias en función de variables socio-demográficas. *Acción Psicológica*, 13(2), 57-68.
- González, M. T. (1998). La conducta antisocial en la infancia. Evaluación de la prevalencia y datos preliminares para un estudio longitudinal. *Revista Iberoamericana de diagnóstico y evaluación psicológica*, 2, 9-28.
- Hoeben, E. M., Meldrum, R. C., & Young, J. T. (2016). The role of peer delinquency and unstructured socializing in explaining delinquency and substance use: A state-of-the-art review. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47, 108-122.
- Jones, S., Miller, J. D., & Lynam, D. R. (2011). Personality, antisocial behavior, and aggression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39(4), 329-337.
- Luengo, M. A., Romero, E., Gómez, J. A., Guerra, A. y Lence, M. (2007). La prevención del consumo de drogas y la conducta antisocial en la escuela: análisis y evaluación de un programa. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

- Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behavior: a developmental taxonomy. *Psychological review*, 100(4), 674.
- Ortet, G., Escrivá, P., Ibáñez, M. I., Moya, J., Villa, H., Mezquita, L., & Ruipérez, M. A. (2010). Versión corta de la adaptación española para adolescentes del NEO-PI-R (JS NEO-S). *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 10(2), 327 – 344.
- Peña, M. E. (2010). *Conducta antisocial en adolescentes: factores de riesgo y de protección*. Madrid: Editorial complutense
- Pratt, T. C., Cullen, F. T., Sellers, C. S., Winfree L. T., Jr., Madensen, T. D., Daigle, L. E., Fearn, N.E., & Gau, J. M. (2010). The empirical status of social learning theory: A meta-analysis. *Justice Quarterly*, 27(6), 765-802.
- Prinstein, M. J., Boergers, J., & Spirito, A. (2001). Adolescents' and their friends' health-risk behavior: Factors that alter or add to peer influence. *Journal of pediatric psychology*, 26(5), 287-298.
- Rutter, M., Giller, H. y Hagell, A. (2000). *La conducta antisocial de los jóvenes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (orig. 1999).
- Sánchez, R., & Ledesma, R. (2007). Los cinco grandes factores: cómo entender la personalidad y como evaluarla. *Conocimiento para la transformación. Serie Investigación y Desarrollo*, 131-160.
- Slagt, M., Dubas, J. S., Deković, M., Haselager, G. J., & Aken, M. A. (2015). Longitudinal associations between delinquent behaviour of friends and delinquent behaviour of adolescents: Moderation by adolescent personality traits. *European Journal of Personality*, 29(4), 468-477