## Externalizing Behaviors and Family Influences on Filipino Urban Adolescents: A Social Learning Theory Approach

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Abstract: This study will look through Bandura's Social Learning Theory perspective on how parental influence predicts Filipino adolescents' externalizing behaviors. As children are impressionable, they observe their parents as role models; their behavior development from childhood to adolescence is dependent on parental influence. With this in mind, the study's research objectives aim to understand how parental influences, such as abusive and antisocial behavior, affect the adolescent's externalizing behavior and the level of externalizing behaviors among Filipino adolescents living in Metro Manila, Philippines. The researchers then surveyed 202 Filipino adolescents residing in Metro Manila, answering a questionnaire that measured family characteristics, perceived abusive and antisocial behavior of parents, and self-assessed level of externalizing behaviors. The data gathered was processed through descriptive and inferential statistics, and the results concluded that family influence does have significance in the adolescent's externalizing behavior. In conclusion, through Social Learning Theory and the data collected, the adolescent's externalizing behaviors were found to be due to family influence.

**Key Words:** Adolescents, Externalizing Behaviors, Family Influence, Social Learning Theory, Perceived Abusive Behaviors of Parents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

# 1.1. Externalizing Behaviors among Adolescents: Concept and Trends

Adolescents worldwide often exhibit externalized behaviors. Common intuition dictates externalized behaviors stem adolescent's emotions caused by an imbalance of hormone production within the brain. But we can see that family influences, hereditary or genetic influences, and the adolescent's environment can cause adolescents to manifest these externalized behaviors (Bishop et al., 2002). Reviewing the trends of adolescent externalized behaviors will significantly impact the field of psychiatry and mental health nursing as adolescent externalized behaviors strongly predict a later life of disruptive behavior towards people, which may result in violence, substance abuse, or crime (Perry & Price, 2018)

Externalized behaviors are defined as a group of behavior problems directed to an external environment (Externalizing Behaviors: Examples & Definition, 2015). These behaviors are generally regarded as negative behaviors as they may be disruptive towards others and toward the external environment (Campbell, 2000; Bishop et al., 2002). In this study, these refer to destructive behaviors or conduct manifested by the respondent.

Also, externalized Behaviors dimensionalized into two domains: delinquency and aggressive behavior. According to Liu (2004), aggressive behavior is a form of externalizing behavior that can be defined as verbal or physical behaviors that harm or threaten to harm others. These behaviors include attacking others and being involved in fights. On the otherhand, delinquency refers to nonviolent forms of antisocial behaviors instead of the violent acts within the scope of the earlier concept of aggressive behavior. Delinquent behaviors include minor forms of misconduct such as disrespecting authority, lying, bullying, skipping school, and more (Liu, 2004).

# 1.2. Understanding Family Influences: A Social Learning Approach

Paragraph 1: Trends of family influences among adolescents

The family plays a crucial role in how a child develops traits and characteristics, often being influenced by the actions of the parents (De Figueiredo, 2012). Moreover, the impact of family influences on adolescents can be examined through common observation, to psychoanalyzing the behaviors and actions of the parents around the children. In this study, externalized behaviors such as aggression and delinquency, and their ties to family

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influences will be reviewed. Ludht and Freyberger (2004) reported that aggression and delinquency had a significant relationship between perceived parental rejection and abusive behavior. We can infer that influence from the family is a vital part in the manifestation of these behaviors. This study will utilize Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to expound further and explain this occurrence.

Social Learning Theory was a theoretical framework proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977 which suggests that a person can acquire new behaviors through observing and imitating the behaviors of live, symbolic, or verbal instructional models. This theory also states that learning is influenced by both external reinforcement and internal reinforcement. Bandura also describes how humans actively process information and understand the relationship between actions and their respective consequences through the mediational process. The mediational process has four steps: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. This study focused on how external influences affect the cognitive function of an individual.

As this study will focus on the relationship between the parents and adolescent, the researchers will utilize Bandura's Social Learning Theory to identify if family influences, more specifically, perceived family influences, could incite changes in the adolescent's behavior. This study will focus on parents' perceived abusive behaviors, specifically, aggressive tendencies, antisocial behaviors, intoxication to alcohol and alcohol encouragement, and externalizing behaviors within the respondent, specifically, aggressive behavior and delinquency.

#### 1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study describes the level of externalizing behaviors among Filipino urban adolescents in Metro Manila. It determines different family influences such as family characteristics, abusive, and antisocial behaviors of parents on their externalizing behavior levels. Specifically, this answers the following questions:

- 1. What is the level of externalizing behaviors among Filipino urban adolescents in Metro Manila, Philippines?
- 2. How do family influences such as family characteristics, abusive, and antisocial behaviors of parents affect their externalizing behavior levels?

### 2. METHODOLOGY

This study determines how externalizing behaviors are affected by family influences. These family influences are construed as the influence of structures and dynamics in the family on externalizing behaviors of children through learning and socialization (Smith & Stern, 1997). With that, the theoretical-methodological approach of social learning theory is most appropriate in understanding family influences on externalizing behaviors. The social learning approach looks into how behaviors are formed based on modeling, exposure, and imitation of other people's behavior (Bandura, 1977). This approach looks at how cognitive and environmental factors influence learning and behavior (Bandura, 1977).

As for the research design, a cross-sectional study approach was used, designed for the researchers to observe current behaviors and outcomes simultaneously (Setia, 2016). This cross-sectional approach measures the current assessments of respondents on their perceived level of externalizing behaviors, family characteristics, and perceived abusive behaviors and antisocial behaviors of their parents.

A total of 202 Filipino urban adolescents in Metro Manila participated as a sample of this study. Respondents were asked to participate in this study via e-mail and other online platforms as a technique of data collection. The sample included in this study satisfied the criteria of having parents drinking alcohol and have seen antisocial behaviors also among parents. Responses were collected using a survey questionnaire. This instrument measured their family characteristics, perceived abusive and antisocial behaviors of parents, and self-assessed level of externalizing behaviors.

The results from this survey were encoded in MS Excel and analyzed using Jamovi. This study analyzed quantitative data through descriptive and inferential statistics. Family characteristics were described through frequency counts and percentages. The description of perceived abusive and antisocial behavior of parents and self-assessed level of externalizing behavior used means and standard deviations. Concerning inferential statistics, the Independent Sample T-test was employed to determine differences of categorical variables in relation to externalizing behaviors. Pearson's r correlation coefficient test was also used to determine the relationship of perceived abusive and antisocial behaviors of parents with externalizing behaviors. Lastly, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the effects of family influences on externalizing behaviors.

#### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics on the externalizing behaviors and perceived abusive behaviors of parents among Filipino urban adolescents. Based on the findings on the externalizing behaviors of respondents, aggressive

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behaviors are more common (M = 2.14, SD= 0.74) compared to delinquency behaviors (M = 1.62, SD= 0.74). This means that the respondents manifested aggressive behaviors more than delinquency as forms of externalizing behaviors.

Regarding forms of perceived abusive behaviors of parents assessed by the respondents, on the one hand, antisocial behaviors (M=2.51, SD=0.96) and aggressive tendencies (M=2.24, SD=1.21) have the highest levels of perceptions. On the other hand, alcohol encouragement has the lowest average scores of perceived abusive behaviors of parents (M=1.56, SD=0.64).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics, n=202

Variables	Mean	SD	Maximum	Minimum	
Externalizing					
Behaviors	2.14	0.74	5	1	
Aggressive	1.62	0.74	5	1	
Behaviors					
Delinquent					
Behaviors					
Abusive Behaviors of					
Parents					
Aggressive	2.24	1.21	5	1	
Tendencies					
Alcohol	1.56	0.64	5	1	
Encouragement					
Antisocial Behaviors	2.51	0.96	5	1	
Intoxication to	2.08	0.74	5	1	
Alcohol					

#### Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient Test Results

Table 2 presents the significant correlations using the Pearson's r correlation coefficient test. Based on the result, perceived forms of abusive behaviors of parents are statistically significant correlates for both aggressive and delinquent behaviors of adolescents. Regarding aggressive behaviors, all abusive behaviors except alcohol encouragement have substantial correlations. Among perceived forms of abusive behaviors of parents, aggressive tendencies have the highest strength among other correlates. Aggressive tendencies of parents has a moderately strong and positive correlation with the aggressive behaviors of adolescents r(202)=0.448, p<.001. This means that the higher the level of aggressive tendencies of parents, the higher also the aggressive behaviors of adolescents. As explained by Bandura (1977), in Social Learning Theory, perceived aggressive tendencies of the parent are observed and imitated by the child, which turns into an externalized behavior. Another explanation from Bandura's theory is that the parents' aggressive behaviors can act as a stimulus for a mediational process, which in turn, manifests this form of externalized behavior.

Regarding delinquent behaviors of respondents, all abusive behaviors also have significant correlations. Among perceived forms of abusive behaviors of parents, alcohol encouragement has the highest strength among other correlates. Alcohol encouragement has a moderately strong and positive correlation with the delinquent behaviors of adolescents r(202)= 0.363, p<.001. This means that the more adolescents were encouraged to drink alcohol by their parents, the more they manifest delinquent behaviors. This is related to the findings of Lee et al., (2016), which states that parents who encourage alcohol use will cause self-delinquency amongst adolescents. Social Learning Theory also presents that parental alcohol use can encourage their child to think that this behavior is non-problematic and justifiable. This behavior also predicts the child's high-risk behavior, such as alcohol use, substance abuse, and hostility.

**Table 2.** Correlation Coefficients, n=202

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Externali-						
zing						
Behaviors						
1.	1.00					
Aggressive						
Behaviors						
2.	0.331	1.00				
Delinquent	***					
Behaviors						
Abusive						
Behaviors						
of Parents						
3.	0.448	0.332	1.00			
Aggressive	***	***				
Tendencies						
<ol><li>Alcohol</li></ol>	0.127	0.363	0.197	1.00		
Encourage		***	**			
ment						
5.	0.345	0.225	0.569	0.077	1.0	
Antisocial	***	***	***		0	
Behaviors						
6.	0.118	0.316	0.069	0.425	0.0	1.0
Intoxicatio	***	***		***	53	0
n to Alcohol						

<sup>\*</sup>p-value<0.05; \*\*p-value<0.01, \*\*\* p-value<0.001

#### Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Table 3 presents the multiple linear regression results. Based on the findings, perceived abusive behaviors of parents significantly explains 20% of the variance in aggression scores of respondents,  $R^2 = 0.20$ , F(4, 202), p<0.001. Moreover, perceived abusive behaviors of parents, in another model, significantly explains 22% of the variance in the delinquency scores of the respondents,  $R^2 = 0.22$ , F(4, 202), p<0.001.

In model 1, only perceived aggressive tendencies of parents significantly and positively predict the aggressive behaviors of adolescents,  $\beta = 0.28$ , t(202) = 4.69, p < .001. Social learning theory by Bandura (1977) explains that children mimic the behavior of their parents as they see it as non-problematic. As children observe this behavior from their parents, children will mimic the behavior by

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seeing that aggression is an effective manner to attain what they want.

In model 2, perceived aggressive tendencies, alcohol encouragement, and intoxication to alcohol among parents significantly and positively predict the delinquent behaviors of adolescents,  $\beta$ = 0.18, t(202) = 3.10, p< .01;  $\beta$ = 0.26, t(202) = 3.23, p< .01;  $\beta$ = 0.12, t(202) = 2.91, p< .01, respectively. This is related to the findings of You and Liu's (2015) study, which states that abusive behavior from parents has a significant effect on both violent and nonviolent delinquent behaviors. Social learning theory also presents that adolescents manifest delinquent behavior due to these abusive behaviors being reinforced to have them view these behaviors as something desirable to have.

**Table 3.** Multiple Linear Regression Results. n=202

Model	Covariate s	В	t- stati stic	p- valu e	Ad j. r²	F <sup>1</sup> stati stic	p· val ue
	Abusive Behaviors of Parents				0. 20	13.9* **	< .00 1
1	Aggressiv e Tendencie s	0.28	4.69	<0.0 01			
(Aggressi on)	Alcohol Encourage ment	0.01	0.14	0.88 7			
	Antisocial Behaviors	0.13	1.72	0.08 7			
	Intoxicati on to Alcohol	0.05	1.16	0.24 6			
2 (Delinqu ency)	Abusive Behaviors of Parents				0. 22	15.4* **	< .00 1
	Aggressiv e Tendencie s	0.18	3.10	<0.0 1			
	Alcohol Encourage ment	0.26 **	3.23	<0.0 1			
	Antisocial Behaviors	0.06	0.81	0.41 9			
	Intoxicati on to Alcohol	0.12 **	2.91	<0.0 1			

\* p-value <0.05; \*\*p-value <0.01, \*\*\* p-value <0.001

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides an insight on how externalized behaviors are affected and manifested by adolescents through family influences, explicitly focusing on their parent's abusive behaviors such as aggressive tendencies, alcohol encouragement, level of intoxication to alcohol, and general antisocial behaviors. With that, the study's findings give importance to how children are affected by external influences—namely, family influences on their development and behaviors.

To conclude, through the social learning theory and this data, it is observable that the externalized behaviors that can be manifested by children can be affected by the parents' influences. This could be inferred through children being impressionable in their formative years as they grow up.

For the aggressive behaviors of an adolescent, it can be observed that parent's aggressive tendencies and the other abusive behaviors parents exhibit can heavily influence this as these domains are seen to be a significant predictor for onset manifestation for aggression as an externalized behavior. We can say the same thing for the delinquency variable; with aggression directly related to delinquency, we can infer from the data and the theoretical approach that parents' abusive behavior is also a solid and significant predictor for delinquency being manifested as an externalized behavior.

Since this study primarily focuses on how family influences can affect how externalized behaviors are manifested, future research could be done on how different influences in adolescents' lives could affect them. Future studies use Bandura's concept on the Social Learning Theory, as well as other concepts and theoretical frameworks, to understand further the ever-changing dynamics of a modern family and our understanding of the emotional development of an adolescent.

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