

Relationship between Prosocial behaviour and Aggression among College Students

Shravani Sakalkale
(Student at Department of Psychology,
SNDT Arts and Commerce College for
Women, Pune)

Abstract

Several changes occur throughout the transition to maturity, including changes in behaviour, emotions, and cognitions. Growing maturity occurs hand in hand with other demands during the transition from adolescent to adulthood, such as taking care of oneself and others, making independent decisions, and becoming self-sufficient. Prosocial behaviour can be one of the factors to reduce aggressive actions. Both being the components of social psychology, this study aims at finding a correlation between the two in college going students. A total 102 students ($N_{\text{males}}=28$, $N_{\text{females}}=72$) participated for the study from India. Prosocialness scale by Caprara et. al. 2005 ($M_{\text{females}}=64.63$, $SD=9.03$), ($M_{\text{males}}=59.66$, $SD=9.36$), ($t=2.422ns$) and Aggression Questionnaire by Buss., A.H., & Perry, M. 1992 ($M_{\text{females}}=72.30$, $SD=15.27$), ($M_{\text{males}}=73.62$, $SD=17.902$), ($t=-.360ns$) were used for measurements. The study indicated that there is no significant difference amongst males and females in relation with prosocial behaviour and aggression. Results indicated negative correlation between prosocial behaviour and aggression but non-significant ($r=-0.17$ ns).

Keywords: Prosocial behaviour, Aggression, Social Psychology

Introduction

The transition to adulthood is marked by several changes including behavior, emotions, and cognitions. During the transition from adolescence to adulthood, increasing maturity comes hand in hand with some other expectations such as taking care and responsibility of self as well others, making independent decisions, and becoming self-sufficient (Arnett 2000). Prosocial behavior can be stated as a social skill that might help in reducing the aggression effects in a person.

Prosocial behavior is the actions by individuals that help others (often, with no immediate benefit to the helper)—which are a very common part of social life. It is denoting or exhibiting behavior that benefits one or more other people, such as assisting an older adult crossing the street. It is characterized by acts of kindness, compassion, and helping behaviors, which many consider being one of the finest qualities of human nature. Aggression is behavior directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment. Trait aggression describes individual differences in thoughts (e.g., hostility), emotions (e.g., anger), and behavior (e.g., verbal and Physical Aggression) that are intended to harm another person. Regarding the Big Five personality traits, trait aggression often relates positively with neuroticism, inconsistently with extraversion, and negatively with agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness. According to social psychology, the keyword aggression is mainly used for the most important aspect which is displayed as any behavior that should injure another man who doesn't intend to be hatred (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Aggression is defined as taking action with the goal of physically or verbally harming another person. Aggressive conduct, physical, social, psychological, and material injuries all result in someone being hurt (Leary, Twenge, Quinlivan, Leary, & Quinlivan, 2006). There are two sorts of hostility: explicit aggression and intrinsic aggression (Grumm, Hein, & Fingerle, 2011). Explicit aggression is defined as hostility that is committed with the goal of damaging another person and can be directly quantified. Implicit aggressiveness, on the other hand, is the end product of self-evaluation, which can only be measured indirectly. So that it can be concluded that aggression is the behavior of injuring others intentionally, resulting in harm to the victim, physically, socially, and psychologically.

Aggression can be reduced using the social skills one possesses or it can be developed over time. Prosocial behavior is one of the social skills. It includes empathy, altruism, and some other components which, when developed, can help reduce aggression.

Review of Literature

A study where the objective was to test the hypothesis that providing help to others predicts a reduced association between stress and mortality consisted of 846 participants from Michigan and Detroit area. Given the association between stress and mortality, helping others might help in reducing the mortality rate and also help with coping up grief. (Michael J. Poulin, PhD, Stephanie L. Brown, PhD, Amanda J. Dillard, PhD, and Dylan M. Smith, PhD)

Helping others suggests that nothing however prosocial behavior. The role of childhood participation in cultural activities within the promotion of pro-social behaviors in later life was studied in yet one more paper. The information used for this analysis were taken from a national study into culture and sports participation in European nation, UK, entitled 'Taking Part'. There are several studies that are related to childhood participation to the later life i.e., adult life. The study concluded that the childhood participation in cultural activities is extremely much useful to the expansion of civic behaviors moreover as social capital which might be useful to the people moreover because the society. (Brian Garrod, David Dowell)

Another study where the development of pro-social behavior in Children and adolescents was studied with the data of 682 family showed that the influence of the distribution of prosocial behavior in children and adolescents show declining shared environmental and increasing genetic influences with age and also for the development of pro-social behavior genetics also play a significant role. (Jane Scourfield, Bethan John, Neilson Martin and Peter McGuffin)

A significant correlation between personality traits and prosocial behavior was found where literature suggested that agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness have significant positive correlations with helping behavior and neuroticism has negative relationship with prosocial behavior. (Fauzia Tariq & Dr. Irum Naqvi)

A study which measured pro-social behaviour in adolescence with 497 adolescent participants who reported on them through prosocial behaviours. The results showed significant gender differences where the levels of prosocial behavior in boys were stable under the age of 14 following the increase till age of 17 and decreased thereafter whereas for girls it was till the age of 16 and then slightly decreased. Growth in prosocial behavior start earlier for girls than boys and in accordance with gender-role intensification theory, gender differences increase between early and mid-adolescence. (Jolien Van der Graaff, Gustavo Carlo, Elisabetta Crocetti, Hans M. Koot, Susan Branje,)

A study with 259 male participants indicated that those high in neuroticism and low in agreeableness and Conscientiousness are at higher risk of exhibiting aggressive behavior, underlying the relevance of these higher order personality traits in understanding aggressive behavior. (Vibeke H. Dam, Liv Vadskjær Hjordt, Sofi da Cunha-Bang, Dorte Sestoft, Gitte Moos Knudsen, Dea Siggaard Stenbæk) Quinsey, Skilling, Lalumiere, and Craig (2004) discovered that, while both males and females are more likely to indulge in aggressive conduct and commit violent crimes between the ages of 14 and 24 than at other ages, females begin two years earlier on average than males. Furthermore, there are disparities in the severity of violence between men and women.

Aggression can be reduced if someone has adequate anger control abilities. The use of anger management techniques has been found to minimise aggressive behaviour when faced with pressure from the environment. (Shahsavarani et al., 2016).

Another study where The Effect of Anger Management on Aggression with Social Skills as a Moderating Variable was studied, showed the results those social skills can have effect on aggression with respect to anger management wherein this study used correlational study with moderated regression data analysis from Hayes. (May Lia Elfina, Ria Rizki Utami, Latipun)

A 5-year longitudinal study looked at the developmental relationship between aggressive and prosocial behaviour. From the ages of seven to eleven, a longitudinal population sample of girls and boys (N = 1,334) was conducted to analyze the bidirectional cross-lagged linkages between aggressive and prosocial domains of behaviour. Aggressive behaviour examined one year predicted decreases in prosocial behaviour the following year, according to the findings. Prosocial behaviour, on the other hand, did not predict changes in aggressive behaviour the following year. However, they discovered that social preference, which is a measure of likability and acceptance among peers, predicted both aggressive and prosocial behaviour three years later. (Zimmer-Gembeck et al. 2005)

There are many researches separately conducted on Prosocial Behavior and Aggression and few indicating a cause-and-effect relationship between the two. Prosocial behaviour can be stated as a social skill

which might help in reducing the aggression effects in a person. With the support of the above literature, this study aims at finding a correlation between Prosocial behavior and Aggression in college going students.

Hypotheses

1. Prosocial behavior and Aggression will be negatively correlated in college going students.
2. There will be no difference in mean scores w.r.t Prosocial behaviour of college going males and females.
3. There will be no difference in mean scores w.r.t Aggression of college going males and females.

Research Methodology:

Participants:

A random sample of total 102 people was collected from college going students, aged 18 to 25, in India. There were no participants who refused to take part in the study or failed to complete the questionnaire due to the survey design where participants were required to answer all the questions.

Measure

The self-report questionnaire was employed for data collection of this research purpose. 'Google Forms' was used for the same purpose. Two different scales were used for assessing Prosocial behaviour and Aggression i.e., Prosocialness scale and Aggression Questionnaire respectively.

Prosocialness scale (Caprara et. al, 2005)

Caprara et al. established the prosocialness scale in 2005 to assess prosocial behaviour in adults. It's a 16-item scale with a developed to examine individual differences in general adults' tendencies to act in the best interests of others, and it's been proven useful in various research in different countries. Participants rated their prosocial conduct tendencies (1 = never/almost never true; 2 = occasionally true; 3 = sometimes true; 4 = often true; 5 = almost always/always true). The items indicate behaviours and sentiments that might be linked to one of four types of actions: sharing, assisting, caring for, and empathising with others' needs or desires. The overall score is determined by adding the entities together.

Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992)

The aggression questionnaire developed by Buss and Perry in 1992, consists of 29 items. A 5-point scale is used to describe how characteristic and uncharacteristic each of the statements are in describing self. The aggression scale consists of 4 factors- Physical aggression, Hostility, Anger and Verbal aggression. The total score is obtained by summing up the factor scores.

Procedure

Participants from various cities were provided a link to an online Google form that contained basic information about the study. The participant's agreement was signified by clicking on the form link, which directed the informed participants to the survey, which included the Prosocial Behavior and Aggression Questionnaire. A single Google form comprised 49 questions that were distributed to college students. The responses were analysed and kept track of. SPSS was used to calculate each participant's total score on both scales (for comparative analysis).

Data Analysis

The averages and standard deviations of male and female participants' scores were determined. A t test was used to determine the significance of the difference between the means of the scores of the two gender groups (male and female). Item analysis was used to look at specific items that indicated the participants' prosociality and aggressiveness. Graphs were plotted for qualitative analysis.

Results and Discussion

The primary goal of this research is to see if there is a link between prosocial behaviour and aggression among college students. This study looks at the disparities between males and females in terms of prosocial behaviour and aggression. The significance of variations in scores between males and females in relation to prosocial behaviour and aggression was assessed using a t-test.

TABLE 1: Mean, standard deviation and t value for both the gender groups according to prosocial behaviour.

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	t value
Males	59.66	9.26	2.42
Females	64.63	9.03	

$p > 0.05$

In terms of prosocial behaviour, Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for males and females. There is no statistically significant difference between male and female mean scores. The t value of 2.422 is not significant. In conclusion, it is clear that there is no difference in the prosocial behaviour of college students.

TABLE 2: Mean, standard deviation and t value for both the gender groups according to aggression.

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	t value
Males	73.62	17.90	0.36
Females	72.30	15.27	

p>0.01

In terms of aggression, Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for males and females. There is no statistically significant difference between male and female mean scores. The t value of -0.360 is not significant. In conclusion, it is clear that there is no difference in the prosocial behaviour of college students.

GRAPH 1: Representation of mean scores of males and females

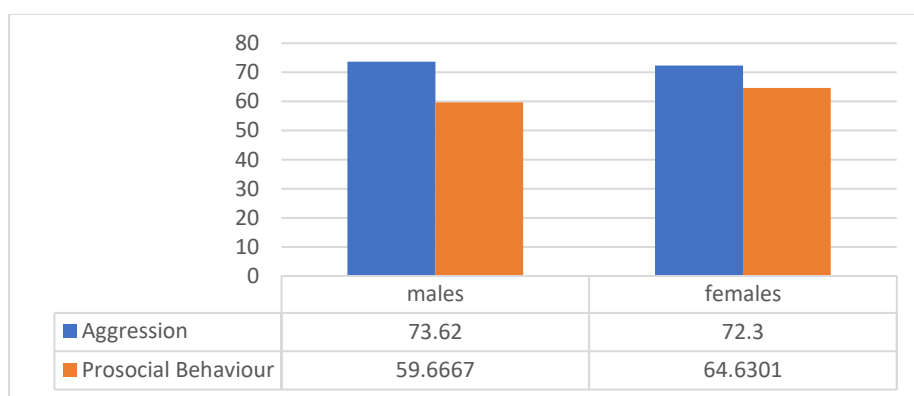


TABLE 3: Summary Table showing Pearson’s Product moment correlation coefficient relationship between Prosocial Behavior, aggression and its aspects

**p<0.01

	Aggression	Prosocial behaviour	Anger	Hostility	Verbal aggression	Physical Aggression
Aggression	1.00	-0.017	-0.030	-0.072	0.125	0.102
Prosocial Behaviour	-0.017	1.00	-0.077	-0.153	-0.068	0.001
Anger	-0.030	-0.077	1.00	0.58	0.49	0.70
Hostility	0.072	-0.153	0.58**	1.00	0.407**	0.518**
Verbal Aggression	0.125	-0.068	0.49**	0.407**	1.00	0.414**
Physical Aggression	0.102	0.001	0.70**	0.518**	0.414**	1.00

Table 3 indicates the correlation between prosocial behaviour and aggression. There is a negative correlation between both the components; although it’s not significant ($r=-0.17ns$).

Correlation between Prosocial behaviour and the facets of Aggression (i.e., Anger, Hostility, Verbal Aggression and Physical Aggression) is also studied. Correlation is calculated at 0.01 significance level (2-tailed). A negative correlation is seen between these facets though they are not significant.

	Sum of square	df	Mean Square	F	R	R ²	β	t
Regression	19.45	01	19.45	97.65**	0.70	0.49	0.70	9.88**
Residual	19.92	100	0.20					
Total	39.37	101						

Physical Aggression) is also studied. Correlation is calculated at 0.01 significance level (2-tailed). A negative correlation is seen between these facets though they are not significant.

Table 4: Summary of simple regression analysis with anger and physical aggression as the dependent variable. Simple regression was carried out to find out if anger could be significant predictor of physical aggression. Anger contributes 49% variance to physical aggression $F(1,100) = 97.65, p < 0.01$. Beta weight of anger in explaining physical aggression was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.70, t = 9.88, p < 0.01$).

Early research by Ersan (2019) suggested that Expressions of anger indirectly predicted both physical aggression ($\beta = .14, p < .01$) and relational aggression ($\beta = .10, p < .01$) through emotion regulation significantly. The emotion regulation has the full mediator role in the relation between anger, physical, and relational aggression. Given the foregoing statistics, it is obvious that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female college students' mean scores for prosocial behaviour and aggression. As a result, the second and third hypotheses are supported. Despite the fact that there are stereotypes about gender disparities in behaviour when it comes to the two components, this study found no significant differences. The major goal of the study, which was the first hypothesis, that prosocial behaviour and aggression are negatively correlated, is also validated, however the correlation is not significant ($r = -0.017, p = 0.864$). As a result, all three hypotheses are justified. Additional analysis was done where correlation between Prosocial behaviour and facets of Aggression was studied. The facets of Aggression include Anger ($r = -0.077, p = 0.455$), Hostility ($r = -0.153, p = 0.124$), Verbal Aggression ($r = -0.068, p = 0.497$) and Physical Aggression ($r = 0.001, p = 0.989$). Though a negative correlation was seen between these facets, it was not significant.

Conclusion

There are several transitions from adolescence to maturity, as previously stated. Prosocial behaviour is one of the markers of one's readiness to take charge of one's life. If prosocial behaviour is practised early in life, it may be advantageous later in life. Aside from these shifts, the transition is characterised by aggressive behaviour. These changes in behaviour can also be traced back to a person's upbringing by their parents. Allen et al. (2006) found that youth are particularly vulnerable to peer effects when their social standing is at jeopardy, highlighting the importance of investigating peer influences during times of transition and uncertainty. Parenting is critical in all of these processes. Human aggressiveness is defined as any behaviour directed against another person and carried out with the immediate purpose to hurt them. Many video games, particularly shooter games, involve a significant degree of explicit and justifiable violence (Haninger and Thompson, 2004). According to a study, playing violent video games has an impact on the gamer's actual life; for example, encountering hostility in video games linked to aggressive behaviour in the real world (Gentile and Gentile, 2007). It is also said that role playing would have an impact on aggression due to the effect of empathy training. Various aspects relating to aggression and prosocial behaviour were investigated in this research study, and it was discovered that there is a negative correlation between the two variables, i.e., if there is a greater inclination toward prosocial behaviour, anger is reduced. Aggression involves not only anger as a cause, but also bullying and other negative behaviours that can be lessened if a person engages in altruistic behaviours.

Limitations

- 1) There were very fewer male participants included in the study compared to the female participant count.
- 2) The study's population is fairly confined to those with a good familial history, and it does not look into all of the components that go into it.
- 3) This research can also be studied in an experimental research design to get more clarifications regarding the results.
- 4) Though the hypotheses are proven, they are non-significant. A significant negative relationship can also be found if the sample size is increased.

Hence, the study needs further research for more accurate results.

References

- Albert D. Farrell, Erin L. Thompson, Krista R. Mehari, Dimensions of Peer Influences and Their Relationship to Adolescents' Aggression, Other Problem Behaviors and Prosocial Behavior, DOI 10.1007/s10964-016-0601-4
- Ceyhun Ersan, Physical aggression, relational aggression and anger in preschool children: The mediating role of emotion regulation (2019), The Journal of General Psychology, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.2019.1609>
- Fauzia Tariq & Dr. Irum Naqvi, Relationship between Personality Traits and Prosocial Behavior among Adolescents, FOUNDATION UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY (2020) DOI 10.33897/fujp.v4i2.79

- GIAN VITTORIO CAPRARA and CONCETTA PASTORELLI, Early emotional instability, prosocial behaviour, and aggression: some methodological aspects, *European Journal of Personality*, Vol. 7, 19-36 (1993)
- G.V. Caprara¹, P. Steca², A. Zelli³, and C. Capanna¹, A New Scale for Measuring Adults' Prosocialness, *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* · January 2005, DOI: 10.1027/1015-5759.21.2.77
- Jolien Van der Graaff, Gustavo Carlo, Elisabetta Crocetti, Hans M. Koot, Susan Branje, Prosocial Behavior in Adolescence: Gender Differences in Development and Links with Empathy, *J Youth Adolescence* (2018) 47:1086–1099 DOI 10.1007/s10964-017-0786-1
- May Lia Elfina, Ria Rizki Utami, Latipun, The Effect of Anger Management on Aggression with Social Skills as a Moderating Variable, DOI: 10.25215/0604.104
- Nancy Eisenberg and Paul A. Miller, Arizona State University, The Relation of Empathy to Prosocial and Related Behaviors, DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.101.1.91
- Pamela Orpinas, Ralph Frankowski, The Aggression Scale: A Self-Report Measure of Aggressive Behavior for Young Adolescents, *The Journal of Early Adolescence* · February 2001, DOI: 10.1177/0272431601021001003
- RONALD J. IANNOTTI, Effect of Role-Taking Experiences on Role Taking, Empathy, Altruism, and Aggression, *Developmental Psychology*, 1978. Vol. 14