

Aggression and Resilience: A Comparative Study among Adolescents Growing Up in Non-Intact and Intact Family

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Abstract: *This study was conducted to compare the aggression and resilience among adolescents growing up in non-intact family, i.e., who are raised by mothers alone; and adolescents growing up in intact family, i.e., who are raised by both the parents. The data was collected from 120 adolescents of various places in Thrissur district. Random sampling method was used in the data collection. The main tools used were Aggression Questionnaire and The Resilience Scale. The various statistical methods used were t-test and Pearson's correlation-coefficient. The results show a significant difference in resilience among adolescents in non-intact and intact families in which an adolescent growing up in intact family shows more resilience when compared to adolescents growing up in non-intact family. However, there is no significant difference in aggression between adolescents in non-intact and intact families. Also, resilience and aggression do not show any significant relationship.*

Keywords: Adolescents, Aggression, Resilience

1. Introduction

Adolescence can be viewed as the most important transition stage in an individual's life. It is the growing phase which determines the major aspects of one's personality. A period beginning with the onset of puberty and ending when individuals assume adult roles and responsibilities. According to WHO (World Health Organization, 2000), adolescence can be aptly defined as a period of growth in an individual's life after the individual passes from childhood to adulthood. These changes occur between 10 to 19 years.

Adolescence is a period of active growth and development in all aspects such as physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and social. The adolescents are bound to show variation during this period till the attainment of full maturity. Many adolescents present problems during this potentially disturbing period. Both parents and adolescents struggle between the adolescent's wanting independence and autonomy, at the same time still needs parental guidance.

Influence of Parental Presence and Family Type

Effective parenting plays a crucial role in the life of teenagers. Apart from the traditional norms of various parenting styles such as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglecting, the presence of both the parents is also important.

Non-intact Family: Refers to families in which father is absent in the home. The condition for the present study is those families in which the father works abroad and not living with the children at home.

Intact Family: Refers to families in which both biological parents are present in the home. There are many factors acting upon a teenager who lives with only one parent, that is, mother and whose father works abroad or a non-immigrant father. It is helpful to analyze an adolescent's

behavior in the absence of a father figure and to understand the role of mother on children during the absence of her spouse is helpful.

The major role is played by mother who primarily brings the child to grow into an individual. Even in the absence of father who may visit only for a month or two, once in a year, the care giver who is the mother takes the responsibility of a single but still a strong parent to nourish the child. The child lacks a father figure and many important values they need to receive only from a father.

When compared with other children who lives in an environment with both their parents are involved, they tend to receive more care, attention, support and a control from the part of the father figure which the mother may not be able to fulfill to a great extent. This difference in the presence of father would probably makes a difference in many important aspects of the child's behavior such as emotional maturity, resilience as well as maladaptive behaviors like aggression.

In the case of children who lives with their mother, there can be many possibilities for a child to become; emotionally immature, lack of resilience and highly aggressive. This might be due to the lack of care, love and support from the father figure. The aggressive behavior may be due to the child's insecure feelings inside him or her. And could be also due to the over care, love and affection given by mother in order to fulfill their needs and to make the child comfortable without feeling the absence of one of the parents. Therefore, the child may become self-centered and difficult to adjust with situations, especially outside home environment.

This condition may also occur in the case of children who live with both the parents. This could be due to the excessive attention, care and support the child receives from both of

them. Both the conditions explain that the presence and absence of one of the parent, that is, father can affect an adolescent's behavior positively and negatively. It is according to the environment in which the teenager lives, his or her relationship with other family members, peers, social circle and other situational factors.

Father-Absent Families

A large proportion of adolescents spend at least part of their lives in a one-parent family or solo parent family— typically with their mothers (Norton & Moorman, 1987). Adolescents living in father-absent families face many problems including: increased risk for delinquent (externalizing) behaviors and for depression and anxiety, impaired cognitive and social performance, and difficulties in forming meaningful relationships, including stable romantic ones.

Aggression

Behavior directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment. Actions designed to harm others in some way- the modern world in which we live offers many new ways to accomplish this goal. Aggression involves face-to-face assaults against others, either verbal or physical and also indirect efforts to harm them through spreading rumors about them.

Basic Sources of Aggression

- **Frustration:** Anything that prevents an individual from reaching goals he/she is seeking, and which leads to the arousal of a drive whose primary goal is that of harming some person or object that is primarily perceived as the cause of frustration
- **Provocation:** Actions by others that tend to trigger aggression in the recipient, often because they are perceived as stemming from harming intention. Another form of provocation to which people respond with annoyance is teasing. It refers to provoking statements that call attention to the target's flaws and imperfections.

Techniques to Control Aggression

- 1) Punishment: Procedures in which aversive consequences are delivered to individuals when they engage in specific actions. It can reduce aggression only if it meets four basic requirements, such as;
 - a) It must be prompt: Follow aggressive actions as quickly as possible.
 - b) It must be certain to occur: High probability that it will follow aggression.
 - c) It must be strong: Strong enough to be highly unpleasant to potential recipients.
 - d) It must be perceived: By recipients as justified or deserved.
- 2) Self-regulation or Self-control: The capacity to regulate many aspects of own behavior, including aggression. It often requires a lot of cognitive effort. Prosocial thoughts can also self-regulate behavior because of positive attitudes toward regulating emotions.
- 3) Catharsis hypothesis: The view that providing angry people with an opportunity to express their aggressive impulses in relatively safe ways will reduce their tendencies to engage in more harmful forms of aggression.

- 4) Self-affirmation: The tendency to respond to a threat to one's self-concept by affirming one's competence in another area (different from the threat). Procedures to protect or bolster one's self-esteem might prevent them from engaging in aggression.

Resilience

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. Adolescents who are exposed to stressors develop various behavioral and emotional problems, but some of them tend to refuse this expectation by becoming well adapted individuals. Such groups of adolescents who develop this psychosocial functioning in face of adversity are referred as 'Resilient'.

The term Resilience is used to describe an individual's ability to overcome adverse conditions or situations that involve risk to their well-being, development and mental health. It is a transactional process mediated by the interaction between the individual and the environment that ranges throughout life, since an individual who is resilient in an adverse situation, may not be in another situation.

Statement of the Problem

- 1) To compare the difference in Aggression among adolescents growing up in non-intact and intact family.
- 2) To compare the difference in Resilience among adolescents growing up in non-intact and intact family.

Objective

To identify the difference in Aggression and Resilience among adolescents growing up in non-intact and intact family and also to find out the relationship between Aggression and Resilience.

Hypotheses

- 1) There will be no significant difference in aggression among adolescents in non-intact and intact families.
- 2) There will be no significant difference in resilience among adolescents in non-intact and intact families.
- 3) There will be no significant difference in aggression among males and females in non-intact family.
- 4) There is no significant difference in aggression among males and females in intact family.
- 5) There will be no significant difference in resilience among males and females in non-intact family.
- 6) There will be no significant difference in resilience among males and females in intact family.
- 7) There will be no significant relationship between aggression and resilience.

2. Method

Participants

The sample selected for the study constitute 120 adolescents of the age range 15 to 17 years, out of which 60 were selected from non-intact family and 60 from intact family. The sample were collected from Thrissur district using random sampling method.

Measures

- 1) **The Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (1992)**
Aggression Questionnaire (The Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire) was designed by Arnold Buss and Mark

Perry, professors from the University of Texas at Austin in 1992. The questionnaire consists of 29 items where participants rank certain statements along a 5- point continuum from "extremely uncharacteristic of me" to "extremely characteristic of me." It interprets aggression as consisting of four sub-traits including, Physical aggression (9 items), Verbal aggression (5 items), Anger (8 items) and Hostility (8 items).

2) **The Resilience Scale by Wagnild and Young (1993)**

The Resilience Scale (RS25) is a self- report instrument developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) in the United States. The scale was developed to assess resilience level or the perception that an individual has of himself as able (or not) to deal with any troublesome situations and/or unforeseen circumstances, to be perseverant, autonomous and have a positive perception of himself. The Resilience Scale is a 25-item scale which reflected five basic characteristics of resilience: Perseverance, Self-confidence, Serenity, Meaning and Existential Loneliness.

3) **Personal data sheet**

The personal data sheet was used to gather data regarding the participant age, gender, education and parental presence.

Statistical Analysis

Mean, Standard Deviation, t test and Correlation Coefficient were used to ascertain the data using SPSS Package.

3. Result and Discussion

Table1: Means and SD, t-value and significance on the level of aggression by comparing adolescents in non-intact and intact families

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Aggression	Non-intact	65	76.98	15.083	0.737	0.462
	Intact	60	79.05	16.144		

Table 1 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on aggression among adolescents in non-intact and intact families. From the table, it is seen that there is no significant difference in aggression (t = 0.737; p > 0.05) between adolescents in non-intact family (mean = 76.98; SD = 15.083) and intact family (mean = 79.05; SD = 16.144). Therefore, the hypothesis that, there will be no significant difference in aggression among adolescents in non-intact and intact families, stands accepted. It indicates that adolescents growing up in non-intact and intact family have almost equal level of aggression. It might be due to the reasons of the parenting styles that the parent adopts, especially the mother.

Table 2: Means and SD, t-value and significance on the level of resilience by comparing adolescents in non-intact and intact families

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Resilience	Non-intact	65	117.97	14.220	4.515	.000
	Intact	60	129.38	14.030		

Table 2 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on the level of resilience among adolescents in

non-intact and intact families. From the table, it is seen that there is significant difference in resilience (t = 4.515; p < 0.01) between adolescents in non-intact family (mean = 117.97; SD = 14.220) and intact family (mean = 129.38; SD = 14.030).

Therefore, the null hypothesis that, there will not be a significant difference between the resilience of adolescents in non-intact and intact family, stands rejected. It indicates that adolescents growing up in non-intact and intact family have difference in resilience. Adolescents growing up in intact family type is found to have an increased resilience. The reason might be due to the presence of both the parents at home. The child gets love and affection from parents, especially mother who is more concerned. At the same time, the child sees a father figure which ensures a sense of security and concern, who is more protective in nature.

Table 3: Means, SD, t value and significance obtained in aggression among males and females in non-intact family

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Aggression	Females	35	77.14	14.888	0.090	.928
	Males	30	76.80	15.559		

Table 3 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on the level of aggression among males and females in non-intact family. From the table, it is seen that there is no significant difference in aggression (t = 0.090; p > 0.05) between females (mean = 77.14; SD = 14.888) and males (mean = 76.80; SD = 15.559) in non-intact family.

Therefore, the hypothesis that, there will be no significant difference in aggression among males and females in non-intact family stands accepted. It indicates that males and females growing up in non-intact family have equal level of aggression. It might be due to the varying personality characteristics, peer group influence or the family environment. Adolescent males tend to be less aggressive when compared with females. It might be due to the possible reason of taking responsibility of the family since their father is a non-immigrant.

Table 4: Means, SD, t value and significance obtained in aggression among males and females in intact family.

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Aggression	Females	30	79.70	17.241	0.309	0.758
	Males	30	78.40	15.235		

Table 4 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on the level of aggression among males and females in intact family. From the table, it is seen that there is no significant difference in aggression (t = 0.309; p > 0.05) between females (mean = 79.70; SD = 17.241) and males (mean = 78.40; SD = 15.235) in intact family.

Therefore, the hypothesis that, there will be no significant difference in aggression among males and females in intact family stands accepted. It indicates that males and females growing up in non-intact family have almost equal level of aggression. It might be due to the varying personality characteristics, peer group influence or the family environment.

Table 5: Means, SD, t value and significance obtained in resilience among males and females in non-intact family

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Resilience	Females	35	118.43	15.677	0.284	0.777
	Males	30	117.43	12.552		

Table 5 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on the level of resilience among males and females in non-intact family. From the table, it is seen that there is no significant difference in resilience ($t = 0.284$; $p > 0.05$) between females (mean = 118.43; SD = 15.677) and males (mean = 117.43; SD = 12.552) in non-intact family.

Therefore, the null hypothesis that, there will be no significant difference in resilience among males and females in non-intact family stands accepted. It indicates that males and females growing up in non-intact family have almost same resilience with only a slight difference between them, which is not statistically proved and is negligible to obtain a significant difference between both the groups. It means that gender does not play a major role in determining the resilience in adolescents growing up in non-intact family.

Table 6: Means, SD, t-value and level of significance obtained in resilience among males and females in intact family.

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t-test	Significance
Resilience	Females	30	128.03	12.971	0.742	0.461
	Males	30	130.73	15.115		

Table 6 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t value and significance on resilience among males and females in intact family. From the table, it is seen that there is no significant difference in resilience ($t = 0.742$; $p > 0.05$) between females (mean = 128.03; SD = 12.971) and males (mean = 130.73; SD = 15.115) in intact family.

Therefore, the null hypothesis that, there will be no significant difference in resilience among males and females in intact family stands accepted. It indicates that males and females growing up in intact family have almost same resilience. There is only a slight increase in resilience among males than in females which is negligible to obtain a significant difference between both the groups and is not statistically proved. It means that gender does not play a major role in determining the resilience in adolescents growing up in intact family.

Table 7: Correlation between the variables aggression and resilience

Variable		Resilience
AQ	Pearson Correlation	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.918
	N	125

Table 7 shows the correlation between aggression and resilience. From the table it is seen that aggression and resilience do not show any relationship. However, the r value is a negative value. Which means that, as resilience increases, aggression tends to decrease. But, the current study does not show any statistically significant relationship between each other.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The major findings of the study were There is a significant difference in resilience among adolescents in non-intact and intact families. Adolescents growing up in intact family type is found to have an increased resilience. However, there is no significant difference in aggression between adolescents in non-intact and intact families. Also, resilience and aggression do not show any significant relationship.

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