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Psychological and Gender Differences in a Simulated Cheating Coercion Situation at School

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Abstract: This study aimed to analyze gender, anxiety, and psychological inflexibility differences of high school students' behaviors in a simulated situation of peer coercion into academic cheating. Method: A total of 1147 volunteer adolescents participated, (Men: N = 479; Mage = 16.3; Women: N = 668; Mage = 16.2). The participants saw 15 s animated online video presenting peer coercion into an academic cheating situation, including a questionnaire about their reactions to face the situation. They also answered the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory for children and adolescents and the Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth (AFQ-Y). Gender was associated with the behaviors facing the situation. Higher state anxiety and inflexibility were present in those participants that avoided aggressive behaviors facing the situation; on the other hand, trait anxiety was present in those who reacted aggressively. Finally, higher anxiety and inflexibility were associated with the used moral disengagement mechanisms, but also with peers' perception as sanctioning or being against the participants' decision. The most aggressive students were more flexible and less stressed than those who tried to solve assertively. Expectations about peers seem to be relevant to the decision-making facing moral dilemmas and peer victimization.

Keywords: peer victimization; moral disengagement; bullying; disruptive behavior

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1. Introduction

Legitimacy is considered the moral basis of social interaction (Kelman 2001). This construct has been used to describe beliefs that justified different punishable actions as they were normal or socially accepted (Martínez-González et al. 2021). Studies have focused on children's evaluation of the situation (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Fernández Villanueva 2009; Martínez-González et al. 2019), the moral disengagement mechanisms they use (Bandura 1999, 2002), and the expectations about peers and adults as legitimizers of violence (Martínez-González et al. 2021).

The moral disengagement mechanisms refer to beliefs that people use to maintain a positive self-concept and reduce their guilt when acting against moral standards (Bandura 1999, 2002). There are (a) *moral justifications*, which link a violent act to a heroic or social desire; (b) *euphemistic labeling*, which changes the destructive connotation of the act; (c) *advantageous comparison*, which reduces the immoral act comparing it with another more despicable; (d) *displacement of responsibility*, transferring blame to an authority figure; (e) *diffusion of responsibility* when the perception of guilt is reduced as a consequence of acting in a group; (f) *distorting the consequences*, which reduces the damaging effects of a

behavior; (g) *victim blaming*, considering the victim as the motivator of the situation; and (h) *dehumanization*, depriving people of their human qualities to facilitate abusing them.

The moral disengagement mechanisms allow explaining immoral acts from genocide (Bandura 1999) to daily acts of corruption (Martínez-González et al. 2020; Zhao et al. 2019) such as academic cheating (Barbaranelli et al. 2018) or peer victimization (Meter et al. 2019). It was found that students more sensitive to social pressure are more likely to academically cheat than those who give greater emphasis to their moral identity (Wowra 2007).

Clear rules established justly and equitably positively impact students' moral identity development and auto-understanding (Ramberg and Modin 2019; Riekie et al. 2017). In contrast, dishonest acts, distrust, and manipulation have been associated with bullying behaviors (Andreou 2004), and these generate internalizing problems as well as health problems (Arana et al. 2018; Dirks et al. 2017; Iyer-Eimerbrink and Jensen-Campbell 2019; Joseph and Stockton 2018).

These behaviors have been related to anxiety, which could fluctuate in different situations or evolutionary stages of life, presenting women with higher anxiety levels and internalizing problems, especially in adolescents (Hernandez Rodriguez et al. 2020; Storch et al. 2003). The incidence of state anxiety has been associated with maturational and reproductive processes, social pressure in adolescence, negative affect with stress, anxiety, and depression (McLean and Anderson 2009; Mercader-Yus et al. 2018). Many of these situations occur at school, where young conflicts find their natural scenario.

Social pressure at school could nudge the students to resort to academic cheating in contexts where this is adopted as a practice legitimized by their peers (Barbaranelli et al. 2018; Farnese et al. 2011; Griebeler 2019) but also could be a situation that generates conflicts between students. In this line, children's expectations about peers play an important role when they face school conflicts (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019).

On the other hand, violence in the family and community as a legitimate way to solve conflicts has been associated with early violence legitimation (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Martínez-González et al. 2016). Those environments reduce prosocial behaviors (Galán Jiménez 2018), expose children to the risk of reproducing violence in their daily relationships (Kim et al. 2019a, 2019b) and in the society that they will constitute in adulthood (Goodman et al. 2020), and also expose them to chronic stress, compromising their health (Finegood et al. 2020).

We proposed the present research to analyze gender, anxiety, and psychological inflexibility differences of high school students' behaviors in a simulated situation of peer coercion into academic cheating.

Our hypotheses were (i) gender differences would be present in the behavior facing peer coercion into academic cheating; (ii) higher anxiety and inflexibility would be present in those participants that reacted aggressively facing the situation; (iii) higher anxiety and inflexibility would be associated with the rejection of moral disengagement mechanisms; (iv) higher anxiety and inflexibility would be associated with peers' perception as sanctioners or opposed to the decision made facing the situation.

2. Results

This study aimed to analyze gender, anxiety, and psychological flexibility differences in teenagers' behavior facing a simulated situation of peer coercion into academic cheating. Hypothesis i was confirmed, since the gender of participants and the gender of the offenders was associated with the behaviors facing the situation; Hypothesis ii was partially confirmed since higher state anxiety and inflexibility were present in those participants that avoided aggressive behaviors facing the situation, but trait anxiety was present in those who reacted aggressively; Hypothesis iii was rejected since higher trait anxiety and inflexibility were associated with the used moral disengagement mechanisms. Hypothesis iv was accepted, considering that higher trait anxiety and inflexibility were associated with perceiving witnesses as sanctioners. Next, we will explain these results.

Differences were found in the reactions associated with the gender of the participant and the peer who pressed academic fraud (p = 0.10). Most of the female participants were inclined to avoid conflict or assertively resolve the situation. The males resolved it assertively and, secondly, avoided the conflict. A more significant proportion of males presented aggressive behavior compared to females (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender differences in the participant's behavior when faced with coercion to commit fraud.

		Behavior When Faced with Coercion to Commit Fraud					
Gender		**Aggressive**	**Social Support**	**Assertive**	**Avoidance**	**Passive**	**Total**
Men	Count	59.00	106.0	153.0	147.0	14.00	479.0
	% within row	12.3%	22.1%	31.9%	30.7%	2.9%	100.0%
	% within column	54.6%	40.9%	44.6%	36.4%	42.4%	41.8%
Women	Count	49.00	153.0	190.0	257.0	19.00	668.0
	% within row	7.3%	22.9%	28.4%	38.5%	2.8%	100.0%
	% within column	45.4%	59.1%	55.4%	63.6%	57.6%	58.2%
Total	Count	108.00	259.0	343.0	404.0	33.00	1147.0
	% within row	9.4%	22.6%	29.9%	35.2%	2.9%	100.0%
	% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-Squared Tests							
	Value	**df**	***p***				
X^2	13.37	4	0.010				
N	1147						

When the peer that pressured someone into academic fraud was female, significant differences were found in their responses associated with the gender of the peer that pressured someone into academic fraud (p = 0.017). There were more aggressive responses when the peer was a man and more assertive responses when the peer was a woman (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender differences in the participant's and aggressor's behavior when faced with coercion to commit fraud.

			Behavior When Faced with Coercion to Commit Fraud					
Participant Gender	**Aggressor Gender**		**Aggressive**	**Social Support**	**Assertive**	**Avoidance**	**Passive**	**Total**
Men	Men	Count	34.00	67.00	84.00	87.00	6.00	278.0
		% within row	12.2%	24.1%	30.2%	31.3%	2.2%	100.0%
		% within column	57.6%	63.2%	54.9%	59.2%	42.9%	58.0%
	Women	Count	25.00	39.00	69.00	60.00	8.00	201.0
		% within row	12.4%	19.4%	34.3%	29.9%	4.0%	100.0%
		% within column	42.4%	36.8%	45.1%	40.8%	57.1%	42.0%
	Total	Count	59.00	106.00	153.00	147.00	14.00	479.0
		% within row	12.3%	22.1%	31.9%	30.7%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Women	Men	Count	29.00	82.00	77.00	121.00	5.00	314.0
		% within row	9.2%	26.1%	24.5%	38.5%	1.6%	100.0%
		% within column	59.2%	53.6%	40.5%	47.1%	26.3%	47.0%
	Women	Count	20.00	71.00	113.00	136.00	14.00	354.0
		% within row	5.6%	20.1%	31.9%	38.4%	4.0%	100.0%
		% within column	40.8%	46.4%	59.5%	52.9%	73.7%	53.0%
	Total	Count	49.00	153.00	190.00	257.00	19.00	668.0
		% within row	7.3%	22.9%	28.4%	38.5%	2.8%	100.0%
		% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2. *Cont.*

			Behavior When Faced with Coercion to Commit Fraud					
Participant Gender	**Aggressor Gender**		**Aggressive**	**Social Support**	**Assertive**	**Avoidance**	**Passive**	**Total**
Total	Men	Count	63.00	149.00	161.00	208.00	11.00	592.0
		% within row	10.6%	25.2%	27.2%	35.1%	1.9%	100.0%
		% within column	58.3%	57.5%	46.9%	51.5%	33.3%	51.6%
	Women	Count	45.00	110.00	182.00	196.00	22.00	555.0
		% within row	8.1%	19.8%	32.8%	35.3%	4.0%	100.0%
		% within column	41.7%	42.5%	53.1%	48.5%	66.7%	48.4%
	Total	Count	108.00	259.00	343.00	404.00	33.00	1147.0
		% within row	9.4%	22.6%	29.9%	35.2%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Squared Tests

Participant Gender		**Value**	**df**	***p***
Men	X^2	3.189	4	0.527
	N	479		
Women	X^2	12.052	4	0.017
	N	668		

No significant differences were found in state anxiety ($p = 0.086$), trait anxiety ($p = 0.341$), and psychological inflexibility ($p = 0.301$) related to gender when facing coercion into academic fraud. However, these variables showed significant differences between those who decided to attack and those who did not. Although state anxiety was higher than trait anxiety, it was higher in participants who decided not to attack. They also evidenced high psychological inflexibility. Trait anxiety was higher in participants who reacted aggressively (Table 3).

Table 3. Differences in aggressive behaviors depending on the state anxiety, trait anxiety, and psychological inflexibility of participants.

Scale	**Behavior**	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**F**	***p***
State Anxiety	Attack	28.20	2.941	137	5.342	0.021
	No attack	28.77	2.675	1010		
Trait Anxiety	Attack	26.29	4.613	137	6.513	0.011
	No attack	25.26	4.430	1010		
Psychological Inflexibility	Attack	15.50	3.567	137	6.859	0.009
	No attack	16.33	3.446	1010		

The state anxiety did not show significant differences associated with the different mechanisms of moral disconnection. In contrast, trait anxiety presented significant differences when moral disengagement mechanisms, such as moral justification, distorting the consequences, victim blaming, and dehumanization were used. The psychological inflexibility showed significant differences related to the use of advantageous comparison and dehumanization. The participants who showed higher trait anxiety considered their reaction as morally correct. The same happened to the participants who considered that they did not hurt the offender and those who did not blame the peer for initiating the situation. The participants who showed greater inflexibility avoided comparing their behavior with a worse one to justify their reaction. Finally, trait anxiety evidenced significant differences regarding witness peers' expectations, being higher in those who perceived them as sanctioning or legitimizing their reaction facing the situation. A greater inflexibility was found in the participants who perceived the witness peers as neutral or opposed to their reaction to the situation presented (Table 4).

Table 4. Differences in moral disengagement mechanisms and expectations of peers by trait anxiety and psychological inflexibility.

Moral Disengagement Mechanism and Expectative about Peers			Mean	SD	N	F	*p*
Trait Anxiety	Moral justification	Neutral	26.05	4.752	170	3.809	0.022
		Absence	25.22	4.366	947		
		Presence	26.67	5.346	30		
	Distorting the consequences	Neutral	24.83	4.173	157	8.203	<0.001
		Absence	25.12	4.176	687		
		Presence	26.25	5.090	303		
	Victim blaming	Neutral	25.00	4.082	283	6.333	0.002
		Absence	26.95	4.940	84		
		Presence	25.35	4.511	780		
	Expectative about peers	Neutral	25.40	4.355	575	8.386	<0.001
		Reject	25.04	4.386	474		
		Legitimize	26.67	4.937	95		
		Sanction	35.00	5.292	3		
Psychological Inflexibility	Advantageous comparison	Neutral	16.29	3.514	823	3.243	0.039
		Absence	16.64	2.830	128		
		Presence	15.71	3.614	196		
	Expectative about peers	Neutral	16.21	3.328	575	3.325	0.019
		Reject	16.35	3.621	474		
		Legitimize	15.95	3.406	95		
		Sanction	10.33	3.512	3		

3. Discussion

Analyzing the gender differences in coercion into academic fraud, female adolescents were more avoidant, while male adolescents were more aggressive, coinciding with previous studies about peer aggression in adolescence (McNaughton Reyes et al. 2019). We found how the reaction to the situation was more aggressive if the offender was a man and more assertive if the partner was a woman. In this regard, boys suffered more significant and different types of victimization than girls (Hernandez Rodriguez et al. 2020; Joseph and Stockton 2018). These trends in gender differences are linked to the way interpersonal relationships are built in childhood from an early age, as well as the expectations of behavior associated with each gender (Card et al. 2008; Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Martínez-González et al. 2016; Martínez-González et al. 2021). In consequence, the use of conciliatory strategies, seeking help from adults, or avoiding confrontation may become a factor of greater risk of victimization by peers if these alternatives are used by male teenagers (Dirks et al. 2017), even when the group rejects peer victimization (Guimond et al. 2018). One reason is that assertiveness and assent to dialogue are associated with female stereotypes (Mehta and Dementieva 2017). However, men receive more social pressure from peers and adults to use violence as an accepted way of solving conflicts in their daily relationships (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Farrell et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2019a, 2019b). Thus, assertiveness is a strategy generally seen as socially skillful and would be associated with less victimization, but only for youth who experience less aggression from their peers (Dirks et al. 2017).

Regarding avoidance as a reaction of female adolescents facing coercion into academic cheating, new evidence indicates that women can assume avoidant attitudes or maintain silence when facing moral dilemmas that benefit or even disadvantage them (Bossuyt and Kenhove 2018). In this line, several studies evidenced that girls tend to suffer more social manipulation from their peer group than boys (Hernandez Rodriguez et al. 2020; Joseph and Stockton 2018). The position of avoidance and silence in situations of victimization may be related to greater social need, fear of abandonment, difficulty in managing emotions, and more binding relationships (Benenson et al. 2014). These situations place the women

at risk of several future forms of violence (Pokharel et al. 2020) with implications even for their moral functioning (Bossuyt and Kenhove 2018). Therefore, it is important to design interventions at this stage for the students to be aware of this type of behavior and the implications it has for their individual future and the way they will interact socially.

Concerning state anxiety and psychological inflexibility results, it was found that both were higher in participants who decided not to attack. In contrast, trait anxiety was significantly higher in the participants who reacted aggressively. These characteristics of the population that responded aggressively can be related to the conditions of the Colombian context, where there is a high exposure to violence in everyday relationships (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Martínez-González et al. 2016). These responses are socially legitimized as the correct procedure and are seen as usual (Martínez-González et al. 2016).

In this regard, people with high reactivity to fear in the face of threats have shown more evasive responses to a threat or provocation in a conflict situation (Beyer et al. 2017; Vogel and Schwabe 2019), while people characterized by traits with a high level of motivation were more likely to participate in aggressive interactions when provoked (Beyer et al. 2017). The fight or escape elections in a conflict situation have been mainly driven by the possibility of retaliating against the aggressor (Beyer et al. 2017). Thus, anxious symptoms are associated with less support for aggressive responses to challenging hypothetical peer situations and peer victimization (Dirks et al. 2017; Wright et al. 2010), in contraposition to the trait anxiety.

High trait anxiety causes a higher reactivity to any threat; therefore, it will be easier to show an attacking or aggressive behavior to face a threat. However, the state anxiety, a feeling that participant will experience when the controllability perception of the environment is low, and the certainty of the lack of resources to face any eliciting situation that appears, will provoke a flight reaction (Bustamante-Sánchez et al. 2020; Tornero-Aguilera et al. 2020). In this line, psychological inflexibility produces a similar response. Lower psychological flexibility would be related to lower cognitive adaptability to the changing environment, eliciting a larger number of uncontrollable feelings, especially when a stressor occurs (e.g., aggression). Previous authors have shown how psychological inflexibility is linked to an increased modulation of the sympathetic autonomic nervous system, which regulates the stress response (Beltrán-Velasco et al. 2021; Sánchez-Conde et al. 2019). In this physiological situation, it has also been possible to verify how information processing decreases and more irrational decisions tend to be made (Delgado-Moreno et al. 2019; Tornero-Aguilera and Clemente-Suárez 2018). Therefore, if we combine high psychological inflexibility, a decrease in information processing, and high state anxiety, it is predictable that the expected response would be an avoidance rather than a confrontational or attacking behavior to face the eliciting situation.

The participants who showed greater trait anxiety avoided aggression and considered this reaction to be morally correct, without consequences to the offender, and did not blame him for causing the situation. Furthermore, trait anxiety was also more significant in those adolescents who expected sanction or legitimation from witnesses. These teenagers could tend toward group acceptance and avoiding conflict. They may be more likely to yield to academic cheating by being more sensitive to social pressure when fraud is a legitimized practice by peers (Barbaranelli et al. 2018; Farnese et al. 2011; Griebeler 2019; Wowra 2007). Consequently, children's and adolescents' expectations of their peers as legitimizers of transgressive behaviors play an important role when facing school conflicts (Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Martínez-González et al. 2021) and require attention to implement intervention programs.

Regarding the participants who showed greater inflexibility, they avoided comparing their behavior with a worse one to justify their reaction and considered the witnesses as neutral or in opposition to this. These teenagers could exhibit more consistent and rigid moral behaviors, thus avoiding falling into fraud (Wowra 2007). However, they may also have more difficulties adapting to the group rules and experiencing more loneliness, which could lead to the appearance of internalizing symptoms if they are victims of intimidation

and social victimization (Arana et al. 2018; Iyer-Eimerbrink and Jensen-Campbell 2019). Negative experiences of friendship, aggressive conflicts, and low reciprocal friendship levels exacerbate the adverse effects of maladaptive coping associated with a higher feeling of school loneliness and continuous victimization experiences among peers (Gardner 2019). While higher anxiety symptoms are associated with less aggressive responses, higher levels of depressive symptoms have been related to aggressive behavior and, for girls, the reduction of assertive strategies (Cuttini 2017; Dirks et al. 2014). Those findings suggest that anxiety may be associated with a less problematic response than depression facing peer victimization (Cuttini 2017).

These gender differences consistently evident in peer victimization literature have implications for preventing and reducing social bullying in its different manifestations. Specific intervention at school, at home, and other social interventions are needed to stop the increasing tendency in bullying cases. The information provided in the present research could be used to design and apply this program with the teenage population.

Moral disengagement may serve as an important risk indicator for the appearance of more aggression in conflict situations among adolescents, characterized by the perception of injustice and sustained victimization over time. Identifying how adolescents handle situations involving moral dilemmas and their perception of the offenders and witnesses could help develop effective interventions to promote the resolution of conflicts using socially acceptable strategies. Interventions to promote empathy and prosociality are crucial for victims, offenders, and witnesses who can advocate against victimization (Meter et al. 2019). Preserving clear rules established fairly and impartially may help adolescents' moral behavior and help them understand themselves (Ramberg and Modin 2019; Riekie et al. 2017).

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Participants

A total of 1147 volunteer adolescents participated, aged between 12 and 18 years (Men: N = 479; M = 16.3; SD = 1.1; Women: N = 668; M = 16.2; SD = 0.9) with a stratified random sampling of simple affixation in which the sample was collected from schools with different socioeconomic levels in the city of Barranquilla (Colombia). All the procedures were conducted following the Helsinki Declaration (as revised in Brazil, 2013) and approved by the University Ethical Committee (approval code 094). The data were collected anonymously. Before participation, all participants, parental or guardian, and their professors were informed about the experimental procedures, indicating the right to withdraw from the study at any time and providing written informed consent.

4.2. Procedure

This study relied on the use of animated video that simulated a cheating coercion situation at school with a different combination of peer and teacher genders as the authority figure to evaluate different behaviors from participants, as well as the influence of gender, anxiety, and psychological inflexibility on the high school students' behavior. The use of simulated scenarios of violence has been effectively used by previous specific researchers (Hyatt et al. 2019; Martínez-González et al. 2019; Cardozo-Rusinque et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016; Rayburn et al. 2007). The teenagers were contacted in several high schools, and the sample was formed from students who accepted, and had parents who accepted, their participation. Groups of 30 participants completed the task in a computer room, sitting randomly according to their gender. We prepared the computers with the situations according to gender, two lines for males and two lines for females, varying the gender of the aggressor. Then, when students entered the classroom, we asked them to sit in the line corresponding to their gender identity. First, they read the objectives of the research and consented to participation. Next, the instructions and demographic questions appeared; they watched the video and answered the questions proposed to analyze their behavior. Finally, the participants filled out an anxiety questionnaire.

4.3. Instruments

4.3.1. Test Used to evaluate Anxiety

Anxiety was measured by the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory for children and adolescents (Castrillón-Moreno and Borrero-Copete 2005). It is composed of two scales, the first to measure State Anxiety, with 20 items (reliability: McDonald's $\omega = 0.72$ on this study), and the second to measure Trait Anxiety, with 20 items (reliability: McDonald's $\omega = 0.91$ on this study).

4.3.2. Test Used to Evaluate Psychological Inflexibility

This variable was measured by the Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth (AFQ-Y). It is a 7-item questionnaire where the participant must respond on a 1 to 7 scale (Valdivia-Salas et al. 2017) (reliability: McDonald's $\omega = 0.87$ on this study).

4.3.3. Instrument to Assess Participant's Behavior in the Academic Cheating Coercion at School

Participants saw a 15 s animated online video presenting peer coercion into an academic cheating situation. There were four different stimuli, varying the gender of the peer. The stimulus presented an exam staged in the classroom. A voice-over described the situation to generate identification with the main character, as follows: "*During an evaluation, a classmate asks you for the answer to a question. When you refuse to tell him, he responds by insulting you. Given this, what do you do?*". There was no presence of authority figures in the scene. See the videos here:

Female (victim)—Female (offender): https://youtu.be/lBDIXJN88Sg
Female (victim)—Male (offender): https://youtu.be/dlN6uQk-rvs
Male (victim)—Female (offender): https://youtu.be/x9Nl00x3if0
Male (victim)—Male (offender): https://youtu.be/jrDtAfRfbYU
Some images taken from the videos could be seen in Figure 1.

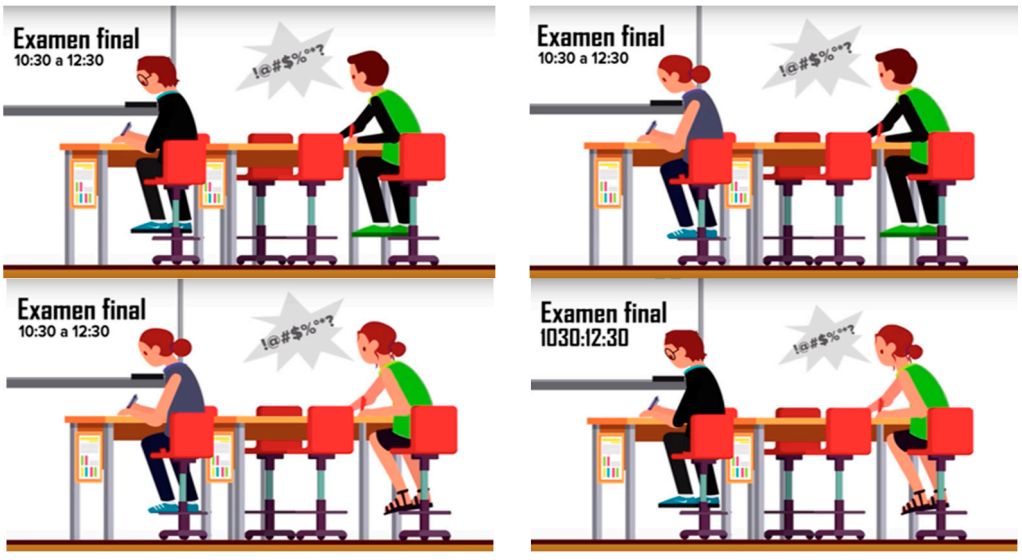

Figure 1. Stimulus simulating academic cheating coercion at school. In each box, the offender's character is on the right and the participant's character on the left.

The video is embedded in a Google form. After being played, the following response options appeared:

- I respond the same, with rudeness (aggressive).
- I ask the teacher to change my position (avoidant).
- I call the teacher to come over (supportive).
- I give him/her the answer to avoid being attacked (submissive).

- I tell him/her that his/her evaluation could be canceled (assertive).

The answers were registered as assertive, avoidant, aggressive, submissive, and supportive behaviors. For this aim, the categories were integrated as "no attack" when the responses were alternatives to violence, and the aggressive responses were integrated as "attack".

After this, questions inspired by moral disengagement mechanisms theory (Bandura et al. 1996; Bandura 1999, 2002) and questions about violence legitimation perceived from peers and adults were presented to analyze the participant behavior. These items were registered as nominal variables (Table 5):

Table 5. Nominal variables to evaluate moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura) and violence legitimation from peers and adults.

Variable	Dimension	Question	Response Options
Moral disengagement mechanisms	Moral justification	Do you think your reaction was?	• Good • Regular • Bad
	Euphemistic labeling	What have you done?	• To save your bacon • You don't know • Acting in the wrong way
	Advantageous comparison	If someone else was in your position	• He/She would act worse than you • You don't know how He/She would act • He/She would act the same as you
	Displacement of responsibility	Who started the problem?	• He/She did • You don't know • You did
	Diffusion of responsibility	If your friends find out about the incident and decide to confront him/her, who would be responsible for the situation?	• No one, because it would happen in a group • You do not know • Everyone, including you
	Distorting the consequences	Do you think you hurt your classmate?	• No, you don't think you have hurt him/her • You don't know • Yes, you think you have hurt him/her
	Victim blaming	Do you think your classmate deserved what you did?	• Yes, because He/She was disrespectful • You don't know • No, He/She didn't deserve it
	Dehumanization	The classmate who wanted to cheat is:	• A donkey • You don't know • Irresponsible

Table 5. *Cont.*

Variable	Dimension	Question	Response Options
Legitimation perceived	From peers	What would your classmates do when they found out about your reaction	• They would support you. • They wouldn't say anything. • They would criticize you. • They would reject the situation.
	From adults	Realizing the situation, what will the teacher do?	• He/She will punish your classmate. • He/She will do nothing. • He/She will get you a warning. • He/She would reject the situation.

4.4. Statistical Analysis

JASP statistical software was used to analyze the data. Chi-square test and ANOVA were used to analyze anxiety and gender differences related to the proposed situations' behavior. The level of significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

5. Conclusions

In a situation of coercion into academic fraud, female adolescents were more avoidant, and male adolescents were more aggressive. The most aggressive students presented lower psychological inflexibility and stress and higher trait anxiety than those who tried to solve assertively. Non-aggressive behaviors were associated with higher psychological inflexibility and state anxiety. Finally, expectations about peers were shown to be relevant for decision making facing moral dilemmas and peer victimization.

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