

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND AGGRESSION

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Abstract: Whether high or low, self-esteem is associated with increased aggression remains a topic of debate. The majority have argued that aggression is linked to low self-esteem, though this stance has been disputed by others. Although the concept of self-esteem has been extensively researched as it has evolved in psychology, it has not been widely used among criminology to predict aggressive behavior. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between aggression and self-esteem among adolescents, and to examine whether inmate's self-esteem level predict different type of aggression.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents play a very important role in society. The youth in their adolescent age goes through various changes and varied experiences which are primarily psychological in nature. The most common phenomenon observed in the youths is aggression. Many studies have been done to understand aggression and other factors associated with it. It is found that in adolescent age youths face aggression due to self-esteem.

1. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has received considerable attention in both academic and popular circles (Murk,1999). There has been a great deal of research into self-esteem and there continues to be considerable debate as to whether high self-esteem is essential, of little consequence or even detrimental to human wellbeing. Despite this level of attention, there has been a lack of consensus about the definition of self-esteem. The most straight forward definition of self-esteem is 'an evolution of one self' (Zeigler-Hill & Jordan, 2010). However, the exact nature of this evolution continues to be disputed. Issues includes whether self-esteem should be understood as a state or a trait, whether it is based on affective or cognitive processes, whether it is global or domain specific, and whether implicit and explicit self-esteem are two different form of self-esteem. Objective does not permit a discussion of all these issues here, however the questions is whether self-esteem is best understood as global or a domain specific construct, and whether implicit and explicit self-esteem are two distinct type of self-esteem.

2. Theoretical Definitions

Self-esteem is continually revealing itself under different definitions and implications. Gail McEachron (1993) defines self-esteem as the 'judgment one makes about their self-concept.' Self-concept- refers to the attribute one has. This definition was supported by the work of Dr Morris Rosenberg who defines self-esteem as 'attitude one hold toward themselves as an object. In short Dr Morris believed that self-esteem was measured via assessing a subject's attitude about themselves as a thing. On the other hand, a second definition of self-esteem is the ratio of one's success over their pretensions or failure. James Williams work to explain, this definition

of self-esteem requires the researcher to define 'success'. For the purpose of this paper we will stick to Williams definition of Success but the failure must also be in an area of equal importance to subject. Therefore, the definition can be understood as the ratio of success of importance to failure of equal importance

3. Operational definitions

Despite the numerous theoretical definitions of self-esteem there is only a minute number of operational definitions used today. The most common is Rosenberg self-esteem scale. This scale measures self-esteem via survey. Every answer on the survey is assigned a point value with more points being rewarded for answers demonstrating high self-esteem and vice versa. The subjects survey is scored and the subject is placed into the category.

The operational definitions used today are less sophisticated. It employs the use of an interview that asks similar questions that would be used on a self-esteem survey. While conducting the research the researcher is observing the nonverbal cues such as eye-contact, smiling, and hand writing. The researcher counts the number of times they observe these to determine self-esteem (Jackson 1984).

4. Global vs. Domain Specific Self-Esteem

Global self-esteem can be defined as an individual's positive or negative attitude towards the self as a totality (Rosenberg 1995). The majority of studies into self-esteem have treated it as a global construct, and global self-esteem has been found to be related to many and diverse Outcome (salmivalli 2001). For example- low self-esteem has been found to predict depression, eating problem and mental health. While high self-esteem has been shown to predict happiness, to help buffers against negative feedback and to help to protect against depressive symptoms in people with chronic illness. Swann et.al. 2007 argued that the specificity matching principle means that global self-esteem is unlikely to predict specific behaviors. The principle state that in natural environment, most outcomes are caused by multiple factors which may interference with each other, and to compensate for this, the specificity of predictors and criteria should be matched. In study of American school children Haynes 1990- found that behavioral conduct self-esteem was a significant predictor of classroom behavioral, group participation and attitude towards authority. Wild et al. 2004 found that family self-esteem but not peer, school, body or global self-esteem was independently associated with suicidal ideation and attempts.

5. Implicit vs. Explicit Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has traditionally been assessed using self-report measures, which are arguably an appropriate means of assessing an individual's subjective experience or view of (Zeigler-Hill & Jordan, 2010). However, self-report measures rely on respondents providing an accurate report of their views, as well as being able consciously to assess all aspect of their self-esteem, and it may be that neither of these assumptions is true. Johnson 1997 notes that self-esteem questionnaires are very sensitive to various form of response bias and related psychological defenses, while Zeigler-Hill and Johnson (2010) observe that self-report measures of self-esteem correlate with measures of impression management, suggesting that individuals tend to provide responses in order to present a particular image or to appear more socially desirable.

II. AGGRESSION

Aggression is generally defined as any behavior that is intended to harm another person who does not want to be harmed (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Aggression is an external behavior that you can see. Aggression is not an emotion that occurs inside a person, such

as an angry feeling. Aggression is not a thought inside someone's brain, such as mentally rehearsing a murder. Aggression is intent to hurt.

In addition, not all the intention that hurt others are aggressive behavior. Eg- dentist might intentionally give a patient a shot of Novocain, but the goal is to help rather than to hurt the patient.

1) Different forms of Aggression

Forms of aggression we meant how the aggression is expressed, such as Physical vs. Verbal, Direct vs. Indirect and Active vs. Passive (Buss, 1961).

Physical Aggression involve harming others physically i.e. hitting. Kicking etc. Verbal aggression involves harming others with words i.e. yelling, screaming, etc. In Direct aggression the victim is physically present. With Indirect aggression the victim is absent. For example- physical aggression can be called as direct aggression i.e. hitting. And indirect aggression is destroying another person's property when he/ she are not looking. The form of aggression can be active or passive. With active aggression, the aggressor responds in a harmful manner i.e. hitting. With passive aggression, the aggressor fails to respond in harmful manner.

2) Low Global Self-Esteem and Aggression

Historically, low self-esteem has often been viewed as playing an important role in aggressive behavior. Several theories as to why there may be a relationship between low self-esteem and aggression have been proposed. It has been suggested that aggression may provide individuals with low self-esteem with an increased sense of power and independence that aggression may serve as attention seeking behavior which enhances self-esteem (Ostrowsky, 2009).

In recent systematic review, walker and Bright (2009) found that 12 of 19 studies identified showed a relationship between low self-esteem and aggression. One of the most robust studies to show a relationship between low self-esteem and aggression conducted by Donellan et al. 2005. They conducted two cross-sectional studies and one longitudinal studies with children and teenagers in America and New Zealand, and found a strong relation between self-esteem and aggression, delinquency and anti-social behavior.

3) Aggression and Implicit Self-Esteem

As discussed earlier, some studies have found that implicit self-esteem relates to variables in much the same way as explicit self-esteem, but other studies have found that implicit and explicit self-esteem relate to variables in different way. It is therefore difficult to hypothesize about how implicit self-esteem might relate to aggression. In what appears to be the only directly relevant study, Sandstorm & Jordan 2008 found no association between children's implicit self-esteem and teacher's reports of aggression. This suggested that there is no direct relation between implicit self-esteem and aggression.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar and Kumar (2002) found no significant difference in aggression among students at different levels of self-esteem. Student studying in private institution exhibit higher aggression score as compare to student studying in government schools. Level of self-esteem and institution type did not interact significantly with regard to their combined influence on aggression among senior secondary school students. Result revealed that student studying in science stream had significantly high mean aggression score than

students of arts stream. They also found that level of self-esteem and stream did not interact significantly with regard to their combined influence on aggression among senior secondary school.

Wild et al. (2004) found that family self-esteem, but not peer, school, body, sport or global self-esteem was independently associated with Aggression'.

Donnellan, M. B. Low self-esteem is related to aggression, antisocial behavior, and delinquency

Trzesniewski et al. (2006) found that adolescent with low self-esteem grew up to have more criminal convictions compared to adolescent with high self-esteem.

Kumar, R., Lal, R., & Bhuchar, V. Impact of social support in relation to self-esteem and aggression among adolescents.

IV CONCLUSION

Viewed against this backdrop, it can be concluded that aggression and its relation with one's self-esteem has been studied extensively in varied context on different population. However, results are not yet conclusive for adolescents. It necessitates for a rigorous methodological research exclusive for the adolescents to understand the dynamics of their self-esteem and aggression; a research which considers all the possible antecedents as contributing factors to this dynamic interplay. Findings of such study would have implications in several areas of human functioning.

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