

Aggression in School Students: The Mediating Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem in the Context of Home Environment

Dr. Sujata Chaudhary

Assistant Professor and Head of the Department
HRIT University Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract: *The relationship between the home environment and aggression in students was examined in this research, along with the mediating role played by self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The sample consisted of 300 students who were picked randomly from different schools within the city, and their ages ranged from 13-18 years. Four instruments were used in this study: Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) was used to assess aggression; Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) was used to find emotional intelligence; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used to measure self-esteem; and Home Environment Inventory (HEI) was used to assess family dynamics. Results revealed that there was a strong negative relationship between supportive family environment and aggression (Estimate = -0.25, $p < .01$). Further, emotional intelligence (Estimate = -0.14, $p < .05$) and self-esteem (Estimate = -0.18, $p < .02$) appeared to mediate this relationship, meaning those variables explain the manner in which positive home environment reduces aggression. Emotional intelligence and self-esteem together even made mediation stronger (Estimate = -0.32, $p < .01$). Overall, these results support the notion about positive environment being one of the keys for emotional and personal development.*

Keywords: aggression, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, home environment, mediation

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, people have very different perceptions about their ability to control the situations they face. Some think they can control and affect what happens to them; others feel helpless, assignments determine outcomes due to external forces — chance or luck, perhaps. The alternate solution of disengaging means they are not taking action to change their behavior or setting. These people tend to be more vulnerable to stress, which can come from different areas of everyday life. Such stress can manifest in conflicts with parents, siblings, peers, and friends, other family members, neighbors, or even strangers. Aggression is a serious issue affecting school students and society and educational institutions. Reports about violence, bullying, and aggressive behaviors among youth routinely draw headlines and have initiated new debates from educators to policymakers to parents. Not only is this rising problem harming the current state of student welfare, but it is also damaging the entire educational atmosphere.

More and more, aggressive and violent behaviors in schools have become a major problem of educative institutions all over the world. Although the impression that things are becoming worse among school children might be due to the media's exaggerated reporting, the facts do prove that violence and bullying in schools are real. The prevalence of accounts and stories that report on cases of physical and verbal violence, bullying, and other issues affecting students and their learning is evident. Such behaviors don't just cause adverse changes but have negative long-term effects as well such as loss of self-confidence, worsening relationships with peers, decline of performance, increasing drop-out rates, and higher risk of mental issues (Ballard et al., 1999; Sagarese & Giannetti, 1999).

Aggression and conflict are ubiquitous problems for children and youngsters in educational contexts across the world (Dinkes et al., 2009). Aggression is usually defined as “a response that causes harm to another person” (Buss, 1961).

Aggression is associated with numerous mental health problems and socio-developmental concerns, and also seems to decrease prosocial behaviors and healthy social relationships, particularly in adolescence (Card et al., 2008; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000). Aggression in schools is detrimental; it lightens the academic atmosphere, affecting the quality of education and impeding students and teachers alike with focusing on learning.

II. THE ROLE OF HOME ENVIRONMENT IN SHAPING A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Without any expectation of reward, the family is the most fundamental institution where children find safety and support. The environment established by a family is one of the major determining factors of a child's psychological development as well as problem-solving maturation, self-esteem, and goal-orientation. Interaction patterns within families therefore play a significant role in mental well-being (Maheshwari et al., 2020). On the other hand, disturbed family shapes, domestic violence, abuse, overprotection and psychological traumatic events, and social formulations such as unemployment and poverty are associated with adolescent psychological issues (Behere et al., 2017). Have more opportunities for emotional disclosure (as compared to nuclear families, which are less intimate) (Rawat & Singh, 2017).

However, factors such as maternal stress, rejection and neglect negatively impact children's mental health, increasing the risk of adjustment problems (Lautarescu et al., 2020). Warsito et al. (2012) also mention illnesses, poor feeding patterns, and medical infections can be off shoot of learning and delay learning process. Maheshwari et al. (2020), people focus on family environment in their paper "Family Environment and Its Relation with Adolescent Girls Mental Health: A Quantitative Study in Indian Context". Findings: Cohesion, acceptance and care were positively associated with psychological well-being, but most girls across grades had suboptimal mental health.

In their study, García Mendoza et al. (2019) explored the relationship between family ties and mental health in Spanish university students. As results indicated, good relations between parents and children are vital for the mental well-being of the population studied since they help one's psychosomatic troubles. Hamon and Schrodtt (2012) investigated how parenting style affects young adults' self-esteem and mental state. It was found that authoritative parenting influences self-esteem positively, consequently decreasing the level of depression.

Emotional Intelligence and Aggression

The EI becomes one more important intellectual factor controlling a manner that creates a great deal of aggressive behavior; that is, adolescents who engage in physical fighting may be less able to name and control those negative emotions that frequently lead them to act violently (Peled & Moretti, 2007). As according to the definition of Salovey and Mayer (1997), four components form EI: (a) the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotions accurately, (b) The ability to access and/or generate feelings that facilitate thought, (c) The ability to understand emotion and emotion-related knowledge, and (d) The ability to regulate emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Apart from this, higher EI develops socially competent behavior, while lower levels of EI are linked to higher aggression and disruptive behavior (Mayer et al., 2008; Kokkinos, & Kipritsi, 2012). Many studies have proven the relationship between EI and other related behaviors: negative correlation is very well established here. For example, Shahzad et al.'s (2013) study showed all facets of aggression, including physical, verbal, anger, and hostility, to have a negative correlation with trait emotional intelligence. Their results suggest higher emotional intelligence to be associated with less aggressive behavior.

Sancho et al. (2014) essentially validated previous study works on EI and aggression as they found consistent evidence across ages, cultures, and measures that those individuals who scored higher on EI showed diminishing levels of aggression. Several researchers, on the other hand, report non-significant relationships between EI and aggression. Tintweiss (2011) studied relational aggression and EI in adolescents, which showed no significant relationship. Likewise, in comparison studies between rural and urban populations and teacher trainees, Jaleel found that EI and aggression were significantly unrelated.

Self-Esteem and Aggression

The topic of self-esteem has been at hand for numerous studies where opinions about the interrelation between aggression and self-esteem varied. Previously, low self-esteem was considered as a cause of aggressiveness, but now it became clear that the situation is not that simple. According to Martin E.P. Seligman, high self-esteem may also result

in aggression caused by the combination of various defensive mechanisms and narcissistic behavior. Plamondon et al. (2021) examined family interactions and how they impact the lives of young adults. As was shown by the results, bullying in childhood leads to the reduction of self-esteem and life satisfaction as well as numerous internal problems, especially in the case of parental anger and sibling conflict. Thus, the theme of healthy family relationships is crucial. The study carried out by Baumeister et al., in 2003 illustrated that narcissism rather than self-esteem is a more effective indicator of aggression in humans.

The correlation between self-esteem and aggression is complex. High self-esteem, when combined with narcissism, can sometimes fuel aggression. Meanwhile, low self-esteem can lead to defensive and reactive aggression. An understanding of such dynamics provides critical information in handling issues such as violence and aggression within the young and adult populations.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between the home environment and aggression among school students.
2. To explore the role of emotional intelligence as a mediator between the home environment and aggression.
3. To investigate the mediating effect of self-esteem in the relationship between the home environment and aggression.
4. To analyze the combined mediating effects of emotional intelligence and self-esteem on aggression in relation to the home environment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to examine the relationship between home environment, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and aggression among school students.

Participants

The participants were those 300 students from random sampling drawn from different schools within the city. Their ages ranged from 13 to 18 years. The students were selected if they had the informed consent and, wherever necessary, parental consent. However, those students were excluded from the study whose cognitive impairment or psychiatric diagnoses could interfere with subsequent implementation of the study measures.

Variables- 1- Independent Variable: Home Environment, **2- Dependent Variable:** Aggression, **3- Mediating Variables:** Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant positive relationship between the quality of the home environment and aggression among school students.
2. Emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between the home environment and aggression.
3. Self-esteem significantly mediates the relationship between the home environment and aggression.
4. Emotional intelligence and self-esteem together mediate the relationship between the home environment and aggression.

Measures/Tools

1. Aggression was measured using the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ),
2. Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF),
3. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)
4. The Home Environment Inventory (HEI)

Procedure

The data collection process took place over two months. After obtaining permission from school authorities and informed consent from the students and their parents, the students took the questionnaires together in their classrooms during a single sitting. They were given directions for the questionnaire and were assured that their answers would be kept confidential. The session lasted 45 minutes in total, and students were given breaks as they please.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The descriptive statistics undertaken were mean, standard deviation, and frequencies for each of the study variables: aggression, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and home environment. This aided in a preliminary understanding of the data satisfactorily and detection of any outlier. Pearson's Correlation was the primary analysis done in this study to explore the relationship between numerous variables. Mediation analysis was also employed to check out the effects of the home environment on aggression.

The Results

Table 1: Showing the Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Home Environment	72.45	8.62	55	89	300
Aggression	78.12	9.34	60	95	300
Emotional Intelligence	63.25	7.45	48	78	300
Self Esteem	21.85	3.76	14	30	300

Interpretation:

The mean score for the environment at home is 72.45, leading to the conclusion that students view their environment at home positively; the minimum score is 55, while the maximum is 89. For aggression, the mean score is 78.12, revealing that students display moderate high levels of aggression with scores ranging from 60 to 95. The average emotional intelligence score was given as 63.25 with a standard deviation of 7.45. This symbolizes that emotional intelligence was at a moderate level in students, ranging from 48 to 78. The mean score for self-esteem is 21.85 with a standard deviation of 3.76, indicating that self-esteem levels are moderately high, with scores ranging between 14 and 30.

Table 2: Showing the Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Variables

Variable	Home Environment	Aggression	EI	Self- Esteem
Home Environment	1	-0.45**	-0.50**	0.47**
Aggression	-0.45**	1	0.48**	0.42**
EI	-0.50**	0.48**	1	0.55**
Self-Esteem	0.47	0.42**	0.55**	1

Interpretation:

There is a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$) between home environment and aggression. A better home environment is associated with lower aggression levels in students. A positive correlation ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$) exists between home environment and emotional intelligence. A supportive home environment enhances emotional intelligence. A positive correlation ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$) is observed between home environment and self-esteem. Students from supportive home environments tend to have higher self-esteem. There is a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$) between aggression and emotional intelligence. Higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower aggression. A negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$) is found between aggression and self-esteem. Students with higher self-esteem exhibit lower levels of aggression. A positive correlation ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$) exists between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have higher self-esteem.

Table 3: Showing the Mediation Effect of Direct and Indirect Paths and 95% Confidence Interval (CI)

Paths	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p- value	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
Direct Effect (Home →Aggression)	-0.25	0.06	-4.17	0.001**	-0.37	-0.13

Indirect Effect (Home → Emotional Intelligence → Aggression)	-0.14	0.04	-3.50	0.005**	-0.22	-0.07
Indirect Effect (Home → Self-Esteem → Aggression)	-0.18	0.05	-3.60	0.002**	-0.28	-0.09
Combined Mediated Effect	0.32	0.07	-4.57	0.001**	-0.46	-0.19

95% CI: For all paths, the 95% confidence intervals exclude zero, confirming that the observed effects are statistically significant.

Interpretation of table 3:

Home Environment → Aggression (Direct Path): It shows a direct path moving from home environment to aggression with a significant negative effect: Estimate = -0.25, $t = -4.17$, $p = .001$. This means that a good home environment directly relates to a decrease in student aggression, which establishes the case to have a supportive home environment to control aggressive behavior.

Home Environment → Emotional Intelligence → Aggression (Indirect Path): The indirect path through emotional intelligence is also significant: Estimate = -0.14, $t = -3.50$, $p = 0.005$. This means that a supportive home environment fosters emotional intelligence, which then helps in controlling aggression. This evidence emphasizes the mediating role that emotional intelligence plays in decreasing aggressiveness.

Home Environment → Self-Esteem → Aggression (Indirect Path): The indirect path self-esteem also shows statistical significance: Estimate = -0.18, $t = -3.60$, $p = 0.002$. This means that a positive home environment enhances self-esteem, leading to an indirect decrease in aggression. It shows that increased self-esteem, promoted by a supportive home environment, can relieve aggressive tendencies.

The mediated effect that arises from both emotional intelligence and self-esteem indicates that it is statistically significant (Estimate = -0.32, $t = -4.57$, $p < .01$). The strong negative value of the effect indicates that both emotional intelligence and self-esteem play a significant role in mediating the relationship between the variables in question.

Moreover, all the confidence intervals have been calculated and do not cross the zero point, confirming the significance of the results.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research reveal the positive contributions made by the home environment, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem in establishing the levels of aggression demonstrated by an academic youth. The various types of descriptive statistics indicate that students perceive their home environment as favorable while demonstrating levels of aggression that are moderate, but still related to moderate levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The above findings provide an important basis for understanding the parameters of aggressive behavior shown by students with the major focus being put on emotional intelligence and self-esteem as mediating factors.

Home Environment and Aggression

According to the results, there exists a significant inverse relation between home environment and aggression. In other words, it appears that students with positive family backgrounds tend to display less aggression. This implies that a thorough change in families, which aims to enhance relationships among family members as well as teach parents positive parenting techniques, is necessary (Warsito et al., 2012).

Home Environment and Emotional Intelligence

This significant result underlines the positive link between home setting and emotional intelligence which means that positive family background aids in developing emotional intelligence. Family environment during childhood is very influential in the acquisition of the ability to recognize, express, and oversee emotions including being empathetic towards others.

Home Environment and Self-Esteem

The connection that is established between a home and self-esteem indicates the supportive surroundings for a person with adequate mental health. Hence, children living in the homes where they are appreciated and emotionally empowered are likely to have a higher self-esteem level. As a result, high self-esteem promotes self-confidence, stress management, and learning good coping mechanisms, which can defend against aggression. Another important fact about a supportive family is that it does not only create the ground for the development of self-esteem but also equips the child with the necessary emotional strength.

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem

Emotional intelligence and self-esteem are tightly connected and serve as catalysts for the emotional well-being of a person and his/her social behavior. Students who possess a high level of emotional intelligence are able to identify, understand, and manage their emotions successfully and therefore, feel positive in relation to themselves in whatever they do. The students' ability to process emotions properly contributes to their self-confidence and self-esteem as they start to treat themselves in a proper way. Hence, if students learn how to identify and control their emotions properly, they are likely to avoid negative feelings like self-doubt and insecurity.

Combined Mediated Effect

Consequently, the combination of emotional intelligence and self-esteem has brought about additive influences having a reduction impact on aggression. In the absence of emotional intelligence one is unlikely to build a strong self-image and thus exhibit aggression. Since emotional intelligence means a person has a better understanding of their emotions they are less likely to be unbalanced under the influence of certain triggers causing aggression. At the same time, self-esteem serves as a basis for self-worth and satisfaction which leads to a more peaceful reaction in an interpersonal situation. When these aspects cooperate, they strengthen the effect of one another by enhancing both the level of awareness about one's emotions and the level of self-esteem which protects from feeling inadequate.

VII. CONCLUSION

Overall, these results present substantial proof of the impact of home environment, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem on students and their aggression levels. Beneficial home environment decreases the aggression levels directly and indirectly by increasing the emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The above-presented conclusions show the necessity of implementing various measures which contribute to the formation of home environment, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem as means of aggression influencing. Future studies should pay more attention to this problem and conduct more thorough investigations of the relationships between the mentioned concepts.

Ethical Considerations

The inquiry followed ethical guidelines for procedures and was approved by the institutional review board. The participants were provided with the purpose of the study and volunteered to participate in it. The students were assured about the confidentiality of their responses and their participation not having any effects on their academic performance. Furthermore, the students were informed about the possibility of withdrawal from the study at any time without any penalties for that action.

Limitations

While this research provides a better insight into the operation of emotional intelligence and self-esteem on aggression, it nevertheless has some limitations. One limitation arises from the use of self-reported data which is subject to bias due to social desirability. In addition to this, the use of a cross-sectional design does not allow for the study of causation. Future research should involve longitudinal studies and various samples to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the results.

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