

DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF RELATIONAL AGGRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS

Saima Riaz, Zaqia Bano, Razia Anjum*, Sami Ul Haque Ansari**

University of Gujrat, Gujrat Pakistan, *Government College Women University, Sialkot Pakistan, **Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning, Karachi Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the predictive relation of demographic variables with relational aggression.

Study Design: Cross sectional study.

Place and Duration of Study: Department of Psychology, University of Gujrat, Gujrat Pakistan, from Aug 2017 to Jan 2018.

Methodology: A total of 612 adolescent students were selected with age 12-19 years from diverse academic institutes of Gujrat city. Urdu version of diverse adolescent relational aggression scale was used to measure relational aggression. Neural network analysis was carried out by using SPSS-21.

Result: The findings of this study revealed significant predictive relation of demographic variables (gender, birth order, family system, number of siblings and age) with relational aggression. The most important predictor of relational aggression in teenagers was birth order 0.249 (100%), age 0.246 (98.9%) siblings 0.242 (86.3%), family system 0.166 (66.8%) and gender 123 (49.6) respectively.

Conclusion: Demographic variables are the significant predictor of relational aggression. By managing the effects of these variables, adverse behavior of relational aggression can be controlled in adolescent students.

Keywords: Adolescents, Demographic variables, Predictive relationship, Relational aggression.

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INTRODUCTION

Human aggression is a social behavior. According to Baron and Richardson,¹ aggression is any conduct which is aimed at damaging another individual who does not want to be mistreated. Aggression usually appears in different forms such as physical violence which involves hurting others bodily like beating, jolting, shooting, or stabbing; and oral aggression includes hurting others by degrading words (like name-calling, yelling, swearing, and screaming). One other form of aggression is relational aggression. Crick *et al*,² who proposed the concept of relational aggression, believe that relational aggression is more damaging than physical aggression among adolescence. Relational aggression pertains to deliberately damaging another individual's social relations, inclusion within a group, or feelings of acceptance.

As relationships are extremely significant aspect of ones lives. Individuals have a propensity to consume their energies and resources in making and maintaining the relationships to others. Therefore, harm to the social relations causes great distress in an individual's life. Fundamentally, relational aggression stresses

on the application of one's link to disrupt the others relationships.² Struggles are made to harm the associations and these links are aimed for influencing somebody. The perpetrator misuses his or her associations as a foundation for getting control, to increase the communal endorsement, and to dispense ferocity. Oppressor's relations are tried to be a manipulated. Ferocious behaviors perhaps would be obvious in real activities both bodily and orally. Diverse oral methods are utilized such as distributing rumors, overlooking, segregation, gossip, and friendship exclusion.³ In short, relational aggression harms others by abolishing or fears to terminate the associations by upsetting their approval.

Aggression among friends and in educational institutes is a thoughtful problem. Adolescence is a growing age and in this significant period, young adults adopted some immoral patterns of behavior. During this period youngster may also get to indulge in behaviors like relational aggression. Relational aggression is not a novel type of violence. Many consider it to be a usual part of growth for kids and teenagers.⁴

Relational aggression is a freshly studied topic and has gained tremendous significance. Demographic variables like gender, age birth order etc. play important role in one's life. Literature supports the variation in aggression and relational aggression as well in

Correspondence: Dr Saima Riaz, Department of Psychology, University of Gujrat, Gujrat Pakistan
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reference to different demographics. Different use of relational aggression has been reported across gender. Female students are found to be more indulged in covert aggression as compared to overt. They less engaged in physical aggression. They usually use gossips, rumors, separation from friends, and different methods of abuse.⁵ Adolescents girls are more indulge in relational aggression as compared to boys.⁶ Moreover, a study supported the notion that males are more aggressive than females.⁷ Besides, research has also found aggression differences in reference to age.⁸ Birth order is another important factors. An association has been found between birth order and a propensity toward hostility.⁹ Teenage years are reflected as periods of turmoil residing amid childhood and adulthood. While passing through this age an individual goes through numerous vicissitudes both bodily as well as emotional.

This study aimed to investigate the effect of different demographic variables (gender, birth order, family system, age and number of siblings) on relational aggression in adolescent students.

METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional research study was carried out at department of Psychology, University of Gujrat, from August 2017 to January 2018.

A sample of 612 students were recruited from different academic institutes of Gujrat. The multistage random sampling technique was employed in the present study for selection of a good representative sample. List of private and public, middle and high schools was obtained by district education office Gujrat. Figures of students in public sector were obtained by district education office while students studying in private sector were estimated at the rate of 12% of public sector according to the instructions of district education office. The sample size was worked out by applying the Yamane formula at 0.05 level.

Inclusion Criteria: Adolescents from age 12-19, whom were studying in educational institutes in Gujrat (schools, colleges and university) were included.

Exclusion Criteria: Adolescents under age 12 and above age 19, adolescents not studying in any educational institute, and the adolescents with any physical disability and diagnosed psychological problems which hinder them in responding, were excluded from the current research.

Demographic information sheet was used for inquiring the related information about gender, birth order, family system, age and no. of siblings. For the

assessment of relational aggression, the Urdu version of diverse adolescent relational aggression scale¹⁰, was used. The scale consisted of 27 items to illustrate relational aggression, acts and effects. There is no reversely scored item. All items are worded positively to rate the relational aggression. Responses have been rated on four-point Likert type format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scale has a composite score; all the items are totaled for getting a score for relational aggression with high scores showing more relational aggression. Score range of the scale is 27-108. Reliability for the scale is 0.78, and in the current study it was 0.8.

Method and material applied in present investigation were examined and approved by the institutional review committee, University of Gujrat, Pakistan (IERB ltr no: UOG/ASRB/Psychology/02/7906). All recommendations of the board were incorporated in the present study. Permission was taken from the institutes authorities of the different educational institutes from where sample was to be drawn. Permission was also taken from parents of adolescent students through the institutes authorities. Sample selection was carried out in three stages. At first stage, 26 institutes were selected randomly by lottery method with equal allocation. Now these were considered sub-populations, and at second stage respondent were selected randomly from respective institutes. In the next stage, sections were selected randomly from all classes by lottery method. From each selected section attendance list was obtained by teacher. According to that list students were selected systematically by even odd method. Scales of study were given to students to be filled in, in a separate room. The total 640 adolescents were approached, 28 questionnaires were discarded, and remaining sample became 612.

Neural network analysis by using SPSS-21 was applied for finding the predictive effects of afore said variables and their relative importance in the determination of relational aggression. It has been established that neural network is more suitable to practice instead of regression¹². Further, the contribution of the demographic variables in regulating the relational aggression of adolescent students can be estimated in this analysis. In the first step demographic variables were put in factor and relational aggression was in dependent column. The training and testing cross entropy error and percent incorrect predication was examined with sample percentage. Finally, the neural network model explained the importance of indepen-

dent variables for adjustment problems in adolescent students.

RESULTS

A total of 612 adolescent students of age range 12-19 years with mean age 15.27 ± 2.18 years were selected. 366 were girls (59.8%) and boys were 246 (40.2%). Adolescent birth order ranges from 1-10. Number of sibling ranges from 0-14, and 272 (44.44%) adolescents were living in nuclear family system while 340 (55.56%) were living in joint family system.

If the percent incorrect predications are constant in the training and testing it gives the confidence about the model as correct. In case of current research, the difference is very small for training and testing (Table-I). The neural network model gives information about the relative importance of prediction of demographic factors for relational aggression. The importance can be shown in the Table-II.

Table-I: Model summary of neural network analysis (n=612).

Cross Entropy Error		Percent Incorrect Predictions	
Training	Testing	Training	Testing
343.86	150.56	36.5%	37.3%

Table-II: Predictive importance of independent factors (n=612).

Parameters	Importance	Normalized Importance
Gender	0.12	49.6%
Birth order	0.25	100%
Family System	0.17	66.8%
Age	0.25	98.9%
No. of Siblings	0.21	86.3%

In result, a comprehensible neural network model appeared that elucidated the importance of independent variables for relational aggression among adolescent. The chart of importance shows that the results were dominated by birth order, followed by age, no. of siblings, family system and gender.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at exploring the predictive relation of gender, birth order, family system, age and number of siblings on relationally aggressive behavior among adolescents with the endorsement of notion that all these are the determinants of relational aggression where birth order is the most salient. The concept of birth order was originated by Adler and he endorsed that it has a major role in the human life.^{7,12} Birth order variances are common because of siblings trying to contest for the attention of their parents by demanding roles inside the family. Previous researches endorse the results of current study.¹³

The current research implied that relational aggression varies with gender differences. The aforesaid notion is endorsed by previous findings. A research claimed that male delinquents inclined to practice physical hostility as a tool of harassment and pressure and as a prime technique to proclaim themselves over the victim.¹⁴ Further, males and females involve in relational aggression in a different way.⁶ Some researchers have contradictory findings when we talked about gender variations observed in relational aggression that female are more involved in relational aggression rather males use this type of mistreatment similarly or even more than females.⁶ Throwing more light on importance of demographic variable, a study conducted by Khan *et al*¹⁵ found out that one third of school kids had hostile conduct positively linked to family variables and age. Moreover, a study reports contradictory findings about age and relational aggression relationship that it becomes stable after age.^{11,16} Current research supports predictive link of gender,⁷ age,^{8,9,17,18} and family structure with relational aggression.

CONCLUSION

Demographic variables are the significant predictor of relational aggression. By managing the effects of these variables, adverse behavior of relational aggression can be controlled in adolescent students.

Conflict of Interest: None.

Authors' Contribution

SR: Substantial, designing, acquisition, collection & interpretation of data, ZB: Supervision and finalized the data, RA: Critical review and revision of data, SHA: Statistical analysis.

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