



The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Aggression among Selected College Students undergoing Online Learning in the Philippines

Frederick Edward T. Fabella, Ph.D.
FEU Roosevelt, Cainta, Rizal, Philippines
DOI: 10.47760/cognizance.2022.v02i04.001

Abstract: This study sought to explore the relationship between self-esteem and aggression levels of 3rd year college students undergoing online learning from home. One section of 34 students was selected randomly from a government institution, while one section of 33 students was similarly selected from a private institution. To measure self-esteem, the Sorensen Self-Esteem Test was used. On the other hand, the Aggression Questionnaire by Buss and Perry was used to assess the respondents' level of aggression. The responses were obtained through Google Forms. The results of this study indicate that there is a statistically significant inverse correlation between self-esteem and aggression of the respondents. The lower the self-esteem, the higher the level of aggression.

Introduction

In the Philippines, face to face classes for all levels of students were disallowed since the beginning of the COVID-19 global pandemic lockdown in 2020 ^[1]. It is only in 2022 when the government began to allow on a limited basis the reopening of face to face learning. Students have thus been forced to continue their studies at home through online learning effectively isolating them from their classmates and peers approximately for the past 2 years now.

This current study aims to look at the levels of self-esteem and aggression of college students who are still attending online classes from home.

Over a decade ago, a fascinating debate about whether it was low self-esteem or high self-esteem that contributed to an individual's level of aggression ^[2]. In one study, the authors state that aggressive people normally have high self-esteem ^[3]. Self-esteem and narcissism were also found to be positively interrelated ^[4]. Furthermore, narcissistic individuals are said to be prone to aggression when there are threats to their egos ^[5].

Aggression can mean a variety of behaviors that may cause harm to yourself, other people or objects. It may also take the form of harming someone physically or psychologically [6].

Respondents for this study were taken from a government college in the province of Rizal and a private college in Metro Manila.

The author sought to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the levels of self-esteem and aggression of students from the government and private colleges?
- (2) Is there a significant difference between the self-esteem and aggression levels of students from the government and private colleges?
- (3) Is there a significant relationship between respondents' levels of self-esteem and aggression?

Methodology

One 3rd year college section of 34 students was selected randomly from the government institution, while one 3rd year college section of 33 students was similarly selected from the private institution. The government college group consisted of 14 males and 20 females with a mean age of 20.85. The private college group was composed of 5 males and 28 females with a mean age of 22.86.

To measure self-esteem, the Sorensen Self-Esteem Test was used [7]. This instrument has 50 items consisting of statements to which the respondent simply responds whether they are true. In this test, the higher the score, the lower the self-esteem of the respondent.

On the other hand, the Aggression Questionnaire by Buss and Perry [8] was used to assess the respondents' level of aggression. This is a Likert style instrument with 29 items that measures physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. The higher the score obtained the higher the level of the respondent's aggression.

The 2 questionnaires were then administered through Google Forms.

The following are tables that show the calculated values.

Results

Table 1: Comparison of the Respondents' Level of Self-Esteem

	Government College	Private College
N	34	33
Mean	30.294117647059	31.6666666666667
Standard Deviation	9.2163538	9.967656
Welch's t-test:		
t = 0.5848		
df = 64		
standard error of difference = 2.347		
The two-tailed P value equals 0.5608		
By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.		

Table 2: Comparison of the Respondents' Level of Aggression

	Government College	Private College
N	34	33
Mean	84.588235294118	87.181818181818
Standard Deviation	15.271518	18.475414
Welch's t-test:		
t = 0.6253		
df = 62		
standard error of difference = 4.148		
The two-tailed P value equals 0.5341		
By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.		

Table 3: Relationship between Self-Esteem and Aggression for Government College Respondents

X Values $\Sigma = 1030$ Mean = 30.294 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 2803.059$	Y Values $\Sigma = 2876$ Mean = 84.588 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 7696.235$	X and Y Combined N = 34 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 2586.118$
Pearson r:		
R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - Mx)(Y - My))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = 2586.118 / \sqrt{(2803.059)(7696.235)} = 0.5568$		
The P-Value is .000626. The result is significant at $p < .05$.		

Table 4: Relationship between Self-Esteem and Aggression for Private College Respondents

X Values $\Sigma = 1045$ Mean = 31.667 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 3179.333$	Y Values $\Sigma = 2877$ Mean = 87.182 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 10922.909$	X and Y Combined N = 33 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 3577$
Pearson r:		
R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - Mx)(Y - My))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = 3577 / \sqrt{(3179.333)(10922.909)} = 0.607$		
The P-Value is .00018. The result is significant at $p < .05$.		

Table 5: Relationship between Self-Esteem and Aggression for Government and Private Colleges Combined

<p>X Values $\Sigma = 2075$ Mean = 30.97 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 6013.94$</p>	<p>Y Values $\Sigma = 5753$ Mean = 85.866 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 18731.791$</p>	<p>X and Y Combined N = 67 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 6222.731$</p>
<p>Pearson r:</p> <p>R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - Mx)(Y - My))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = 6222.731 / \sqrt{(6013.94)(18731.791)} = 0.5863$</p> <p>The P-Value is < .00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$.</p>		

Discussion

Looking at the results in Table 1, no significant difference was found between the self-esteem levels of college students studying in a government school and those studying in a private school. Similarly, no significant difference was established between the aggression levels of college students studying in a government school and those studying in a private school in Table 2.

However, when the relationship between self-esteem scores and aggression scores is considered, Table 3 shows that there is a significant positive correlation for government college students. The same was found for private college students in Table 4. When combining all the respondents from both institutions, a significant positive correlation between self-esteem scores and aggression scores was obtained. It is important to note that the instrument used to measure self-esteem states that the higher the score, the lower the self-esteem. It can therefore be concluded that for the respondents of this study, as their self-esteem decreases their aggression increases.

The findings are consistent with a study done in 2005, which found that low self-esteem is related to hostility and anger ^[9]. Another study found that students with low self-concept in achievement domains are expected to aggress at school compared to those with high self-concept ^[10]. In a related research, it was observed that the effect of self-esteem on aggression was unrelated to narcissism ^[11]. And in a meta-analysis of 52 studies involving a combined

number of 82,358 Chinese student respondents, a medium negative correlation was found between self-esteem and aggression ^[12].

It is of interest that despite the respondents being unable to attend face-to-face classes, it would appear that aggression is still felt by them.

The author recommends further studies that compare the self-esteem and aggression levels of students who are attending face-to-face classes and those in an online learning program from home.

References

- [1]. De Guzman, C. (2021). *The Philippines Still Hasn't Fully Reopened Its Schools Because of COVID-19. What Is This Doing to Children?* Time. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://time.com/6124045/school-closures-covid-education-philippines/>
- [2]. Ostrowsky, M. (2010). *Are violent people more likely to have low self-esteem or high self-esteem.* Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2009.08.004>
- [3]. Baumeister, R. F., Bushman, B. J., & Campbell, W. K. (2000). *Self-esteem, narcissism, and aggression: Does violence ...* Self-Esteem, Narcissism, and Aggression: Does Violence Result From Low Self-Esteem or From Threatened Egotism? Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8721.00053>
- [4]. Barry, C. T., Grafeman, S. J., Adler, K. K., & Pickard, J. D. (2007, February 21). *The relations among narcissism, self-esteem, and delinquency in a sample of at-risk adolescents.* Journal of Adolescence. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0140197107000024>
- [5]. Thomaes S;Bushman BJ;Orobio de Castro B;Cohen GL;Denissen JJ; (2009). *Reducing narcissistic aggression by buttressing self-esteem: An experimental field study.* Psychological science. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19906123/>
- [6]. Cherry, K. (2021). *What Is Aggression?* Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-aggression-2794818>
- [7]. Sorensen, M. J. (2006). *Sorensen Self-Esteem Test.* Retrieved April 13, 2022, from https://webassets.aihec.org/BehavioralHealth/Sorensen_Self-Esteem_Test.pdf
- [8]. Buss, A.H., & Perry, M. (1992). *The Aggression Questionnaire.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63, 452-459.
- [9]. D'zurilla, T., Chang, E., & Sanna, L. (2005). *Self-esteem and social problem solving as predictors of aggression in college students: Semantic scholar.* undefined. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/SELF-ESTEEM-AND-SOCIAL-PROBLEM-SOLVING-AS-OF-IN-D%27zurilla-Chang/e9001e3b2497b0cc16d59ebf479c459c2b4e91bd>
- [10]. Taylor, L., Malanchuk, O., & Davis-Kean, P. (2007). *Self-esteem, academic self-concept, and aggression at school.* Aggressive behavior. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17441013/>
- [11]. Donnellan, M. B., Trzesniewski, K., Robbins, R., Moffitt, T., & Caspi, A. (2005). *Low self-esteem is related to aggression, antisocial behavior ... - sage publications inc.* Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2005.01535.x>
- [12]. Teng, Z., Liu, Y., & Guo, C. (2015, January 13). *A meta-analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and aggression among Chinese students.* Aggression and Violent Behavior. Retrieved April 13, 2022, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1359178915000063>