

## Assessment of level of aggression among husbands and wives

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### ABSTRACT

In the present research an attempt was made to assess the level of aggression among husbands & wives (married couples). The study was carried on by formulating hypotheses that (a) - Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their aggressive behaviour. (b)- Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility. For empirical verification of these two hypotheses a study was conducted on a sample of 100 Married Couples (50 Husbands and 50 Wives) from Patna by employing incidental sampling technique. The Buss-Perry Scale was used for measuring aggression among married couples. A personal data sheet was also prepared and used by the researcher for collecting necessary personal information about respondents. For the analysis of the obtained scores t-ratio was computed. The findings on the whole indicated that there is significant difference between husbands and wives in terms of their level of aggression.

**Keywords:** *Aggression, Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger, Hostility, Husbands & Wives*

**A**ggressive behaviour is any type of action that is aimed to harm others physically and psychologically (Berkowitz, 2005; Buss & Perry, 1992; Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2009). Aggression may be explained in terms of rude answering, irritation, feeling of unjustness, bearing grudges, quarrelling, urge to take revenge and reactionary outlooks to customs or beliefs (Chauhan & Tiwari, 1972).

Aggression can also be described in two types: Reactive Aggression and Proactive Aggression (Card & Little, 2006; Fite, Stoppelbein, & Greening, 2009). Reactive aggression ascribes to acts of provocation by other people to develop resentment, rage and frustration (Berkowitz, 2005) whereas Proactive Aggression is not followed by anger or rage, but as a medium to achieve a target (Berkowitz, 2005). Proactive aggressions are determined and organized actions that have some intentions other than harming/hurting someone.

In general, there are many speculations that illustrate the roots of human aggression. Instinct theories advocate that aggression seems largely from inherent urges and tendencies. Drive theories propose that aggression implies from external elicited drives to hurt or injure others. However, provocation, media violence and elevated arousal (for example, anger and sexual

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arousal), personality characteristics (especially Type A personality), situational factors (e.g. high temperatures and excessive use of alcohol and medication) and different types of personality disorganizations (like psychopathic personality and narcissism) are several other determinants of aggression.

Another assumption that aims to connect biology and human aggressiveness defines that the males are biologically inclined toward aggressiveness as compared to females. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) declared in their article the rationales of biological sex differences in Aggression. One of the causes was the fact that males are more aggressive than females in all communities. Another justification was that “Aggression is related to levels of sex hormones and can be changed by experimental administration of these hormones.” They propounded that cross-cultural proof on sex differences in Aggression supported their view that the sex difference and hostility are rooted in biological factors (Tieger, 1980). The most widespread approved perspective is that the gender differences toward violence and Aggression are determined by the environment in which people are brought up. Johnson (1972) writes that it is true that hormones affect behaviour, but at the same time “masculine” and “feminine” behaviour is also affected by the external environment and “the long socialization process through which they learn society’s values”.

Gender is an important determinant which plays a vital role in both human and animal aggression. Men are generally much more physically aggressive than women (Coie and Dodge 1997, Maccoby and Jacklin 1974). There is also proof that males are speedier to aggression (Frey et al 2003) and much more expressive to their aggression physically in comparison to females (Bjorkqvist 1994). However, in view of relational aggression and social rejection, men and women are equally aggressive (Archer, 2004, Card, Stucky, Sawalani, and Little, 2008).

Aggression among couples has been badly reported by different origins. These accounts have led to the recognition of the truth that family or domestic aggression is a general circumstance in today’s advanced era, in which people may be physically or psychologically assaulted, beaten up, slapped, or even killed in their own homes.

Physical aggression happens in approximately one-quarter to one-half of community samples of dating/cohabiting/married couples (e.g., Lawrence & Bradbury, 2007; Leonard & Roberts, 1998; O’Leary et al., 1989). Couples who report physically aggressive behaviours like grabbing, pushing, slapping, etc. are more likely than non-physically aggressive couples to report relationship discontent as well as separation/divorce (e.g., Arias et al., 1997; Rogge & Bradbury, 1999). Estimates indicate that 25% of women and 8% of men are physically abused or raped by their close partner sooner or later throughout their life (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Other samples reveal that 21% of spouses reveal intimate physical aggression every year (McDonald, Jouriles, Ramisetty-Mikler, Caetano, & Green, 2006).

Although female victims are often the focus of constant violence investigation, the considerable percentages of aggression towards men (e.g. Archer, 2000) recommend the need to assess both male and female aggression.

### ***Purpose of the study***

The purpose and objective of the present research is to assess the level of aggression among husbands & wives (married couples).

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### *Hypotheses*

For this purpose, following Hypotheses were formulated: -

1. Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their aggressive behaviour.
2. Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Sample*

The present investigation was carried on the 100 married couples (50 Husbands & 50 Wives) of Patna district by employing incidental-cum-purposive sampling technique. Their age ranged from 25 to 30 years. They were matched as far as possible in other respects.

#### *Tools*

1. A Personal Data Sheet prepared by the researcher was used for collecting necessary personal information about the respondents.
2. The Buss-Perry Scale was used for measuring aggression among married couples.

#### *Procedure*

The test was administered in two different sessions. First of all, personal data sheet was administered to the respondents and relevant information was gathered. Thereafter, The Buss-Perry Scale was administered to the respondents and the responses made by the subjects were scored, tabulated and analyzed by applying t-test. The findings based on the mean differences and their t-values have been shown in table 1 to 3.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

For deriving useful conclusion, the data is organized in a systematic way. The obtained result is explained on the basis of statistical analysis.

*Table – 1 Mean value of Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger, Hostility and Total Aggression among Husbands & Wives (Couples)*

Group	Physical Aggression	Verbal Aggression	Anger	Hostility	Total Aggression
Husbands	37.64	27.6	28.8	34.6	129.2
Wives	25	20.7	23.9	28.9	94.8

It is clear from table-1 that the obtained mean scores of husbands on physical aggression (37.64), verbal aggression (27.6), anger (28.8), hostility (34.6) and total aggression (129.2) is higher than the obtained mean scores of wives on physical aggression (25), verbal aggression (20.7), anger (23.9), hostility (28.9) and total aggression (94.8). This clearly indicates that the level of aggression is higher among husbands in comparison to wives. Thus, it can be said that both the hypotheses framed by the researcher are also proved.

It is evident from table-1 that the husbands scored the highest mean value (37.64) on physical aggression and the lowest mean value (27.6) on verbal aggression while their obtained mean value on anger (28.8) and hostility (34.6) are between this line. This indicates that the physical aggression appears to be highly associated with the aggression among husbands. It also reveals that the wives scored the highest mean value (28.9) on hostility and the lowest mean value (20.7) on verbal aggression. In case of physical aggression and anger,

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the obtained mean value (25) & (23.9) respectively is between the hostility and verbal aggression. Thus, it can be clearly said that hostility is one of the prominent dimensions of aggression among wives.

From the inspection of table-1, it is clear that physical aggression is associated with the aggression among husbands while hostility is highly shown as a dimension of aggression among wives. Hamel (2005) found in a study that men and women are physically and psychologically ill-treated each other at the same rates. On the basis of the findings of the study, it was concluded that those couples who are living together show greater level of hostility than dating couples, and that woman in both situations show an enhanced level of hostility towards their mates.

Therefore, to reach and find out the significant difference between two means and to further elaborate the findings statistically t-ratio was applied by the researcher.

**Table – 2 Differences Between the Mean Scores of Total Aggression Among Husbands & Wives (Couples) (N =100)**

Group	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	P-value
Husbands	129.2	41.8	13.11	2.530	98	P >.01
Wives	94.8	18.27	8.83			

Table-2 presents that the difference between the mean scores of husbands (129.2) and wives (94.8) on total aggression is significant at .01 level of confidence. Thus, it can be concluded that husbands and wives differ significantly in respect of their level of aggression. The obtained mean value of husbands and wives on total aggression is 129.2 and 94.8 respectively. Hence, it is clear that the degree of aggression is higher in husbands. This finding strongly supports the hypothesis made by the researcher.

Gender differences in aggression have been reported constantly, as that men and boys show higher level of aggression than women and girls, specially in terms of physical aggression (Burton, Hafetz, and Heininger, 2007).

**Table– 3 Differences Between the Mean Scores of Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility Among Husbands & Wives (Couples)**

Variables	Group	MEAN	SD	SE	t-value	df	P-value
Physical Aggression	Husbands	37.64	16.24	5.69	2.556	98	P >.01
	Wives	25	8.06	3.85			
Verbal Aggression	Husbands	27.6	14.24	6.58	2.23	98	P >.05
	Wives	20.7	7.27	4.26			
Anger	Husbands	28.8	12.63	5.36	1.028	98	P <.05
	Wives	23.9	10.09	4.87			
Hostility	Husbands	34.6	13.31	6.23	0.57	98	P <.05
	Wives	28.9	9.05	6.13			

From the inspection of table-3, it is clear that the difference between the mean scores of the husbands (37.64) and wives ( 25 ) on physical aggression is significant at .01 level of confidence. Thus, it can be said that husbands and wives differ significantly in terms of their physical aggression. Thus, the hypothesis framed by the researcher is confirmed.

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This finding goes in line with that of Weed, Winston & Lack (2010) whose findings indicated that there's a significant gender difference on physical aggression, with males reporting engaging in it more often than female. This finding is also in line with that of Fabia and Andreu (2010) who found that men are higher on physical aggression. This finding is consistent with other researchers like that (Locke & Bogin, 2006, Cairns, 1986, Cambell & Muncer 1987, Burton, Hafetz and Henninger, 2007, Jamie & Keating, 2004, Onukwufor, 2013, Myers, 2005), their findings showed that there's a gender difference on physical aggression-men are much more likely to engage in physical aggression than women. Men score significantly higher on scale of physical aggression than women (Harris and knight-Bohnoff 1996).

The above table presents that the difference between the mean scores of husbands (27.6) and wives (20.7) on verbal aggression is significant at .05 level of confidence. Though the obtained t-value = 2.23 is significant but it is marginally significant, therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis framed by the researcher is partially confirmed. The obtained mean value of husbands and wives on verbal aggression is 27.6 and 20.7 respectively. Hence, it is clear that the degree of verbal aggression is higher in husbands. This finding strongly supports the hypothesis made by the researcher.

The outcome of this study is in general agreement with Harris (1992), Maccoby and Jacklin mentioned in Shaffer (2005) who explained that data from over and above 100 countries reveal the fact that boys and men are physically and verbally aggressive to a greater extent in comparison to girls and women. This finding is in line with Jamie & Keating, (2004) found that boys displayed more verbal aggression than girls. Onukwufor, (2013) found that male and female differ on verbal aggression, verbal aggression were higher among males than females. Katy & Michael, 2000, and Archer & parker, 1994) found a significant relationship between gender difference and verbal aggression.

From the inspection of table-3, it is also clear that the mean differences among husbands (28.8) and wives (23.9) on anger is not significant even at .05 level of confidence. As the obtained mean value of husbands and wives on anger is 28.8 and 23.9 respectively, it is clear that they do not differ from each other in terms of their anger. Thus, it can be said that the difference between husbands and wives in terms of anger is not significant. This finding refutes the hypothesis framed by the researcher.

This finding is in line with that of (Muovchevich & Howells, 2001, Thomas, 1989 Boman, 2003, Simon & Nath, 2004, Shelds, 2007, Dutton & Tsai, 2007) who found no evidence that male and female differ in their experience of anger. Lively & Powell, (2006) found that there is no confirmation that women are more likely than men to suppress anger/aggression. It can also be observed from the above table that the mean differences of husbands (34.6) and wives (28.9) on hostility is not significant even at .05 level of confidence. As the obtained mean value of husbands and wives on hostility is 34.6 and 28.9 respectively, it is clear that they do not differ from each other in terms of their anger. Thus, it can be said that the difference between husbands and wives in terms of hostility is not significant. This finding refutes the hypothesis framed by the researcher.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

A study of all the above tables presents an extensive picture of the level of aggression among husbands and wives (married couples).

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The findings on the whole indicated that there is significant difference between husbands and wives in terms of their level of aggression.

Bettencourt and Miller's (1996) review exhibited that men were more aggressive than women, supports the result obtained from the study.

It is also clear that in case of physical aggression the obtained data clearly suggests that the degree of physical aggression among husbands is significantly higher rather than the wives. This result agrees with Bernstein, Penner Clark-Stewart and Roy (2006) that boys are more physically active and aggressive than girls. The rationale behind this finding might be girl's awareness that they are weaker sex and they required to avoid physical aggression for their safety and well-being.

Gender differences in aggression do exist (Björkqvist, 2018). Ticusan, 2014 reveals in a research that in respect of aggressiveness there are some differences between male and female. It was very much noticed that males show aggressiveness to a greater extent than females.

The findings in terms of verbal aggression indicate that there is significant difference between the husbands and wives. Onkwufor (2013) observed 360 adolescent students in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State Nigeria on physical and verbal aggression, at the end of his study he opined that prevalence of physical aggression and verbal aggressions were higher among males than females.

In respect of anger and hostility, married couples do not differ significantly from each other. According to Onkwufor, (2012) anger takes place when the aggressor's primary intension is to harm the victim as a result of Hostility. Regarding the gender difference on anger as a component of aggression, several scholars have found no evidence that male and female differ in their experience of anger (Thomas, 1989 Boman, 2003, Simon & Nath, 2004, Shields, 2007, Dutton & Tsai, 2007; Lively & Powell, 2006).

Thus, the first hypothesis framed by the researcher that "*Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their aggressive behaviour*" is significantly proved. But the second hypothesis framed by the researcher that "Husbands and Wives would differ significantly in terms of their Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility" is statistically found significant only in terms of physical aggression and verbal aggression while in case of anger and hostility, the finding is not statistically significant even at .05 level of confidence.

### **Recommendation**

The findings of the present researcher have indicated that level of aggression among husbands is higher than wives. Although the husbands scored highest on physical aggression while wives scored highest on hostility, it is clear that level of aggression is higher among husbands in comparison to wives.

Many investigations reveal that aggressive behaviour does not occur by itself but is due to the difficulty of establishing relationships with peers (Kim & Nho, 2017), parental supervision of children (J. Lee & Randolph, 2015; Van der Graaff, Branje, De Wied, & Meeus, 2012) affected violent video games and movies (Fischer, Kastenmüller, & Greitemeyer, 2010; Hasan, Bègue, Scharrow, & Bushman, 2018; Jerabeck & Ferguson, 2013) instability of self-esteem (E. J. Lee, 2014), lack of self-control (Denson, DeWall, &

Finkel, 2012), excessive alcohol consuming (Denson et al., 2011; Keller, Blincoe, Gilbert, & Haak, 2014; Koeswara, 1998), frustration and stress (Koeswara, 1998; Tull, Jakupcak, Paulson, & Gratz, 2007), patterns foster parents who are hard (Arifin, 2015; Casselman & Rosenbaum, 2014; Goldstein, 2016; Willis, 2010), provocation from others (Arifin, 2015; Koeswara, 1998; Taylor et al., 2009), regulation of maladaptive emotions (Debono et al., 2016; Roll, J., Koglin, U., & Petermann, 2012), and environments that are not conducive (Arifin, 2015; Berkowitz, 2005; Harris, 1996; Koeswara, 1998; Park, 2006; Willis, 2010).

The findings of the present research thus have brought many new facts in respect to the aggression and its different dimension among married couples. The findings would stimulate other researchers also to take up such problems for further investigation. Longitudinal studies on a larger group of married couples are needed in future. For the purpose of general screening of the aggression level among married couples, the findings can be of much helpful to the counsellors, clinicians, social-workers and psychologists.

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## Assessment of level of aggression among husbands and wives

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