

# A Comparative Study of Aggression among the Adolescents Living with Families and in Orphanages



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## Abstract

### Background

Aggression refers to any behavior that is hostile, destructive, or violent. Generally, aggressive behavior has the potential to injure or damage the target person or object. Aggressive behavior includes physical assault, throwing objects, destroying property, self-injurious behavior or verbal threats. Aggression may be either physical or verbal. A behavior is classified as aggression even if it does not actually cause harm or pain. Children in institutional care face many difficulties such as poverty, poor physical health, attachment disorder, inadequate social skills and mental health difficulty. Institutionalized children are at high risk of developing emotional and behavioral problems. Death of parents makes children vulnerable and predisposes them to physical and psychological risks.

### Objectives

The present study aims to examine the aggression level among the school going adolescent girls and boys residing in orphanages and ones with their families.

### Sample

The sample comprises of 60 school going adolescents aged between 14-18 years residing in orphanages and the ones living with their families.

### Tools

Aggression Scale (2004) developed by G.P.Mathur and Rajkumari Bhatnagar has been used in this study.

### Results and Discussions

The results of the present study indicate that the adolescents living in orphanages have higher aggression level as compared to the adolescents living with their families. The result also highlight that girls have higher aggression than the boys.

**Keywords:** Aggression, Adolescents, Families, Orphanages.

### Introduction

Aggression has been defined (Loeber & Hay, 1997) as a category of behaviour that causes or threatens physical harm to other. It is a perplexing phenomenon and is viewed as a form of behavior, not as an emotion, a motive, or an attitude. Individuals get aggressive largely due to family relationships, peers and environmental experience. The process of acquisition mostly involves observational learning through exposure to aggressive behavior and to values supporting enacted aggression, including reinforcement and punishment contingencies. It is mostly contextually driven. When a child is raised in an environment which is full of deprivation, frustration, victimization, and instability automatically increases chances of development of aggression. Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by important physical, cognitive and social changes. In some cases, these changes prove to be contributory factors in emergence of externalizing problems, such as aggressive behavior to peers (Estevez, Murgui, Musitu, & Moreno, 2008a; Verona, Javdani, & Sprague, 2011).

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio- demographic profile of the school going adolescents living with families and the ones in orphanages.
2. To study the level of aggression among school going adolescents living with families and the ones in orphanages.

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- To study the gender differences on the aggression level among school going adolescents living with families and the ones in orphanages.

#### Review of Literature

Rakshanda (2016) stated that the family and home environment provide vital chances for the development of aggression. Family interaction patterns that involve siblings, parents, caregivers provide model of aggressive behavior and direct opportunities to learn how aggression functions in meeting needs. While observing how parents respond to distress or conflict, children learn aggression as a proponent response to aversive events. Parents or caretakers behavior that occurs in disciplinary confrontation may represent coercion as a way of achieving compliance. Display of coercive power in the form of physical and verbal abuse, as opposed to reasoning and firm discipline motivated by love, may also breed aggression. Moreover, when the parent or caretaker rejects a child or fails to provide security, warmth, and affection, the child learns that mistreatment is normative. There is considerable evidence that children raised by parents or caretakers who are physically castigatory or emotionally rejecting are more likely to have behavioral problems. Insecurity and impulsive aggression easily develops from harsh, erratic, and inept discipline during formative years.

Brendgen et.al (2002) identified the children in institutional care who are ex-posed to neglect and physical abuse have many problems in internalizing (anxiety, depression) and externalizing (aggression, impulsivity) behavior problems.

Black (2003) examined that the institutionalized children who have been handled cruelly, disconnectedly and with lack of consideration may build up anger due to lack of love and nurturing. These children also become aggressive and sometimes do not have the social skills or are not able to manage their behavior. They tend to become frustrated when they are not encouraged to express themselves.

Kruti & Melonashi (2015) in a study on aggression among Albanian adolescents stated direct aggression is more pronounced in males, indirect aggression seems to be more pronounced in females. Negativism was one dimension where females out-scored males.

Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) & Hyde (1984) suggested that males show more direct or physical aggression because of the higher levels of testosterone, which bring greater physical strength as compared to females.

Tizard & Rees (1975) in their findings stated that emotional and behavioural status of children in institutional care worsens and sometimes even in run institutions children develop a range of negative behaviours, including aggression and indiscriminate affection towards adults

Makame & Grantham (2002) Many institutionalized children are insecurely attached. They lack sympathy, seek behavior in negative ways, exhibit poor self-confidence, show discriminate

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affection toward adults, are more prone to rebelliousness, and are even more aggressive than their non institutionalized counter-parts

#### Hypothesis

- The level of aggression among the school going adolescents living in the orphanages is likely to be higher than the ones living ones with their families.
- Significant gender differences are likely to be found in the aggression level among the school going adolescents living with families and the ones in the orphanages.

#### Methodology

##### Sampling

In the present study purposive sampling technique has been followed to select the school going adolescent girls and boys living in orphanages and the ones with families in the district of Ludhiana, Punjab, between the age group of 14-18years who were present at the time of data collection. In total, there were sixty adolescents. All the adolescent girls and boys were in the age group of fourteen to eighteen years. Thirty adolescents (15girls and 15 boys) were taken up from orphanage and a controlled group of thirty adolescents (15 girls and 15 boys) living with families were matched on the basis of age, gender and school as sample for the study.

##### Tools

- A self constructed Interview schedule has been used to study the socio- demographic profile of the adolescents living with families and the ones in the orphanages.
- Aggression Scale (2004) developed by G.P.Mathur and Rajkumari Bhatnagar has been used in this study. It consists 55 items. (Age group 14+). It is a Likert type 5 point scale. The total number of answers constitutes the final score. Maximum score is 275 and minimum is 55. Higher scores show higher aggression level and lower scores show lower aggression level. Test-retest reliability of the checklist was found to be .88 in males and .81 in females. Validity is .80 in males and .78 in females.

#### Results and Discussions

##### Socio Demographic Profile

##### Adolescents in Orphanages and Families

The findings on socio demographic profile indicate that majority (80%) of the girls and boys living in orphanages were found to be in the age-group 15-16 years whereas majority of the adolescents living with their families belonged to the age-group of 16-17 years. Maximum girls (80%) and boys (76%) living with their families are found to be studying in class XI-XII<sup>th</sup>. Whereas the majority of the adolescent girls (60%) and boys (70%) residing in orphanages are less educated and were found to be in the class IX-X. The parents of majority of the girls and boys living with their families were found to be alive whereas the ones living in orphanages 60% of girls and boys parents were found to be alive. The results showed that out of the total sample of the girls and boys in orphanages, more than half (65%) were staying in orphanages for the last 1-5 years, 15% had been staying since 6-10 years and 20% since 11-15 years.

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The living status of the girls and boys before being admitted to orphanage indicated that 30% adolescents were in the orphanage due to the death of both parents, whereas half (45%) of the

adolescents were there, because either of their parents were missing or else one of the parent had died and the rest of children's (25%) parents were either divorced or extremely poor.

**Table1: Level of Aggression among the Adolescent Girls living in orphanages and the Ones with Families**

| Adolescent Girls      | Mean  | SD   | t value | p value |
|-----------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Living in Families    | 192.8 | 21.7 | -2.22*  | 0.03    |
| Living with rphanages | 206.4 | 9.5  |         |         |

**Figure I**

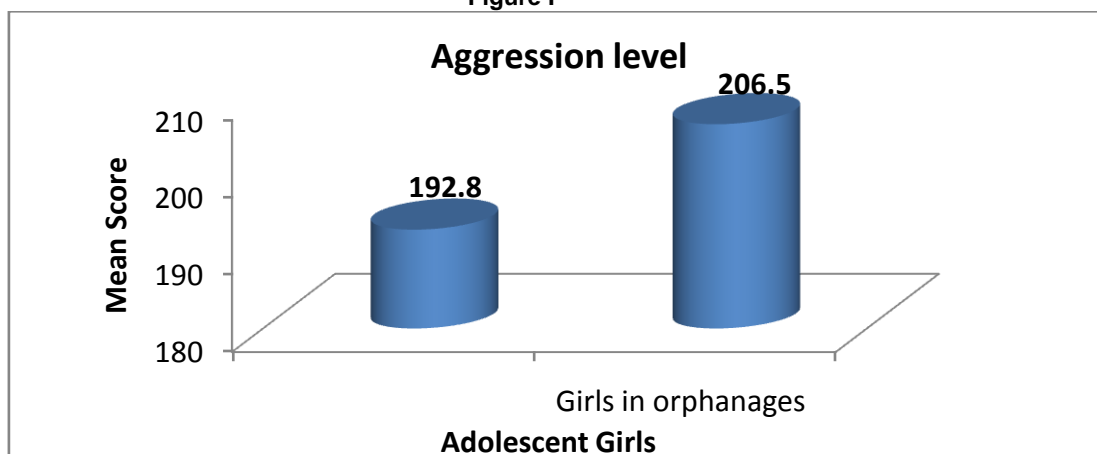


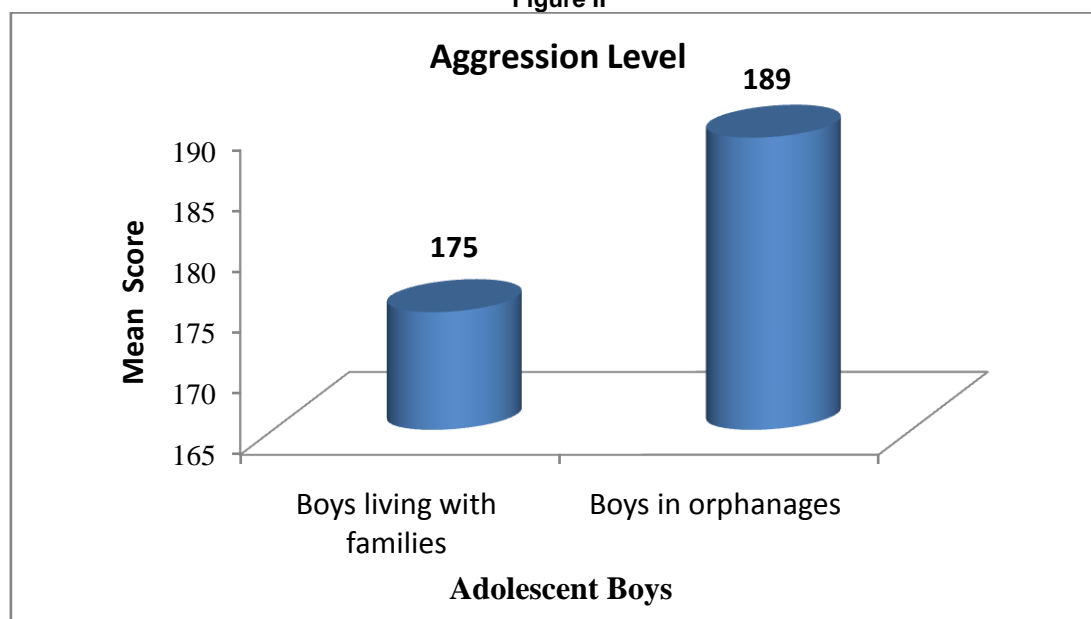
Table1 showed the scores of aggression of adolescent girls living in orphanages and the ones with their families. The t-test was used to compare the score of aggression. The mean values of aggression obtained by girls living in orphanages was 206.4 and for those living with their families was 192.8 and significant difference in aggression amongst both the

groups ( $t=-2.22^*$ ,  $p=0.03$ ) were found. The table shows that the adolescent girls residing in orphanages have higher aggression level than the girls living with families. Fig-I depicts the aggression level of adolescents which is higher in the girls living in orphanages as compared to the ones living with their families.

**Table2: Level of Aggression among the Adolescent Boys Living in Orphanages and the Ones with Families**

| Adolescent Boys      | Mean  | SD    | t value | p value |
|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Living with Families | 174.6 | 10.6  | -1.97*  | 0.05    |
| Living in Orphanages | 189   | 26.03 |         |         |

**Figure II**



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Table 2 showed the scores of aggression of adolescent boys living in orphanages and the ones with their families. The t-test was used to compare the score of aggression. The mean value of aggression level obtained by boys living in orphanages was 189 and for those living with their families was 174.6 and significant difference in aggression amongst both the

**Table 3: Gender Differences in Aggression Level among Adolescents living in Orphanages and Ones with Families**

| Adolescents Living in | Variables | Mean  | SD    | t value | p value |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Orphanages            | Girls     | 192.8 | 21.7  | -2.89*  | 0.007   |
|                       | Boys      | 174.6 | 10.6  |         |         |
| Families              | Girls     | 206.4 | 9.5   | 2.44    | 0.02    |
|                       | Boys      | 189   | 26.03 |         |         |

The table 3 indicates the aggression level of adolescent girls and boys living in orphanages and the ones with their families. The mean values of aggression obtained by girls and boys living in orphanages were 192.8, 174.6 ( $t=-2.89^*$ ,  $p=0.007$ ) whereas the mean scores of the ones living with their families were 206.4 and 189 ( $t=2.44$ ,  $p=0.02$ ). The results showed that there is significant difference in aggression level of adolescent girls and boys residing in the orphanages and the girls have higher aggression level than the boys. Further results indicated that there is no significant gender difference in the aggression level of adolescents living with families.

#### Discussions

The hypothesis 1 stated that aggression among the adolescents living in the orphanages is likely to be significantly higher than the ones living with their families, was found in line with the results of the present study. Table 1 and 2 showed in the present study that the adolescents living in orphanages were found to have higher aggression level than the ones living with their families. A previous study by Alink, Cicchetti, Kim and Rogosch (2011) stated that if the children have been maltreated, then they showed higher levels of disruptive/aggressive behaviour. Whereas Shulgaet.al (2016) in a study on Psychological Characteristics of Adolescents Orphans with Different Experience of Living in a Family, stated that adolescents who have never lived in a family are bound to be more aggressive than others. It may be a response to the threat and flux in their surroundings. Adolescents who live in institutions since their birth are more in an appropriate situation to start destructive conflicts and are less able to cooperate with others.

Hypothesis 2 stated that significant gender differences are likely to be found in the level of aggression among the adolescents living in orphanages and the ones living with families were in line with the results of the present study. The scores of aggression in table 3 showed that adolescent girls had higher level of aggression than the adolescent boys. Similar was documented by Crick (1996) and Crick and Grotpeter (1995) who argued that much aggression in girls has been overlooked because it is in a different form from that of boys. Girls are more likely to use relational aggression, that is, verbal and indirect aggression, such as, alienation, ostracism, character defamation and gossip.

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groups ( $t=-1.97^*$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) were found. The table shows that the adolescent boys living in orphanages have higher aggression level than the boys living with their families. Fig-II depicts the aggression level of adolescents which is higher in the boys residing in the orphanages as compared to the ones living with their families.

#### Conclusions

There is a significant amount of evidence which suggests that aggressive behavior is a result an attraction between individual and environmental factors. The parental practices are also important. Environmental issues, such as abuse and discipline too are significant in understanding the individuals with aggressive behavior.

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