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## Introduction

Aggression and violence, both within and outside professional work, are issues that teachers increasingly have to deal with nowadays. The scale of the phenomenon is increasing rather than diminishing; it takes on new, more drastic forms and is destructive to the psyches of those affected, who may be victims of aggression in both the real and the virtual world.

Violence contravenes human rights – above all, the right to dignity – as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the International Covenant on Civil Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These general acts of law refer to human rights, including specific groups that are vulnerable to discrimination and require protection against violence. Adequate legal measures are in place to ensure that the offences set out therein are punished and effectively discouraged through sanctions. Nowadays, a victim of aggression and violence can be not only a poor, submissive, sensitive, shy or fearful person, but also one with a specific appearance, views or outstanding learning achievements – someone who is simply different. It is important to remember that being victimised is not the victim's fault. Everyone has the right to be themselves, and this 'otherness' should not provoke hatred or violence. There are also numerous theories on the multifaceted causes of aggression.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the anonymity of students in remote learning situations has increased aggression towards both the learners and the teachers (Bieganowska-Skóra & Pankowska, 2020; Bigaj & Dębski, 2020; Ragavan et al., 2020). Indeed, teaching is becoming the highest-risk profession, as evidenced by cases of harassment of teachers publicised by the media. For example, at a technical college in Toruń, a group of students put a dustbin over a teacher's head, then filmed the entire incident and published it on the Internet. Teachers are often afraid of their students and do not know how to behave in conflict situations. It must be remembered that a teacher, while performing their duties, has the right to enjoy the protection provided for a state functionary under the principles set out in

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the Criminal Code. The educational authority and the relevant legislation should guarantee protection and support teachers' activities in combating aggression and violence. If aggression is to be overcome, it is not enough to punish it, but also to eliminate the phenomena that contribute to it. Widely publicising the legal consequences of aggression throughout the media and consistently punishing aggressors can assist in curbing this phenomenon. The authorities should consistently punish aggressors for the consequences of their behaviour whilst tackling the causes of this frustration, which can include economic exclusion.

## Literature review

Research shows the adverse effects of exposing students to aggression and violence in school settings, as well as the consequences for other members of the school community, including teachers (Patton et al., 2012). Over the past year, 41% of the respondents had experienced some form of violence at school. A substantial increase in cyberbullying against teachers can also be observed (Goel & Naaz, 2021; Tomczyk et al., 2016, pp. 4–5). In 2018, statements from 34% of students mentioned posting compromising material about teachers at their school. This may be related to a number of factors, including the inability of teachers, parents and students to sufficiently deal with threats in both real space and cyberspace (Orpinas & Horne, 2004).

Young teachers with limited experience feel particularly vulnerable when faced with aggressive or violent student behaviour (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Reddy et al., 2018; Santor et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2010). Teachers' knowledge and sense of agency in dealing with aggression and violence indicate that they do not have the tools to deal with these problems. The lack of specific knowledge in this area precludes appropriate prevention and intervention measures. Moreover, students are not the only victims of aggression. Teachers may also be at risk, which can undermine their ability to help others (Berlanda et al., 2019; Galand et al., 2007; Moon & McCluSkey, 2020). As a result of conflict and aggressive situations, teachers

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experience stress and deteriorated health, which may consequently lead to professional burnout or leaving the profession (Poraj, 2004; Zysberg & Sabbag, 2021). Bandura's (1977) *Self-efficacy theory* highlights the individual's personal experience and competence – their ability to cope with the situations that life brings. In this case, reference can be made to teachers and the daily struggles they face, for example, aggressive situations at school, which can affect their confidence and self-esteem. Thus, it is worth noting that perceptions of self-efficacy and personal goals are relevant to people's motivation, emotional state and actions in difficult and oppressive situations (cf. Kozicka, 2004, pp. 36–37). This is also supported by research on the level of self-efficacy among adolescents, and its correlation with aggressive behaviour (Bandura & Locke, 2003, pp. 87–99). Other international studies have shown a link between self-esteem and victimisation in school or online, and have highlighted the victims' low self-esteem (Álvarez-García et al., 2015, pp. 231–233). This can lead to low self-esteem in the person who is bullied. This phenomenon affects both students and teachers.

Given the importance of teachers' role in preventing the problem of aggression and violence, this study's aim was to train teachers and enhance their awareness. One of the possible solutions was to develop and deliver an e-learning course on the chosen platform between 2019 and 2021 in order to improve the competencies of future teachers and educators in the following areas:

- learning about aggression and violence, its causes, indicants and coping mechanisms;
- becoming familiar with the legal consequences of aggression and violence;
- solving problems when coping with others' aggression in real and virtual spaces;
- resolving conflicts in a constructive manner within a team, through knowledge and the choice of appropriate strategies; and
- communicating effectively as part of a team.

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To achieve these objectives, a sample of teacher-training students participated in a 60-hour course on a selected e-learning platform. The participants were provided with continuous monitoring and substantive and technical support by the academic staff in order to maintain the integrity of the programme's various thematic modules. Prior to the course, the participants were invited to take part in a survey whose cognitive objective was to identify whether future teachers need expert knowledge about aggression and violence in a variety of environments. The respondents also discussed how to prevent these occurrences and how to mitigate the negative effects of aggression.

## Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate the opinions of future teachers about needs and expectations when dealing with aggression and violence, in the context of their personal experiences and future professional work. To achieve this objective, the following research questions were addressed.

1) What is the distribution of prospective teachers' responses in terms of assessing their knowledge and self-efficacy in dealing with the phenomenon of aggression and violence in relation to the real/virtual space?

2) Is there a link between personal experience of (cyber)aggression and (cyber)violence and the declared need to improve knowledge and skills for diagnosing, analysing and dealing with these issues?

The research was of a cyclical nature, carried out over a period of two years. In May 2020, a preliminary survey was conducted among the participants in the first edition of the course, which lasted four months. Subsequently, a preliminary survey was conducted in the second edition of the course in January 2021. The survey was conducted remotely through a closed survey system. The survey group consisted of students

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of teaching-training programmes and specialisations studying at a public university in central Poland.

The selection of respondents for the sample was purposeful, and the basic criterion was their application for participation in an e-learning course on the subject of aggression and violence, in the context of their causes and ways to prevent them. A total of 202 students participated in the survey (the total number of students taking that course), which resulted in 167 questionnaires being returned with complete responses. The respondents received an invitation to participate and a link to the survey via the university's email system. Upon accessing the survey landing page, the participants were informed about its purpose and how the data would be processed. In addition, they were informed that the survey was anonymous and voluntary, and that they could opt out at any time. In order to take part in the survey, the students had to provide consent to participate.

The study used a diagnostic survey method. For this purpose, a survey questionnaire was constructed

- to evaluate their own knowledge and performance in dealing with aggression and violence in real and virtual spaces (five-point Likert scale: 1 – very poor, 5 – very good),
- to indicate their experience of (cyber)aggression and (cyber)violence, types of aggression and their perception of these phenomena in terms of the individual, relatives and family, as well as the school environment and
- to indicate their expectations concerning the subject matter and issues covered during the e-learning course.

The validity of the research tool and the research procedure was tested in a pilot study, which allowed errors, shortcomings and ambiguities to be detected. Based on the information gleaned at this phase, some items on the survey form were reworded, amended or deleted.

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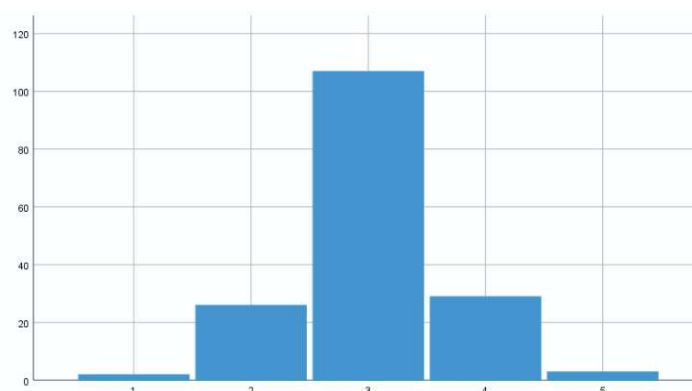in Real and Virtual Spaces*
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## Results and analysis

An analysis of basic descriptive statistics was performed, including the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, frequency analysis, $\chi^2$ tests, Fisher's exact tests, Student's *t*-tests for independent samples and Mann–Whitney *U* tests. The classical threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$ was taken as the significance level.

### *Evaluation of knowledge on aggression and violence in real and virtual spaces*

First, the distribution of responses assessing knowledge and self-efficacy in the area of aggression and violence in real and virtual spaces was analysed. This indicator was reported on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated a very low level of knowledge and 5 a very high level. According to Figure 1, level 3 responses – indicating a moderate level of knowledge – clearly prevailed. The basic descriptive statistics of the quantitative variables are presented in Table 1. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which checks the normality of the distribution of the variables under study, were also conducted. A statistically significant result of this test was recorded, indicating a deviation from a normal distribution. In such cases, additional verification of the skewness is recommended. If the skewness of the tested distribution is between -2 and +2, it can be assumed that the data are not significantly asymmetric with respect to the mean. The result for this variable met this criterion, so it was decided that the statistical analysis would consist of parametric tests.

**Figure 1. Evaluation of knowledge on aggression and violence in real and virtual spaces**

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**Table 1. Basic descriptive statistics
for the quantitative variable**

| | M | Me | SD | Sk. | Kurt. | Min. | Max. | D | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation of knowledge on aggression and violence in real and virtual spaces | 3.03 | 3 | 0.67 | 0.09 | 1.06 | 1 | 5 | 0.33 | <0.001 |

*M* – mean; *Me* – median; *SD* – standard deviation; *Sk.* – skewness*; Kurt.* – kurtosis;

*Min.* and *Max.* – lowest and highest values of the distribution, respectively;

*D* – result of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test; *p* – significance

### Experiences of violence and its types

A series of frequency analyses was subsequently performed for all questions posed to the respondents in order to calculate the percentage of participants who had experienced any kind of violence. There were 140 affirmative (83.8%) and 27 negative (16.2%) responses. Table 2 presents the breakdown of indications for specific violence types. It can be noted that the highest percentage of affirmative responses concerned incidents occurring in real life.

**Table 2. Experiencing violence**

| | Not indicated | | Indicated | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Personally – in real life | 67 | 40.1 | 100 | 59.9 |
| Personally – in a virtual space | 99 | 59.3 | 68 | 40.7 |
| Real-life – against loved ones and acquaintances | 74 | 44.3 | 93 | 55.7 |
| Real-life – against unknown individuals | 113 | 67.7 | 54 | 32.3 |

The types of violence experienced were then analysed. As presented in Table 3, only 12 people indicated that they had not experienced any type of violence (compared to the 27 mentioned above). Of the types of violence listed, emotional, psychological and verbal violence were reported

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most frequently, while sexual and economic violence were least frequently reported.

**Table 3. Types of violence experienced**

| | Not indicated | | Indicated | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Emotional | 53 | 31.7 | 114 | 68.3 |
| Economical | 156 | 93.4 | 11 | 6.6 |
| Physical | 96 | 57.5 | 71 | 42.5 |
| Verbal | 67 | 40.1 | 100 | 59.9 |
| Exclusionary | 92 | 55.1 | 75 | 44.9 |
| Mental | 65 | 38.9 | 102 | 61.1 |
| Sexual | 152 | 91 | 15 | 9 |
| Negligence | 139 | 83.2 | 28 | 16.8 |
| I have not experienced any of the above types | 155 | 92.8 | 12 | 7.2 |

The survey then ascertained how many participants responded to the violence experienced. Affirmative answers were given by 89 individuals (53.3% of the sample) and negative ones by 78 respondents (46.7%). It is surprising to see such a high percentage of people not reacting to violence. This may be due to their own powerlessness, lack of support or, above all, insufficient competence in dealing with aggression and violence.

The next question asked the respondents to imagine that they would experience aggression at school or in the school environment and whether they, as a teacher, educator or psychologist, would be able to deal with the situation. The results are summarised in Table 4.

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**Table 4. Answers – would the respondents, as teachers, educators or psychologists, be able to perform certain actions if they encountered aggression at school or on the Internet**

| | School grounds | | | | Internet | | | |
| | No | | Yes | | No | | Yes | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognise a problematic situation | 27 | 16.2 | 140 | 83.8 | 36 | 21.6 | 131 | 78.4 |
| Solve a problematic situation | 104 | 62.3 | 63 | 37.7 | 119 | 71.3 | 48 | 28.7 |
| Provide assistance to victims of violence or indicate where to seek it | 38 | 22.8 | 129 | 77.2 | 54 | 32.3 | 113 | 67.7 |
| Prevent conflicts in the future | 113 | 67.7 | 54 | 32.3 | 125 | 74.9 | 42 | 25.1 |

The vast majority of participants estimated that they would be able to recognise a problematic situation, but just over a third indicated that they would be able to solve it. Even fewer claimed that they would be able to prevent conflicts from arising in the future. Similar distributions of responses were recorded for the question about aggression on the Internet.

### Course expectations

The respondents were also asked to assess the need to supplement their knowledge and skills in diagnosing, analysing and dealing with aggression. As presented in Table 5, more than 9 out of 10 respondents answered in the affirmative, referring to real and virtual spaces. There were similar distributions of responses.

**Table 5. Participants' assessment of a need to supplement their knowledge and skills in diagnosing, analysing and dealing with aggression**

| | Yes | | No | | I have no opinion | |
| | N | N | % | % | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In real space | 156 | 93.4 | 1 | 0.6 | 10 | 6 |
| In virtual space | 153 | 91.6 | 6 | 3.6 | 8 | 4.8 |

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Table 6 summarises the topics which the respondents would like to learn more about. The most frequently mentioned topics were how to prevent aggression and violence, as well as the psychological aspects of aggression and violence. The key notions and concepts of violence were the least frequently mentioned, which may indicate that prevention measures are more important to them than theory.

**Table 6. Topics the respondents would like to develop**

| | Not indicated | | Indicated | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Key notions and concepts of violence | 121 | 72.5 | 46 | 27.5 |
| Legal aspects of violence | 85 | 50.9 | 82 | 49.1 |
| Psychological aspects of aggression and violence | 39 | 23.4 | 128 | 76.6 |
| Socio-pedagogical aspects of cyberbullying | 88 | 52.7 | 79 | 47.3 |
| Stalking and hacking | 96 | 57.5 | 71 | 42.5 |
| Prevention of aggression and violence | 31 | 18.6 | 136 | 81.4 |

The respondents' expectations of the course were also assessed (Table 7). Most often the persons surveyed indicated that they cared about improving their knowledge of and skills for dealing with others aggression in real and virtual spaces and constructive conflict resolution in a team.

**Table 7. Course expectations**

| | Not indicated | | Indicated | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Improving knowledge and skills in solving problems related to dealing with aggression of others in real and virtual spaces | 12 | 7.2 | 155 | 92.8 |
| Acquiring knowledge and skills for constructive conflict resolution within a team | 46 | 27.5 | 121 | 72.5 |
| Acquiring knowledge and skills for effective communication within a team | 79 | 47.3 | 88 | 52.7 |
| Acquiring knowledge and skills for solving routine problems of searching for necessary information online, selecting information and using it skilfully and solving problems while using digital technology | 70 | 41.9 | 97 | 58.1 |

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### *Experiencing (cyber)aggression and (cyber)violence*

In the next step of the statistical analysis, the participants' experience of violence was examined for correlations with the other variables of the study. A series of $\chi 2$ tests were performed, or, if their assumptions were not met, Fisher's exact tests. First, the results of the participants who had experienced any violence or had never experienced violence were compared. Eight statistically significant correlations were noted. Those who had experienced violence were more likely to indicate in the survey that they had taken action in relation to the violence experienced by themselves or someone close to them. They were more likely to show interest in issues concerning the socio-pedagogical aspects of cyberbullying and preventing aggression and violence. They also emphasised learning skills for solving problems when dealing with others' aggression in real and virtual spaces. They expressed the need to acquire knowledge and skills for constructive conflict resolution in a team more than those who had not experienced aggression. Respondents affected by the experience of aggression rarely indicated that in the future they would be able to prevent conflicts from arising in the school environment or on the Internet. The cogency of the first effect noted was moderately high, while the others were low. The results are summarised in Table 8.

**Table 8. Relationship between experience of violence
and other variables (statistically significant relationships)**

| | | | Experiencing violence | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Reacting to violence experienced by you or someone close to you | no | *N* | 56 | 22 | $\chi^2(1) = 15.65$; $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.31$ |
| | | % | 40.00% | 81.50% | |
| | yes | *N* | 84 | 5 | |
| | | % | 60.00% | 18.50% | |
| Ability to prevent future conflicts in response to aggression in or around school | no | *N* | 100 | 13 | $\chi^2(1) = 5.61$; $p = 0.018$ $V = 0.18$ |
| | | % | 71.40% | 48.10% | |
| | yes | *N* | 40 | 14 | |
| | | % | 28.60% | 51.90% | |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to prevent future conflicts in response to aggression on the Internet | no | *N* | 109 | 16 | $\chi^2(1) = 4.16$; $p = 0.041$ $V = 0.16$ |
| | | % | 77.90% | 59.30% | |
| | yes | *N* | 31 | 11 | |
| | | % | 22.10% | 40.70% | |
| Interest in issues concerning the socio-pedagogical aspects of cyberbullying | no | *N* | 69 | 19 | $\chi^2(1) = 4.04$; $p = 0.045$ $V = 0.16$ |
| | | % | 49.30% | 70.40% | |
| | yes | *N* | 71 | 8 | |
| | | % | 50.70% | 29.60% | |
| Interest in issues concerning the prevention of aggression and violence | no | *N* | 21 | 10 | $\chi^2(1) = 7.27$; $p = 0.007$ $V = 0.21$ |
| | | % | 15.00% | 37.00% | |
| | yes | *N* | 119 | 17 | |
| | | % | 85.00% | 63.00% | |
| Improving knowledge and skills in solving problems related to dealing with aggression of others in real and virtual space | no | *N* | 6 | 6 | $p = 0.005$ $V = 0.26$ |
| | | % | 4.30% | 22.20% | |
| | yes | *N* | 134 | 21 | |
| | | % | 95.70% | 77.80% | |
| Acquisition of knowledge and skills for constructive conflict resolution within a team | no | *N* | 33 | 13 | $\chi^2(1) = 6.85$; $p = 0.009$ $V = 0.20$ |
| | | % | 23.60% | 48.10% | |
| | yes | *N* | 107 | 14 | |
| | | % | 76.40% | 51.90% | |

Those who had experienced cyberbullying were more likely to indicate that they were interested in the topic of how to prevent it. These individuals selected knowledge and skills for constructive conflict resolution within a team as one of the most important aims of the course.

## Discussion

As mentioned above, the daily reality of teachers in schools is complex and imbued with challenges and the need to deal with aggression as their main focus. This skill is essential in a remote learning situation,

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as has been evidenced by research conducted during the COVID-19 crisis (Dolev-Cohen & Levkovich, 2020). The pandemic and the need to shift to remote learning have led to an increase in aggression and many other negative behaviours, while also raising awareness of the need to bring this phenomenon under control.

The aim of this study was to understand the participants' expectations of an e-learning course and to investigate the relationship between the experience of aggression and/or violence in real and virtual space and the declaration of knowledge in this area. The results show that more than 80% of the respondents had experienced some form of aggression and/or violence. In most cases the aggression concerned direct communication, which for more than 40% of the participants took place in virtual spaces. Of the types of violence specified, emotional, psychological and verbal violence were recorded most frequently, whereas sexual and economic violence were the least frequently reported.

Before taking the e-learning course, the vast majority of participants estimated that they would be able to recognise a problematic situation, but just over a third indicated that they would be able to solve it. Even fewer indicated that they would be able to prevent conflicts from arising in the future. Similar responses were found for encounters with acts of aggression on the Internet. The respondents expressed the most interest in acquiring skills for preventing and addressing the psychological aspects of aggression and violence and constructive conflict resolution in a team; the least interest was in theoretical concepts of aggression and violence. Those who experienced it more often indicated a desire to improve their knowledge and skills.

The results of this research showed that future teachers lack skills in dealing with aggression problems. In view of the increasing likelihood of experiencing them (both real and virtual) and the awareness of the consequences of these experiences, there is a need to raise the awareness and competence of future teachers and educators at the tertiary level in recognising symptoms, dealing with aggressive behaviour and supporting those affected. In particular, teachers must be prepared to:

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(a) use instructional techniques and modify existing curricula to teach their students social problem-solving and conflict resolution skills,

(b) implement verbal and non-verbal intervention techniques to reduce students' belligerent behaviour and

(c) intervene to protect pupils and others in situations of crisis for them (Acker, 1993).

The results lead to the conclusion that it is necessary to modify the training programmes of teachers and educators so that they know how to recognise and deal with their own and their students' aggression inside and outside the classroom. A teacher who is aware of the causes of aggression and who has the right skills to ensure a friendly classroom climate can greatly enhance the behaviour and lives of their students (Larson & Kolodziejczyk, 2019, pp. 26–28; Kulesza, 2007). It is important that teachers, form masters, educators, school psychologists and other specialists are able to promote a safe school environment through appropriate educational methods and mutual cooperation, and, above all, to develop students' respect, empathy, trust and responsibility in their relations with other people, which can counteract deliberate aggression and violence.

Teacher education programmes should draw attention to the importance of collaborating with other professionals in the community (school educators, psychologists, therapists and school nurses), school staff and parents, so that social care[1] and educational measures can be taken for prevention, intervention and psycho-social needs (Goel & Naaz, 2021, p. 53).

Appropriate responses, including in public spaces, can increase school safety and reduce the likelihood of further violent incidents. The implementation of educational programmes in this area should be compulsory –

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[1] Social welfare institutions are responsible for social welfare, its organisation and provision, enabling persons and families to overcome difficult life situations and supporting them in efforts to satisfy their needs and to live in conditions that respect human dignity. The social welfare institutions in Poland include social assistance homes, care and Education centres, municipal and communal social assistance centres, county family assistance centres and others.

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not only in pedagogical and teaching faculties, but also in every university or school – and they should relate to the family environment. **Education should be systemic and institutionalised, given that irregular and sporadic actions are far from sufficient, and sometimes apparent.** Bearing in mind that part of society is unprepared for the experience of violence and cyberbullying, it is necessary to ensure comprehensive education, to develop competencies for developing appropriate attitudes, recognising the symptoms of violence and preventing it and to raise awareness about obtaining legal and psychological assistance as well as therapy.

We must not forget that prevention of these phenomena is not only the responsibility of schools; the family and the media also play active roles in passing on values and promoting responsible use of mobile devices and the Internet. Children and young people should be taught adequate digital literacy and the advantages of electronic communication devices, as well as the potential risks and how to prevent them. Systematic and purposeful training in these values, knowledge and skills should be a responsibility shared by schools, family and societies (Álvarez-García, et al., 2015, pp. 232–233). For instance, there is a free helpline of the Children's Rights Ombudsman in Poland, enabling children, adolescents and carers to receive free and professional psychological help in oppressive situations. Assistance is provided to people with emotional problems, in conflictual peer, school, family and adolescent relationships. However, the current situation calls for systemic solutions and programmes and appropriate action to address these difficult issues.

An aggressive pupil is often a lost and frustrated person, who may enter life with the baggage of negative experiences. The role of the teacher, educator and tutor should be to help the pupil cope with these difficulties, understand the nature of the destructive effects of aggression and violence and to form the right attitude based on values. A report by the Polish Committee of the European Anti-Poverty Network (Szarfenberg, 2021), based on national and international statistics, indicated an increase in the number of citizens living in extreme poverty by 2020. The Polish Central Statistical Office (Bieńkuńska&Góralczyk2021) also confirmed that the proportion of children living in poverty had increased

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in the previous year. The deterioration of the material situation of some households and the increase in extreme poverty in Poland is associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in social contact. Extreme social poverty and economic instability can therefore be a breeding ground for aggression and violence.

It should be noted that this study is not without limitations. For instance, a larger sample group could have provided statistical confirmation of the results. Furthermore, this research can be repeated with a group of school teachers actively working at different levels of education. With a larger sample, it would be possible to investigate any differences by professional experience or by gender.

## Conclusions and personal reflection

The reflections that arose in connection with the course I conducted, and the analysis of the material collected in the questionnaire, led me to formulate certain conclusions and postulates, which I present below. The problem of violence and aggression is difficult to define and cannot be captured by statistics. This phenomenon escapes comprehensive research. However, there is an urgent need to study it, as it has steadily increased to the point of causing public concern. This is why the media have taken an interest in the topic and are constantly informing the public about manifestations of aggression and violence. The course I conducted was therefore a response to an urgent contemporary need, and the research material collected through a survey conducted on a small group (167 course participants) is undoubtedly only one contribution to a comprehensive and multifaceted view of the problem. As a result of the course, I understood that it would be erroneous to consider aggression and violence as a final phenomenon. I believe that the problem should be considered in terms of cause and effect: the causes, manifestations of aggression and violence, their effects and ways of combating them.

The participants of the remote course on aggression and violence view the knowledge gained as part of their professional development.

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*Needs and Difficulties of Future Teachers in Dealing with Aggression and Violence
in Real and Virtual Spaces*
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It is clear that only teachers who are involved in and aware of these problems will be able to prevent and deal with aggressive behaviour by students, and the knowledge they gain can have a significant impact on the school environment. However, it appears that training and support for teaching staff in this area has been insufficient in recent years. Teachers, especially young ones just entering the profession, are under pressure to achieve high teaching scores or strive to improve them. As a result, they often feel frustrated because they have to reconcile teaching time with the time spent overcoming expressions of aggression in the classroom. It is therefore necessary to focus on increasing future teachers' skills in getting to know students, classroom management, conflict resolution and managing emotions (their own and others'). It is necessary to strive for efficient communication in teams and to establish good relations, because the ability to solve everyday school problems is a manifestation of an effective teacher's work.

The pandemic is a difficult time, with lockdowns, prolonged isolation, the severing of direct interpersonal relations, remote working and hybrid learning, the economic consequences of lockdown (inflation, economic slowdown and bankruptcies), significant expansion of poverty, the psychological and psychiatric consequences of long-term isolation (widespread depression in children and adolescents and a wave of suicides) and significant changes in morality. Such factors have intensified aggression and violence, on a scale never seen before. Moral, ethical and religious norms are no longer a brake on the expression of aggression and violence; rather, the oppressive nature of social life during the pandemic has become a driving force for this problem. Moreover, the phenomenon is increasing, and concrete measures must be taken to reduce its scale. Attempts are being made to counteract it, such as the press conference of the Children's Rights Ombudsman, the new helpline (800 12 12 12), the clinic for children with depression (by the TVN Foundation 'Nie jesteś sam' [You are not alone] and the Children's Health Centre.

When analysing the empirical material, I understood that an important role in the fight against aggression and violence should be played not only by teachers, but by many institutions (social services, foundations,

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charities and others) which can prevent it before it appears in the public space – provided that they are effective. I decided that today my survey would include a question on what the respondents believe is the source of violence, in order to investigate whether the respondents are aware of these social phenomena causing aggression and violence, as well as a few other questions to make the respondents think and observe: 'Is the aggressor sometimes also a victim of a system, of mistakes in social and economic policy?' I would make them think about the difference between a victim and an aggressor, by asking how they would define a victim, and what problems an aggressor solves by expressing aggression and using violence. I reflect that it was a mistake to ask how violence should be 'dealt with', because, in my opinion, the correct question is which institutions should be involved in combating the phenomenon of aggression and violence, so that their activities have the desired effect of reducing the scale of this disturbing phenomenon.

**Postulates**

1. Given the complex aspects of aggression and violence outlined above, I propose the need for a definition of aggressors and victims in the 2020s, during a prolonged pandemic and in relation to its consequences.
2. I believe that by gaining comprehensive knowledge of this issue, it will be possible to combat the phenomenon effectively with regard to both its causes and its effects.
3. This issue therefore needs to be thoroughly researched – a pressing need given the current pandemic and post-pandemic situation.
4. The phenomenon should be comprehensively studied from the point of view of pedagogy, sociology, economics, social policy, psychology and psychiatry.
5. Particular attention should be paid to the institutions that care for the mental health of children, adolescents and adults.
6. Legal regulations and enforcement are needed.

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7. Teachers, who have the legal status of state officials, should play a major role in this fight.

8. The media should play an important role in this fight by disseminating educational campaigns.

9. The media and teachers should be supported in this fight by the institutions set up for this purpose, such as the European Commission.

10. It is necessary to measure the scale of the phenomenon and to carry out research to locate the areas of public life in which it occurs most frequently.

11. Institutions should be established to ensure equal access of all children and adolescents to the Internet and culture, in order to counteract social exclusion.

12. The public should be provided with low-cost access to recreation, to remove an important cause of aggression and violence – boredom, which leads to frustration.

These are the research areas I indicate as urgently needing research.

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