



GENDER DIFFERENCE IN AGGRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVING HIGH OR LOW SELF ESTEEM

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Abstract:

Forty four college going boys and equal number of college going girls were administered Aggression Questionnaire by Buss and Perry, and State Self Esteem Scale by Heatherton and Polivy. The study was designed to examine gender differences and self esteem differences with regards to aggressive behaviour. It was hypothesized that college going boys have significantly more aggressive behaviour than college going girls. And college going students with low self esteem exhibit significantly more aggressive behaviour than students with high self esteem. A 2x2 factorial design was used, and the data were treated by two way ANOVA. Results supported both the hypotheses.

Keywords:

Aggression, Self Esteem, Gender Differences, Aggressive Behaviour

Aggressive behaviour, among men and women, is seen in our everyday life. However, in most cases it is anger expressed towards others. Sometimes anger is expressed through facial emotions, and sometimes it is expressed verbally. An another form of aggressive behaviour is hostility. In hostile aggression the prime objective is inflicting some kind of harm on the victim. Hostility is more likely to result in physical aggression. Considering these varied types of aggressive behaviour; aggression can be defined as behaviour performed with the intent of physically or psychologically hurting one or more other people (Smith, 1998).

Apparently it appears that aggressive behaviour is inborn and biological factors play major role in developing aggressive behaviour; but the basic learning theory suggests that aggressive behaviour develops as the result of pattern of positive and negative reinforcement. Some studies have clearly demonstrated the effects of rewards on aggression (See Patterson, et al. 1967; Travellion & Snyder, 1993). Though learning processes are important they cannot alone account for what we know about the origins of aggression (Loebes & Hay, 1997). The specific aggressive behaviour patterns in a given individual are influenced by experiences, and learning processes that take place during childhood, but the underlying basis for aggression is biological (Kraus, 1997).

One highly debated problem regarding aggression is gender difference or sex difference. Our social training tells us that men are more aggressive than women. But the question is whether these casual observations are confirmed by major propositions and careful, empirical research. The early research

supported the deeply ingrained stereotype that women are gentle and nurturant whereas men are aggressive and demanding (Colley et al., 1994). However, based on the recent studies, the best conclusion is that there are probably no overall gender differences in amount of aggressive behaviour. In Japanese and Spanish cultures males reported more physical aggression, verbal aggression and hostility as well as higher instrumental beliefs, whereas females reported more expressive representation than males (Ramirez, Andreu, & Fujihara, 2001). Women tend to hold an expressive social representation of aggression while men tend to hold an instrumental representation. Women rated their own aggression as more acceptable than did men (Astin, Redston, & Campbell, 2003). Archer (2004) carried out meta-analytic review of sex differences in aggression. Direct specially physical aggression was more common among males and females at all ages sampled. Anger showed no sex differences.

Self esteem is believed to be associated with aggressive behaviour. Self esteem is the extent to which one perceives oneself as relatively close to being the person one wants to be and/or relatively distant from being the kind of one does not want to be, with respect to person-qualities one positively and negatively values (Block & Robbins, 1993). It is a common belief that low self esteem is associated with aggressive behaviour. However Baumeister, Smart, and Boden (1996) argued that if high esteem is threatened or disputed by someone or some event then the person may react with violence and hostility. People with inflated views of their own superiority, those with narcissistic tendencies, may be the most prone to violent reactions. Bushman and Baumeister (2002) found that the prisoners with a history of violence offenses were significantly higher on narcissism than those prisoners with no history of violence.

Aim of study:

Main aim of the study is to find out whether boys and girls differ significantly or not on aggression. Also, to search whether the Ss with high self esteem are more aggressive or those having low self esteem.

Hypotheses:

Considering the social and cultural conditions in India it was hypothesized that,

- i) College going boys are significantly more aggressive than college going girls.
- ii) The subjects with low self esteem are significantly more aggressive than the subjects with high self esteem.

Sample:

Total sample consisted of 88 Ss. They were selected from two graduate colleges of Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India. All the students were studying at B.A. second year. Their age range was 17 to 19 years. Random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample. Male female ratio was 1:1.

Tools Used For Data Collection:

Aggression Questionnaire:

This Scale was constructed and developed by Buss and Perry (1992). Though it is titled as questionnaire, it consists of 29 statements depicting different types of aggressive behaviour. Each statement

is provided with a five point scale ranging from – extremely uncharacteristic of me to extremely characteristic of me. Reliability of the questionnaire is .83.

State Self –Esteem Scale:

This Scale was constructed, developed and validated by Heatherton, and Polivy (1991). It consists of 20 items; each item is provided with a five point scale ranging from not at all to extremely.

Results and Discussion:

Means and Standard Deviations obtained by four classified groups are given in the following table:

Table-

Group		A ₁ B ₁	A ₁ B ₂	A ₂ B ₁	A ₂ B ₂
Aggression Status	\bar{X}	75.04	84.95	55.04	64.64
	s	3.88	3.48	3.72	3.99

A₁ = Boys, A₂ = Girls, B₁ = High self esteem, B₂ = Low self esteem

In the study gender and self esteem were treated as independent variables, each one was varied at two levels. Thus, a 2x2 factorial design was used. Dependent variable was aggression. Since a 2x2 factorial design was used the four classified groups were- BH = boys with high self esteem; BL = boys with low self esteem; GH = girls with high self esteem; and GL = girls with low self esteem. Means and SDs obtained by the four classified groups were- BH \bar{X} = 75.04 ± 3.88; BL \bar{X} = 84.95 ± 3.48; GH \bar{X} = 55.04 ± 3.72; and GL \bar{X} = 64.64 ± 3.99.

Examination of means and SDs clearly indicates that distribution of scores in each of the four groups is more or less normal. Difference in the means of the four groups is large, so the groups might differ significantly from each other. Aggression data of the four classified groups were treated by two way ANOVA. Main factor gender brought out significant results (F=626.97, df=1 & 84, p<0.01). Considering the significant F value, and the means obtained by the broad groups of Boys and Girls, it could be asserted, that the group of boys was significantly more aggressive than the group of girls. In earlier studies similar results were observed (See Ramirez & associates, 2001; Astin & associates, 2003).

Self esteem was also found associated with aggression. Self esteem also yielded significant results (F=146.66, df 1& 84, p<0.1). The Ss with high esteem and those with low esteem differ significantly from each other. Aggressive behaviour was significantly more predominant among the Ss having low self esteem than those having high self esteem.

Interaction gender × self esteem was found non-significant (F=0.04, df= 1 & 84, p>0.5). It seems that in the process of developing aggressive behaviour gender and self functioned independently.

On the basis of results following conclusions were drawn.

- College going boys had significantly more aggression than college going girls.

- College going students with low self esteem had significantly more aggression than those having high self esteem.

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