

The Relationship Between Self and Aggression and the Role of Social Ecology During Adolescence

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ABSTRACT

In the complex tapestry of human behavior, the intricate interplay between self-concept and aggression emerges as a compelling study area. The self-concept is a constellation of several characteristics rather than a single, cohesive construct. Most studies have accentuated the relationship between self-esteem and aggression. Presenting a combination of three elements of self-concept- self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, the paper also discusses how factors like peer evaluation and social support play a role in determining aggression. While self-image posits a negative correlation, self-esteem has a contentious relation and self-efficacy upholds a negative correlation. Variations across cultures, norms, gender, and personality pave the way for differences across aggressive tendencies. Results on aggression in social setup reveal that both social status and social support help in framing positive self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy beliefs in an individual. Gender differences in aggression are mostly related to differential socialization. Thus, domain-specific self-concept, social support, and social status significantly influence aggression among adolescents, highlighting the importance of understanding these factors for intervention and positive development.

Keywords: *Aggression, Self-concept, Self-image, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, Adolescence, Social status, Social support*

In the complex tapestry of human behaviour, the intricate interplay between self-concept and aggression emerges as a compelling study area. Self-concept refers to an individual's knowledge about who he/ she is. The idea of self underpins our attitudes, tendencies, and behaviours. Its dynamic and multifaceted nature occurs across various dimensions. Individuals do not possess a global self-concept, for example, they have an academic self-concept, health self-concept, social self-concept, etc. It involves how individuals perceive themselves and the emotions and attitudes tied to these perceptions. The

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self-concept is a constellation of several characteristics rather than a single, cohesive construct. The "I" (the subjective, experiencing self) and the "me" (the objective, knowable self) were differentiated by William James in 1890. This theory was later developed by other scholars, such as Carl Rogers (1959) and Markus and Nurius (1986), who identified other sub-dimensions within the self-concept, including the physical, social, emotional, and academic selves states (Bracken, 2009). Social interactions and cultural circumstances have a significant impact on the self-concept in addition to internal considerations. Mead (1934) highlighted the part played by "looking-glass selves," in which we form opinions about ourselves based on what we think other people think of us. Festinger (1954) developed the social comparison theory, which emphasises how we assess our value and ability by comparing ourselves to other states (Bainbridge, 2023). This multidimensional aspect of self-concept sets the stage for a nuanced examination of its role in shaping aggressive tendencies.

The early 17th-century conceptualization of aggression denotes it as 'an unprovoked attack'. Contemporary operationalization of aggression by social psychologists is that it is a behaviour intended to harm the other person. Research reports that intention is an antecedent to behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1974) and the most common ways of intentional harm are through crimes. Channeling of aggression may take different forms and result in serious consequences for the receiver as well as the perpetrator. Aggression does not relate to a mentality or an emotional state; rather, it just describes a behavior. Although they may influence someone to act violently, feelings like rage, attitudes like hoping the worst for others, and motivations like the need to dominate or dominate one's surroundings may all lead to aggressive behavior. Effective research on aggressiveness requires that these elements be distinguished from one another and from violence (Warburton & Anderson, 2015). The terms "aggression" and "violence" are interchangeable. Considering them to be interchangeable leads to misunderstandings and uncertainty among academics. Violence is viewed by the majority of social psychologists as a subset of aggressiveness. More accurately, "violence" refers to aggressiveness meant to inflict enough severe injury to necessitate medical treatment or even result in death. Many social psychologists expand this concept to include seriously hurting someone's emotions (Warburton & Anderson, 2015).

The concept of self is closely related to aggression. Threat or its perception of self, causes acting in defence of it, for example, low self-esteem and forms a ground for aggressive behaviour (Gomez & McLaren, 2007). Individuals' view of themselves as deserving of social support depends on self-worth (deserving) and a reciprocating surrounding makes provision for a sense of control and reinforces an individual's efficacy to maintain healthy relationships. On the contrary, a similar question intrigues this research is why are individuals motivated to aggress? Social support or social status which is an important reinforcer in inhibiting or exhibiting aggression? However, it becomes important to mention that the norms affect the social behaviour of the individual. If violence is normative in a culture, individuals may choose to aggress in violent ways. This would disrupt the social balance, sometimes paving the way for 'honor culture'. Honor is construed as an individual's (predominantly men) intrinsic value linked to reputation. This valuation is contingent upon both the individual's own perception and the external judgments of others. Cultures characterized by honor place a significant emphasis on the readiness and capability of a man to respond forcefully, and at times destructively; to affronts against his honor, family, or deeply held values (Gomez & McLaren, 2007).

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The relationship between self-concept and aggression also bridges support for psychological influences. According to social learning theory, individuals acquire behaviours by observing and imitating others, implying that aggressive tendencies may be learned through modelling. In this framework, the perception of oneself emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping behavioral outcomes (Bandura, 2019). The way an individual views themselves influences the adoption and expression of aggressive behaviours, as self-concept intertwines with the observational learning process.

Furthermore, the frustration-aggression hypothesis underscores the connection between frustration and aggressive responses. When faced with frustration, individuals may resort to aggressive behaviours as a coping mechanism. Introducing an additional layer to this intricate relationship, the impact of self-concept on the interpretation and reaction to frustrating situations becomes evident. How one perceives oneself can significantly influence the way frustration is experienced and expressed, providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between self-concept and aggression within the context of the frustration-aggression hypothesis. This complex dynamic demonstrates the complexity of human conduct and how it depends on both internal and external variables.

In research on this field, self-concept and self-esteem are used interchangeably. Within the framework of the present investigation, self-esteem and self-concept are distinguished. Self-concept is a description of oneself and an assessment of one's talents, whereas self-esteem is an overall evaluative and emotional judgement of one's performance, including well-being. (Findlay & Bowker, 2009). Self is both a cognitive and social construction, with self-concept serving as a cognitive representation of the self (Taylor et al., 2007). In the context of peer aggression, some findings indicate a substantial negative association between social support and peer aggression. Additionally, there is a noteworthy positive relationship between self-concept and peer aggression (Jenkins & Demaray, 2012).

This study aims to shed light on the dynamics of the link between aggressiveness and self-concept as well as how social standing and support reinforce (non)aggressive inclinations. By demonstrating the connection between three aspects of self-concept and aggression—an operationally understudied topic—this research may eventually close the gap in the literature. Programs for intervention and more study may be necessary due to the nature of social ecology and its impact on aggressiveness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aggression is a force that is as pervasive as it is unnerving. Although violent behaviour can be easily observed on the outside, its origins are deeper, winding through the intricate maze of the self. Deciphering the complex interplay between aggressiveness and self is essential to understanding human behaviour, avoiding harm, and promoting more positive social environments. Adequate research has found a relationship between aggressive inclinations and ideas like self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-image.

I. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF SELF AND AGGRESSION

Aggression and Self-image

Self-concept, or self-image, is a fundamental component of human psychology. It alludes to the idea we have of ourselves in our minds, which is typically pretty stable. This image includes interior elements like emotions, ideas, and personality qualities in addition to external attributes like abilities and physical appearance. Elements of One's Own Image

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include Physical Self: How we view our shape, size, and state of health. Social Self: Our perception of who we are in connection to other people and social groups. The psychological self is our comprehension of our feelings, ideas, and character attributes. the person we aim to be, including our beliefs, aspirations, and ideals, is our ideal self (Lange et al., 2011). Various researchers have found a link between self-image and aggression.

Life-span developmentalists operationalize adolescence as typically occurring between the ages of 12 and 18, and is characterised by the onset of puberty and physical maturation, accompanied by significant socio-emotional transformations. However, these may be subjected to individual differences based on gender, cohort and cultural influences. The notion of adolescence is a product of societal construction. Unlike in earlier agrarian societies where physical maturity signified adulthood, contemporary society has introduced a prolonged phase termed “adolescence” that spans between childhood and adulthood (World Health Organisation). Research suggests that developmental factors such as chronological age show its enhanced effects in presence of environmental factors such as educational stage, academic performance, etc. in the process of identity maturation in adolescents.

As adolescents develop their self-concept, they seek answers to the question - “Who am I?” in the wider context that gives them a description about their attitudes and personality in terms of academics, physical strengths and orientation, sexual orientation and their prowess in romantic relationships, professional/ career roles and intimate friendships. This acts as a preparatory stage for adulthood which is marked by extensive responsibilities on an individual. The significance of peer presence is very important in this stage of life.

Adolescents also engage in value-based decision making that incorporates how to resolve a conflicting decision such as choosing between going to a party and studying. This process involves weighing the consequences of all the values. The effects are multi-directional and although an individual’s personal values may be inclined towards higher academic commitment and parental incentives for performance, the social pressures such as peer pressure, personality development, impressions, popularity, etc. might influence an individual to supersede the personal values. These explorations about the self, if yield consistent satisfaction to the individual about their decisions, help them gauge their current identity status. The heightened brain activity is witnessed in ventromedial prefrontal cortex when adolescents engage in self-evaluation and consider their relational identity seems to coincide with the brain’s processing value. Consequently, this could indicate that adolescents attribute greater subjective value to themselves, their various characteristics, roles and aspirations. This implies that aspects of identity and other self-related processes might become more influential in influencing decision-making and driving behaviour during adolescence (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018). As children move into adolescence, there is a heightened significance placed on evaluations of one's abilities. Consequently, this developmental stage may be particularly susceptible to the impact of negative self-assessments (Fanti & Henrich, 2015).

Two studies examined the relationship between violence, narcissism, self-image clarity, unpleasant feelings, and theoretical presumptions. The study looked at the connection between verbal aggression, desperation, and rage following an ego-threat operationalized through a fictitious performance assessment on an IQ test, and narcissism and clarity of self-image. The second study also examined the mediating role of the individuals' negative emotions in order to further our knowledge of their aggressive actions after failure.

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Expecting negative emotions and animosity after failing, narcissism, and having a clear self-concept were shown to be significant factors. When faced with failure, less narcissistic people with high clarity of self-image exhibited sentiments of despair and no violence, but strong narcissists with poor self-image clarity reacted with rage and aggression states (Stucke & Sporer, 2002). The link between self-image and aggression can be found through projective techniques such as the Draw A Person test. Therefore, a study was conducted by (Earwood et al., 2004) that sought to determine if children and adolescents at risk for aggressiveness may be identified by screening using the Draw a Story (DAS) assessment. Thirty children who had previously engaged in aggressive behaviour and eighteen students who had never engaged in violent behaviour were given the DAS activities by four art therapists. A psychologist examined the data following the scoring of the 211 replies on 5-point rating scales to evaluate the Emotional Content and Self-Image. The aggressive students scored much higher on Self-Image and significantly lower on Emotional Content. Along with replies that scored five points in self-image and one point in emotional content, aggression was also substantially correlated with such responses showed (Earwood et al., 2004).

A longitudinal study (Blakely-McClure & Ostrov, 2016) discovered that engaging in relational aggression during the fifth grade was linked to a decrease in academic self-concept and an increase in sports self-concept. This implies that children who exhibit relational aggression at this stage tend to view themselves less positively in academic domains (Alam & Halder, 2018) while developing a more positive self-concept in the realm of sports or physical activities. A commonly reported link across various research is narcissism and not global self-esteem as a predictor of aggression in scholastic environments. The reason for this is that self-esteem or the overall evaluation of one's worth rises from various domains such as family, sports, friends, etc. Experiencing negative outcomes in these areas is unlikely to result in aggression at school and more likely that would manifest in the domain where it is sourced states (Taylor et al., 2007)

Aggressive behaviour in 8th-grade students may be linked to the initiation of romantic relationships, particularly in males. Research suggests that males displaying aggression may be perceived as more attractive by females, potentially leading aggressive adolescents to view themselves as more physically appealing states (Torregrosa et al., 2011).

An investigation of the relationship between violent classroom behaviour, academic self-image, and esteem was carried out. A group of middle school students from various ethnic origins had their longitudinal data evaluated to examine if a high self-concept had a distinct pattern of effect when threatened and how academic self-concept connected to the probability of acting out in the classroom. Information is provided by parents on school discipline, academic performance as reported by the school, and self-reported academic self-concept. The findings imply that students who have low self-concept in accomplishment areas are generally more prone than those who have strong self-concept to act aggressively in class (Taylor et al., 2007). In another study, 195 school-age children were tested to determine whether narcissistic children—those who believe they fall short of their idealized, grandiose self—would, over time, exhibit higher levels of general aggression and lower levels of prosocial behaviour, as well as a greater propensity to target their aggression at more socially successful peers. The findings demonstrated that low self-perceptions of one's true self together with narcissism predicted a decline in prosocial behaviour and an increase in aggressiveness towards peers who were popular and beautiful (Pauletti, 2013). It is seen that when self-image of people with narcissist tendencies is threatened it leads to greater

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violence and victimization towards others. A study was conducted to examine the relationship between narcissism and Displaced Aggression (DA) after an "objective" computer assessment tool evaluated the participants' writing skills in a favourable, negative, or delayed manner (i.e., after the completion of the reaction time task). Undergraduate students fought against an opponent (i.e., a confederate) in a reaction time test. The study's initial provocation was defined as the assessment feedback that participants received before they were allowed to compete in the reaction time task. Aggression was substantially positively correlated with narcissism. According to research, narcissistic people are more inclined to behave violently against defenceless people when there is ambiguity about the possible harm to their sense of superiority and self-image (Martinez et al., 2008). It is also seen that if the amount of narcissism is increased by increasing the challenges to the self-image of the subject it can lead to an increase in aggression. In a research, 162 Chinese college students were asked to consider the potential that a higher level of state narcissism may encourage violent reactions by enhancing hostility and hostile attributional bias in the wake of unexpected provocation. The manipulation was shown to raise the self-reported state of narcissism. Anger was a mediating factor in the relationship between increasing aggressiveness and the rise in state narcissism. The results show that anger acts as a mediator between state narcissism and aggressiveness and that narcissism may be momentarily elevated in a nonclinical population showed (C. Li et al., 2016). Thus, it can be concluded from the aforementioned research that aggression and self-image are positively correlated.

Aggression and Self-esteem

"Self-esteem" encompasses more than simply an innate sense of worth that is thought to be a characteristic of all people. Self-esteem is the conviction that one is worthy of life and all of its responsibilities. More accurately, self-esteem is the belief that one is capable of thinking and that one can overcome challenges in life. It is also the belief that everyone has the right to happiness, the feeling that they are worthy and deserving, the capacity to express their wants and wishes, and the right to share in the fruits of their labour. Self-esteem is not something you are born with; rather, it is a taught attribute that comes with success. To state that self-worth is a fundamental human need is to state that it plays a crucial role in the course of life states (Branden, 1990.). Aggression and self-esteem have a more nuanced and varied relationship than one may initially think. Although there is a well-acknowledged connection between low self-esteem and increased aggressiveness, it is important to realize that this relationship is complex and depends on a number of variables.

The correlation between heightened aggression and either high or low self-esteem remains a subject of contention. While many assert that aggression is connected to low self-esteem, some dissenting opinions challenge this perspective (Teng et al., 2015). The flight response to face humiliation in people with low self-esteem causes them to exhibit aggressive tendencies whereas narcissistic traits are more related to high self-esteem than low self-esteem that contribute to violent behaviour (Ostrowsky, 2010). Most research on narcissistic aggression has been conducted in individualistic cultures. While individuals in individualistic cultures often strive to boost their self-worth, those in collectivistic cultures, such as China or the broader East, are generally less inclined to pursue self-enhancement. Cultural variations in the connection between self-esteem and aggression may also be explained by these differences in narcissism. A meta-analysis (Teng et al, 2015) informed a moderate, adverse correlation between self-esteem and aggression. Except for verbal aggression, there was a considerable inverse correlation between self-esteem and various

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forms of aggression, including physical aggression, anger, hostility, and implicit and explicit aggression.

Research was conducted to find out the link between high and low self-esteem and aggressiveness in children. In 652 12-year-old children, the research looked at the competing theories whether low or inflated but contested self-esteem is linked to aggressiveness. Children offered self-ratings of their overall self-worth and social pleasure, as well as peer nominations of physical violence and social acceptability. Instructors graded internalising issues and hostile behaviour. The idea of exaggerated but contested self-esteem was defined as differences in one's own and peers' assessments of social acceptability and social contentment, respectively, along with peer rejection. The primary findings demonstrated a relationship between violence and both low global self-worth and inflated but contested self-esteem. The results showed that aggressive youngsters could seem to have both a low and a high self-esteem, depending on how self-esteem is defined states (Diamantopoulou et al., 2008). In addition to this view, another research revealed different findings. The theory that aggressiveness stems from poor self-esteem has been given new life by recent field research. In order to investigate direct physical aggression—that is, hitting a fellow participant with a loud noise the study reanalysed the data from an earlier experiment and ran a new one. Compared to others, high narcissists were more violent, but only in response to insults or humiliations, and only in the direction of the person making the criticism. The greatest levels of aggressiveness were induced by a strong narcissism and high self-esteem combination. These findings contradict the theory that poor self-esteem leads to either direct or indirect violence and instead support the idea that aggressiveness arises from threatened egotism (Bushman et al., 2009). Another study was conducted by (Teng et al., 2015) that involved 82,358 Chinese students as participants. Aggression and self-esteem appeared to have a mediumly negative association. The examination of aggression sub-factors revealed a negative correlation between self-esteem and nearly every subtype of aggressiveness, except verbal aggression. These subtypes include physical aggression, rage, hostility, and implicit and explicit aggression. The results of moderator analyses indicated that the strength of the relationship between aggressiveness and self-esteem was impacted by several research and participant factors.

Research investigating the connection between aggressive conduct in childhood and self-esteem has yielded contradictory findings. The confusion surrounding two distinct forms of positive self-regard—defence self-esteem, which is characterised by high levels of explicit self-esteem but low levels of implicit self-esteem, and secure self-esteem, which is characterised by high levels of both explicit and implicit self-esteem—may have resulted from researchers' reliance on explicit measures of self-esteem. (Sandstrom & Jordan, 2008). Ninety-three children finished both explicit and implicit Self-esteem tests. In the classroom, teachers evaluated students' levels of relational and physical violence. As expected, when implicit Self-esteem levels were low, there was a positive correlation between explicit Self-esteem and aggressiveness; however, this relationship did not exist when implicit Self-esteem levels were high (Sandstrom & Jordan, 2008). In another study, conducted by (Amad et al., 2021), aggressiveness was measured in 501 young people, roughly equal numbers of men and women. The Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory were used to assess narcissism and self-esteem. Reactive aggressiveness was associated with low self-esteem, whereas proactive violence was connected to high levels of narcissism. Men were more strongly related with both kinds of self-evaluation and proactive aggression, even though this pattern was the same for both genders. The results suggest that people with low self-esteem are more prone to act

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reactively, out of fury and hatred, whereas people with high levels of narcissism can act with deliberate, premeditated aggression to achieve an aim. (Amad et al., 2021).

In a sample of 205 college students, the research looked at the relationships between aggressiveness, social problem-solving skills, and self-esteem. The aggressiveness Questionnaire was used to test four distinct aspects of aggressiveness, while the Social Problem-Solving Inventory-Revised was used to measure five different aspects of social problem-solving ability. Aggression was assessed six to seven weeks after the measurement of self-esteem and social problem-solving skills. Anger, hostility, and physical violence were shown to be associated to low self-esteem, and they were found to be related to numerous particular aspects of problem-solving skills showed (D'zurilla et al., 2003).

The term "emotional dysregulation" describes a problem in controlling emotions. It can show itself in a number of ways, such as having erratic outbursts, feeling overwhelmed by seemingly insignificant things, or finding it difficult to control impulsive behaviours. Extreme emotional outbursts can have an impact on daily life, relationships, employment, and education. Research has shown that emotional deregulation has had a mediating effect between aggression and self-esteem. A study was conducted to investigate the mediation effect of emotion dysregulation among criminals and community members to expand on the relationship between aggressiveness and self-esteem. Self-report measures of trait aggressiveness, emotion dysregulation, and self-esteem level were completed by 197 community members and 153 violent criminals serving prison sentences. In comparison to community members, offenders reported higher degrees of emotional nonacceptance and anger, along with lower levels of self-esteem. To investigate if emotion dysregulation moderated the relationship between aggressiveness and self-esteem, bootstrapping analyses were conducted. Three of the four characteristics of trait aggressiveness that were taken into consideration had mediation models that were significant in the offender sample. The relationships between physical aggressiveness, rage, and hostility and poor self-esteem were entirely mediated by emotion dysregulation revealed (Garofalo et al., 2016). Further it is also seen that social support also helps to enhance self-esteem and reduce aggressiveness among adolescents. One way to define social support is in terms of connections, namely how much and to what extent it fits in. The aid and support provided by the social network that one needs support from friends and family in times of need or catastrophe in order to cultivate a healthy self-image. It not only raises life quality but also provides support in difficult circumstances states (Kumar et al., 2014). A study set out to examine how aggressiveness and self-esteem are affected by social support. The self-esteem measure, aggression scale, and perceived social support scale were given to the sample of 100 students, ages 18 to 23. The findings confirm the hypothesis that there is a positive association between social support and aggressiveness and a beneficial relationship between social support and self-esteem (Kumar et al., 2014).

Aggression and Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy manifests as a potent internal compass that directs our drive, exertion, and, eventually, achievement. Fundamentally, self-efficacy is a person's assessment of their own capacity to carry out certain activities or produce desired results. The voice that whispers "I can" or "I can't" inside of us affects how we approach obstacles, deal with failure, and ultimately determine our potential (Bandura & Adams, 1977). It has been noted that self-efficacy has been linked with aggression. Adolescence is a challenging developmental time, and the significant exposure to violence that many South African teenagers experience may have a detrimental effect on their wellbeing. Adolescent well-being is said to be significantly

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protected by self-efficacy. 344 high school students (ages 13 to 19) who speak Afrikaans were randomly selected from three high schools in the peri-urban area of Worcester, home to mid to low-income groups. Self-efficacy and aggressiveness were measured using the aggressiveness Questionnaire and the Self-efficacy Questionnaire for Children (Willemse, 2008). The results of this study show that aggressiveness and self-efficacy had a substantial negative correlation. Nonetheless, there was a positive link observed for the entire sample between verbal aggressiveness, emotional self-efficacy, and hostility (Willemse, 2008). Another study sought to determine the connection between training, hostility towards peers, self-efficacy, and stress connected to sports. 159 athletes of both sexes, ages 11 to 18, who participated in various sports in the northwest of Italy and answered the questionnaire "Me, my health and sport" made up the sample of teenagers. There were 28 participants in the sample of their coaches, ranging in age from 21 to 62. Adolescents who are more effective at self-regulation exhibit less physical violence towards their classmates. There was no evidence of a connection between violence and stress connected to sports. Furthermore, the adolescents' self-regulatory efficacy is positively correlated with the coaches' self-efficacy in reducing risky behaviours in adolescents, building positive connections with them, and getting them involved in sports (Cairano et al., 2007). Sport is one intervention that is said to help adolescents develop self-efficacy, making it a crucial protective element for their overall well-being. 344 high school students who speak Afrikaans were randomly picked from three high schools located in mid- to low-socioeconomic areas within the peri-urban town of Worcester. The self-efficacy and aggressiveness questionnaires were utilized to gauge the relative levels of self-efficacy and aggression in youngsters. The results showed a substantial adverse association between aggressiveness and self-efficacy (Willemse et al., 2011).

Goal-directed, aggressive social behaviour that has been associated with negative consequences is known as proactive aggression (PA). It has been postulated that teenagers are more prone to exhibit PA if they think that aggressiveness is a socially acceptable and typical reaction. It is believed that self-efficacy about aggressiveness, or the belief in one's capacity to act violently, mediates this association. As a result, in order to examine gender differences and the mediating role of self-efficacy for aggression on the link between approbation of violence and Proactive aggression, a mixed-gender sample of 860 Australian adolescents aged 12 to 14 was employed. As predicted, males scored much higher than females on approval of aggressiveness, self-efficacy, and PA, all of which showed significant positive associations (Hadley et al., 2017). Adolescence is without a doubt the most influential time of life. Adolescents go through biological, cognitive, and emotional changes at this time, which might result in inappropriate behavioural reactions like violence. Adolescents face pressure from their peer groups, therefore being aggressive is a crucial social skill. It appears that teenagers' self-efficacy plays a crucial role in how well they handle these issues. Twelve million adolescents are estimated to exist in Iran, according to the 2011 census, accounting for 16% of the country's total population as a result a study was conducted in Iran among 321 high school students in the first grade in 2014 and 2015. Samples were taken using a multi-stage random sampling technique from six education and training regions. It was found that Aggression and assertiveness showed a significant negative correlation, as did assault and self-efficacy. Aggression decreased when assertiveness and self-efficacy increased. Therefore, it was suggested that training be used to support assertiveness behaviours and self-efficacy attitudes in order to promote mental health states (Khademi Mofrad & Mehrabi, 2015).

II. THE ROLE OF AGGRESSION IN SOCIAL SET-UP

Both social status and social support may function as measures of social comparison as well as self-evaluation by an individual (Åslund et al., 2009). Both these processes are intricately responsible in affecting the self-concept of an individual. In adolescents, the physical and cognitive maturity make them more susceptible to peer evaluation and social comparison (Y. Li & Wright, 2014) & Both social status and social support (Hoseinzadeh et al., 2014) help in framing a positive self-image, self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs in an individual.

As theorised earlier, high physical self-concept correlates with overt expression of aggression (Torregrosa et al., 2011) and perceived physical appeal by others may act as a reinforcement to maintain aggression. This held true for most male than females. Thus, the researchers contend that acceptance of aggression in the social set-up enhances popularity of the aggressors and thus increasing the tendency to aggress in order to maintain that status (Garandea et al., 2011). However, research also suggests that aggressive peers are rejected more often than non-aggressive peers in social set-up. This may lead to inhibiting aggression and resorting to commonly accepted ways of resolving an issue. The role of social approval in both rejecting or accepting aggressors plays an important role in changing the dynamics of an individual's perception about themselves such as- 'I am not an aggressor' (self-image); 'I can resolve an issue without aggressing' (self-efficacy); 'I navigate my conflicts peacefully, treat others with respect and maintain healthy relationships with them to foster a high self-esteem' (self-esteem). Individuals are bound to think from perspectives about themselves in relation to aggression based on what social outcome they anticipate. The research hypothesises that as much as social status is capable of maintaining aggression so does social support help in mitigating aggressive tendencies. It is important to highlight that conceptualisation of 'status' may vary across disciplines. A sociological researcher may intend a qualitative analysis considering dominance and influence as some of the indices. Whereas clinical psychology may aim at quantitative analysis. Thus, peer acceptance or rejection qualifies as indices for the latter discipline (Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006).

Aggression in social ecology- acceptance or rejection of the aggressor?

Certainly, extensive research in the field of developmental psychopathology has consistently demonstrated that aggression and antisocial behaviour are linked to a heightened risk of experiencing peer rejection and ironically, rejection further increased aggression, for example, a study found that receiving negative feedback from peer judges, participants were given an opportunity to aggress, they responded by reducing monetary benefits of peers, etc. states (Reijntjes et al., 2010). Aggressive individuals reported a negative relationship with family than non-aggressive peers (Torregrosa et al., 2011). A compilation of research on likeability of aggressive peers informs that aggressive girls were highly liked by boys (Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). Research from Spanish study by (Torregrosa et al., 2011) informs that girls displaying high levels of aggression perceive their relationships with males more positively than non-aggressive peers. This positivity may stem from societal associations between aggression and masculinity. Aggressive girls, aligning with gender role orientation, may feel greater affinity and acceptance among male peers. However, (Dijkstra et al., 2010) reported that relational aggression negatively predicted likeability and invited more rejection from peers. However (Torregrosa et al., 2011) indicated research on the difference between "self- perception" of relations with peers and "actual" rejection or acceptance by peers. It is important to note that popularity and likeability are not related directly across all situations (Blakely- McClure & Ostrov, 2016).

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Acceptance of an individual in a group whether he/she is aggressive or non-aggressive was moderated by peer-valued characteristics (Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). This indicates that if peer groups value that aggressive individuals inhibit violent tendencies and be respectful, acceptance of them in the group would be warranted. While determining status, peers attempt to consider more than the aggressive tendencies of the aggressive peer. Such as physical likeability, affluent lifestyles, athletic abilities, etc. According to sociometric indices, aggression may assign 'popularity' to an individual but it may not necessarily be linked to 'likeability' of that individual. Further, popularity and liking also depend on the type of aggression exhibited and the sex of the individual. Relational aggression either by boys or girls was neither considered popular nor likeable by the peer group. One reason for this may be that this type of aggression is inherently threatening to peer alliances and trust among members. In the longer run, popularity may come to be associated with relational aggression but not likeability. This was confirmed in the study done by (Blakely-McClure & Ostrov, 2016). The reactions of the peers may influence an individual's self- concept. Past literature informs that higher academic and physical self-concept in grade six were predictors of decrease in relational aggression at age 15. These implications from the research suggest that those who did not have a high physical self-concept intended to use relational aggression more to increase their self- worth (Blakely-McClure & Ostrov, 2016). The dislike from peers and its extent may pave the way for an individual to lack adequate social support. The knowledge of these threatened interpersonal relations may drive the need to modify social behaviour. An individual may then resort either of the two ways- appeasement or aggression to raise their social standing (Åslund et al., 2009). Whether peer rejection reinforces aggression or contributes to its inhibition beckons longitudinal assessment. Social goals such as popularity and preference affected the behaviours of adolescents. Individuals who strived for social popularity goals reported more relational aggression while those who endorsed social preference (such as likeability from peers) were more likely to behave prosocially (Y. Li & Wright, 2014).

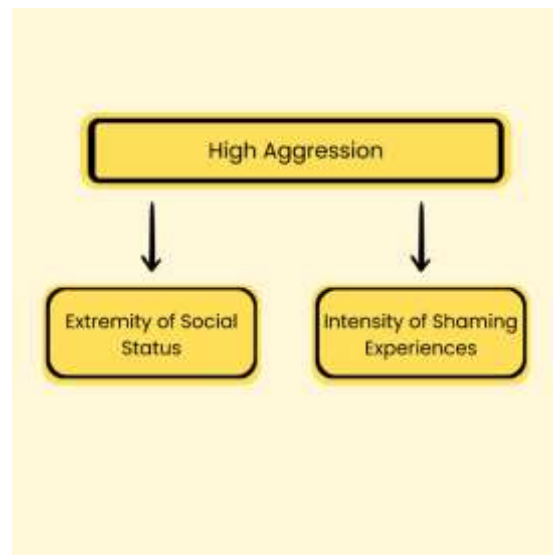


Fig. Likeability and Acceptance factors **Fig. High aggression determinants**

One intriguing finding come from the study by (Åslund et al., 2009) which reported that the extremity of social status and shaming experiences was a determining factor in aggression. For example, very high and very low social status adolescents were more prone to exhibit aggressive tendencies when their social status was threatened in comparison to medium

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social status adolescents. Also, adolescents who were exposed to more ridicule and insult for their behaviour reacted more than others who were not insulted. Thus, the two factors—extremity of social status and feelings of shame bidirectionally affect each other in determining aggressive behaviour. Thus, implications from the literature indicate that the role of environment and peer influence particularly in the adolescent stage in shaping aggression.

Self- concept and peer victimisation: Bringing in the role of social support

More than 7.2% reported peer victimisation at school (Vidourek & King, 2019) Self-concept is viewed as a resilient element in an individual's life. However, (Jenkins & Demaray, 2012) research reports that self-concept is positively correlated with peer aggression and a negative relation between self-concept and victimisation. However, research on specific components of self-concept that are the causes of aggressive behaviours have not been thoroughly investigated. For example, physical competence is more linked with aggressive behaviours than academic competence. In a study by (Blakely-McClure & Ostrov, 2016), a notable direct impact was observed, indicating that engaging in relational aggression during middle childhood was linked to a decline in academic self-concept and a rise in sports self-concept. Children who display aggressive behaviour heighten their likelihood of becoming the targets of victimisation as a form of retribution for their aggression. This, in turn, contributes to a decrease in their self- evaluations, as the experience of receiving aggression from peers shapes the perception that they are disliked by others (Blakely-McClure & Ostrov, 2016). Literature research informs that social support facilitated the role in moderating the connection between victimisation and individual adaptation (Miller, 2013). Research emphasises that interventions in enhancing sociability self-concept may reduce aggression concerns. Social support research also parallelly echoes this finding. An individual's judgement of their ability to get active support can mitigate negative outcomes of victimisation or bullying states (Miller, 2013).

Literature on peer victimizations informed that perceived social support was more by children who were not involved in peer victimisation than in children who either perpetrated peer victimisation or experienced it. Perception of social support facilitates 'social integration'. This may contribute to an individual's self-worth, feelings of control and foster high self- esteem (Jenkins & Demaray, 2012). Another argument in favour of social support comes as "resource" point. From here, individuals can derive the ability to identify the problem accurately (Csibi & Csibi, 2011) handle a stressful situation and have alternatives rather than only aggressive behaviour. The evaluation of the social support and the coping mechanism used by individuals are important contributors to an individual's efficacy beliefs. Individuals who lack social support report feelings of frustration and an inherent "rejection" from social groups. This rejection leads to aggressive behaviours in individuals (Hamama & Ronen-Shenhav, 2012).

Research suggests that social support interventions must be targeted in various domains to enhance self-efficacy, self-esteem and life satisfaction (Hoseinzadeh et al., 2014). The extension of this argument also highlights the need to address that social support as an intervention must also be monitored. If social support is reinforcing the aggression, bullying, and violence may take a severe form. Thus (Garandau et al., 2011) suggest that decreasing the support of aggressive individuals may directly affect the group norms and thus, help in reducing aggression in the social environment. Consequently, social support with self-concept facilitates resilience in individuals (Jenkins & Demaray, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Results from theoretical and empirical study reviewed in this paper show that domain-specific self-concept such as physical, academic, social, etc. are distinctly related to aggression. Research has uniformly agreed on aggression as an “inclination” towards harming someone. However there are variations in conceptions of aggression among scholars. Some include all the three elements of Affect, cognition and behaviour while others just limit it to cognitive (intention), and some as a mixture of cognitive and behavioral elements.

The research contributed immensely by bridging the gap in the bulwark of literature that has either focused on global self-concept solely or self-esteem predominantly in relation to aggression. This work compiles evidence on associations of aggression to three elements of self-concept- self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Relational aggression in fifth grade was related to a decrease in academic self-concept while an increase in physical/sports self-concept. Narcissistic individuals exhibited higher aggression when their self-image was threatened. The relationship between aggression and self-esteem is complex. Low self-esteem often correlates with increased aggression, but narcissistic traits can be linked to both high and low self-esteem, contributing to violent behaviour. Cultural variations impact the connection between self-esteem and aggression. Emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between aggression and self-esteem. Social support positively influences self-esteem and reduces aggression among adolescents. Self-efficacy, the belief in one's capability to achieve, is inversely correlated with aggression in adolescents. The probable reason for this could be that individual's beliefs about receiving active social support increases their self-efficacy.

The research question why are individuals motivated to aggress? Social support or social status which is an important reinforcer in inhibiting or exhibiting aggression? Research contended that norms play an important role in determining aggressive behaviours. During the adolescence stage, self-evaluation and peer status are important goals. The quest to achieve popularity among peers is one of the important reasons for continuance of aggression along with peer-valued characteristics and social goals determined by the individual. However, dynamics in peer groups also influence the continuation or inhibition of aggression. Although the research was not able to determine which social support or social status is more important, it discussed the impact of both relationally. This is because individuals strive for both pursuits simultaneously. Aggressive individuals who have high social status also enjoy good social support, the latter may reinforce aggression and thus the quest to maintain social status. Secondly, individuals who lack social support report feelings of rejection and an inclination towards aggressivity. Thirdly, the extremity of social status (higher and lower) was more related to aggression than the middle social status group.

Social status and support serve as dual metrics for social comparison and self-evaluation, influencing adolescents whose physical and cognitive maturation heightens sensitivity to peer judgment. Both factors contribute to shaping a positive self-image, bolstering self-esteem, and fostering self-efficacy beliefs in individuals. The research hypothesis that as much as social status is capable of maintaining aggression so does social support help in mitigating aggressive tendencies was supported by the review of literature.

Although gender differences were marked across research in the type of aggression displayed by males and females, this research specifically did not address it, except in a few places. It was noted that girls were high in expressing relational aggression and boys in

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expressing physical aggression. Although individual differences, group norms, and cultural and ethnical differences limit the generalisation of this finding. Research reported that physically aggressive girls were more disliked than physically aggressive boys. The popular attribution for this is the associated masculinity with physical aggression. Research also attributed it to the reason that the process of socialization in which boys' limited emotional expressions are encouraged, articulating adverse thoughts and emotional regulation serve as barrier. Thus, suppressing negative emotions correlates with heightened aggression and boys find physical aggression as normative of channelising it. On the other hand, girls' heightened emotional expressiveness may elicit more nuanced feedback, prompting them to utilise emotion-focused coping strategies like avoidance, gossiping, distancing, etc. and other forms of relational aggression.

The paper is not without its limitations but it is an important one. The implications of this research beckons future research on gender differences in aggression, intervention programs to enhance social support to reduce aggression in adolescents. Implications also beckon longitudinal research to establish associations between highly aggressive adolescents and criminal tendencies. This is daunting because forms of abuse including acid attacks, domestic abuse, peer victimisation, cyber abuse, stalking, etc. somewhere have their sources from aggressivity cognitions like threat, rage, revenge, etc. Early intervention and awareness programs are needed. Thirdly, self-concept and social support are important for resilience of an individual's self. In an era when the science of psychology aims at looking at the positives of the human rather than on the negative, it is important to work on aspects that help individuals tap their fullest potential. Only then we can affirm that the essence of this discipline is truly realised.

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