



Gender differences in Aggressive Behavior of Adolescents

KEYWORDS

Aggressive behavior, Gender differences

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to compare the gender differences in aggressive behaviour of Adolescents by using a sample of Two hundredteenagers consisted of 100 boys and 100 girls, age ranging from 16 to 19 years. Dr. G.C. Pati's Aggression test was used for data collection. The causes of aggression as perceived by teenagers were measured by asking few questions related to it. It was found that boys and girls differ significantly on aggression scale. Results show that the boys were more aggressive than girls as showing mean value of aggressive behavior 11.96 and 6.26 respectively. The data suggests that very small number of adolescent girls expressed their anger or aggressive behavior freely as compared to boys who have larger number to express freely their aggression. Another interesting finding revealed that girls feel guilty after expressing their anger where boys don't feel guilty. As for as causes of aggression is concerned, no significant difference have been found between boys and girls on the factors related to its causes.

Introduction:

Aggression may be defined as harmful behavior which violates social conventions and which may include deliberate intent to harm or injure another person or object (Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1993).

Anderson & Huesmann, (2003) defined aggression as a behaviour directed towards another individual carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm".

Researchers have attempted to create two common subtypes of aggression namely, overt and covert aggression (Connor, 2004). Overt aggression involves outward or open confrontational acts of aggression, such as physical fighting, verbal threats and bullying. On the other hand, covert aggression is more hidden and surreptitious, such as stealing, shirking and arson.

Gender differences in aggression are also frequently noted in psychological literature. A meta-analytical study of 63 studies examining gender differences in adult aggression confirmed these findings although the overall difference between males and females was small (Eagley & Steffen, 1986).

According to Connor (2004), males have been found to be more aggressive than females across various types of cultures, scientific studies, and categories of aggression. Buss (2005) has reported that males are believed to be more physically aggressive than females from an early age and commit the vast majority of murders. Thus gender plays an important role in human aggression.

However, some empirical studies have found the discrepancy in male and female aggression to be more pronounced in childhood and the gender difference in adults to be modest. Still, there is evidence that males are quicker to aggression (Frey et al. 2009) and more likely than females to express their aggression physically.

On the basis of a meta-analytical review of 148 studies on gender differences in overt and relational aggression, Card and associates (2008) have revealed that males are more

overtly aggressive than females but when relational aggression was taken into consideration, females were often found to be just as aggressive as males.

Studies show that females in general have better control over their emotions in comparison to males. Also, males are more likely to retaliate when provoked to gain recognition; females are less likely to retaliate in a violent way because they are shielded by moral sense.

Earlier researchers have demonstrated that both genetic and environmental factors play a role in a variety of behaviors in humans and animals (e.g. Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2003), but the genetic or biological basis of aggression, however, remains poorly understood. Genetic-developmental theory states that individual differences in a continuous phenotype result from the action of a large number of genes, each exerting an effect that works with environmental factors to produce the trait (Tremblay, Hartup and Archer, 2005).

Studies by Raine et al. (1997), Raine (2002) have shown that teenagers with lower heart rate were more likely to be aggressive as young adults, but, other researchers have said that these studies could not establish a cause and effect relationship because chronic aggressive behavior might lower heart rates during athletic training.

Neurosurgeons have implicated the role of anatomical structures in causes of aggression. Moyer (1968, 1976) has reported in his physiological studies that neural centers are responsible for aggression control.

There are various environmental factors which influence aggression. Among them aversive incidents, arousal, the media and the group are mentioned. Pain, heat, attack by others are aversive incidents, which are conducive to violence. The arousal of emotions as anger also results in aggressive behavior. Media have also a profound influence on adult's aggression. In a number of cases of house breaking, murder and rape, the aggression has been found to be committed by those who had either read book in great details of violent deeds or have watched

movies full of violence.

In the recent year, the social learning view has gained increasing acceptance. Watching violent scene on television or in films provoke more anxiety and aggressive behavior among their observers. The effect of TV violence is potential on young children. Long term studies have revealed that the more violence children watch on TV, the more violence they exhibit later as teenagers and adults.

Looking at the three groups of studies we could have the results have been consistent. Regardless of procedure used, most films have long bearing on children especially. Exposure to filmed or televised violence can sometime elicit similar actions on the part of the viewers.

Social learning theory suggests that the low standard titillating literature provides curiosity to young mind, which leads to aggression. The comics for children also play a great role in the rise of aggression.

Objectives:

In the light of above mentioned review of literatures, following objectives of the study have been made:

- 1.To identify the differences between adolescent boys and girls on aggressive behavior.
2. To identify the differences between adolescent boys and girls on the way of expression of aggressive behavior or anger.
- 3.To know about the views of boys and girls related to the causes of aggression i.e. biological or environmental factors responsible for it.

Hypotheses:

Based on the review of the contemporary literatures in the field, following hypotheses are framed for the fulfillment of the objectives of the study and putting to test:

- H-1: Adolescent boys' mean aggression score will be significantly higher than the adolescent girls aggression score.
- H-2: Adolescent boys and girls will be significantly differ on the way of expression of aggressive behavior or anger.
- Ho: Adolescent boys and girls will not be significantly differ on the causation of aggressive behavior.

Methodology

Sample:

The sample comprised of 200 teenagers subjects, in which 100 girls and 100 boys have been taken from Bhopal city. The age group of sample was 16 to 19 years. The technique of sampling was purposive sampling.

Tools:

Dr. G.C. Pati's Aggression Test was used to measure the aggression of boys and girls. Adding to this, few questions were asked to the students based on our study and tests. They are as follows:

1. Do you express your anger verbally or otherwise?
2. Do you feel guilty after expressing your anger?
3. Do you think upbringing for child rearing practices have any influence on aggressive behavior of the child?
4. What do you think about provoke aggression in general?: a)biological factor b)environmental factor

Procedure:

To measure the aggression of boys and girls Pati's Aggression

Questionnaire (1976) was used. Few questions were also asked to the subjects based on our study to know about the causes of aggression as they think. After completing the test, subjects' responses were put for scoring as prescribed in the manual of the test.

Results and Discussion:

The boys and girls differ significantly on the aggression. The aggression score of boys and girls is shown in table 1.1. In the present study, gender differences has been found as a potential variable in generating significant upon aggression. It is evident from the observation of table 1.1 that the boys having mean aggression score of 11.96 are significantly higher on aggression than the girls having mean aggression score of 6.26. The t-ratio between two means is found 8.91, which is significant at 0.01 level.

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Boys	11.96	5.84	8.91	Significant at 0.01 level
Girls	6.26	2.64		

Table 1.1 Showing Mean, S.D. and t between boys and girls score on aggression.

The results clearly show that boys are more aggressive than girls. It proves the first hypothesis. This finding is clearly supported by Harris (1994), who suggested that males report higher incidence of many aggressive behavior than do females.

Gender differences in aggression are much larger in the absence of provocation than in its presence. In other words, males are more aggressive than females towards other persons when those persons have not provoked them in any manner (Bettencourt and Miller 1996).

Gender	Aggression Expression Verbally	Guilt feeling after Aggression Expression	χ ²	Level of Significance
Boys	76%	24%	58.34	Significant at 0.01 level
Girls	22%	78%		

Table 1.2 Showing aggression expression and Guilt feeling after aggression expression by boys and girls.

The data shown in table 1.2 proves the second hypothesis and suggests that very smaller number of adolescent girls i.e. only 22% express their anger and aggression towards others, whereas 76% of boys express their aggressive feelings. Another interesting fact was that 78% adolescent girls felt guilt after expressing their anger while only 24% boys expressed guilty feeling after their outbursts. This shows that our society expects male to express their anger but this expectation is not extended to females. Patience and self-discipline seems to be much higher among girl adolescents.

The teenagers were then asked what they think about the causes of aggression. It is evident from the observation of table 1.3 that 65% of boys and 61% of girls think that environment is the prominent cause of aggression.

Gender	Causes of aggression as perceived			χ ²	Level of Significance
	Biological	Up-bringing	Environment		
Boys	16%	19%	65%	0.376	Not significant at any acceptable level of confidence
Girls	17%	22%	61%		

Table 1.3 Showing Causes of aggression as perceived by boys and girls.

As far as biological factors and upbringing are concerned, 16% boys and 17% girls feel that biological factors are responsible for aggression whereas 19% boys and 22% girls feel that up-bringing for child rearing practices are responsible for aggressive behavior of the child, but no significant difference has been found between adolescent boys and girls' views about the causes of aggression.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the results obtained, we can conclude that the adolescent boys and girls are significantly different in their aggression level. The study also reveals that the adolescent girls often withdraw themselves and internalized problems whereas boys in contrast express a bit more than really needed.

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