

Research Paper

A Study of Personality Factors in Relation to Aggressive Behavior among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of personality factors in development of aggressive behavior among adolescents. The sample comprised of 100 (50 male and 50 female) undergraduate students of Z.A.I. P.G. College Siwan, Bihar. The Neo Five Factor Inventory (Costa and Mc Crare, 1992) was used for measuring personality factors and Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) was used for measuring adolescents aggression. Product-moment correlation and t-test were used for analyzing the data. Result showed that there was significant negative correlation between four dimensions of personality (i.e. extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and aggression. Result also showed that there was significant positive correlation between neuroticism dimension of personality and aggression. In gender differences, it was also found that male students scored significantly higher on four dimensions of personality factor (i.e. Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) as compared to female students. it was also found that female students scored significantly higher on neuroticism dimension of personality in comparison to male students. Further it was found that male students scored significantly higher on three dimension of aggression (i.e. physical, anger and hostility) in comparison to female students. No significant difference was found between male and female students on verbal dimension of aggression.

Keywords: *Personality Factors, Aggressive Behavior, Adolescents*

In the present modern era aggression is a very common mental health problem among adolescents. Aggression refers to behavior between members of the same species that is intended to cause humiliation, pain, or harm, antisocial behavior, depression, anxiety, dissociation, and other trauma-related symptoms as well as problems in emotion regulation (Singer et. al., 1999). Psychologists are more concerned about the causal factors, severity and the therapeutic approaches for controlling aggressive behaviors. It is found that over the last few years, aggression and violence levels have drastically increased among adolescents and young adults (Paternite, Simons & Shore, 2001). A Cross-sectional study was conducted by Sharma, Grover, and Chaturvedi (2008) in South Delhi, India, to assess risk behavior related to interpersonal violence and its epidemiological correlates among 550 adolescents of various schools and colleges aged 14-19 years. Their study revealed that, 65 (11.8%)

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carrying a weapon in past 30 days, 74 (13.5%) had threatened or injured someone with a weapon and almost one in every two boys (49.1%) reported being involved in a physical fight in past 12 months. They also found significant correlation between interpersonal violence and male gender, lower age, and number of close friends. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of children are being referred to mental health services for treatment of their aggressive and antisocial behaviors (Frick & Silverthorn, 2001). It is difficult to isolate an explanation for this increase; however, researchers have been able to identify a variety of factors that correlate with aggressive behaviors. Therefore, there is a need to study the role of personality traits in development of aggressive behavior among adolescents.

Personality factors

One important factor which play a significant role in development of aggressive behavior among adolescents is personality traits. Mc Murran, (2009) found in his study that personality traits have an important factor in aggressive and antisocial behavior. Psychologists defined personality traits refer to “the tendency to react in a certain way across various situations” (Baumeister, Bushman & Campbell, 2000).

John (1990) presented a comprehensive framework of big five factors model, which categorizes personality into five broad dimensions: Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism.

1. Extraversions vs. Introversion

Extraversion is the first dimension of Big Five Factors Model of Personality which concerned with interpersonal interactions, activity, and capacity for joy. Such people are sociable, active, talkative and optimistic (Costa, & McCrae, 1992). Whereas introverts tend to be less sociable, slower to self-disclosure, appear less energetic, and are inclined to internalize cognitive processes.

2. Openness to experience vs. Close-mindedness

The second factor of Personality is Openness to experience. Openness refers to a propensity to be imaginative, independent minded, intellectually curious, individualistic, adventurous, daring and divergent in thinking. On the other hand, closed individuals tend to be more conventional, have less ability to understand abstraction and favor simplicity and familiarity. Open people are known to be more aware of their thoughts, impulses and emotions simultaneously; as a result, both of their positive and negative experiences become more intense. This may be one of the reasons why this trait has been linked to both prospective favorable and unfavorable life events which, expectedly, are related to the genesis of stress (Headey and Wearing, 1989).

3. Agreeableness vs. Disagreeableness

The third Factor of Personality is agreeableness. Agreeableness has a social component that refers to a disposition of being friendly, pleasant, considerate, compassionate and cooperative. Individuals who possess this trait would be soft hearted, good natured, trusting, and helpful (Costa, & McCrae, 1992). On the other hand, disagreeableness refers to a disposition of being unpleasant, unfriendly, uncooperative, pessimistic, and aggressive.

4. Conscientiousness vs. Undirectedness

The fourth Factor of Personality is Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness refers to a trait to be disciplined, structured, systematic and well organized. So that someone scoring high on conscientiousness would be organized, reliable, hardworking and punctual (Costa, &

McCrae, 1992). While, undirected people, in comparison, tend to procrastinate and are viewed as disorganized, low in ambition, unreliable and inefficient in highly structured environment.

5. Neuroticism vs. Emotional Stability

The fifth factor of personality is neuroticism. Neuroticism refers to an inclination to be nervous and tense. Neurotic individuals are more prone to unpleasant emotions such as fear, anger, guilt, sadness and self doubt. They experience negative emotions more frequently because of their tendency to worry more, dwell on negative feelings and their lower reaction threshold to aggravating situations (Izard, Libero, Putnam & Haynes, 1993); (Watson & Clark, 1992). On the other hand, emotional stability refers to individuals who have lower emotional reactivity, less mood swings and less negative mood state both in frequency and duration (John & Srivastava, 1999).

A large number of studies support the involvement of personality traits in human aggression, with high Neuroticism, low Agreeableness, and low Conscientiousness exhibiting the strongest association with aggressive and antisocial behavior Jones et. al. (2011) and Miller and Lynam (2001).

Objectives

Following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To find out the significant relationship between different dimensions of personality factors and aggression.
2. To find out the significant difference between male and female students on different dimensions of personality factors.
3. To find out the significant difference between male and female students in aggressive behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

For the present study, the sample comprised of 100 (50 male and 50 female) undergraduate students of Z.A.I. P.G. College Siwan Bihar. The random sampling technique was used for collecting data. Age of the subjects ranged between 16 to 19 years, the mean age being 17.5 years. All the students belonged from upper middle class socio-economic background.

Tools for the study:

The following questionnaires and test were used for the present study.

1. **Neo Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI):** The Neo Five Factor Inventory was used for measuring personality factors. It was developed by Costa and Mc Crae, (1992). This inventory assesses five dimension of personality namely neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), agreeableness (A), openness (O) and conscientiousness (C). This inventory consisted 60-items with 12 items assessing each personality factors. Each item has to be rated on 5-point scale on the continuum of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The possible scores for each of the items were given according to the scoring key. Responses are added on each dimension to get the scores against each personality factor. Consequently, total scores range from 12 to 60. The reliability of the NEO-FFI scales was ranged from 0.75 for conscientiousness to 0.89 for neuroticism when correlated with NEO Personality Inventory. The internal consistency for the NEO-FFI scales was ranged from 0.89, 0.79, 0.80, 0.75, and 0.84

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respectively for each five dimensions i.e. neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness.

2. **Aggression Questionnaire:** Aggression Questionnaire was used to measure adolescents aggressive behavior. It was developed by Buss & Perry (1992). It contains 29 self-report Likert-type items (e.g., “I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them”, “Given enough provocation, I may hit another person”) assessing cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of this domain. Subscales include Hostility (i.e., hostile cognition), Anger (i.e., hostile affect), Physical aggression, and Verbal aggression. Correlations among components range from .25 to .48. The factor structure of the AQ has been replicated in several confirmatory analyses (Buss & Perry, 1992). Its internal consistencies was ranging from .53 to .85.

Analysis:

Product moment correlation and t-test were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

The results of the analyses are given in tables 1 through 3.

Table 1: Correlation between different dimensions of personality and aggression.

Personality factors	Physical	Verbal	Anger	Hostility
Extraversion	-.204*	-.327**	-.256*	-.169
Openness	-.168	-.301**	-.239*	-.195
Agreeableness	-.294**	.419**	.357**	-.282**
Conscientiousness	-.168	-.275**	-.195	-.098
Neuroticism	.305**	.382**	.337**	.292**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.005 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.

It is found from table-1 that there is a significant negative correlation between other four dimensions of personality (i.e. Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) and different dimensions of aggression. It is found from the table that there is significant positive correlation between neuroticism and aggression.

Table 2: Comparison between male and female students on different dimensions of personality. N=100 (50 males and 50 females).

Variables	Group	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	Sig.
Extraversion	Male	26.20	4.79	2.69	98	.01
	female	23.72	4.41			
Openness	Male	24.84	4.26	2.41	98	.05
	female	22.88	3.85			
Agreeableness	Male	25.28	4.45	1.97	98	.05
	female	23.66	3.73			
Conscientiousness	Male	27.88	4.77	3.10	98	.01
	female	25.00	4.51			
Neuroticism	Male	23.10	4.59	2.42	98	.01
	female	25.24	4.20			

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Table-2 shows that there is a significant difference between male and female students on all five dimensions of personality. Male students scored significantly higher on four dimensions of personality (i.e. Extraversion, openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) as compared to female students. On the hand female students scored higher on Neuroticism as compared to male students.

Table 3: Comparison of Male and Female Students on different Dimensions of Aggression Scores.

Aggression Dimensions	Group	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	Sig.
Physical	Male	27.52	7.51	2.53	98	.05
	female	24.06	6.05			
Verbal	Male	26.34	7.62	1.16	98	NS
	female	24.68	6.57			
Anger	Male	28.36	7.57	2.14	98	.05
	female	25.38	6.42			
Hostility	Male	31.14	8.17	3.61	98	.01
	female	25.50	7.41			

Table-3 shows that there is a significant difference between male and female students on different on three dimensions of aggression. In other words, male students scored significantly higher on physical, anger and hostility dimensions of aggression as compared to female students. There is no significant difference between male and female students on verbal dimension of aggression.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the present investigation was to explore the role of personality factors in experiencing aggressive behavior among adolescents. Results of the present study revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between Extraversion dimension of personality and aggression. This result is supported by earlier studies Natalia Śmierciak., et al. (2025). They also found that there is a negative correlation between Extraversion and aggression.

It was also apparent from above results that there is significant negative correlation between other three dimensions of personality (i.e. Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) and aggression. It means that those persons who possess these personality characteristics experience less aggression as compared to those who lack these characteristics. Our result is supported by earlier studies Natalia Śmierciak., et al. (2025). They also found that there is a negative correlation between Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) and aggression.

Earlier studies shown that people higher on Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness live more happy, relaxed, calm, contented, and have better interpersonal relationship with others, in comparison to those who scored low on theses dimensions of personality Costa, & McCrae (1992), Bakker, Lewig, & Dollard, (2006); Jylha & Isometsa (2006).

It was also clear from the results that there is a significant positive correlation between Neuroticism and aggression. It means that those persons who scored high on this dimension of personality significantly experience more aggression. People high on Neuroticism are generally more unhappy, irritated, feel nervousness, are more worried and have more problematic interpersonal relationship in comparison to those persons who score low on this dimension. Perhaps this may be reason that people possessing this negative personality

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characteristic show more aggressive behavior. This study was supported by Barlett and Anderson (2012). They also found in their research that high Neuroticism, low Agreeableness, and low Conscientiousness were linked to increases in aggressive emotions and physical aggression in a large sample of university students.

When gender differences was investigated on above sample, the significant difference was found between male and female students on different dimensions of personality. It is clear from the results that male students scored significantly higher on four dimensions of personality (i.e. Extraversion, openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) as compared to female students. This study was supported by earlier study conducted by Costa, Terracciano, and McCrae (2001).

Similarly, it was also found in this study that female students scored significantly higher on Neuroticism dimension of personality as compared to male students. This result is also supported by previous study conducted by Jylha & Isometsa (2006). It is apparent from the above results that female students scored significantly higher on aggression as compared to male students. This result was supported by Costa et. al., (2001). They also found in their study that women tend to score higher than men in neuroticism dimension of personality.

Similarly, it was also found in this study that male students scored significantly higher on physical, anger and hostility dimensions of aggression as compared to female students. There is no significant difference between male and female students on verbal dimension of aggression.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of present results and discussion it is concluded that personality factors play important role in development of aggressive behavior of adolescents. Further it is also concluded that males are more aggressive behavior in comparison to females.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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