

Israeli Palestinian Adolescents' Exposure to Community Violence and their Academic Achievements: The Indirect Effects of Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms and Parental Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract : Exposure to community violence (CV) is alarmingly high and emphasizes negative consequences. The present study examines the rates and consequences of exposure to community violence, among Palestinian adolescents from Israel, age ranged 14-18. Specifically, it examines whether exposure to community violence is indirectly related to academic achievement through internalizing and externalizing symptoms among adolescents; and whether the indirect effects of exposure to CV and academic achievements will differ when the parents have different levels of psychological well-being. Method: Semi systematic random sample of 760 Palestinian adolescents in Israel, (320 boys, and 440 girls) filled out a self-administration questionnaire. Most of the adolescents had witnessed community violence during the last year and during their lifetime, and more than one third had directly experienced such violence during lifetime compared with 19.6% during the last year. Structural equation modeling was used to examine the indirect effects of exposure to CV and academic achievement. Results revealed that externalizing symptoms mediated the association between exposure to CV and academic achievement. There were no indirect effects through internalizing symptoms. Moreover, parental psychological well-being moderated the indirect effects between externalizing symptoms and academic achievements. Conclusion: Findings highlight the importance of targeting externalizing symptoms for adolescents that could improve their behaviors and also their academic achievements as well. limitations of the study, implications for the practice and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords : community violence, witnessing violence, direct personal experiencing, academic achievement, psychological well-being, Palestinian adolescents

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