

AGGRESSION, BODY ESTEEM AND SELF ESTEEM AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER

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ABSTRACT:

OBJECTIVES:

Finding out the role of gender in aggression, self-esteem, and body esteem was the purpose of this study.

METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional research design was used. Different universities in Peshawar were visited, and 300 students were selected as a sample (N=300), which consisted of both boys (N=150) and girls (N=150) from the age-group 17-22 years. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data, and the measuring tools used were Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire, and Body-Esteem Questionnaire.

RESULTS:

Although the research didn't prove any difference in gender roles regarding self-esteem, it was revealed that boys are more aggressive as compared to girls. Furthermore, a correlation between self-esteem, body-esteem, and aggression was reported.

CONCLUSION:

The study gave the conclusion that gender has a role in levels of aggression found in students; however, both boys and girls are equally affected regarding self-esteem and body-esteem.

KEYWORDS: Gender Differences, Aggression, Body Esteem, Self-Esteem

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INTRODUCTION:

Aggression can be described as a typical mental health issue among adolescents, which represents genuine social issues in the current competitive and distressing world. It is the behavior of individuals that is against social conduct and can bring forward embarrassment, pain, melancholy, nervousness, detachment and various other

signs that can be related to trauma. Moreover, it can enhance problems related to emotions¹. Aggression among students has been divided into four categories. These categories are verbal aggression, anger with resentment, physical aggression, and suspension². Psychologists are more focused on deriving the factors causing aggressive behaviors, their severity and what therapeutic measures can be conducted to bring such behaviors under control. During the past years, levels of violence, as well as aggression, have considerably increased among youngsters³. It was reported by the National Center for Education Statistics,⁴ that 36% of students studying in grades nine to twelve were known to be involved in a minimum of one physical fight during the year 2005, which proved an

increase of 33%, which was previously recorded in the year 2003. Sharma, Grover, and Chaturvedi,⁵ conducted a cross-sectional study in which they examined behavior connected to interpersonal violence and its relation was found out among a sample of 550 young students (14-19 years old) of several colleges in South Delhi, India. In the past decades, the connection between adolescents' aggression and self-esteem has been given much focus. One part of their opinion puts light on "low self-esteem" in which they gave the idea that a person experiencing external issues or barriers in the real world has therefore, low self-esteem. This gives the impression that children with low self-esteem are consequently aggressive and unsociable⁶. A study has discovered the association of body image and self-esteem amongst teenage females. The sample (300) comprised sixteen to eighteen-year-old students from an elementary school. A significant and negative relationship was found between self-esteem and body image ($r=-0.365$, $p<.01$) using the Body Cathexis Scale and Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Furthermore, results indicated that when female adolescents are satisfied and confident of their body image, there is a boost in their self-esteem⁷. Grogan⁸ defines Body Image, as a person's perception, understanding, and feelings regarding their own body. Fitzhugh⁹, is of the view that Body Image is due to a process in our mind, which forms new perceptions that possibly don't even exist. According to a survey conducted by the American Association of University Women,¹⁰ as less as 29% of young girls are satisfied with their bodies, whereas, more than 50% of boys showed that they have a positive view regarding their bodies. Since the last two decades, adolescent's problems related to body dissatisfaction, eating behavior, physical fitness, and mental health have grasped the attention of psychologists all over the world. However, in Pakistan, this issue is least addressed. The present study is another step to investigate physical problems at the college level. The following objectives were formulated keeping in view the studies. To determine whether gender difference between young adults plays a role in self-esteem, body esteem, and aggressive behavior. To find if there is a connection among students' body image, aggression, and self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY:

Purposive sampling technique was used in data collection. A sample of 300 from different departments of universities in Peshawar and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was drawn. The sample consisted of both girls ($n=150$) and boys ($n=150$) who ranged between the ages of 17-22 years. From that sample, 247 (100 boys and 147 girls) were students pursuing their Masters, while 53 (50 boys and 3 girls) were from the BS Program. Arnold Buss and Mark Perry,² developed the Aggression Questionnaire by a 7-point scale, which comprised of 29 items. The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire was brought down to 4 subscales namely physical, verbal, anger, and hostility. The scale's internal consistency ranges from 0.72 to 0.89. A high score on the scale depicts more aggressiveness, whereas, a low score reflects aggressive traits. In the present study, the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of the scale was 0.76. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a 10-item self-reporting questionnaire developed by Morris Rosenberg¹¹. A four-point scale takes five minutes to complete and the participants must indicate how much they agree or disagree with the statements about their self-worth. The possible range of RSE is 0-3 and the higher score indicates higher self-esteem. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for the present sample was 0.52. A Body Esteem Scale was based on 35 items,¹² to assess attitudes towards body parts. Some of the items included were hips, biceps, legs, figure, or physique. There is a Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 to 5 showing strong negative feelings and strong positive feelings respectively. The conceivable score on Body Esteem Questionnaire had the range of 35 to 175. A higher score indicates a more favorable attitude towards body weight. The current sample achieved 0.92 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for the current sample. Different departments of universities in Peshawar were used to collect the data. Following permission from the Head of Departments, the goal of the study was explained to the participants. Moreover, they were told that the data collected will be kept confidential, and it would be used for nothing other than the research. A booklet consisting of questionnaires, namely,

Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire, Body Esteem Scale, and Rosenberg Esteem Scale were distributed among them. Any questions asked by the students were answered, and they were helped instantly. A total of thirteen

departments of four different universities were involved in the process, and the stratified random sampling technique was used. Lastly, a compiled result was formed using SPSS-17.0, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation and t-test.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Comparison of Male and Female Students on Aggression, Self-Esteem and Body Esteem

Variables	Girls (n=150)		Boys (n=150)		95% CI			
	M	SD	M	SD	t (df)	Sig	LL	UL
Aggression .662	101.29	23.72	116.51	22.34	5.719(298)	0.000	9.98	20.457
Self-Esteem .051	42.73	5.895	42.41	6.635	-.442(289)	0.659	-1.746	1.106
Body Esteem .272	126.76	22.520	132.92	22.833	2.352(298)	0.019	1.007	11.313

Note: CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit

The above result shows gender difference on the Buss-Perry Aggression and Body Esteem Scale. No noteworthy difference was found

on the Self-Esteem Scale; however, boys score high on the Aggression and Body Esteem Scale.

Table 2: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation of Buss Perry Aggression Scale, Body Esteem and Self-Esteem Scale (N=300)

Variables	1	2	3
1. Buss Perry Aggression			
2. Body Esteem		0.164*	
3. Self Esteem			0.120*

p<0.01, p<0.05

The table depicts that there is a correlation between Buss Perry Aggression and Self - Esteem Scale.

DISCUSSION:

The main purpose of this study was to find out the role gender difference plays in aggression, body esteem, and self-esteem. Table 1 shows that when compared with girls, boys show more aggression. Previous researchers also agree with the found results¹³. Furthermore, the results point out that males tend to be more involved in aggression involving physical activity than

females¹⁴. A previously done National Survey by the US Department of Health and Human Services reported,¹⁵ that males participate more in physical fights and the ratio of the involvement of ammunition was found to be higher in school. Moreover, the findings give some stereotypical supportive evidence, such as, according to biological theories; testosterone plays an active role in stimulating fury, competition, verbal violence, and physical aggressiveness¹⁶. In addition,

cultural norms also expect males to show tougher behavior and provide a shield, accommodation, and a sense of security to their families. Aggression is usually considered as male instincts, during college life boys show more aggression may be for peer or social approval, achieving status among friends particularly among girls and all this indicates a sign of a powerful person.

Home environment and parental training is another important reason, which may develop aggressive behavior among the male gender. The result indicates that there is no significant gender difference when it comes to self-esteem. However, the findings contradict previous researches done on the same topic. Despite our culture's expectation from women to perform their duties as mothers and stay at home wives, the girls taken as our sample do not seem to have a negative perception about themselves, which is perhaps an effect of education and awareness. According to the report, self-worth shows an increase during adulthood¹⁷. The results shown by the Body Esteem Scale on gender differences do not support previously done studies. The result depicts that women are less conscious than men when it comes to body esteem. One possible reason seems is the media, which indirectly influences the ideology related to the perfect body not only for female "thin" but also for the males to be "muscular". Though media affects both genders, there is another very important factor associated with the people living in KPK, which is surrounded by strong cultural and social values. So, the media factor is not pushing the girls considerably since they are groomed and raised in an environment where revealing the physical body is not appreciated. This fact may have resulted in the prohibition of body esteem needs among girls in the present study. Whereas the rules for boys in the same environment are vice versa. The present study also investigates a relationship between self-esteem and aggression and the two variables show a positive correlation. The results conform to previous studies. It has been previously suggested by Baumeister et al,¹⁸ that high self-esteem initiates aggression. On the other hand, Perez, Vohs and Joiner,¹⁹ were of the view that both high and low esteem has a relationship with self-reported physical aggression. The present study shows a less strong yet significant

correlation between body-esteem and self-esteem. The findings strengthen the longitudinal study, which reported a strong connection between self-esteem and body discontent among youngsters²⁰. Paxton et al,²¹ was of the view that body satisfaction ascends self-esteem.

CONCLUSION:

The present research concludes that aggression and body-esteem vary with gender differences, however, no significant difference was found when it came to self-esteem. It further suggests that there exists a positive correlation between aggression, self-esteem, and body-esteem scale.

LIMITATIONS:

The sample size was not selected through probability sampling technique and other Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Colleges were not selected in this study, so we can't generalise these results on provisional level.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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CONTRIBUTORS

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