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The Relationship Between Attachment Style and Aggression in Young School-Aged Children with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

Attachment, which forms during childhood, specifically from the first year of life, is manifested as an emotional bond between the child and the primary attachment figure. It becomes a predictive factor for action mechanisms in emotionally charged situations.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between the type of attachment and aggressiveness in young school-aged children with intellectual disabilities. We were interested in determining the extent to which the dominant attachment type influences the onset of behavioral disorders and aggressive reactions. The results obtained in the research process demonstrated the extent to which the dominant attachment type influences aggressive manifestations in children with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: attachment style, aggression, intellectual disability

Introduction

Attachment

A child adapts to the world by forming a strong bond between themselves and their primary caregiver, an emotional connection known as attachment (Verza & Verza, 2017).

The early research that studied the emotional connection between mother and child highlighted the existence of three main categories of attachment styles (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978, as cited in Gurza, 2020):

1. Secure Attachment - the relationship between the mother and child is secure and based on trust. This type of relationship makes the child more self-confident and courageous in exploring the surrounding environment because they know they are unconditionally supported, and that help is available when needed. Secure attachment develops through the mother's prompt responses to the child's emotional and support needs in the early years of life.
2. Ambivalent Attachment - the child's relationship with the environment and the caregiving parent is characterized by anxiety and resistance because the child doesn't have the assurance that the adult will respond to their needs for support and emotional fulfillment consistently. This type of relationship develops as a result of the caregiver's fluctuating behavior in meeting the child's emotional and support needs.
3. Avoidant Attachment - in this case, the child's relationships are marked by anxiety and avoidance. The child anticipates constant rejection when seeking support from adults and, as a result, constantly strives for emotional independence from those around them to avoid

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experiencing the pain of rejection. This type of relationship develops when the child's emotional and support needs are repeatedly suppressed by the mother or caregiver.

A secure attachment style is associated with high well-being. People with this type of attachment style exhibit better resilience compared to those with avoidant or ambivalent attachment styles. They do not suppress their feelings to seek social interactions but rather use them for human interaction (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012).

Secure attachment serves as the foundation upon which high self-esteem can be built, clarifying one's self-concept. In this case, social feedback is seen as a resource for developmental efforts, and there is also a process of positive self-evaluation (Kawamoto, 2020).

Individuals with an ambivalent attachment style often try to draw attention to themselves without appearing to need help. They frequently employ strategies to demonstrate immaturity and emotional instability when signaling their need for support from the primary caregiver. Unlike the other two attachment styles, individuals with an ambivalent attachment style do not make efforts to integrate socially, giving the impression that they are disinterested in social interactions (Pastor, 1981; Cassidy & Berlin, 1994, as cited in Folwarczny & Otterbring, 2021).

Individuals with an avoidant attachment style have very low levels of empathy because they develop defense mechanisms to suppress their emotions. They tend to encode and recall fewer events and details when exposed to accounts of sad events in other people's lives (Simpson, et al., 2011).

When a child is separated from their primary attachment figure, anxiety arises in response to an unfamiliar, fear-inducing situation. The child feels safest when with the person with whom they have formed an emotional bond. When the attachment figure is absent, and the child is in an unfamiliar environment, the situation is automatically perceived as dangerous, and anxiety serves as a survival mechanism (Bowlby, 2016).

Aggression

Aggression is understood as an impulsive and destructive behavioral response generated by a combination of external or internal factors (Popescu-Neveanu, 1978). Research attempting to explain the manifestation of aggression has linked it to various variables such as age, gender, environment of origin, and more. Over time, several theories regarding the manifestations of aggression and the factors that drive and sustain it have been proposed. In an attempt to synthesize these theories into an overarching perspective, the General Aggression Model refers to several theories: cognitive neo-association theory, social learning theory, script theory, excitation transfer theory, and social interaction theory. The General Aggression Model considers all categories of factors (social, cognitive, developmental, and biological) to be important in the manifestation of aggressive behavior (Allen, Anderson, & Bushman, 2018).

The General Aggression Model focuses on the individual in a context, a cyclic episode formed by continuous social interactions. This model has three main components (Anderson & Bushman, 2002): a) Information about people and situations - inputs; b) The cognitive, affective, and arousal pathways through which these input variables impact - routes; c) The outcomes of underlying evaluation and decision processes - outcomes.

The first stage, inputs, focuses on how personal and situational factors influence the internal variables of the current state (cognition, affect, and arousal), which are responsible for increasing or decreasing the likelihood of aggression (Allen, Anderson, & Bushman, 2018). Personal factors are individual factors that cause different individuals to respond differently to the

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same situation, or the same individual to respond differently to different situations. Among the most influential personal factors are high or unstable self-esteem, aggressive self-image, high self-efficacy, normative acceptance of aggression, positive attitudes towards aggression, aggressive behavioral scenarios, moral justification of violence, dehumanization, high levels of anger, certain personality disorders, low self-control, high neuroticism, low agreeableness, low conscientiousness, etc. (Gilbert & Daffern, 2011). Situational factors refer to situational variables that create a conducive environment for the emergence of aggression. Among the most important situational factors are social stress, social rejection, provocation, frustration, bad moods, alcohol intoxication, violent environments, discomfort, ego depletion, anonymity, high temperatures, noise, the presence of weapons, threatening stimuli, fear-inducing stimuli (DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2012, cited in Allen, Anderson, & Bushman, 2018).

The routes, or pathways, in the second stage, are the ways in which personal and situational factors act on the internal variables to reinforce aggressive or non-aggressive behaviors. There are three internal variables acting as conduits: affect, cognition, and arousal. Factors such as pain or personality traits affect moods and emotions (affect), while factors like exposure to hostile environments shape aggressive thoughts toward violent acts. Arousal, both physiological and psychological, is influenced by factors such as aggressive history or substance use (Allen, Anderson, & Bushman, 2018).

The third stage, the outcome, is an evaluation process of the situation and the decision on how to respond to the given situation. The decision, whether it leads to aggressive or non-aggressive behavior, is preceded by its application, which leads to new persuasions about the person and the situation, thus restarting the cycle (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Within the framework of the General Aggression Model, there are also distal processes, i.e., biological, and enduring environmental factors that reshape personality and the situation. Among the most important biological factors are ADHD, impaired executive functioning, hormonal imbalances, low serotonin, and low arousal. Regarding the environment, the changes that support aggression primarily include cultural norms that support violence, dysfunctional families, difficult living conditions, deprivation, victimization, violent environments, violent or antisocial peer groups, group conflict, the delegation of responsibility, and chronic exposure to violent mass media programs (Anderson & Carnagey, 2004).

In the case of children with intellectual disabilities, numerous studies have highlighted high prevalence rates of disorganized attachment (ambivalent or avoidant) within this category of individuals. Compared to control groups of individuals of the same chronological age without intellectual disabilities, we can observe a prevalence of disorganized attachment ranging from 40% to 60% in children with intellectual disabilities. This can be explained by the varying family contexts, which range from neglect to overprotection. In other words, the families of these children either neglect their needs due to lack of interest or exhibit excessive care, leading to the neglect of the children's needs in an attempt to protect them too much (Feniger-Schaal & Joels, 2018).

Building upon these findings, numerous other studies have sought to examine the impact of attachment style on adaptive behavior in children with intellectual disabilities. Thus, it has been observed that the presence of an ambivalent or avoidant attachment style is associated with lower rates of social adaptability. The level of cognitive and adaptive functioning is directly influenced by the dominance of the attachment style (Granqvist, et al., 2017).

Similar conclusions have been reached by Fletcher, Flood, and Hare (2016), who, through their work, manage to establish a connection between the dominant attachment style and

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aggressive behaviors. They note that in the case of intellectually disabled children who develop either ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles, difficulties related to stress resistance, emotional distress, and disruptive behavior are observed, including aggressive and dissociative behavior.

Vanwalleghem, Miljkovitch, and Vinter (2021) discuss in their studies about maladaptive social behaviors and low levels of adaptive functioning due to the presence of disorganized attachment in children with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, this type of attachment is associated with suboptimal socio-emotional development and behavioral problems.

Although the literature highlights studies that demonstrate the relationship between dominant attachment style and the presence of aggressive and maladaptive behaviors in children with intellectual disabilities, further research is necessary to strengthen these theories.

Method

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between attachment type and aggression in young school-age children with intellectual disabilities. We were interested in determining to what extent the dominant attachment type influences the occurrence of behavioral disorders and aggressive reactions.

The research objectives were as follows:

- Determine the dominant attachment type in young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Determine high-frequency behavioral disorders in children with intellectual disabilities.
- Correlate attachment styles with behavioral disorders in young school-age children with intellectual disabilities.
- Determine which attachment style is associated with a higher frequency of behavioral disorders in young school-age children with intellectual disabilities.

For the current study, three hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit a secure attachment style have a lower frequency of behavioral disorders.
- H2: Young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit an ambivalent attachment style have a higher frequency of behavioral disorders.
- H3: Young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit an avoidant attachment style have a higher frequency of passive aggression compared to active or overt aggression.

The difficulty in selecting the sample and ensuring the validity of the research results arises from the lack of homogeneity within special education classes, even within classes of students with mild intellectual disabilities. It is known that psycho-emotional development and the formation of adaptive behaviors vary among students in school groups. Additionally, the unique characteristics of behavior in students with intellectual disabilities pose a challenge.

Due to the lack of homogeneity, it was proposed to broaden the sample to include all primary level classes. The sample consists of 20 students enrolled in the primary education cycle at the "Constantin Păunescu" Special Primary School.

The criteria for homogeneity in forming the subject group were as follows:

- Age: 6-11 years.
- Type of disability: intellectual disability.

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Regarding the degree of disability, the largest proportion of subjects in the sample are classified as having moderate intellectual disabilities, with 10 individuals representing 50.0% of the sample. Subjects with mild intellectual disabilities number 9 and represent 45.0% of the sample, while subjects with severe intellectual disabilities number 1, representing 5.0% of the sample.

To measure aggression in this study, a reinterpreted version of the Hostility Inventory (Arnold H. Buss, Ann Durkee) and the Woodworth-Mathews Temperament Test were used. The items of these instruments were adapted to the age level and understanding capacity of the subjects.

To measure attachment styles, the Attachment Relationships Observation Grid was used. This instrument was developed for this study and is based on the behaviors described in John Bowlby's studies on the formation of emotional bonds. The grid consists of 15 statements grouped to identify the three main attachment styles (secure, ambivalent, and avoidant).

Findings and discussion

In the analysis of the results, descriptive and correlational statistics were employed.

Table 1. Mean Values Obtained from the Attachment Relationships Observation Grid

	Secure Attachment	Ambivalent Attachment	Avoidant Attachment
Mean	3.00	2.30	1.65
Median	3.00	3.00	1.00
Standard Deviation	1.414	1.625	1.496
Minimum	1	0	0
Maximum	5	5	5

It is indeed notable that higher scores are recorded for the variables Secure Attachment Style and Ambivalent Attachment Style. The mean scores for these two variables, Secure Attachment Style and Ambivalent Attachment Style, are 3.00 and 2.30, respectively, while the mean score for the Avoidant Attachment Style variable is much lower, at only 1.65 points. This can be explained by the different dynamics of the family environment from which the research subjects originate, as well as the emotional underdevelopment of individuals with intellectual disabilities, which leads them to perceive emotional stimuli from the primary attachment figure differently.

The smaller standard deviation values compared to the central tendencies for all three variables (1.414 for Secure Attachment Style, 1.625 for Ambivalent Attachment Style, and 1.496 for Avoidant Attachment Style) indicate a limited dispersion of results within the subject group. This suggests that there is less variability in the responses of the research subjects regarding their attachment styles, reinforcing the observed trends in the data.

Table 2. Mean Values Obtained from the Hostility Inventory (Arnold H. Buss, Ann Durkee)

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Negativism	2.80	3.00	0.894	0	4
Resentment	2.80	2.00	1.542	1	6
Indirect Hostility	4.00	5.00	2.152	1	7
Physical Aggression	4.65	4.00	4.196	0	10
Suspicion	2.80	2.00	1.908	0	6
Irritability	5.40	6.50	3.545	0	10
Verbal Hostility	7.25	5.00	3.492	3	12

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We thus observe higher values recorded for the variables of Verbal Hostility and Irritability. The average scores on these two variables, Verbal Hostility and Irritability, are 7.25 and 5.40, respectively, while the average for the values of the variables Negativism, Resentment, and Suspicion registers only 2.80 points. The difference between the highest mean recorded for the Verbal Hostility variable and the lowest mean recorded for the Negativism, Resentment, and Suspicion variables is 4.45 points. This can be explained by the fact that the emotional and behavioral development of individuals with intellectual disabilities is below their chronological age. They adopt behaviors through imitation without discerning whether they are good or bad and persist in these behaviors. The standard deviation values that are closer to the central tendencies for the variables Indirect Hostility and Physical Aggression demonstrate a greater dispersion of results within the subject group. For the other variables, a narrower dispersion within the subject group can be observed.

Table 3. Mean Values Obtained from the Woodworth-Mathews Temperament Test

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Simple Emotionality	173.80	156.00	68.849	56	280
Psychasthenia, Obsession	170.40	180.00	54.451	72	264
Schizoid Tendencies	99.00	105.00	58.481	0	180
Paranoid Tendencies	85.00	70.00	43.950	20	180
Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies	149.00	130.00	60.380	78	286
Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies	118.80	126.50	60.803	0	216
Unstable Tendencies	187.20	182.00	105.898	0	364
Antisocial Tendencies	130.00	130.00	97.648	0	312

It is evident that the highest mean value was obtained for the variable "Tendințe instabile (instabilitate psihică)" (Unstable Tendencies), with an average of 187.20, while the lowest mean value was recorded for the variable "Tendințe paranoide" (Paranoid Tendencies), with an average of 85.00. The difference between the highest mean recorded for the "Tendințe instabile (instabilitate psihică)" variable and the lowest mean recorded for the "Tendințe paranoide" variable is 102.2 points. This can be explained by the fact that emotional development in individuals with intellectual disabilities is often asynchronous and marked by the specific heterochrony of this category of individuals.

The smaller standard deviation values compared to the central tendencies for all variables indicate a limited dispersion of results within the subject group. This suggests that there is less variability in the responses of the research subjects regarding their temperament traits, reinforcing the observed trends in the data.

Table 4. Correlational Analysis of Secure Attachment Style with Variables from the Hostility Inventory

		Secure Attachment
Negativism	Pearson Correlation	-,083
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,364
	N	20
Resentment	Pearson Correlation	-,386*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,046
	N	20
Indirect Hostility	Pearson Correlation	-,519**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,010
	N	20
Physical Aggression	Pearson Correlation	-,585**

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	Sig. (1-tailed)	,003
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,137
Suspicion	Sig. (1-tailed)	,283
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,451*
Irritability	Sig. (1-tailed)	,023
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,543**
Verbal Hostility	Sig. (1-tailed)	,007
	N	20

From Table 4, it can be observed that there is a significant negative correlation (for Sig. < 0.05) between the Secure Attachment Style variable and the Resentment and Irritability variables. Additionally, between the Secure Attachment Style variable and the Indirect Hostility, Physical Aggression, and Verbal Hostility variables, there is a highly significant negative correlation (for Sig. < 0.01). Negative correlations indicate an inversely proportional relationship between the Secure Attachment Style variable and the mentioned variables; as Secure Attachment Style becomes more prominent, hostility manifestations decrease.

In simpler terms, this suggests that individuals with a more secure attachment style tend to exhibit lower levels of resentment, irritability, indirect hostility, physical aggression, and verbal hostility. This information can be valuable for understanding the relationship between attachment security and various aspects of hostility and aggression.

Table 5. Correlational Analysis of Secure Attachment Style with Variables from the Woodworth-Mathews Temperament Test

		Secure Attachment
	Pearson Correlation	-,288
Simple Emotionality	Sig. (1-tailed)	,109
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,541**
Psychasthenia, Obsession	Sig. (1-tailed)	,007
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,439*
Schizoid Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,026
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	,119
Paranoid Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,309
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,465*
Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,019
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,771**
Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,603**
Unstable Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,002
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,535**
Antisocial Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,008
	N	20

From Table 5, it can be observed that there is a significant negative correlation (for Sig. < 0.05) between the Secure Attachment Style variable and the Schizoid Tendencies and Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies variables. Additionally, between the Secure Attachment Style

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variable and the Psychasthenia, Obsession, Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies, Unstable Tendencies, and Antisocial Tendencies variables, there is a highly significant negative correlation (for Sig. < 0.01). Negative correlations indicate an inversely proportional relationship between the Secure Attachment Style variable and the mentioned temperament traits; as Secure Attachment Style becomes more prominent, manifestations of aggression-related traits decrease.

In simpler terms, this suggests that individuals with a more secure attachment style tend to exhibit lower levels of schizoid tendencies, depressive and hypochondriac tendencies, psychasthenia, obsession, impulsive and epileptoid tendencies, unstable tendencies, and antisocial tendencies. This information can be valuable for understanding the relationship between attachment security and various temperament traits related to aggression.

Table 6. Correlational Analysis of the Ambivalent Attachment Style with the Hostility Inventory Variables.

		Ambivalent Attachment
Negativism	Pearson Correlation	-,065
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,392
	N	20
Resentment	Pearson Correlation	,235
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,159
	N	20
Indirect Hostility	Pearson Correlation	,391*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,044
	N	20
Physical Aggression	Pearson Correlation	,564**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,005
	N	20
Suspicion	Pearson Correlation	,071
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,383
	N	20
Irritability	Pearson Correlation	,462*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,020
	N	20
Verbal Hostility	Pearson Correlation	,524**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,009
	N	20

From Table 6, it can be observed that there is a significant positive correlation (at Sig. <0.05) between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the variables Indirect Hostility and Irritability. Additionally, there is a highly significant positive correlation (at Sig. <0.01) between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the variables Physical Violence and Verbal Hostility. Positive correlations indicate a direct proportionality between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the mentioned variables, meaning that as the Ambivalent Attachment Style becomes more pronounced, manifestations of hostility increase.

Table 7. Correlational Analysis of the Ambivalent Attachment Style with the Woodworth-Mathews Temperament Test Variables.

		Ambivalent Attachment
Simple Emotionality	Pearson Correlation	,087
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,358
	N	20
Psychasthenia, Obsession	Pearson Correlation	,334
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,075
	N	20
Schizoid Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,419*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,033

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	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	-,140
Paranoid Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,278
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	,435*
Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,027
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	,560**
Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,005
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	,372
Unstable Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,053
	N	20
	Pearson Correlation	,517**
Antisocial Tendencies	Sig. (1-tailed)	,010
	N	20

From Table 7, it can be observed that there is a significant positive correlation (at Sig. <0.05) between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the variables Schizoid Tendencies and Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies. Additionally, there is a highly significant positive correlation (at Sig. <0.01) between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the variables Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies, as well as Antisocial (Egocentric) Tendencies. Positive correlations indicate a direct proportionality between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the mentioned variables, meaning that as the Ambivalent Attachment Style becomes more pronounced, manifestations of these aggressive traits increase.

Table 8. Correlational Analysis of the Avoidant Attachment Style Variable with the Hostility Inventory Variables

		Avoidant Attachment
Negativism	Pearson Correlation	-,173
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,233
	N	20
Resentiment	Pearson Correlation	,059
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,402
	N	20
Indirect Hostility	Pearson Correlation	,490*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,014
	N	20
Physical Aggression	Pearson Correlation	,440*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,026
	N	20
Suspicion	Pearson Correlation	,251
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,143
	N	20
Irritability	Pearson Correlation	,355
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,062
	N	20
Verbal Hostility	Pearson Correlation	,370
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,054
	N	20

From Table 8, it can be observed that there is a significant positive correlation (at Sig.<0.05) between the variable "Avoidant Attachment Style" and the variables "Indirect Hostility" and "Physical Violence." Positive correlations indicate a direct proportional relationship between the "Avoidant Attachment Style" variable and the other mentioned variables. In other

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words, the more pronounced the Avoidant Attachment Style, the higher the manifestations of hostility.

Table 9. Correlational Analysis of the Avoidant Attachment Style Variable with the Woodworth-Mathews Temperament Test Variables.

		Avoidant Attachment
Simple Emotionality	Pearson Correlation	,060
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,402
	N	20
Psychasthenia, Obsession	Pearson Correlation	,104
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,332
	N	20
Schizoid Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,327
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,080
	N	20
Paranoid Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,268
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,127
	N	20
Depressive and Hypochondriac Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	-,010
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,483
	N	20
Impulsive and Epileptoid Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,294
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,104
	N	20
Unstable Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,211
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,186
	N	20
Antisocial Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,440*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,026
	N	20

From Table 9, it can be observed that there is a significant positive correlation (at Sig.<0.05) between the variable "Avoidant Attachment Style" and the variable "Antisocial (egocentric) tendencies." Positive correlations indicate a direct proportional relationship between the "Avoidant Attachment Style" variable and the other variable mentioned. In other words, the more pronounced the Avoidant Attachment Style, the higher the antisocial tendencies tend to be.

Conclusion

In the case of children with intellectual disabilities, it is more challenging to establish a clear relationship between attachment style and aggression due to the specific traits and the very high capacity for imitation that persists throughout their lives. Additionally, the emotional and affective underdevelopment associated with infantile emotions, which is characteristic of individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout their lives, makes it harder to define an attachment style.

This specific context formed the basis of the investigative approach, which aimed to explore the relationship between attachment type and aggression in young school-age children with intellectual disabilities.

Following the correlational analysis between the Secure Attachment Style and the variables defining aggression, it was observed that there are significant and highly significant negative correlations between them. This validates the first research hypothesis, which assumed that young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit a secure attachment style have a lower frequency of behavioral disorders. Thus, the dominance of the

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Secure Attachment Style inhibits aggressive tendencies in young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Regarding the second research hypothesis, which suggests that young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit an ambivalent attachment style have a higher frequency of behavioral disorders, the significant and highly significant positive correlations between the Ambivalent Attachment Style variable and the aggression variables confirm this hypothesis. In young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities, the presence of an ambivalent attachment style supports and sustains aggressive tendencies.

The significant positive correlations between the Avoidant Attachment Style variable and the aggression variables included in this assumption confirm the third research hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit an avoidant attachment style have a higher frequency of passive aggression rather than active or overt aggression. Thus, passive aggression is more pronounced in young school-age individuals with intellectual disabilities who predominantly exhibit the Avoidant Attachment Style compared to their peers who share similar characteristics but predominantly exhibit one of the other two attachment styles.

The conclusions reached as a result of the investigative process strengthen the findings obtained from previous research and support the theory that aggressive behavior is influenced by the dominant attachment style in young schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities. This adds new arguments to the existing body of knowledge supported by the investigative effort. The study has significant practical implications for professionals in the field and contributes to the development of new strategies and intervention programs.

From an educational standpoint, the current research emphasizes the need to understand and address attachment style as part of holistic behavioral intervention. Professionals in the field can pay special attention to attachment-based strategies to reduce aggressive behaviors and enhance the process of social integration. In this case, early intervention becomes crucially necessary. Knowledge of the dominant attachment style can be important for anticipating and preventing maladaptive behaviors. Therefore, professional training that includes understanding, recognizing, and addressing attachment-related difficulties in children with intellectual disabilities is also necessary.

Regarding the family environment, programs can be developed to help family members understand the formation of attachment styles and their impact on children's behavior. This way, the family plays an essential role in shaping secure attachment.

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