

Psychological Correlates of Aggression among Adolescents

Sadhan Dasgupta and Maupali Ghosh

University of Calcutta, Kolkata

Aggression is one of the most important problems among the adolescents. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between aggression and each of the variables, namely, personality, emotional quotient and parental bonding among adolescents. The participants were 100 adolescents from different English medium schools (14 -18 years) in Kolkata. Results showed that there is relationship between aggression and each of the variables, namely, personality, emotional quotient and parental bonding.

Aggression is any form of behaviour that is intended to injure another person (physically or verbally) or to destroy property. Aggressive behaviours may be direct or indirect and may be internally or externally directed in nature. Aggression has theoretically been explained from several angles. From the psychoanalytical perspective, aggression results from an instinctive drive. Ethological approaches explain aggression as a self-perpetuating instinct. The frustration-aggression hypothesis links aggression to frustration. Aggression has also been explained through the social learning model, being learnt directly or vicariously from act of aggression by others. Aggressive behaviours are always maintained through contingent reinforcement.

Recent advances in Neuropsychology, electrophysiology and brain imaging have assumed that aggression is a product of both psycho-social and biological factors. It has been hypothesized that lowered physiological arousal may result from prefrontal damage or congenital sluggish functioning of prefrontal cortex. It may predispose individuals to lower levels of fear, high level of stimulus seeking or both, which may in turn cause them to aggressive outburst (Raine,2002). Parallely psychologists have also recognized a number of psychological

and social factors in producing aggressive behaviour in individuals.

Different longitudinal studies both in Western and Indian conditions have confirmed that aggressive behaviour rises its peak during adolescence (Kapur,1985; Singer, 2007). The number and forms of violent acts committed by Indian teens (including rape, murder, physical and verbal attack) both in home and outside are escalating to a significant extent. Both at societal level as well as at individual level this increasing trend of aggression amongst adolescence have become a major challenge for the 21st century.

To date, work examining the relationship of personality and aggressive behaviour has primarily concentrated on correlational studies aimed at identifying association between a particular personality trait and aggression. There is some evidence that a measure reflecting Neuroticism(N) or negative emotionality predicts aggressive behaviour problems in middle childhood and adolescence (Jone & Stevenson,1997). On the other hand, (Einsberg et al, 2000) have found that measures of disinhibition or low Conscientiousness can predict aggression and other externalizing behaviour across adolescence. This low conscientiousness is again biologically supported by the lower

activation of the prefrontal cortex which plays a major role in the control of impulse (Singer, 2007).

Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient has also been found to have a relationship with aggressive behaviour. The term emotional intelligence was first used by Mayer and Salovey (1990). The most scientific definition of Emotional Intelligence was given by them is "Emotional intelligence may be defined as the capacity to reason with emotion in four areas- to perceive emotion, to integrate it in thought, to understand it and to manage it." Like general intelligence, it is also a product of both heredity and environmental forces.

According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), there are four components of Emotional Intelligence. They are: accurately perceiving and expressing one's own emotion, the ability to access and generate emotions in the service of thinking and problem solving, understanding emotions and emotional meanings and being able to manage and regulate one's emotions appropriately. So from this standpoint, emotional intelligence seems to play the role of a moderator variable in the ultimate expression of different emotions. Considerable research indicates a critical link between early parent-child interaction variables and later manifestations of aggressive behaviours in adolescents (Williams & Riskind, 2004). According to Parker, parental bonding encompasses both parental care (i.e., the provision of nurturance and affection) and parental protection (i.e., creation of a sense of safety and security). So it has been hypothesized that disruptions in early parent-child bonding either in the form of 'care' or 'protection' may act as a potential variable for the development of aggression in later life (Weinfeld et al., 2000). On the basis of the above background, the objectives were:

Objectives:

1) To find out whether there is any relationship between experience and expression of aggression with different dimensions of personality like neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

2) To assess whether there is any relationship between experience and expression of aggression with the level of emotional intelligence in a group of adolescents.

3) To assess whether there is any relationship between nature of parental bonding and the experience and expression of aggression in a group of adolescents.

Method

Sample:

A group of 100 adolescents were taken, 50 boys and 50 girls from different English medium schools in Kolkata city. Age ranging from 14 to 18 years studying in class eight to twelve were employed. All of them were Hindu and belonged to middle class socio-economic status. Subjects with a previous history of any major physical or psychiatric illness were excluded from this study.

Tools:

State Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI): It was developed by Spielberger (1988). It consists of 44 items that form 6 scales and 2 subscales namely State Anger (S-A), Trait Anger (T-A) (Angry Temperament and Angry Reaction), Anger-In (A-IN), Anger-Out (A-OUT), Anger-Control (A-CON) and Anger Expression (A-EX). Alpha coefficient ranged between 0.69 and 0.93.

Neo-Five Factor Inventory (Neo-FFI): It is a 60 item inventory that provides a brief and comprehensive measure of the five domains of personality. It was developed by Costa and McCrae. It consists of 60 items that form 5 dimensions of personality namely Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E),

Openness(O), Agreeableness(A) and Conscientiousness(C). Internal consistency coefficients of the factors range from 0.68 to 0.86.

Parental Bonding Instrument(PBI): It was developed by Parker (1979) was designed to measure the quality of attachment or “bond” between parent and child. Development of the instrument was based on previous research which shown that the parental bonding has two dimensions: “care” and “control/overprotection”. The care dimension involves at one end, affection, emotional warmth, empathy, closeness and on the other end, emotional coldness, indifference and neglect. PBI possess good internal consistency and re-test reliability.

Emotional Intelligence Test: It was developed by Chadha for the Indian population. This is a 15 item scale. Test-retest reliability of the test is 0.94 and Split-half reliability is 0.89.

Results

Table 1 shows means and SDs of different components of aggression. The table shows that in case of different components of aggression, namely, State Anger (S-A), Trait Anger (T-A), Anger-Out(A-Out) and Anger Expressed(A-Ex), the mean of males is higher than that of females. Standard deviation also is higher in case of males than females. Incase of Emotional Quotient(EQ), the mean of females (182.98) is higher than that of males (146.80) whereas, S.D as found is higher incase females (51.45) than that of males (45.52). Incase of different dimensions of personality, namely, Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), the mean of males is higher than that of females. Incase of mother care and father care, the mean of males higher than that of females. Incase of mother protection and father protection, the mean of females is higher than that of males. S.D is higher incase of females as compared to males .

Table 2 shows correlation between different components of aggression and emotional quotient, different dimensions of personality and parental bonding. Findings suggest that EQ has significant positive correlation with A-Con. i.e, Anger Control. Neuroticism has significant positive correlation with T-A, i.e, Trait Anger. Openness has significant positive correlation with Anger-In. Agreeableness has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Conscientiousness has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Mother Care has significant negative correlation with S-A. Mother Protection has significant positive correlation with S-A. Father Care has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Father Protection has significant positive correlation with State Anger.

Table 3 shows correlation between different components of aggression, emotional quotient, different dimensions of personality and parental bonding among adolescent males and females. Findings suggest that Openness of females has significant positive correlation with Anger-In. Agreeableness of males has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Agreeableness of females has significant negative correlation with Anger-In. Conscientiousness of males has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Mother Care of males has significant positive correlation with Anger-Control. Mother Protection of males has significant negative correlation with A-Con. Mother Protection of females has significant positive correlation with State Anger. Father Care of males has significant negative correlation with State Anger. Father Care of females has significant negative correlation with Trait Anger. Father Protection of females has significant positive correlation with State Anger.

Table 4 shows the result of t-test between two groups of adolescents, having higher and lower scores of anger expression

Table 1. Mean, SD of different components of aggression, emotional quotient (EQ), different dimensions of personality and parental bonding

	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
S-A	15.04	5.36	14.18	4.54	14.61	4.96
T-A	21.02	5.76	20.32	5.82	20.67	5.77
A-IN	16.94	4.27	17.54	4.16	17.24	4.2
A-OUT	17.48	4.36	16.72	4.85	17.1	4.6
A-CON	21.1	6.03	21.16	4.67	21.13	5.37
A-Ex	29.18	8.04	28.96	8.38	29.07	8.17
EQ	146.8	45.52	182.98	51.45	164.89	51.64
N	57.82	6.87	53.52	8.35	55.67	7.91
E	50.6	7.76	49.5	8.19	50.05	7.95
O	44.96	8.7	46.72	9.64	45.84	9.18
A	38.58	9.15	37.6	8.08	38.09	8.6
C	39.14	9.29	44.08	10.11	41.61	8.6
Mother Care	24.92	4.18	24.56	6.19	24.74	5.26
Mother Protection	16.46	5.17	17.54	7.61	17	6.5
Father Care	24.56	4.66	23.12	7.14	23.84	6.04
Father Protection	14.38	4.9	16.51	8.37	15.44	6.86

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

with respect to emotional quotient, different dimensions of personality and parental bonding. The t-test value between two groups of adolescents having higher and lower scores of anger expression with respect to EQ has been found to be 2.05 (*p<0.05)

Discussion

Results indicate that emotional quotient (EQ) has significantly positive correlation with anger control. Persons having high emotional intelligence are less likely to engage in manifestation of aggressive behaviour. They are able to control or regulate their anger considering the reality situation. In case of males, emotional intelligence has been found to have significant positive correlation with anger control and significant negative correlation with anger expression. Individuals having high levels of emotional intelligence are less likely to express aggression or engage in aggressive and violent acts. (Hadi Naghdi; Nastaran Adibrad; Rahmatollah Nouranipour, 2010). This has been confirmed when the total group of subjects employed were divided into two groups (i.e., High and

Low groups) which was done by computing quartile deviation on the basis of their anger expression score and a statistically significance between group difference has been obtained in terms of their EQ scores.

From the findings of the present study, it has been found that personality has correlation with aggressive behaviour among adolescents. Neuroticism, has been have significant positive relationship with trait anger. Persons with high level of neuroticism, i.e., those persons who are emotionally unstable and more poorly adjusted than others in dealing with stress have been found to have higher predisposition to experience aggression. Aggression does not function in a vacuum; some conditions definitely provoke aggression more than others, but some are better at resisting (or responding to) provocation. Studies have shown that greater aggressive response was seen under provocation for trait anger in persons with high level of neuroticism. Openness have been found to have positive correlation with anger in. Individuals with high scores on openness

Table 2. Correlation between different components of aggression and emotional quotient (EQ), different dimensions of personality and parental bonding

	S-A	T-A	A-IN	A-OUT	A-CON	A-EX
EQ	-0.07	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.24*	-0.16
N	0.19	0.22*	-0.09	0.1	-0.11	0.14
E	-0.03	-0.1	-0.04	0.12	-0.09	0.13
O	-0.04	0.07	0.24*	0.15	0.01	0.18
A	-0.17	-0.29**	-0.02	-0.07	-0.06	-0.05
C	-0.07	-0.29**	0.04	-0.17	0.09	-0.17
Mother Care	-0.21*	-0.19	0.03	-0.09	0.12	-0.1
Mother Protection	0.29**	0.07	0.06	0.09	-0.03	0.08
Father Care	-0.17	-0.21*	0.07	-0.13	0.13	-0.14
Father Protection	0.30**	0.08	0.02	0.05	-0.02	0.03

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Table 3. Correlation between different components of aggression and emotional quotient, different dimensions of personality and parental bonding among adolescent males and females separately

	S-A	T-A	A-IN	A-OUT	A-CON	A-EX
EQ of Male	-0.06	0.08	0.12	-0.03	0.36**	-0.32*
EQ of Female	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	0.14	0.14	-0.03
N of Male	0.19	0.22	-0.13	0.04	-0.15	0.16
N of Female	0.16	0.21	-0.03	0.11	-0.1	0.12
E of Male	0.04	-0.15	0.07	0.19	-0.02	0.21
E of Female	-0.13	-0.07	-0.14	0.05	-0.17	0.07
O of Male	-0.19	-0.05	0.19	0.17	-0.09	0.18
O of Female	0.13	0.19	0.28*	0.15	0.11	0.18
A of Male	-0.17	-0.32*	0.21	0.08	-0.12	0.16
A of Female	-0.18	-0.27	-0.28*	-0.23	0.03	-0.27
C of Male	-0.08	-0.34*	0.14	-0.09	-0.05	-0.06
C of Female	-0.02	-0.23	-0.09	-0.22	0.27	-0.27
Mother Care of Male	-0.21	-0.18	0.17	-0.06	0.35*	-0.15
Mother Care of Female	-0.23	-0.21	-0.06	-0.12	-0.06	-0.07
Mother Protection of Male	0.27	0.09	0.02	0.07	-0.34*	0.23
Mother Protection of Female	0.34*	0.06	0.07	0.12	0.23	-0.01
Father Care of Male	-0.29*	-0.03	0.07	-0.01	0.22	-0.17
Father Care of Female	-0.12	-0.35*	0.08	-0.22	0.08	-0.14
Father Protection of Male	0.27	0.09	0.02	0.07	-0.34*	0.23
Father Protection of Female	0.34*	0.06	0.07	0.12	0.23	-0.01

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

have creativity and divergent thinking. These individuals have the ability to hold in or can sublimate the angry feelings in a socially desirable manner. Agreeableness have been found to have negative relationship with predisposition to experience aggression. These individuals tend to be altruistic, sympathetic, eager to help others and believe

that others will help them in return and thus have less predisposition to experience angry feelings (Gleason, Jensen-Campbell, & Richardson, 2004). Conscientiousness have been found to have negative relationship to experience of anger. Research indicates that since these persons are purposeful, strong-willed and determined, they have less

Table 4. t-test between two groups of adolescents, having higher and lower scores of anger expression with respect to emotional quotient, different dimensions of personality and parental bonding

	Anger Expression
EQ	2.05*
N	0.66
E	0.38
O	1.15
A	1.23
C	0.32
Mother Care	1.09
Mother Protection	0.84
Father Care	0.79
Father Protection	0.45

predisposition to experience angry feelings. Extraversion have not however been found to have relationship to aggressive behaviour. Research undertaken in this subject have shown that persons who are sociable, assertive, energetic, cheerful and liking excitement are less likely than others to experience and express angry feelings.

In order to explain the relationship between personality and psychopathology four proposed models have been developed and it has shown some consensus among researchers to explain the potential relationship between personality traits and manifestation of aggression. These models are 1) the vulnerability – predisposition model, 2) the spectrum model, 3) the scar model and 4) the pathology – exacerbation model (Dolan-Sewell, Krueger, & Shea, 2001). The significant positive correlation between neuroticism and aggression obtained from the present study has again confirmed the validity of the vulnerability – predisposition model. Furthermore, many previous findings have also confirmed neuroticism as potential vulnerability factor for later externalizing psychopathology like aggression.

Bonding with parents has been found to have relation with experience and expression of aggression. Individuals who perceive their

mother as caring are less likely than others to experience angry feelings at a particular time. Research has shown that both maternal care and protection act as protective factors against the manifestation of hostile aggression. Males who perceive their mother and father as caring are less likely to experience angry feelings and are better at controlling their angry feelings. On the other hand, females who perceive their father as caring are less likely to experience angry feelings. However, males and females who perceive both their parents as overprotective has less capacity to control their angry feelings. Because overprotection sometimes may minimize the stress tolerance capacity of an individual

Strengths and Weaknesses:

1) This study has presented a relationship between the experience and expression of aggression with different dimensions of personality, emotional quotient and parental bonding among adolescents. So for a better understanding of different externalizing psychopathology, these findings can be used as a landmark.

2) Findings of this study can be utilized for better understanding of different issues which can be utilized for effective counselling and guidance of this population in future.

3) From prevention perspective, also, the knowledge of these findings can be utilized by parents at home as well as teachers in classroom situation.

Limitations

Aggressive behaviours have been found to have significant relationship with media violence. It has been observed that exposure to the actions of other persons can strongly affect our attitude, emotions and behaviours. Impact of media violence as a significant variable for experience and expression of aggression have not been included due to limitation of time. Biological variables like neurological, biochemistry etc predicting

aggressive behaviour have also not been included in the present study. Sample was selected only from English medium schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that the experience and expression of aggression have been found to have significant relationship with different dimensions of personality namely neuroticism, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Furthermore, emotional intelligence and the nature of parental bonding, both father and mother also plays an important role in the experience and expression of aggression.

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Sadhan Dasgupta, PhD, Associate Professor. Department of Applied Psychology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata. Email:sdgcal@rediffmail.com

Maupali Ghosh, Research Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata. Email: pau_ghosh@ymail.com