

AGGRESSION AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR GENDER AND OPTIMISTIC-PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE

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ABSTRACT

These days aggressive behavior has become a topic of vital importance and a major concern in most societies. The whole world seems to be under the strain of aggressive acts of various forms. In psychology, as well as in other social and behavioral sciences, aggression refers to behavior between members of the same species that is intended to cause pain or harm. Aggression takes a variety of forms among humans and can be physical, mental or verbal. Research studies reported many factors which are responsible for the production of aggression. In the present paper an attempt has been made to study the aggression among school going adolescents in relation to their gender and optimistic-pessimistic attitude. A sample consisted of 338 school going adolescents studying in class 10th in Government and Private High Schools in district Mandi of Himachal Pradesh was drawn by using multistage sampling followed in combination with stratified random sampling technique. Aggression level of school going adolescents was assessed by "Aggression Scale" developed by Dr. G.P. Mathur & Dr. Raj Kumari Bhatnagar and the level of optimistic-pessimistic attitude was measured by "Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude Scale" developed by D.S. Prashar. The results of the present study revealed that female adolescents have significantly higher level of aggression (209.44) in comparison to male adolescents (204.61). Results of the present study further reported that there is significant difference in aggression among school going adolescents at different levels of their optimistic-pessimistic attitude.

INTRODUCTION

These days aggressive behavior has become a topic of vital importance and a major concern in most societies. The whole world seems to be under the strain of aggressive acts of various forms. Violence is disturbingly common in most parts of the world and it is undoubtedly creating chaos and disturbing the world peace and harmony. In psychology, as well as other social and behavioral sciences, aggression refers to behavior between members of the same species that is intended to cause pain or harm. Aggression takes a variety of forms among humans and can be physical, mental or verbal. Although humans share aspects of aggression with non-human animals, they differ from most of them in the complexity of their aggression because of factors such as culture, morals and social situations. We attack, hurt and sometimes kill each other, we aggress verbally by means of insults or attempts to damage another's reputation and wars always seem to be happening someplace, approximately 14,600

wars in 5,600 years of recorded history (Montagu, 1976).

Aggression is defined as behaviour intended to cause harm or pain either directly or indirectly. The key to this definition is the word intended. If a student fractures another student's nose by accident, the fracture is not the result of aggression, but if the student intended to fracture the nose, he or she was being aggressive in the negative sense of the words (Aronson, 1977). Hicks (1965) mentioned that viewing aggression, particularly if the subject identifies with the aggressor will cause immediate aggressive responses to be elicited in children, youth and adults, whereas Kingmore (1968) found an increase in aggression as a result of observing violent sports. The study of adolescent aggressive behaviour during the last decade has increasingly focused upon the fact that aggression is not only physical by its nature, but it can be of various forms. The rapid development of the peer-estimation paradigm (many forms of interpersonal aggression simply go unnoticed if

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only self-reports or behavioral observations are used) has made this new focus possible. Taylor, et al. (2010) reported that frequent use of corporal punishment is associated with increased risk for higher levels of child aggression when the child was 5 years of age. Anjum, et al. (2011) pointed out that the group of women who experience domestic violence had high aggressiveness and poor life satisfaction as compared to the other group of women. Competition does not cause aggression rather the cause of aggression in competition is the provocation that is perceived to occur within the game (Garbling & Taylor, 1971).

Aggressive behaviour pattern was not confined to the lower castes but transgressed the boundaries of caste and class (Arunima, 1989). It was revealed by Srivastava (1988) that there was no correlation of aggression with self-concept, achievement motivation and performance. Aggression and moral disengagement was found more in the rural respondents and moral disengagement was found to be a mediator of aggression in adult subjects (Yadava, et al., 2002). Card, et al. (2008) results confirmed prior findings of gender differences (favoring boys) in direct aggression and trivial gender differences in indirect aggression. Results also indicated a substantial intercorrelation ($= .76$) between these forms. Despite this high intercorrelation, the two forms showed unique associations with maladjustment. Direct aggression is more strongly related to externalizing problems, poor peer relations and low prosocial behaviour. Indirect aggression is related to internalizing problems and higher prosocial behavior. In fact, Bettencourt and Miller (1996) found that when there was provocation gender differences in aggression tend to shrink or disappear. It was reported by Sangwan (2011) that urban boys are significantly higher on aggression as compared to rural boys.

Aggression can be considered as partly inherent and partly environmental as its intensity largely depends on learning and culture including various other sub-factors. The frustration aggression hypothesis assumes that thwarting a person's efforts to reach a goal induces aggressive drive which, in turn, motivates behaviour designed to injure the person which

causing frustration. Social learning theory supports the notion that aggression is also a learned response. This theory conceptualizes the motivational components of aggression. So, it emphasizes on aversive experiences and incentive inducement for aggression. The researches reported many factors which are responsible for the production of aggression in humans.

Optimism is "an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome". It is the philosophical opposite of pessimism. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines optimism as "hopefulness and confidence about the future or the success of something". We inherit around 50% of our tendency towards optimism or pessimism from our parents, possibly more from our mothers with whom we tend to spend more time in childhood. As human beings, feeling angry, sad, insecure, or depressed are all natural things. Optimism requires discipline and a concerted effort in everything we do. It requires a commitment to make our lives better and to work for the opportunities to achieve some peace in our lives. Pessimism is a state of mind which negatively colors the perception of life, especially with regard to future events. Value judgments may vary dramatically between individuals, even when judgments of facts are undisputed. A pessimist is the kind of person who doesn't see life with all its beauty and blessings but instead becomes filled with a lot of negative ideas. They easily give up and they lose hope which makes them feel left-out a lot of the time. They have the tendency to hate themselves and often feel that they are really doing nothing. They blame themselves and also the others around them. An excessively pessimistic thinking style can be a contributory factor in stress. Anzi and Owayed (2005) found significant positive correlation between academic achievement and optimism whereas the correlation was negative between academic achievement and pessimism. Optimism lowers anxiety but is not related to expectations of grades or grade point average (Stocker, 1999). Optimism is a partial factor in academic anxiety (Weiss, 2001 and Kumari, 2008). Roughton (2008) found that athletes who

had less belief in god-mediated control were less likely to be optimistic. A majority of collegiate athletes (59.9%) possess pessimistic style (Wilson and Ragilin, 2000) and a research study by Bhavneshwari (2011) found that a large majority of school going adolescents (61%) possess pessimistic attitude. A certain degree of pessimism is useful but an overly chronic pessimistic style can reduce our ability to cope with stress and research has shown that it can also have a negative influence on our physical and psychological health.

Presently the unhealthy competition among the students is creating various problems in schools, home and in the society. The increasing cases of riots, violent attacks on teachers and students, abusing, antisocial behaviour, rape cases, agitations and acid attacks on females are the signals of rising anger and frustration and hence the signs of increasing aggression in our adolescents. A review of research studies carried out in the field of aggression reveals that no systematic attempt has been made to assess the aggression among school going adolescents with regard to their optimistic-pessimistic attitude especially in the Indian context. Therefore the present study has been planned to be undertaken.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Aggression among school going adolescents in relation to their gender and optimistic-pessimistic attitude”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to fulfill the following objectives.

1. To study the aggression level of school going adolescents.
2. To study the gender-wise difference in aggression among school going adolescents.
3. To study the aggression among school going adolescents at different levels of their optimistic-pessimistic attitude.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Following hypotheses were formulated for verification in the present study.

1. There will be no significant gender-wise difference in aggression among school going adolescents.
2. There will be no significant difference in aggression among school going adolescents at different levels of their optimistic-pessimistic attitude.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited in its scope to the following aspects.

1. The sample included only 10th class students studying in government and private high schools of Dharampur and Sadar educational blocks of district Mandi of Himachal Pradesh in the session 2012-2013.
2. The study was confined to a sample of 338 students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Following terms have been used in the study.

1. Aggression: Aggression is behaviour, which intends to hurt or injure someone and is designed to deliver negative outcomes. In the present study aggression level of adolescents was assessed by Aggression Scale developed by Dr. G.P. Mathur & Dr. Raj Kumari Bhatnagar.
2. School going Adolescents: Class 10th students who are studying in Government and Private High Schools of Dharampur and Sadar educational blocks of district Mandi of Himachal Pradesh in the session 2012-2013.
3. Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude: Optimism is a state of mind that causes the mind to believe that the advantages and beneficent will always occur for the individual. Pessimism is a state of mind which negatively colours the perception of life especially with regard to future events. In the present work optimistic-pessimistic attitude of school going adolescents was measured by using “Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude Scale” developed by D.S. Prashar.

RESEARCH METHOD USED

For conducting the present investigation, descriptive survey method of research was used.

SAMPLING

In the present investigation a representative sample of 338 students studying in class 10th was drawn from eight high schools (Four Government and four Private High Schools) situated in Dharampur and Sadar educational blocks of district Mandi of Himachal Pradesh by using multistage sampling followed in combination with stratified random sampling technique.

TOOLS USED

1. Aggression Scale developed by Dr. G.P. Mathur & Dr. Raj Kumari Bhatnagar.
2. Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude Scale developed by D.S. Prashar.

DATA ANALYSIS

For testing the gender-wise significance of difference in aggression among school going adolescents the statistical technique of t-test was used. Further, for finding out the significance of difference in aggression among school going adolescents at four levels of their optimistic-pessimistic attitude (high optimistic, optimistic, moderate and pessimistic attitude), the statistical technique of Analysis of Variance (One Way) was applied.

MAJOR FINDINGS

From the analysis and interpretation of the data, following findings may be drawn.

1. Results of the present study revealed that 62.65% of female adolescents and 52.33% of male adolescents having their aggression scores 205 & above and thereby reflecting on higher percentage of school going female adolescents with high aggression level in comparison to their male counterparts.
2. 47.67% of male and 37.35% of female school going adolescents was found to possess average aggression.
3. None of the school going adolescents possesses low level of aggression. Maximum numbers of school going adolescents studying in private and government high schools have high aggression.
4. The percentage of female students having high aggression level is 10.32 % more than male school going adolescents.

5. There is significant gender-wise difference in aggression among school going adolescents.
6. Female adolescents have significantly higher aggression level (209.44) in comparison to male adolescents (204.61).
7. There is significant difference in aggression among school going adolescents at different levels of their optimistic-pessimistic attitude.
8. Adolescents with high optimistic and optimistic attitude did not differ significantly from each other with respect to their aggression. Further, the adolescents with high optimistic and moderate attitude did not differ significantly from each other with respect to their aggression.
9. Adolescents with high optimistic attitude have exhibited significantly higher mean score of aggression (213.26) as compared to students with pessimistic attitude (190.76).
10. Adolescents with optimistic and moderate attitude did not differ significantly from each other with respect to their aggression.
11. Students with optimistic attitude have exhibited significantly higher mean score of aggression (205.26) as compared to students with pessimistic attitude (190.76).
12. Adolescents with moderate attitude have exhibited significantly higher mean score of aggression (204.19) as compared to students with pessimistic attitude (190.76).

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