



# Personality and family correlates of problem behaviour among adolescents

Anna Janovska, Maria Bacikova-Sleskova

Department of Educational Psychology and Health Psychology,  
Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovak Republic

## Background:

Recently, the rise of problem behaviour in schools has often been discussed. Indeed, adolescence is the period of life in which various forms of problem behaviour may escalate. In our contribution, we focused on the problem behaviour represented by avoiding school, disturbing the lesson, using vulgar words, cheating and refusing to meet teacher's demands. We examined their relationship with self-esteem, self-control and some aspects of parenting (child disclosure, parental solicitation, parental knowledge, parental monitoring).

## Sample:

The representative research sample consisted of 1101 early adolescents (50.1% girls, Mean age=13.48) from primary schools in Slovakia.

## Methods:

The respondents completed:

**The Self-Control Scale** (Finkenauer, Engels, & Baumeister, 2005) consisted of 11 items and respondents could answer on a five-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always). A higher score indicated a higher level of self-control.

**Self-Esteem scale** (Rosenberg, 1979) consisted of 10 items. Respondents could answer on a four-point scale. The higher score represented a higher level of self-esteem.

Child disclosure, parental solicitation, parental knowledge and parental monitoring were assessed using a set of questions developed by Stattin and Kerr (2000). The scales consisted of 5 to 7 items, higher score indicates stronger family process.

Respondents were also asked about the frequency of some forms of problem behaviour (avoiding school, disturbing the lesson, using vulgar words, cheating and refusing to meet teacher's demands). We created summary score of problem behaviour and then we split research sample to two groups (1 – those who did not report any type of problem behaviour or reported only one episode of such behaviour; 2 – those who reported more than one episode of problem behaviour).

## Statistical analysis:

Binary logistic regression was used to explain problem behaviour, dependent variable was dichotomized (as mentioned above). The model consisted of seven independent variables (gender, self-control, self-esteem, child disclosure, parental solicitation, parental knowledge, parental monitoring).

## Findings:

Significant differences between boys and girls were found in these forms of problem behaviour: disturbing the lessons ( $p<.001$ ), cheating ( $p=.011$ ) and refusing to meet teacher's demands ( $p=.015$ ) (Figure 1).

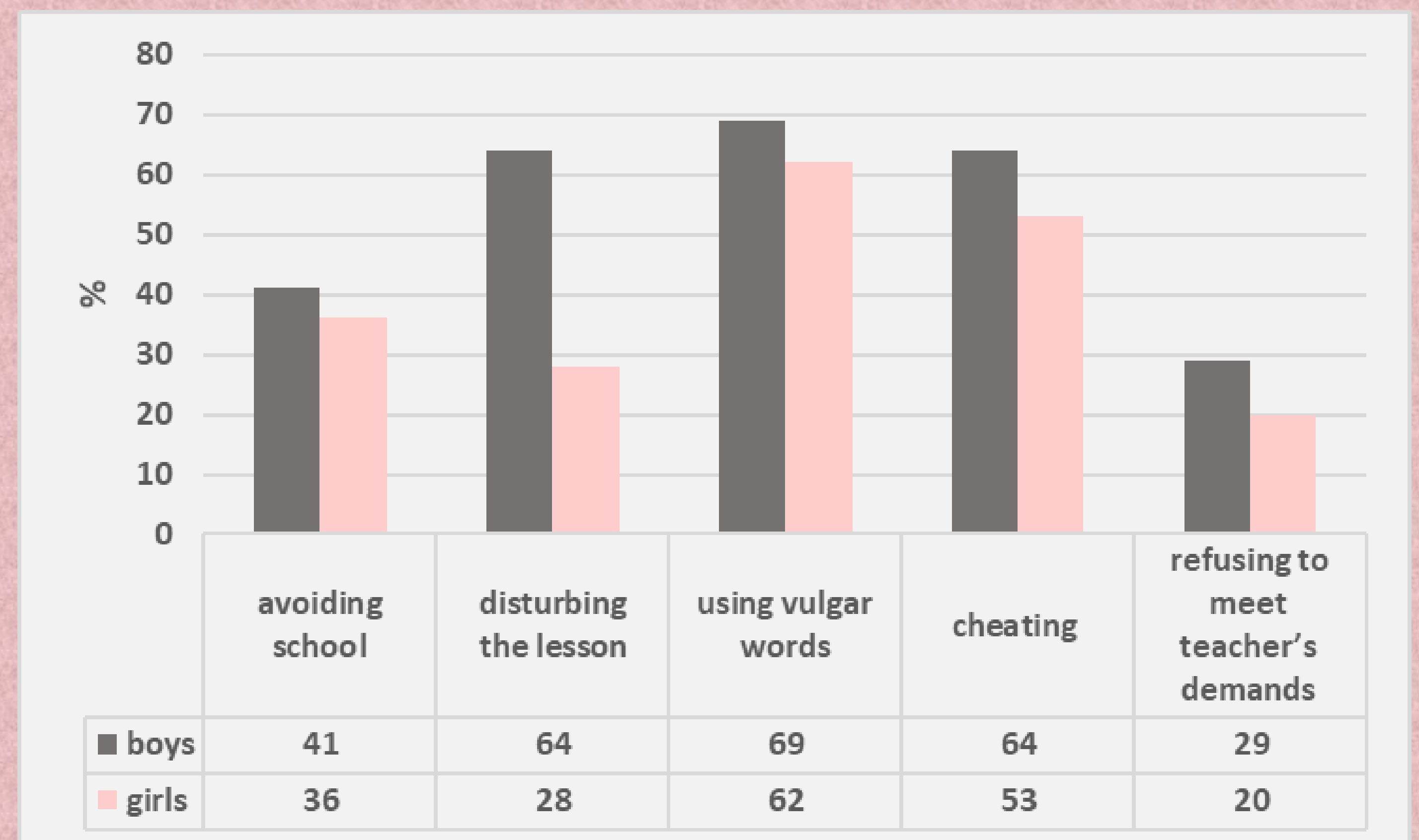


Figure 1 Percentage of self-reported problem behaviour among Slovak adolescents in terms of gender

Problem behaviour of adolescents was found to be negatively associated with self-control ( $p<.001$ ), child disclosure ( $p<.001$ ), parental knowledge ( $p<.001$ ), parental monitoring ( $p=.012$ ) and positively associated with parental solicitation ( $p=.001$ ). Our data support the existence of gender differences, i.e. boys reported problem behaviour more frequently than girls (Table 1).

Table 1 Regression model for self-reported problem behaviour among Slovak adolescents

Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup> = .217 Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = .291	B	sig	OR	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
				Lower	Upper
Gender	.588	.001	1.800	1.281	2.528
Self-esteem	-.045	.085	.956	.908	1.006
Selfcontrol	-.069	<.001	.933	.905	.962
Child disclosure	-.109	<.001	.896	.850	.946
Parental solicitation	.090	.001	1.094	1.039	1.153
Parental knowledge	-.099	<.001	.906	.865	.949
Parental monitoring	-.054	.012	.947	.908	.988
Constant	7.524	<.001	1852.703	1.281	2.528

## Conclusion:

The study has contributed to the understanding of correlates of problem behaviour in early adolescence and can be used for targeting prevention programmes.

## Acknowledgment:

This work was supported by Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract APVV-15-0662 and APVV-0253-11 and by the grand KEGA 016UPJŠ-4/2017 and VEGA 1/0623/17.

## Address for correspondence:

Anna Janovská, PhD.,  
Department of Educational Psychology and Health Psychology, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University, Moyzesova 9, 040 01 Kosice, Slovak Republic  
email: anna.janovska@upjs.sk

## References:

- Finkenauer, C., Engels, R. C. M. E., & Baumeister, R. F. (2005). Parenting behaviour and adolescent behavioural and emotional problems: The role of self-control. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 29(1), 58–69.
- Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic Books
- Stattin, H., & Kerr, M. (2000). Parental monitoring: A reinterpretation. *Child development*, 71(4), 1072-1085.