

Impact of Developmental Aggression on Self-Esteem in College Students

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Abstract

Adolescence is a sensitive period that is accompanied with a common problem of low self-esteem and high aggression. In the present research we tried to understand the difference and relationship between developmental aggression and self-esteem among college students. A total of 331 participants were chosen from different colleges and universities of Odisha, India. Rosenberg Self-Esteem and Buss & Press Aggression scales were used in this study for tapping the self-esteem and aggression among adolescences. The result found that in terms of college students' aggression and diligence, there was a significant difference between boys and girls. In the part of the relationship that is important in the findings, there was a partial significance relationship between developmental aggression and self-esteem. Moreover, in terms of level analysis, the finding suggest that, through most of the participants were at the average level of self-esteem and developmental aggression, and males seem to have more self-esteem associated with aggression than females. Our findings further suggest that factors of age and parent occupation that play a significant role in eruption of high developmental aggression and self-esteem in college students.

Keywords: adolescence, aggression, hostile, physical, self-esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Disruptive behaviours are common among college students, and in general, these types of behaviours are considered normative to some extent. Sometimes disruptive behaviour becomes problematic when it involves ego, and that often creates aggression in individuals. Early behavioural problems, such as antisocial, aggressive behaviour and substance use disorders, predict future developmental and functional impairment (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2007). Continuous negative incidents have been associated with early aggressive behaviour among college students (Kaukinen, 2014). Each year, developed countries reported that physical acts of violence affected 5.5 million men and 7 million women (Whitaker et al. 2013). Many researchers said that the exact

root of physical acts of violence was in adolescence and that women who are very physically aggressive at the adolescent age, have a greater risk of being victimized in college (Kaukinen, 2014). According to a well-known study (Whitaker et al. 2013) of college students from 16 different countries, nearly 29 percent of college students are involved in physical violence each year, which begins in adolescence and continues into adulthood. The most recent research says that low self-esteem is associated with an increased risk of aggressive behaviour in college students. Also, aggressive behaviour decreases with the increase of self-esteem in individuals (Yu, et al. 2020).

In human life, problems of emotional separation from parents and siblings arise in the period of adolescence. Friends become more important at

college age, and many pull away from their parents in a search for their own identity. One of the recent papers discussed regarding academic decimation and mental health, observed that perceived academic discrimination affects adolescents' behavioural adjustment and social competencies through self-esteem (Zhao & Ngai, 2022). Moreover, Gauthier and colleagues said that self-esteem has an indirect effect on the increased risk of delinquent behaviour in boys. And boys have lower levels of self-esteem than girls and are associated with an increased risk of delinquent behaviours (Gauthier, Herbet, & Blais 2021).

Empirical findings suggest that aggression has an impact on self-esteem, particularly among college students. As the growing stages pass by, aggressive behaviour affects self-esteem. Lower self-esteem in girls leads to more conformism than in boys, and that girls have significantly more negative attitudes towards themselves as compared to boys (Minev et al. 2018). One of the studies by Sharma and Agarwal (2015) found a significant difference between pre-intervention self-esteem and post intervention collective self-esteem among adolescents. Findings by Naganandini in 2017 showed that 55% of adolescents had normal levels of self-esteem, 6.67% of adolescents had high levels of self-esteem, and 8.33% of adolescents had low levels of self-esteem. On the other hand, literature says that men have higher self-esteem than women (Joshi & Shribastaba 2009, McClure et al. 2010). In addition, men are more aggressive in nature than women (Yavuzer, 2013). Self-esteem in adolescents is a predictor of physical and mental health (Mwanza & Menon, 2015) in relation to positivity in relational aggression and psychological well-being.

Moreover, adolescent aggression is positively and significantly affected by family violence and TV viewing behaviour of adolescents, Kumari & Kumar (2018). Singh (2016) found that a significant difference and a relationship existed between aggression and emotional maturity among college students. In the case of direct aggression, boys are more prone to hitting than girls (Kruti & Melonashi 2015). The dimension of physical aggression also represents a significant difference between males and females. Munoz et al. (2007) found that women tend to engage in verbal aggression

while men engage in more severe physical aggression. Similarly, boys are more aggressive than girls, and girls have poorer self-esteem than boys and have significant mean differences with respect to aggression and self-esteem (Kaur, 2018 & Singh et al., 2017). It is also found through previous research that low self-esteem has a significant relationship with aggressive behaviours. Teng et al. (2015) found that female aggression is associated with lower self-esteem. Further, it indicates Wang et al. (2013) that if low self-esteem occurs in college students, then developmental aggression involvement triggers them to be more aggressive without consciousness. The research attempted to address a very common problem of developmental aggression along with self-esteem in Indian college students. Researchers also tried to see if there were any significant relationships between the variables of developmental aggression and self-esteem among boys and girls.

Objectives

- o To understand the differences between developmental aggression and self-esteem in college students
- o To explore the relationship between different factors of developmental aggression and self-esteem in college students

Hypotheses

- o There would be gender differences in respect to the variable of aggression and self-esteem
- o Different factors of developmental aggression would have positive association with self-esteem

Method

Participants

Through a stratified sampling method, a group of 331 participants (i.e., male = 151 and female = 180) with an age range of 16–31 years ($M = 1.95$ & $SD = 0.53$) were selected for the data collection from different colleges and universities in Odisha, India. For this study, it took approximately 6 months (i.e., November to March, 2020) to finish the data collection.

Materials

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (1965) was used for the assessment of self-esteem level. The scale takes approximately 10-15 minute to complete. It has five positive dimensions and five negative dimensions. It consists of 10 statements related to overall feeling of self-worth or self-acceptance, with higher scores indicating more positive self-regard. Each item was responded with 4 point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3 which include 1, 3, 4, 7, 10 and other 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 scores are reversed which is 3 to 0.

Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ): The Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (1992) has 29 questionnaires and a 5 point scale. This scale consists of 4 factors which are physical aggression (PA), verbal aggression (VA), anger (A), and hostility (H). The scores of factors are PA -9, VA-5, A-7, and H-8. The two items in the scale are reversed scores. Every time in the scale is denoted with the subject variable and the total of each sub factor. Total aggression score is calculated from the sum of each factor's score.

Procedure

In the first phase, before administering the scales, proper rapport was established with all the participants. Furthermore, they were asked to fill out the demographic scale after indicating their willingness to participate in the study. In the second phase, following that, they filled out both the aggression and self-esteem scales within approximately 16–22 minutes, after which the participants handed over the filled questionnaires. The collected data was analysed using the mean, standard deviation, correlation, and t-test.

Results & Discussion

This section conversed about the data analysis and interpretation of findings. Collected data were analysed through the statistical software of SPSS-22 version. Keeping in view the objectives, the data were analysed through t-test and correlation analysis.

Table 1: *Different types and numbers of demographic variables and percentage of college students (N=331)*

Variables	N (=331)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	151	45.6%
Female	180	54.4%
Age		
16-19 years	52	15.7%
20-23 years	244	73.7%
24-27 year	33	10.0%
28-31 year	2	0.6%
Education		
UG	204	64.4%
PG	127	36.6%
Area		
Rural	167	50.5%
Urban	164	49.5%
Parents Occupation		
Govt Job	87	26.3%
Private Job	57	17.2%
Famer	120	36.3%
Business	67	20.2%

The above table, represents the demographic variables of mean, standard deviation and the percentage of males and females. Most of participants fall in the age groups of 20-23 (73.7%) years according to the collected demographic data, and this particular age is a trigger point of developmental aggression. Most of the students are at undergraduate level (N=198 P=59.8%). It also needs to be pointed out that most of their parents' were farmers in terms of other occupations (N=120 P=36.3%), indicating that the students were from a farming family background.

Table 2: Differences between different factors of developmental aggression and self-esteem of college students (N=302)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Physical Aggression	Male	151	19.39	4.66	1.83
	Female	151	18.51	3.57	
Verbal Aggression	Male	151	17.99	4.18	.001
	Female	151	17.99	3.35	
Anger	Male	151	27.06	5.55	4.21**
	Female	151	24.61	4.51	
Hostility	Male	151	21.05	6.32	-4.57**
	Female	151	24.07	5.14	
Total Aggression	Male	151	85.50	13.23	.12
	Female	151	85.33	10.57	
Self-esteem	Male	151	19.22	5.25	3.65**
	Female	151	17.35	3.64	

Note: *significant at 0.05 level, **significant at 0.01 level

Obtained results show that there are some significant differences between male and female in the factor of aggression and self-esteem. In the sub factor of aggression such as anger and hostility, there are differences within males and females ($t=4.21$ anger & $t=-4.57$ hostile). It clearly shows that the factor of gender is a differentiating factor of aggression. The Mean, S.D, and t-value of hostile aggression scores found in males ($M= 21.05$ S.D= 6.32), and in females ($M= 24.17$, S.D=5.14) as well as t-value (4.57) which is more than tabulation value

Table 3: Relationship between different factors of developmental aggression and self-esteem of college students (N=331)

Variables	Mean	SD	PA	VA	A	H	TA	SE
PA	18.99	4.12	1					
VA	18.11	3.72	.31**	1				
A	25.81	5.24	.35**	.236**	1			
H	22.78	5.93	.16**	.12*	.06	1		
Total Aggression	85.83	11.88	.67**	.57**	.64**	.60**	1	
Self-esteem	18.24	4.56	-0.2	-11*	-.002	-.05	-.06	1

Note: *significant at 0.05 level, **significant at 0.01 level

Table 3, represents the correlation between the variables. The abbreviations of the variables are PA- Physical Aggression, V-Verbal Aggression,

at 0.01 level. Also, part of self-esteem in both male and females, have highly significant differences ($M=, 19.22$ males, 17.35 females, $SD= 5.25M, 3.64F$ & $t=3.65$) between them. It reveals that there is a highly significant mean difference in aggression as well as self-esteem of college students which is the expected direction. Moreover, the above results graphically represented below in Fig.1 which shows the mean value of males and females in respect to the variable of aggression and self-esteem.

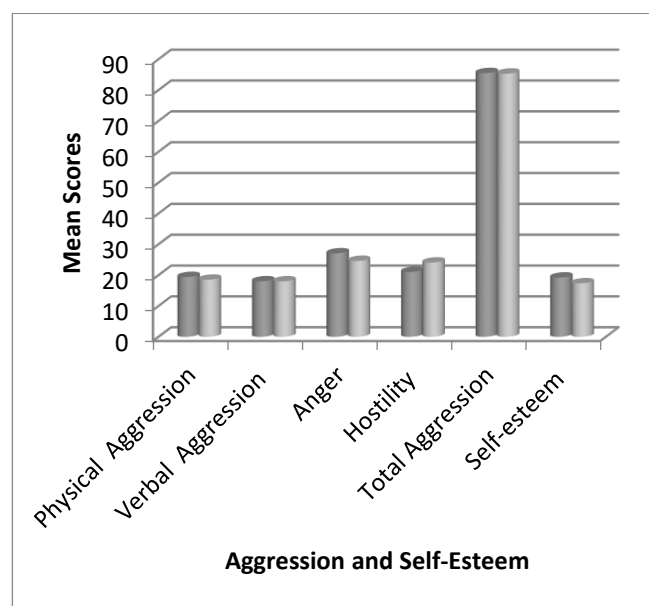


Fig.1. Showing mean values in gender-wise with respect to aggression and self-esteem graph

A-Anger, & H-Hostility. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem with each components of aggression except the verbal

aggression ($r=-.11^*$). It indicates that self-esteem and aggression are partially interrelated.

Table 4: *Level of developmental aggression and self-esteem of college students (331)*

Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Aggression		
31-60 (Normal)	4	1.2%
61-90(Average)	213	64.4%
91-120 (High)	114	34.4%
Self-Esteem		
0-15 (Low)	88	26.6%
16-25(Normal)	219	66.2%
25 above (Average)	24	7.3%

Above, table 4 shows the level of developmental aggression of college students, in which maximum students fall into the category of average level ($N = 213$, $P = 64.4\%$), followed by higher ($N=213$, 34.4%) level. In terms of self-esteem among college students, the majority ($N = 219$, $P = 66.2\%$) fall into the normal category, while the minority (26.6%) fall into the low category.

The findings indicated significant differences in aggression and self-esteem issues in the male participants. The results also indicate that the males have higher self-esteem issues than the females, which may explain why males are more aggressive. This could be one of the reasons for the developmental aggression in males who suffer from many problems in their family, academic performance, and society. We all know that adolescence is a transition period for all human beings, and it is during this period that they need care, affirmation, achievement, independence, value, support, and autonomy. From the literature, it is found that men are almost always more physically aggressive than women, and also that women always act with verbal aggression and, in some cases, hostility (Frodi, 1977 & Elizabeth, 2014). This might be one of the reasons why women have

significantly higher levels of control behaviour than men, which predicts physical aggression. Similarly, findings by Mokolapo & Dele (2014) suggest that gender has a significant influence on violent behaviour (Fareeda & Jahan 2014), and males are significantly higher on different dimensions of aggression such as physical, verbal, anger, and hostility in comparison to female students. Recent findings by Yodu (2018) suggest that male students are more likely to be physically aggressive while female students are more likely to be verbally aggressive.

In relationship measurement, it is shown that there is a partial significant relationship between aggression and self-esteem among college students, which is quite similar to the study of Zeigler-Hill, Enjaian, Holden, & Southard (2014), where self-esteem instability has a significant association with aggression level. Similarly, one of the most recent studies in China found that aggressive behaviour is negatively correlated with self-esteem in college students (Yu, et al. 2020). The levels of developmental aggression of college students' categories are average, followed by higher levels. Furthermore, it is seen that there is a partially significant relationship between anger and self-esteem among college students, which relates to the findings of David and Kistner (2000) on the factor of aggression, that there is no significant relationship. Also, research shows that males are more aggressive than females, and yet simultaneously, males have higher self-esteem than females. A lot of people have done research that backs up these findings, like Wani (2017), Veiskarami et al. (2015), Akhtar & Kushwaha (2015) and Talukdar and Deka (2014).

Conclusion

Our overall finding shows that self-esteem and aggression developed a partially significant relationship between males and females during adolescence. Furthermore, male adolescents are thought to be more aggressive than female adolescents. It might be that family and age play a crucial role in developing aggressive behaviour for males, which supports the study of Dukes et al. 2001. On the other hand, males have higher self-esteem than females. It might be one of the reasons that students may be in a

relationship, which gives them more strength to hike their self-esteem. Furthermore, it would be preferable to conduct research on current trends in relationship and psychological behaviour changes such as aggression and self-esteem. A much larger sample is also needed in the future to investigate socio-economic factors that lead to them aforementioned changes.

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