Role of Attachment Styles in Aggressive Behavior among Secondary School Students in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Walter Odera Owino[1]   Newton Mukholwe Asakhulu[1]
Jonathan Muema Mwania[2]
1. Department of Education Foundation and Psychology, Maasai Mara University
2. Department of Educational Psychology, South Eastern Kenya University

Abstract
Aggressive behavior is common in adolescents and poses a health risk to perpetrators as well as victims. A high prevalence of aggression has been reported in secondary school students in Nairobi County. Previous research has shown that aggressive behavior may be related to insecure attachment but no studies have investigated this relationship in secondary school students in Nairobi County. This study therefore investigated whether students' attachment styles predicted aggressive behavior in secondary school students in Nairobi County. The study was anchored in the attachment theory and adopted a correlational design. The study targeted 10,451 Form Three students in public secondary schools. Nine schools were selected from three sub counties and then random sampling was used to select 367 respondents. Students' attachment styles were measured using the Attachment Styles Questionnaire and aggressive behavior was measured by combining the physical aggression and verbal aggression subscales of the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire. Linear multiple regression analysis was used to test whether attachment styles predicted aggressive behavior. the main finding of the study was that attachment styles significantly predicted students' aggressive behavior (F = 7.405, P < .001) and explained 8.2% of the variance in aggressive behavior (R^2 = 0.82). Specifically, aggressive behavior was predicted by preoccupied attachment style (β = .117, P = .048) and dismissing attachment style (β = .157, P = .008). The study recommended that students' attachment styles be taken into account in efforts to curb aggressive behavior in secondary school students.
Keywords: *Attachment styles, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful, aggressive behavior*

I.   Introduction

Violent and aggressive behavior by young people is a threat to public health (World Health Organization, 2014). Aggression refers to deliberate actions taken with the intention of causing physical or psychological harm to another person (Warren, Richardson & McQuillin, 2011; Eltink et al, 2018). The perpetrator of the aggressive act must intend to cause harm and believe their behavior will harm the target and the target of the aggressive act is motivated to avoid the behavior (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003). Aggression takes different forms. Little, Heinrich, Jones and Hawley (2003) examined literature on aggression and noted a diversity of terms used to describe aggressive behavior. They found overlaps among the various definitions given in the literature but realized that aggression can broadly be categorized as either overt or relational. Overt aggression involves physical and verbal actions intended to harm the target. Physical aggression inflicts bodily harm to the victim directly for example by fighting a person, beatings, kicking, rape, violent robbery and even homicide. Verbal aggression inflicts psychological harm through insults, making denigrating comments about someone and other adverse forms of communication (Karriker-Jaffe, Foshee, Ennett & Suchindran, 2008; Ristić-Dimitrijević, 2011).

Anderson and Huesmann (2003) suggest that an aggressive act does not necessarily cause actual bodily harm to the victim. In this regard, they view physical violence as an act of aggression on the extreme end of the aggression spectrum. Although any violent action towards another person is aggression, much of aggression is not violent. Little and colleagues (2003) described relational aggression as actions intended to damage the target's reputation or social standing among peers. They include things like ostracization, exclusion from social groups and spreading rumors and gossips that damage reputations. Olweus (1993) a leading researcher on bullying, defines bullying as repetitive and persistent behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort to the target of the behavior and can take the form of direct physical of verbal aggression as well as indirect or manipulative behavior. Bullying involves aggressive behavior directed at a victim with the intention of harming them.

Research has shown that aggressive behavior is commonplace in adolescents and the problem is global in nature. For instance, Kumar, Bhilwar, Kapoor, Sharma and Parija (2016) reviewed studies examining aggressive behavior in adolescents in India. Authors of the reviewed studies varied in their definition of aggressive behavior as well as the methodology for measuring it. The reported prevalence varied from 17.7% in one study to 66.5% in another study. The reviewers came to the conclusion that aggressive behavior was very common and called for interventions to lower it. In another study, Sharma, Grover, and Chaturvedi (2008) explored aggressive behavior in 14–19-year-old adolescents. Twelve percent of the respondents had brought a weapon to school in the past one month, 49% of the respondents had been in a physical fight and 13.5% had attacked or threatened another person with a weapon in the past one year. A survey of school going adolescents in China by Tang and associates (2013) revealed that 24.4% of respondents were verbally aggressive towards peers and 27.9% were physically aggressive towards peers. In the United States, data from the Centers for Disease Control showed that up to 700,000 young people aged 10-24 sought hospital treatment for injuries sustained through assaults (Schlomer et al, 2015).

Aggression is a major problem in Kenyan secondary school students. For instance, Wakoli and Bundotich (2020) investigated prevalence of aggressive behavior in secondary school students in Bungoma County in Western Kenya. They found that bullying and fighting between students were commonplace and urged for actions be taken to curb such behavior. In an investigation of bullying and parenting styles in girls' schools in Kajiado County, Manyibe (2018) found that bullying was common and verbal abuse, sexual and physical bullying were the most prevalent bullying behaviors. Itegi (2017) surveyed students' experiences of bullying in secondary schools in Nairobi County. Students experienced high levels of physical aggression such as being hit, kicked or beaten as well as verbal aggression in form of students insulting or spreading malicious information about each other. Opere, Kamere and Wawire (2019) explored secondary school students' experience of violence and other aggressive behavior in Nairobi County. They drew a representative sample of 341 students from 22 schools in the county. In total, 69.2% of the students had been victims of violence or had experienced violence, a clear indication of the high prevalence of violence in secondary schools. Physical violence was the most common form of violence as reported by 38% of the students followed by verbal abuse (25.9%) and bullying (15%). The study further revealed that violence was mostly perpetrated by male students against fellow classmates.

Estévez, Jiménez, Moreno (2018) investigated how aggressive behavior contributed to maladjustment in 12–17-year-old adolescents with a history of aggression towards their peers. Logistic regression analyses revealed that in both boys and girls, aggressive behavior was associated with low empathy, less satisfaction with life, poor self-esteem and more depressive symptoms. Aggression was associated with less positive attitude towards school, difficulty making friends and disengagement from learning. Opere and colleagues (2019) observed that students waste a lot of time due to interruptions in learning occasioned by violence in school and added that when perpetrators of violence leave school, they fit into society poorly. Furthermore, adolescents with aggressive behavior are more likely to continue with such behavior in adulthood (Wahl & Metzner, 2012). High levels of aggression in adolescents predicts involvement in other delinquent behavior such as bullying, violence in or out of school, violence against romantic partners, violence directed at one's parents or children and other externalizing behaviors (Racz, Putnick, Suwalsky, Hendricks, & Bornstein, 2017; Perez-gramaje, Garcia, Reyes, Serra & Garcia, 2020).

Over the years, researchers have delved into causes of aggression in adolescence. Huang and colleagues (2017) examined the available literature and grouped the reported factors associated with aggression into five broad categories namely: environmental, social, genetic/biological, substance use and psychopathology. Aggressive behavior throughout the lifespan has been examined through attachment theory and there is evidence that attachment security is associated with aggression in adolescents. Such a study has not been done among secondary school students in Nairobi County so this study sought to fill this gap.

II.   Literature Review

The Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1982) originally conceptualized attachment as a bond that forms between an infant and its caregiver but, like other researchers who developed his theory, he recognized that attachment relationships in early life are prototypes for attachment organization in future relationships. The attachment theory proposes that children form internal working models of early attachment relationships with a model of the self and a model of the other. The "other" is the caregiver who is typically the child's first attachment figure. Children develop secure attachment if caregivers are responsive to their needs and available when they call on them for attention, more so when they are distressed (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). In their internal working models, securely attached children view themselves as competent and deserving of love and view important others as being loving, caring and available to meet their needs and provide comfort when distressed (Cassidy, 2001). Insecure attachment

forms if caregivers are not meeting children's needs consistently, are dismissive, rejecting or hostile towards the child.

Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance are two dimensions of insecure attachment resulting from adolescents' models of the self and models of the other (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Adolescents with preoccupied or anxious attachment style have high attachment anxiety. They have a negative self-image and a positive image of the other. Though they feel unworthy of attachment figures' love and attention, they strongly desire acceptance and validation from attachment figures. The threat of abandonment worries them greatly so they use hyperactivating strategies such as displayed intense negative emotions to keep attachment figures' attention. Adolescents with dismissing or avoidant attachment styles have high attachment avoidance. They have a positive self-image but perceive attachment figures negatively. They have low trust for other people and prefer emotional independence rather than intimacy. When distressed, they adopt a deactivating strategy by withdrawing and concealing their emotions in contrast to the anxiously attached adolescent who reacts to distress with intensified emotions. Fearful attachment style is characterized by high levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance. Adolescents with fearful attachment have negative self-image and negative other image. They distrust attachment figures and expect rejection but also desire to be close to the attachment figure. Their reactions to attachment figures are not clear like in the case with anxious or avoidant adolescents.

Adolescents become more independent from parental figures as they undertake the task of forming an identity (Erikson, 1968). They shift most of their attention towards relationships with peers but parents continue acting as important attachment figures even though attachment is no longer about proximity to caregivers as it is in early childhood (Allen, McElhaney, Kuperminc, & Jodl, 2004). Adolescents can form secondary attachment relationships with people other than parental figures but the attachment organization in these relationships will follow the template set by the primary attachment to the caregiver and ingrained in the internal working models. In essence, the internal working models formed in attachment relationships with caregivers are brought into relationships with peers and other extra familial relationships (Berlin, Cassidy, & Appleyard, 2008) because they are relatively stable (Cassidy, 2001; Riggs, 2010) and act as a lens through which adolescents view interpersonal relationships. Adolescents interpret relational experiences in a way that matches their internal working models and form relationships that are consistent with their models of themselves and relational partners thereby replicating the quality of attachment to caregivers in other relationships (Dwyer et al, 2010).

Attachment and Aggressive Behavior

The attachment theory provides a framework that can help explain aggressive behavior in adolescents. Thompson (2008) observes that right from childhood, insecurely attached individuals are more prone to negative emotions such as anger and sadness, display less social competence and act more aggressively in comparison to securely attached peers of similar age. Insecurely attached children lack security and comfort provided in secure attachment relationships with caregivers therefore their mental images of interpersonal relationships are infused with distrust, fear and need for self-protection (Allen, 2013) hence greater disposition towards aggressive behavior.

According to Kiessling-caver (2018) attachment security may influence adolescents' aggressive behavior through reflective functioning. Reflective functioning is the ability to accurately understand other people's mental states and feelings. Adolescents who can understand others' mental states and feelings are more empathic and restrain from aggressive behavior. Adolescents with insecure attachment lack capacity to accurately understand their own and others' mental states and feelings. They easily misinterpret other peoples' intentions and feelings and react aggressively to perceived ill intent.

Attachment security might influence adolescents' aggressive behavior because it has a bearing on interpersonal relationships. The internal working models which contain adolescent's self- image and image of relational figures influence adolescents' expectations of themselves and others within close relationships and also influence how they conduct themselves in social interactions and interpret cues coming out of these social interactions (Boling, Barry, Kotchick, & Lowry, 2011). Adolescents with secure attachment, having had supportive relationships with caregivers and internalized positive images of themselves and caregivers, are likely to view relationships positively, anticipate mutually supportive relationships, empathize more and demonstrate more cooperative and prosocial behavior compared to insecurely attached adolescents (Ooi, Ang, Fung,Wong & Cai, 2006). A study by Malonda, Llorca, Mesurado, Samper, Mestre (2019) examined the role of prosocial behavior in relation to attachment to peers and aggressive behavior in 13–19-year-old adolescents. In that study, students who reported closer attachment to peers were more prosocial in their behavior and the more prosocial they were, the less likely they were to be physically or verbally aggressive.

Internal working models of insecurely attached adolescents may precipitate cognitive distortions leading to aggressive behavior. For instance, de Vries and others (2016) explored associations between attachment to parents and aggression in 12–19-year-old adolescents. Aggression in that study was a combination of direct aggression (verbal and physical aggression) and indirect aggression (anger, hostility, irritability and suspicion). The study revealed that adolescents' close attachment to parents was inversely related to both direct

and indirect aggression. In addition, adolescents with weak attachment to parents had negative self-image and negative perception of people generally. These cognitive distortions made them more likely to engage in harmful behavior towards other people. In peer interactions, securely attached adolescents are well accepted by peers, have more positive expectations of peers, are less likely to be withdrawn and are viewed by peers as less aggressive compared to their insecurely attached counterparts (Dykas, Ziv & Cassidy, 2008). Adolescents with negative expectations of peers which are founded on negative internal working models may withdraw from social interactions or display hostile and aggressive behavior in peer interactions (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002; Liu, 2006). The internal working models of insecurely attached adolescents stem from relationships with unavailable, untrustworthy, uncaring or hostile caregivers. Such adolescents are more likely to infer hostile intentions in other's behavior and retaliate more aggressively if they perceive hostility from others. Moreover, insecurely attached adolescents with negative view of themselves and of others may behave in ways that attract hostility and rejection from peers. They then react to that hostility and rejection with aggression (Ooi et al, 2006).

Aggressive behavior may be a sign of anger and hostility directed at attachment figures. Adolescents with anxious attachment strongly desire acceptance and validation from attachment figures but they distrust attachment figures because they are uncertain of their response. The anxiously attached adolescents experience conflict resulting in anger and frustration which may lead them to aggression towards attachment figures (Brodie, Goodall, McVittie and Darling (2018). Brodie and associates investigated the relationship between attachment, hostility and aggression and their study revealed that attachment anxiety and avoidance were related to hostility and physical aggression. The study determined that individuals with high level of attachment anxiety are not able to effectively manage their anger and express that anger by physically attacking other people. According to Bowlby (1988), insecurely attached adolescents experience intense anger when they perceive a threat of abandonment by attachment figures. The feeling of abandonment results when they are denied proximity and contact with attachment figures. Anger, which may lead to aggression, is intended to dissuade the attachment figure from abandoning the person.

Studies have shown that insecure attachment predicts bullying behavior where repeated acts of aggression are directed towards other people. For example, Nikiforou, Georgiou and Stavrinides (2013) investigated whether attachment to parents and peers was associated with bullying behavior in 5th and 6th grade students in Cyprus. Students with stronger attachment to parents and peers were less likely to bully other students. Walden and Beran (2010) also investigated how attachment quality was related to bullying in 4th to 8th grade Canadian school children and it emerged that students with less secure attachment to caregivers were more likely to bully their school mates. In an investigation by Murphy, Laible and Augustine (2017), correlational analyses revealed that adolescents with stronger attachment to their parents and peers were less likely to be bullies and were more likely to defend victims of bullying. A study done by Li and other authors (2015) exploring aggressive behavior in 11–15-year-old Chinese adolescents also revealed that adolescents with stronger attachment to parents displayed less aggression against their peers. These studies suggest that if adolescents feel a close attachment to their parents and peers, they are less inclined to harm their peers through bullying and other aggressive behavior.

Research on attachment styles and aggressive behavior support the view that insecure attachment, as opposed to secure attachment, is associated with aggressive behavior in adolescents. In one study, Okeke and Anierobi (2020) investigated the relationship between attachment styles and aggressive behavior in 1,320 Nigerian secondary school students. The results of the study showed that students with secure attachment style were less likely to engage in physical and verbal aggression and were also less angry and hostile in comparison to students with disorganized, anxious-avoidant and anxious-resistant attachment styles. McDade (2015) explored the links between attachment styles and aggression in 15–17-year-old African American girls. Verbal and physical aggression in 136 girls was combined into one measure of aggression. Regression analysis revealed that aggression was significantly predicted by attachment avoidance. Aggression was significantly correlated with state and trait anger which were also predicted by attachment avoidance. That study also supported the view that insecurely attached adolescents are prone to anger and they react to anger through aggression towards others. Kõiv (2012) examined relationship between self-reported attachment styles and bullying behavior reported by peers in 10–18-year-old school students. Ambivalent attachment style predicted none of the bullying behaviors but bullies were more likely to have an avoidant attachment style compared to victims of bullying and students who engaged in none of the bullying behaviors.

Objective of the Study

The picture emerging from the reviewed literature shows that aggressive behavior is related to attachment security whether attachment is considered in terms of closeness to parents and peers or dimensionally in terms of attachment anxiety and avoidance or in terms of attachment styles. This study sought to determine whether there was a relationship between attachment styles and aggressive behavior in secondary school students in Nairobi County.

Hypothesis
This null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' attachment styles and aggressive behavior was tested using data collected in the study.

III. Methodology

Participants in the study were 367 Form Three students from public secondary schools in Nairobi County. There were 181 male students (Mean age = 16.48 years) and 186 female students (Mean age = 16.40 years). Three sub-counties were purposively selected and the schools in the sub-counties were divided into boys' only schools, girls' only schools and coeducational schools. Three schools were randomly selected from each category. Participants were randomly selected from the nine schools. The study adopted a correlational design. Data was collected with self-administered questionnaires. Students' attachment styles were measured using the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ, Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra & Bakker, 2003). The ASQ consists of 24 items in four sub-scales measuring secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment styles. The ASQ demonstrated adequate reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .85). Aggressive behavior was measured using items from physical aggression and verbal aggression sub-scales of the Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ, Buss & Perry, 1992). Combined, these items showed excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .83). Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23).

Results of the Study
The means and standard deviations for the study variables for male and female respondents are shown in Table 1. Independent samples t-test was calculated to determine whether the differences in means between male and female students were statistically significant for each variable.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	Males		Females			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	Sig (2 tailed)
Aggressive behavior	38.84	11.7	40.15	11.9	1.038	.300
Secure attachment	22.83	5.23	23.81	5.38	1.764	.079
Preoccupied attachment	20.54	6.65	19.44	8.31	1.393	.165
Dismissing attachment	15.81	4.79	14.88	5.75	1.655	.099
Fearful attachment	16.06	4.74	15.86	5.96	.344	.731

Note: M = Mean SD = Standard deviation

As shown in Table 1, girls had a higher mean for aggressive behavior (40.15) than boys (38.84) but the difference was not statistically significant (t = 1.038, P = .300). Table 1 also shows that girls had a higher mean for secure attachment than boys (23.81 versus 22.83) but boys had higher means for preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment styles. It appears that girls are more securely attached compared to boys but the differences in attachment styles were not statistically significant. Correlational analysis was done to test relationships between students' aggressive behavior and attachment styles. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations between Attachment Styles and Aggressive Behavior

Attachment Styles	Aggressive Behavior
Secure Attachment	-.129*
Preoccupied Attachment	.202***
Dismissing Attachment	.226***
Fearful Attachment	.150*

Note: * P < .05 ** P < .01 *** P < .001

According to Table 2, aggressive behavior was negatively correlated with secure attachment (r = -.129, P < .01) which implies that the more secure a students' attachment, the less their aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior was positively correlated with preoccupied (r = .202, P < .001), dismissing (r = .226, P < .001) and fearful (r = .150, P = .003) attachment styles. The implication of these findings was that the more insecure a student's attachment, the more aggressive behavior he or she displayed.

In order to test the relative predictiveness of the four attachment styles and test the null hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was done. The fitness of the regression model was tested using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the model was found to be statistically significant (F = 7.405, P < .001) therefore attachment styles significantly predicted aggressive behavior in secondary school students. As a result of this finding, the null hypothesis was rejected. The regression model with students' attachment styles as predictors of aggressive behavior was able to explain 8.2% of the variance in students' aggressive behavior (R^2 = 0.82). The regression coefficients for the regression model are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Regression Coefficients for Aggressive Behavior

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	35.141	3.630		9.682	.000
Secure Attachment	-.252	.114	-.116	-2.202	.028
Preoccupied Attachment	.179	.090	.117	1.982	.048
Dismissing Attachment	.340	.128	.157	2.650	.008
Fearful Attachment	.112	.124	.052	.902	.368

Dependent Variable: Aggressive Behavior

According to Table 3, secure attachment was a significant predictor of students' aggressive behavior (β = -.116, P = .028) in that more secure attachment predicted less aggressive behavior in students. On the contrary students with preoccupied attachment (β = .117, P = .048) were more likely to engage in aggressive behavior although the regression coefficient was barely significant. Similarly, dismissing attachment also predicted more aggressive behavior (β = .157, P = .008). lastly, fearful attachment style did not significantly predict students' aggressive behavior although a statistically significant bivariate correlation was found between fearful attachment and aggressive behavior.

IV. Discussion

This study investigated whether attachment styles predicted aggressive behavior in secondary school students in Nairobi County. The findings made in the study showed significant associations between attachment styles and students' aggressive behavior. In line with previous studies that have explored attachment security and aggressive behavior in adolescents, this study found that secure attachment predicted less aggressive behavior. Earlier investigations have found that adolescents with secure attachment to parents and peers were less likely to be aggressive towards one another (Walden & Beran, 2010; Nikiforou et al, 2013; de Vries et al, 2016; Murphy et al, 2017).

This study took a dimensional approach to attachment and explored the role of attachment styles in predicting aggressive behavior. In correlational analysis, aggressive behavior was significantly correlated with preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment styles. The implication of this finding was that students with insecure attachment styles were more likely to be aggressive towards others. In addition, regression analysis showed that dismissing attachment was the strongest predictor of students' aggressive behavior followed by preoccupied attachment. In other words, attachment avoidance and anxiety were significantly associated with students' aggressive behavior. This finding is supported by findings from earlier studies such as Okeke and Anierobi (2020) who found that attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were significantly related to aggressive behavior in Nigerian secondary school students. Attachment avoidance predicted aggressive behavior in adolescent African American girls in the study by McDade (2015) exploring association between attachment styles and aggressive behavior. Similarly, Kõiv (2012) found that bullies were more likely to have avoidant attachment compared to students who were not involved in any bullying.

This study demonstrated that Students with secure attachment style are less likely to be aggressive towards others as opposed to students with insecure attachment styles. Students with secure attachment are better adjusted and socially competent, are more empathic and demonstrate more prosocial behavior than those with insecure attachment (Schoeps, Monaco, Cotolı & Montoya-Castilla, 2020). As a result, they have more positive relationships, less hostility, less anger and less aggressive behavior. Students with the dismissing and fearful attachment styles are prone to looking at others in a negative light and easily misinterpret innocuous signals from others as threats. As a result, they feel less constrained from actions that may harm other people. In addition, they do not value intimate relationships because they distrust other people. Since they are not much concerned about maintaining relationships, they have no problem harming others through aggressive behaviors. Bonneville (2016) looked at aggression in adult couples and found that abusive behavior was associated with fearful attachment. The author observed that respondents with fearful attachment styles were torn between desiring intimacy with partners on one hand and dreading too much closeness with partners on the other hand. The conflict between wanting to distance themselves when they feel too close or wanting to get closer when they feel too distanced from significant others is frustrating and according to the author of the study, leads individuals with fearful attachment into aggressive behavior like insults, curses and hurtful words.

Unlike students with dismissing attachment, students with preoccupied attachment style are more concerned with maintaining relationships with significant others. They find validation through acceptance by attachment figures and worry over abandonment. Adolescents with anxious attachment may think of aggression as the only way to get attention from attachment figures because they never developed effective ways of relating with attachment figures since childhood (Farnicka & Grzegorzewska, 2015). Students with insecure attachment lack emotion regulation skills because they did not learn to properly regulate their emotions within relationships

with caregivers and are prone to acting aggressively when they experience negative emotions (Ratip (2013; Miga, Hare, Allen & Manning, 2020).

V.   Conclusion

This study found that attachment styles were significantly associated with students' aggressive behavior in Nairobi County. Although secure attachment did not predict less aggressive behavior as expected, insecure attachment styles were associated with more aggressive behavior. It can be concluded that the internal working models formed from early attachment relationships influence adolescent's behavior in relation to other people. Adolescents with insecure attachment styles, hence negative self-models and models of relational figures, are more prone to aggressive behavior.   This study therefore demonstrated that the attachment theory is a valuable framework that might be used to explain aggressive behavior in adolescents.

VI.   Recommendations

The study recommends that attachment security should be considered in school guidance and counseling especially when dealing with problem behavior such as aggression and violence. Guidance and counseling teachers should assess students' attachment styles and pay closer attention to students with insecure attachment styles since insecure attachment is a risk factor for aggressive behavior. Parents and guardians should be educated on parenting that fosters secure attachment in their children.

[1].   References

[2].   Ainsworth, M. D., & Bell, S. M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development, 41*, 49-67. doi: 10.2307/1127388

[3].   Allen, J. G. (2013) *Mentalizing in the development and treatment of attachment trauma*. London, England: Karnac.

[4].   Allen, J., McElhaney, K., Kuperminc, G., & Jodl, K. (2004). Stability and change in attachment security across adolescence. *Child Development, 75*, 1792–1805.

[5].   Anderson, C. A., & Huesmann, L. R. (2003). Human Aggression : A Social-Cognitive View. In M. A. Hogg & J. Cooper (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp. 298–323). Sage Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608221.n12

[6].   Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test

[7].   of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*, 226-244.

[8].   Berlin, L. J., Cassidy, J., & Appleyard, K. (2008). The influence of early attachments on other relationships. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications (*2nd ed*.)* (pp. 348-365). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

[9].   Boling, M. W., Barry, C. M., Kotchick, B. A., & Lowry, J. (2011). Relations among early adolescents' parent-adolescent attachment, perceived social competence, and friendship quality. *Psychological Reports, 109*(3), 819-841. doi: 10.2466/02.07.09.21.PR0. 109.6.819-841

[10].   Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Attachment.* New York: Basic Books.

[11].   Bowlby, J. (1988). Developmental psychiatry comes of age. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 145*, 1–10.

[12].   Brodie, Z., Goodall, K., Darling, S., & Mcvittie, C. (2018). Attachment insecurity and dispositional aggression: The mediating role of maladaptive anger regulation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518772937

[13].   Buss, A.H., & Perry, M. (1992). The Aggression Questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*, 452-459.

[14].   Cassidy, J. (2001). Truth, lies, and intimacy: An attachment perspective. *Attachment & Human Development, 3*(2), 121-155. doi: 10.1080/14616730110058999

[15].   de Vries, S. L. A., Hoeve, M., Stams, G. J. J. M., & Asscher, J. J. (2016). Adolescent-Parent Attachment and Externalizing Behavior : The Mediating Role of Individual and Social Factors. *J Abnorm Child Psychol*, *44*, 283–294. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-9999-5

[16].   Dwyer, K. M., Fredstrom, B. K., Rubin, K. H., Booth-laforce, C., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Burgess, K. B. (2010). Attachment, Social Information Processing, and Friendship Quality of Early Adolescent Girls and Boys. *J Soc Pers Relat.*, *27*(1), 91–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509346420

[17].   Dykas, M. J., Ziv, Y., & Cassidy, J. (2008). Attachment and peer relations in adolescence. *Attachment & Human Development*, *10*(2), 123–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730802113679

[18].   Eltink, E. M. A., Hoeve, J. Ten, De Jongh, T., Van der Helm, G. H. P., Wissink, I. B., & Stams, G. J. J. M. (2018). Stability and Change of Adolescents' Aggressive Behavior in Residential Youth Care. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, *47*(2), 199–217. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-017-9425-y

[19].   Estévez, E., Jiménez, T. I., & Moreno, D. (2018). Aggressive behavior in adolescence as a predictor of personal , family , and school adjustment problems. *Psicothema*, *30*(1), 66–73. https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2016.294

[20].   Farnicka, M., & Grzegorzewska, I. (2015). Intrapersonal correlates of aggression in adolescents: Determinants of undertaking the role of the perpetrator and the victim. *Current Issues in Personality Psychology, 3*, 25-35. doi:10.5114/cipp.2015.49940

[21].   Huang, J., Tang, J., Tang, L., Chang, H., Ma, Y., Yan, Q., & Yu, Y. (2017). Aggression and Related Stressful Life Events among Chinese Adolescents Living in Rural Areas : A Cross-Sectional Study. *J Affect Disord*, *15*(211), 20–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2016.12.044

[22].   Itegi, F. M. (2017). Bullying and its Effects : Experiences in Kenyan Public Secondary Schools. *International Journal of Education and Research*, *5*(3), 23–36.

[23].   Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Foshee, V. A., Ennett, S. T., & Suchindran, C. (2008). The development of aggression during adolescence: Sex differences in trajectories of physical and social aggression among youth in rural areas. *J Abnorm Child Psychol*, *36*(8), 1227–1236. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-008-9245-5.

[24].   Kiessling-caver, A. (2018). Attachment Security and Violence : The Role of Reflective Functioning Capacity. *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, *19*(1), 15–26.

[25].   Kõiv, K. (2012). Attachment Styles Among Bullies, Victims and Uninvolved Adolescents. *Psychology Research*, *2*(3), 160–165.

[26].   Kumar, M., Bhilwar, M., Kapoor, R., Sharma, P., & Parija, P. (2016). Prevalence of Aggression among School- Going Adolescents

in India : A Review Study. *Kumar M et Al. Ind. J. Youth Adol. Health*, *3*(4), 39–47.

[27]. Little, T. D., Henrich, C. C., Jones, M. J., & Hawley, P. H. (2003). Disentangling the " whys " from the " whats " of aggressive behaviour. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *27*(2), 122–133. https://doi.org/10.1080/0165025024400128

[28]. Liu, Y. (2006). Paternal/maternal attachment, peer support, social expectations of peer interaction, and depressive symptoms. *Adolescence*, *41*, 705-721.

[29]. Li, X., Bian, C., Chen, Y., Huang, J., Ma, Y., Tang, L., … Yu, Y. (2015). Indirect aggression and parental attachment in early adolescence: Examining the role of perspective taking and empathetic concern. *PAID*, *86*, 499–503. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.07.008

[30]. Malonda, E., Llorca, A., Mesurado, B., Samper, P., & Mestre, M. V. (2019). Parents or Peers ? Predictors of Prosocial Behavior and Aggression : A Longitudinal Study. *Front. Psychol*, *10*(2379). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02379

[31]. Manyibe, E. (2018). *Analysis of Parenting Styles and Bullying Behavior among Girls*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

[32]. Mcdade, E. M. (2013). *The Impact of Self-Reported Attachment Style on Aggression and Depressed Mood in Urban African American Adolescents*. Unpublished Thesis, University of Michigan.

[33]. Miga, E. M., Hare, A., Allen, J. P., & Manning, N. (2010). The Relation of Insecure Attachment States of Mind and Romantic Attachment Styles to Adolescent Aggression in Romantic Relationships. *Attach Hum Dev*, *12*(5), 463–481. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2010.501971

[34]. Murphy, T. P., Laible, D., & Augustine, M. (2017). The Influences of Parent and Peer Attachment on Bullying. *J Child Fam Stud*, *26*(5), 1388–1397. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0663-2.The

[35]. Nikiforou, M., Georgiou, S. N., & Stavrinides, P. (2013). Attachment to Parents and Peers as a Parameter of Bullying and Victimization. *Journal OfCriminology*, *2013*. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/484871

[36]. Okeke, N. U., & Anierobi, E. I. (2020). The Relationship Between Parental Attachment and Aggressive Behaviours Among In-School Adolescents in. *Journal of Guidance and Counselling Studies*, *4*(1), 338–351. https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4055779

[37]. Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do: Understanding children's worlds*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

[38]. Ooi, Y. P., Ang, R. P., Fung, D., Wong, G., & Cai, Y. (2006). The Impact of Parent-Child Attachment on Aggression , Social Stress and Self- Esteem. *School Psychology International*, *27*(5), 552–566. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034306073402

[39]. Opere, O. A., Kamere, I., & Wawire, V. (2019). School Violence as a Cause of Non-Peaceful Coexistence in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi, Kenya. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 130–145. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2019.79010

[40]. Perez-gramaje, A. F., Garcia, O. F., Reyes, M., Serra, E., & Garcia, F. (2020). The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context and Personal Maladjustment. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, *12*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.5093/ejpalc2020a1

[41]. Racz, S. J., Putnick, D. L., Suwalsky, J. T., Hendricks, C., & Bornstein, M. H. (2017). Cognitive abilities, social adaptation, and externalizing behavior problems in childhood and adolescence: specific cascade effects across development. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 46*, 1688-1701. https:// doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0602-3

[42]. Ratip, D. (2013). *The role of attachment in violent offending and violence in institutions*. Unpublished Thesis, University of Birmingham.

[43]. Riggs, S. (2010). Childhood Emotional Abuse and the Attachment System Across the Life Cycle: What Theory and Research Tell Us. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *19*, 5–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926770903475968

[44]. Ristić-Dimitrijević, R., Lazić, D., Nenadović, M., Djokić-pješčić, K., Klidonas, N., & Stefanović, V. (2011). Aggression in Adolescents: Characteristics and Treatment. *Srp Arh Celok Lek*, *139*(suppl 1), 61–64. https://doi.org/10.2298/SARH11S1061R

[45]. Schlomer, G.L., Cleveland, H.H., Vandenbergh, D.J., Feinberg, M.E., Neiderhiser, J.M., Greenberg, M.T., Spoth, R. & Redmond, C. (2015). Developmental differences in early adolescent aggression: a gene x environment x intervention analysis. *J Youth Adolesc, 44*, 581-597.

[46]. Schoeps, K., Monaco, E., Cotolı, A., & Montoya-Castilla, I. (2020). The impact of peer attachment on prosocial behavior , emotional difficulties and conduct problems in adolescence : The mediating role of empathy. *PLoS ONE*, *15*(1), e0227627. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0227627

[47]. Sharma, R., Grover, V.L., & Chaturvedi, S. (2008) Risk behaviors related to inter-personal violence among school and college-going adolescents in south Delhi. *Indian J Community Med, 33*(2), 85-88

[48]. Shaver, P. R., & Mikulincer, M. (2002). Attachment-related psychodynamics. *Attachment & Human Development*, *4*(2), 133–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461673021015417

[49]. Tang, J., Ma, Y., Guo, Y., Ahmed, N.I., Yu, Y. & Wang, J. (2013). Association of aggression and non-suicidal self-injury: a school-based sample of adolescents. *PLoS One, 8*(10), e78149. 10.1371/journal.pone.0078149

[50]. Thompson, R. A. (2008). Early attachment and later development. In J. Cassidy, & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 265-286). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

[51]. Van Oudenhoven, J.P., Hofstra, J., & Bakker, W. (2003). Ontwikkeling en evaluatie van de Hechtingsstijlvragenlijst (HSL) [Development and evaluation of the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ)]. *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor de Psychologie, 58*, 95-102

[52]. Wahl, K., and Metzner, C. (2012). Parental influences on the prevalence and development of child aggressiveness. J. Child Fam. Stud. 21, 344–355. doi: 10.1007/s10826-011-9484-x

[53]. Wakoli, C. O., & Bundotich, S. (2020). Prevalence of Aggressive Behaviours among Students in Secondary Schools in Bungoma County , Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *4*(4), 305–311.

[54]. Walden, L. M., & Beran, T. N. (2010). Attachment Quality and Bullying Behavior in School-Aged Youth. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, *25*(1), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573509357046

[55]. Warren, P., Richardson, D. S., & McQuillin, S. (2011). Distinguishing among non-direct forms of aggression. *Aggressive Behavior, 37*(4), 291–301.