

# Is Relational Aggression Part of the Externalizing Spectrum? A Bifactor Model of Youth Antisocial Behavior

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## Abstract

The primary purpose of the present study was to examine support for the inclusion of relational aggression (RAgg) alongside physical aggression (Agg) and rule-breaking behaviors (RB) as a subfactor of antisocial behavior (ASB). Caregiver reports were collected for 1,087 youth (48.9% male) ages 6–18. Results indicated that all three subfactors of ASB demonstrated substantial loadings on a general ASB factor. Using a bifactor model approach, specific factors representing each ASB subfactor were simultaneously modeled, allowing for examination of common and specific correlates. At the scale level, results demonstrated consistently strong connections with high Neuroticism and low Agreeableness across all 3 ASB subfactors, a pattern which was replicated for the general ASB factor in the bifactor approach. Specific factors in the bifactor model demonstrated connections with personality and psychopathology correlates, primarily for Agg. These findings provide some support for an overall grouping of RAgg with other ASB subfactors in youth, and further distinguish Agg as potentially representing a more potent variant of youth ASB relative to both RB and RAgg. *Aggr. Behav.* 39:149–159, 2013.