

# Why Adolescents Behave Aggressively at Higher Secondary Level

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**Abstract:** *In this study it critically examines the aggressive behavior of adolescent students at the higher secondary level, focusing on its impact on their overall adjustment in academic and social settings. Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage characterized by emotional, psychological, and social changes, often leading to aggressive tendencies that may affect interpersonal relationships and academic performance. The English word adolescence comes from the Latin word adolescere which means to grow to maturity. It is that span of years during which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood mentally, emotionally, socially and physically. It is the period of onset of puberty to the age of maturity. It is a period of transition when changes of attitude and behaviour are most rapid. Hence, Stanley Halls calls this the period of great stress and strain, storm and strife. But Holling Worth calls this the period of temporary insanity. The study explores various factors contributing to aggressive behavior, including family environment, peer influence, and school dynamics. It also investigates the coping mechanisms and adjustment strategies employed by students to manage their aggression constructively. The first hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) states that there is no significant difference in the aggressive behavior of adolescent students based on gender. The results will provide valuable insights into the causes and consequences of aggression among adolescents, offering recommendations for educators, parents, and policymakers to develop effective intervention strategies that promote positive behavior, emotional well being, and a supportive learning environment.*

**Keywords:** Aggressive, Behavior, Adolescent, Adjustment, Higher Secondary Level

## 1. Introduction

The term aggression comes from the Latin word “Aggressio” which means “attack” (Etymology Dictionary). Various researchers have defined the term aggression in their own way. Brown (1997) defines aggression as “the use of power by one or more people intentionally to harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or other”. Baron and Byrne (1997) define aggression “as a behavior directed towards the goal of harming another living being.” Similarly, Anderson (2002) defines aggression as a behavior, which causes intentional harm to another person. A perusal of these definitions lead us to conclude that aggression is a behavior, which indulges a person to harm others for own benefit to fulfill any desire. It refers to behavior, which intends to harm and injure others either verbally or physically. Overt aggression is a common type of aggression observed among adolescents, which is apparent and outward confrontational acts manifested physically and verbally, such as fighting and shouting. It has become a major public health concern, as it results in detrimental health impacts like injury, mental health, and social problems. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant emotional, psychological, and social transitions. During this period, students at the higher secondary level often experience challenges in managing their emotions, which may manifest as aggressive behavior. Aggression in adolescents can take various forms, including verbal, physical, and relational aggression, and it can significantly impact their academic performance, peer relationships, and overall adjustment in school and society. Understanding the factors contributing to aggressive behavior, such as family dynamics, peer influence, school environment, and psychological well-being, is essential for fostering a supportive educational atmosphere. Effective adjustment is crucial for adolescent students to cope with academic pressures, social expectations, and personal growth. The ability to regulate emotions, develop healthy

interpersonal relationships, and adopt constructive coping strategies plays a vital role in their overall well-being. However, the extent to which students can adjust varies based on individual differences and external influences. A critical study of adolescent aggression and its impact on adjustment is necessary to identify underlying causes, assess behavioral patterns, and explore effective interventions. This research aims to examine the aggressive behavior of adolescent students at the higher secondary level and its relationship with their adjustment in academic and social settings. By analyzing the contributing factors, gender differences, and coping mechanisms, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers. The results will help in developing strategies that promote emotional regulation, positive behavior, and a conducive learning environment, ultimately supporting students in achieving personal and academic success. Aggression is an inherent aspect of human social behavior that, together with motor and visceral expressions, is associated with actions aimed at achieving a specific objective or directed towards threatening stimuli with the intent to inflict harm, whether for offensive or defensive purposes (Rasia-Filho et al., 2008), thereby serving several vital functions including securing resources such as food and territory, establishing social hierarchies, and competing with rivals to ensure reproductive opportunities (Krämer et al., 2008). Reactive aggression elicited in social interactions is highly dependent on inhibitory control, particularly among individuals with high trait aggressiveness, significantly influencing levels of reciprocal violence (Anderson et al., 2008a; Krämer et al., 2007), which are ultimately shaped by cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors (Koch et al., 2024). Specifically, aggression has been strongly linked to hostile perceptions of others, further amplified by relational vulnerabilities, which predispose individuals to heightened anger, independently of whether negative emotions manifest as enduring traits or temporary states (Burt et al., 2009; Maalouf et al., 2022). Interestingly, research on animal behavior suggests that certain forms of aggression may be

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inherently rewarding, a phenomenon mediated by dopaminergic systems that mirror those in reward-processing mechanisms identified in humans (Couppis & Kennedy, 2008). In this sense, animals invest considerable energy in performing aggressive actions and appear to derive pleasure from such encounters (Fish et al., 2002), so it is plausible to state that aggressive behavior in human populations may also have intrinsically rewarding qualities.

Aggression is highly prevalent among adolescents but generally declines in young adulthood, with childhood adversities related to violence exposure and mental health issues playing a significant role in the development of aggressive behavior (Huesmann et al., 2021; Salo et al., 2022; Vivar et al., 2014). The prevalence of violence among youth represents a significant public health crisis in society, reflecting deep-rooted issues related to alienation, social status, family disruption, and community trauma, which perpetuate fear and instability (Bushman et al., 2016). Social sources of influence shape behavior by allowing individuals to acquire knowledge about their environments and the statuses of others through observation, leading to strategic modulation of actions in response to interpersonal and contextual dynamics (Bandura, 1977; Desjardins et al., 2012; Splan & Forbes, 2022). This emphasizes that aggression should be viewed as a continuum rather than a discrete category (Isen et al., 2022).

Because of its pervasive power as a stimulus, digital media has the potential to exert a significant influence in the learning and emergence of violent behavior. For example, exposure to violent content in digital media, particularly through video games, can shape perceptions of aggression as normative or acceptable, potentially desensitizing young viewers to violence and increasing the likelihood that they will engage in aggressive behavior in their real-world interactions (Anderson et al., 2007; Delhove & Greitemeyer, 2021; Hogan & Strasburger, 2020; Ybarra et al., 2022). Adolescents, whose cognitive and emotional regulatory systems are still maturing and who have not yet fully developed their identities and their moral and ethical values, may be particularly vulnerable to these influences, as their ability to critically evaluate and filter violent content is still developing (Dumontheil, 2014; Fleming, 2005; Kroger et al., 2010; Sebastian et al., 2008; Wong et al., 2010). In fact, this period is marked by diminished self-control, with adolescents exhibiting heightened sensitivity to environmental cues, leading to stronger emotional reactivity and a limited capacity to regulate their behavioral responses, changes that are linked to ongoing developments in brain connectivity, particularly within the limbic system (Casey, 2015). Violent video games (VVGs) can be defined as digital games that involve scenarios where players engage in aggressive behaviors, such as physical combat, the use of weapons, or the performance of harmful actions against other characters. Although VVGs have been a central focus in the debate regarding their potential link to aggressive behavior in adolescents, this issue remains unresolved, with mixed findings in the recent literature. Some studies have shown no clear correlations between VVG exposure and increased aggression (Ferguson, 2015; Kühn et al., 2019), while other research suggests that certain individual, contextual, and social variables may influence (or be influenced by) these effects (Anderson &

Bushman, 2001; Brockmyer, 2022; Orozco-Marín et al., 2024; Teng et al., 2019), including moral disengagement (the justification of aggression by detaching actions from moral standards), desensitization (reduced emotional responses due to repeated exposure), empathy (the ability to recognize and experience the feelings of others), or prosocial behavior (diminished helpfulness or cooperation), to name a few. Furthermore, advances in technology and distribution methods have increased access to and use of VVGs, but regulatory systems have not grown in parallel, raising concerns about their effectiveness in protecting younger audiences from inappropriate content (Olejarnik & Romano, 2023).

Considering the progressive increase in the consumption of violent digital content among adolescents, especially video games, and the significant potential implications this may entail, the objective of this narrative review is to examine the relationship between VVGs and aggressive behavior within the context of this population. In order to provide a comprehensive perspective, the review addresses: (i) VVG exposure through the lens of relevant theoretical approaches, specifically Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the General Aggression Model (GAM); (ii) the biological determinants of aggressive behavior, including neurophysiological correlates and the potential modulatory role of the gut microbiome; and (iii) current evidence on the influence of VVG exposure on adolescent aggression. Through this framework, we seek to establish a descriptive synthesis of the current state of knowledge, clarifying interrelations, highlighting critical aspects for future research, and facilitating an understanding of the diverse influences associated with this topic. This includes emerging areas for which there is very limited evidence (e.g., the potential involvement of the gut microbiome) and contradictory findings on the extent to which exposure to VVGs significantly impacts adolescent aggression. In addition, this review discusses how VVG exposure might intersect with other dynamics, such as bullying and mental health, potentially escalating aggression and violent outcomes.

## 2. Literature Review

Although a number of studies have been conducted in India to assess aggressive behavior of adolescents in relation to various demographic variables. However, the present investigators describe a few most relevant studies related with the area. Malviya (1968) conducted a study on aggression and found that males are more aggressive than females. Goyal and Gupta (2009) studied the impact of modernization on aggression and found significant gender difference. Similarly, Kumar (2011) studied aggression and found significant difference in aggressive attitude in relation to self-esteem, gender, and family. Rana (2011) studied aggression in relation to emotional competence and found no impact of the variable on aggression. Sangwan (2011) studied aggression in relation to, life satisfaction, depression and well-being in rural and urban teenager boys and found that urban boys are significantly higher on aggression in comparison to rural boys. Similarly, Devi (2012) and Kumar (2012) studied aggression and found gender to be playing an important role in determining aggression. Similar finding were attained by Kumar and Malik (2012) and Sood (2012).

A perusal of these studies reveal that aggression has been studied Kumar (2011), Rana (2011), Sangwan (2011) in relation to various cognitive variables studies (self-esteem, emotional competence, and depression self-concept). A few researchers Malviya (1968), Goyal and Gupta (2009), Devi (2012), Kumar (2012), Kumar and Malik (2012) and Sood (2012) have also studied aggression in relation to various demographic variables, like gender, religion, place of living, educational qualification of father and educational of qualification mother, occupation of father and occupation of mother, economic status etc. The present study is aimed at investigating the impact of certain demographics variables (gender, religion, place of living, educational qualification of father and educational qualification of mother, occupation of father and occupation of mother, and economic status) on aggression among Higher secondary school students. Briefly the objectives of the present study are:

- 1) To find out the level of aggression among Higher secondary school students.
- 2) To find out the level of aggression among Higher secondary school students in relation to various demographic variables like gender, religion, place of living, educational qualification of father and educational qualification mother, occupation of father and occupation of mother, and economic status.

### 3. Methodology

In the present study, all Higher secondary level students comprise the population of the study. Even though it is not possible to collect all the data on the population, survey method has been applied. The data has been collected on 311 Higher secondary school students belonging to Kottayam district only. Pre-tested surveys were distributed to measure students' aggression, biological, psychological, and social factors.

#### Objectives of Study

- 1) The study was carried out to identify the types, and the most important and common causes of students' aggressive behavior at secondary level
- 2) To explore teachers' perceptions about the possible solutions of the aggressive behavior of students at school.

#### Significance of the Study

The findings of the study has implication for teachers of secondary level in particular and for policy makers and readers in general to understand the reasons and causes of secondary school students' aggressive behavior at local level as well as the possible solutions for prevention and cure.

### 4. Result

Adolescence is a period of human life where it is very important to make sure that the youth has got the opportunity to mould their behaviour in such a way so that they can develop themselves for the nation. For become a good citizen of a nation it is a very important factor. After doing these experiments it reflects some ways to minimize the aggressive behaviour of the youths. In the school, teachers can played an important role in minimizing the aggressive behaviour and maximizing the positive behaviour among the students. This research has found some techniques, by following those the

teacher can manage emotions of the students in a positive manner. Teacher has a vital role in the process of minimizing the anger issues in students. From the experiments that conducted by the researcher it shows that to do some unique and playful techniques can help the students to control their aggression.

- 1) With the help of building rapport and understand the feeling of the students ones can help the students to minimize the aggressive behaviour of the students.
- 2) Story making, story-telling, various kind of games- these are some ways to lead the students thoughts/anger in a positive way.
- 3) Teacher can encourage the students to accept themselves and others as they or the person are and develop their self-image.
- 4) Teacher can help the students to learn the techniques of managing own problems.
- 5) Developing brotherhood within the students can help him/her to control their emotions.
- 6) Teacher can develop various strategies to help the youths to manage their emotions.
- 7) Teacher can help the students to increase the ability to accept own flaws.
- 8) Teacher should always use positive reinforcement while interact with the students.
- 9) Teacher always should try to make them realized by themselves how our behaviour can affect others, how painful and unacceptable behaviour it is.
- 10) Teacher should always ready to manage any kind of incidents regarding imbalance emotions.

### 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researcher can conclude that Aggression is a normal emotions of human being, the adolescence are not exceptional. There are some unique reasons behind the aggressive behaviour of the students. It may vary from one another. It's not a big deal that students have anger issues, and it reflects in their behaviour. But here, the teacher has some responsibility of direct the students in a proper way. For this purpose the researcher conducts some activities to see the effect of those activities on student's aggressive behaviours. The result of these activities has shown that with the help of proper guidance the teacher can minimize the aggressive behaviour of students in school as well as in the classroom. The researcher also involve parents of the students to make them aware of aggression issues.

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