

# AGGRESSIVITY AND ITS SPECIFIC FORMS IN ADOLESCENCE

M.Ciolac

**Mirela CIOLAC**

PhD., lecturer

Aurel Vlaicu University, Arad, Romania

**Abstract:** The aggressivity is a very big problem of our contemporary society. For the adolescents the main cause of death is violence and not cancer or heart diseases. We consider aggression as being any conduct intentionally directed towards objects, people or by it, to produce some damages, of injuries, destruction and prejudice. The paper presents the results of a research made on 39 subjects to establish the link between verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility; the link between aggression and the specific forms of aggression and the subjects' gender; the degree of association between self-esteem and aggression among students. The results of this study should be seen as a warning. Aggressiveness, whatever form it may take, is present to the high school adolescents. It must be found solutions; it must be identified factors that are responsible for the emergence of maladaptive manifestations.

**Key words:** aggressivity, self-esteem, adolescents, gender, forms of aggressivity – verbal, physical, anger and hostility

## **Theoretical frame**

Delinquency and crime are the peak forms of the manifestation of aggression, and the statistics compiled in different countries show a worrying increase in rates of this "scourge". The President of the International Association of Social psychiatry, Sorel E. (1999 ) shows that the late thrilling twentieth century has seen an extraordinary

intolerance of an unheard and incredible violence. The main cause of death of young people between 15 and 24 years is violence and not cancer or heart diseases.

Regarding the aggressive behavior with antisocial echo (Dragomirescu, 1990), some authors distinguish several types, such as:

1. Indiscriminate aggression, occasional, without necessarily antisocial echo;
2. Aggressive behavior itself multiforme and chronic, which includes criminal behavior;
3. Aggressive behavior as an integral expression, direct of a pathological condition or a condition subsequent to a neuropsychological preexisting trouble or an acquired one.

The aggressive behavior is oriented not only off topic, but on self. And here we must distinguish between acts of self-destructive behavior; suicide is the most serious form, and behavioral acts that may endanger the health and balance of the body (smoking, alcohol, drugs). The essential element of differentiation it is, of course, the presence of self-destructive intent.

So in summary, we consider aggression as being any conduct intentionally directed towards objects, people or by it, to produce some damages, of injuries, destruction and prejudice.

Are men are more aggressive than women? All crime statistics provide a positive answer to this question. From such records, authors such as AH Eagly and VJ Steffen (1986 ) concluded that, indeed, it is more likely than men to be more employed than women in open aggression. But the size of this difference appears to be quite small. Moreover, it may be wider in some contexts than in others. For example, sex differences on the adoption of aggressive behavior were found to be

higher in studies involving non-physical forms of aggression (verbal aggression, others negative ranking after some indicators etc.). Similarly, larger differences were found in situations where aggression seems to be required (for example, certain social roles). In addition, men and women seem to differ to some extent on their attitudes against bullying. And finally, the legislature found that both sexes are addressed more aggressively against male targets than against women.

Starting from these types of studies, R.A. Baron and D. Byrne (1991) draw attention to the fact that gender differences on aggressive behavior depend largely on the sex roles and socialization practices. For example, if the traditional stereotype of masculinity and femininity continues to decrease, gender differences on aggression may decrease. Conversely, if such stereotypes can persist or even strengthen, the gender differences on aggression, is expected to widen.

### **The psychological profile of the deviant adolescent**

*Perception* - From 15 years teen acquires full capacity of discrimination of details. Originality crisis will push the teenager insecure, unprepared and chasing to thrill, to shock, causing in turn similar sensations entourage and parents.

*Language* - The deviant adolescent is hostile to dialogue, vague and incomplete answers communicate difficult and monosyllabic, slang language to adhere to conceal poor verbal skills.

*Thinking* - The deviant adolescent presents abstract combinatorics failure, low capacity of analysis and synthesis, no can critically interpret the reality only partially; being aware of the great importance of the spheres of life and social activities, he can make explicit questions about

the place and the meaning of his own existence, self-reflexiveness and introspection are distorted.

*Imagination* - The deviant adolescent has an overflowing fantasy, fictions and prolonged reveries, hides frequently using lie imagination to express an ego ideal.

*Memory* - Strong colored emotionally; the affective memory is more developed than the verbal and motor ones; perceptual partial and temporal disturbances cause an incorrect recording and fixing of the spatio-temporal dimensions.

*Learning* - The deviant adolescent learn by copying the negative behaviors of those around him, records poor performance in the theoretical fields.

*Motivation and will* - The motivational conflicts determines the lie justification (unmotivattion, defense, vanity) the aspiration level is low, he deceives himself, is stubborn, weak voluntary control, which leads to cowardice, obfuscation, tendency to drug and alcohol abuse, amusement to which he cannot resist, false worship heroes.

*Skills and habits* - Usually do not have hygienic habits of civilized behavior, planning their activities, socio -emotional relationship have tics, difficulty in perceiving and rapid differentiation of colors, smells, tastes.

*Affective processes and sexuality* - Emotional deviance is the normality of adolescents. Interest in the opposite sex teen govern all actions, stimulating efforts in other areas, often justifying deviations from moral or legal norms.

*Intelligence* - Deviants' teenagers present either limit intellect or one of higher level, also show profound cognitive dissonance. Little or no skills are cultivated, often deviant adolescents have athletic abilities,

artistic or integration ones. As often lacked of guidance, of educational and vocational counseling, the adolescent does not realize its aptitudes and possibilities.

*Character* - The picture of deviant adolescent attitudes ( towards himself, the people, the work, the social assessments) reflects a characterological immaturity: self- sufficient, impulsivity, aggression, antisocial acts committed underestimation, indolence, disdain for work, rejecting society as a whole, difficulty in social integration, indifference or aversion to school, lying, neglection, disorientation, confusion of the social values , desire for adventure, lack of ideals, educational frustration, opposition to the adult world.

The body's neurochemical system sensitizes in certain circumstances individual triggers aggressive behavior, makes them more frequently adopt this behavior. We studied the relationship of sex hormones which influence aggressive behavior in two ways. A first series of research allowed positive correlation of testosterone, the primary male hormone, with aggressive behavior. Some theorists argue that the testosterone level can be placed in relation to the disposition to aggress, but he alone, in the absence of other triggering conditions is not enough. In addition, they find a positive correlation between testosterone levels for frustration. On the other hand, if the study of the influence of testosterone on aggressive behavior was done by correlating its level with the number of aggressive acts and scores to various aggression self-assessment questionnaires the findings were different. Administration of progestin to the future mothers (synthetic horinon administered - in pregnancy troubles) demonstrated masculizante effects on female foetuses which showed a significantly higher predisposition toward

violent actions than their brothers during childhood (Reinisch, 1981, as cited. L. Berkowitz, 1993).

What should be noted is that - in the current state of the research - these biochemical agents are not the direct causes of aggressive behavior, but they make the person more sensitive to external stimuli, producing the aggressive reaction, or may exacerbate the intensity of this response (Berkowitz, 1993).

**Study objectives:**

1. Highlighting the link between verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility.
2. Highlighting the link between aggression and the specific forms of aggression and the subjects' gender.
3. Highlighting the degree of association between self-esteem and aggression among students.

**Hypothesis:**

1. There is a significant relationship between verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility. In the sense that the verbal aggression, the physical aggression, the anger and the hostility are positive correlated.
2. The aggression and the specific forms of aggression record significant differences by gender.
3. The self-esteem of adolescents has as lower level as the level of aggressivity increases.

**Research methodology - experimental design**

The research involved 39 subjects; adolescents aged 16 and 18, students at the "Vasile Juncu" Highschool of Miniş Arad County. The analyzed group consists of 21 subjects male and 18 female, 17 students of

class X, 8 female and 9 male and 22 students of class XI, 10 female and 12 male.

**Table no. 1**

Frequency distribution / gender

		<b>gen</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Masculin	21	53.8	53.8	53.8
	Feminin	18	46.2	46.2	100.0
	Total	39	100.0	100.0	

**Table no. 2**

Frequency distribution / class

		<b>clasa</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	a X a	17	43.6	43.6	43.6
	a XI a	22	56.4	56.4	100.0
	Total	39	100.0	100.0	

### **The instruments used**

In the study herein the following tools were used

- Aggression Assessment Questionnaire (AQ ), Buss & Perry, 1998
- Rosenberg questionnaire to measure self-esteem.

Buss & Perry Aggression Questionnaire, 1998, was used for evaluating general aggressiveness and to identify the types of aggression: physical aggression (AF), verbal aggression (AV), anger (F), hostility (A). AQ is composed of 29 items organized in four scales, corresponding to the four specific forms of aggression, the evaluation being made on a

point Likert scale with values from 1 to 5, and 1 = not at all; 2 = small extent, 3 = medium. 4 = to a great extent, 5 = highly agree.

To measure the level of self-esteem, we used a self-assessment tool based on a questionnaire consisting ie Rosenberg scale to assess self-esteem. Rosenberg test consists of 10 items and the assessment is made on a Likert scale with values from 0 to 3 and 0 = strongly against, 1 = against, 2 = disagree, 3 = strongly agree.

### **Organizing and conducting the research**

During the testing session, participants were initially administered the paper and pencil version of the questionnaire of assessing self-esteem Rosenberg and AQ questionnaire - the test of aggression. These instruments were administered in group, without time limit. Participants were instructed to quantify each item honestly, specifying that there is no good or bad answer.

### **Presentation and analysis of data**

Hypothesis 1. There is a significant relationship between verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility. In the sense that verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility are positive correlated.

Values obtained for AQ subscales

**Table no. 3**

Descriptive Statistics Aggression Questionnaire (AQ)

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
AF	39	11	37	21.95	7.026	
AV	39	10	25	15.59	3.958	
F	39	9	30	18.10	4.633	
O	39	14	35	23.79	5.535	
AG	39	54	113	79.44	16.401	
Valid N (listwise)	39					



For Aggression subscale General (AG) values average scores was  $m = 79.44$  (max.145) showing higher mean values for overall aggressiveness.

For Physical Aggression subscale (AF) values average scores was  $m = 21.95$  (max. 45) showing small to medium values of physical aggression.

For Verbal Aggression subscale (AV) average values for scores was  $m = 15.59$  (max. 25) showing the predominance of high values.

For Anger subscale (F) average values for scores was  $m = 18.10$  (max. 35) showing the predominance of high values.

For Hostility subscale (A) the average of the scores was  $m = 23.79$  (max. 40) showing the predominance of high values.

Results on AQ scales shows that the adolescents in the studied sample had a high general level of aggressiveness, the specific form of aggression was not the physical aggression, which has a low level. The forms of aggression that have experienced the highest level were the verbal aggression, the anger and the hostility.

According to the results obtained it appears that there is a significant correlation, positive and strong between the verbal aggression, the physical aggression level, the aggressiveness manifested by anger, the aggression manifested by hostility.

There is a significant positive correlation, between the verbal aggression and physical aggression level, meaning that if verbal aggression level is high then the physical aggression level is high, and vice versa, if the level is low on verbal aggression the physical aggression level is low.

There is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the physical aggression and the anger level, meaning that if physical aggression level is high then the level of anger is high, and vice versa, if the level of anger is low then and physical aggression level is low.

There is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the verbal aggression and the anger level meaning that if verbal aggression level is high then the level of anger is high, and vice versa, if the level of verbal aggression is low then the anger level is low.

There is a significant positive correlation, between the anger and hostility level, meaning that if the anger is high then the level of hostility is high, and vice versa, if the level is low then the anger and hostility level is low.

Therefore, the data obtained by statistical processing allows support hypothesis 1 that, verbal aggression, physical aggression, the aggression manifested by anger and the aggression manifested by hostility are positive correlated.

*Hypothesis 2:*

The aggression and the specific forms of aggression record significant differences by gender.

**Table no. 4**  
Correlation between aggression in general and specific forms of aggression for the masculine gender

		Correlations				
		AF	AV	F	O	AG
AF	Pearson Correlation	1	0.527*	0.480*	0.179	0.717**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.014	0.028	0.438	0.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21
AV	Pearson Correlation	0.527*	1	0.777**	0.511*	0.871**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.014	.	0.000	0.018	0.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21

F	Pearson Correlation	0.480**	0.777**	1	0.542*	0.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.028	0.000	.	0.011	0.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21
O	Pearson Correlation	0.179	0.511*	0.542*	1	0.704**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.438	0.018	0.011	.	0.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21
AG	Pearson Correlation	0.717**	0.871**	0.872**	0.704**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	.
	N	21	21	21	21	21
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
a SEX = Masculin						

According to the table 4 the data shows that there is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the verbal aggression and physical aggression in the male gender in the sense that if verbal aggression level is high then the physical aggression level is high, and vice versa, if the level of verbal aggression is low then the we will have a low level of physical aggression.

There is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the level of anger and verbal aggressiveness in the sense that if the anger is high then the verbal aggression level is high, and vice versa, if the anger level is low then the verbal aggressiveness level is low.

There is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the level of hostility and the verbal aggression in the sense that if the hostility is high then the verbal aggression level is high, and vice versa, if the hostility level is low then the verbal aggression level is low.

**Table no. 5**  
Correlation between aggression in general and specific forms of aggression for feminine gender

Correlations						
		AF	AV	F	O	AG
AF	Pearson Correlation	1	0.012	0.630**	0.092	0.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.961	0.005	0.718	0.005

	N	18	18	18	18	18
AV	Pearson Correlation	0.012	1	0.298	0.712**	0.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.961	.	0.230	0.001	0.001
	N	18	18	18	18	18
F	Pearson Correlation	0.630**	0.298	1	0.204	0.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.230	.	0.417	0.001
	N	18	18	18	18	18
O	Pearson Correlation	0.092	0.712**	0.204	1	0.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.718	0.001	0.417	.	0.000
	N	18	18	18	18	18
AG	Pearson Correlation	0.634**	0.692**	0.727**	0.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.000	.
	N	18	18	18	18	18
**	Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
a	SEX = Feminin					

According to the table 5 we see that there is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the anger and physical aggression level, meaning that if the anger is high then the level of physical aggression is high, and vice versa if the anger is low then the aggressiveness individuals is low.

There is a significant positive and strong correlation, between the level of hostility and the verbal aggression in the sense that if the hostility is high then the verbal aggression level is high, and vice versa, if the hostility level is low then the verbal aggression level is low.

Analyzing the tables No.4 and No.5 results that anger,as character feature, in girls determines a physically aggressive behavior, unlike to the boys where is much smaller .

The girls' personality features increased anger and hostility causes a very high probability of discharge of an aggressive behavior

There are differences between the verbal aggressiveness in adolescent males compared to those of females. That means that the male

adolescents have a higher level of verbal aggression than female adolescents who have a lower level of verbal aggressiveness.

So the data obtained by statistical processing support the hypothesis no. 2 that there are differences in the aggression by gender in subjects.

**Table no. 6**  
ANOVA gender - aggression

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AF	Between Groups	746.786	1	746.786	24.472	.000
	Within Groups	1129.111	37	30.517		
	Total	1875.897	38			
AV	Between Groups	16.420	1	16.420	1.049	.312
	Within Groups	579.016	37	15.649		
	Total	595.436	38			
F	Between Groups	98.169	1	98.169	5.063	.030
	Within Groups	717.421	37	19.390		
	Total	815.590	38			
O	Between Groups	56.049	1	56.049	1.871	.180
	Within Groups	1108.310	37	29.954		
	Total	1164.359	38			

The relationship between aggression and sex factor was studied by calculating the coefficient varied using One Way ANOVA. The results show a significant relationship between the sex of subjects and the values of physical aggression (AF) , F = 24.47 and sig. .000 and anger (F) = 5.06 and sig. 0.30.

*Hypothesis no. 3*

The self-esteem of adolescents has as lower level as the level of aggressivity increases.

**Table no. 7**  
Descriptive statistics for the test Rosenberg

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
stimadesine	39	12	23	17.05	2.655
Valid N (listwise)	39				

**Table no. 8**  
Correlation between self-esteem and aggression

		Correlations					
		AF	AV	F	O	AG	STIMA.SI NE
AF	Pearson Correlation	1	.373*	.604**	.247	.772**	-.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.019	.000	.130	.000	.806
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
AV	Pearson Correlation	.373*	1	.634**	.599**	.782**	-.148
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019		.000	.000	.000	.368
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
F	Pearson Correlation	.604**	.634**	1	.450**	.846**	-.224
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.004	.000	.170
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
O	Pearson Correlation	.247	.599**	.450**	1	.715**	-.246
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.000	.004		.000	.131
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
AG	Pearson Correlation	.772**	.782**	.846**	.715**	1	-.200
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.223

N	39	39	39	39	39	39
STIMA.SI Pearson NE Correlation	-.041	-.148	-.224	-.246	-.200	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	.368	.170	.131	.223	
N	39	39	39	39	39	40

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen from the Table 8 by that what I have tried to demonstrate, by the hypothesis no. 3 is partially confirmed. The correlation between self-esteem and aggression was not statistically significant. Among the self-esteem of adolescents and aggression are a very weak negative correlation, such as the self-esteem is lower the odds of aggression are higher, but in a lesser extent strength.

The manifested aggressiveness in any form expresses the inner state of man. When articulated language communication ability is blocked, sometimes it is replaced by the physical aggressive behaviors. In fact, aggression means a communication failure on the human level, it represents a regression to lower states of human.

Punches or insults, defamation are forms of compensation of those who have no other means of communication. Subcultural individual is expressed predominantly by gesture, by bodily attitudes. With a vocabulary too limited, it limits his ability to communicate through language. Physical strength assures subsistence and gives a value in front of the others. So this method is best suited as an argument in a dispute.

The aggressive act is an expression of the personality. But we must not generalize because there are random acts of aggressive behavior in situations where they're in need of defense, survival. Most often, these acts do not define a personality if not constant over time, specifically if you are not a characteristic of a person. Psychology, using objective

methods had made an inventory behavior; it ranked them and measured them statistically. Thus it could be achieved on the one hand to identify and differentiate the types of behavior, and on the other hand in the context of psychophysical features in which they become more frequent, which led to the establishment of forms of human personality structure that presents an increased risk of aggressivity.

### **Conclusions**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the link between aggression in general and its specific forms: the verbal aggression, the physical aggression, the anger and the hostility. The second objective was to establish if the level of aggression (verbal aggression, physical aggression, aggression manifested by anger, aggression manifested by hostility) is influenced by the gender of the subjects. Another objective was to highlight the degree of association between the self-esteem and aggressivity among students.

Therefore the data obtained shows that the first hypothesis is confirmed, ie the verbal aggressions, the physical aggression, the aggression manifested by anger, the aggression manifested by hostility are positive correlated.

Regarding the second hypothesis, that aggression recorded differences according to the gender of the subjects, there are differences between the verbal aggressiveness in adolescent male to female ones, meaning that male adolescents have a higher level of verbal aggression than female adolescents who have a lower level of verbal aggressiveness. Anger, as character feature in girls determines a physically aggressive behavior, unlike to the boys, to which is much smaller. The girls'



personality traits - anger and hostility increased - cause a very high probability of discharge of aggressive behavior.

Hypothesis 3 is partially supported: the correlation between self-esteem and aggression was not statistically significant. Among the self-esteem of adolescents and aggression are a very weak negative correlation - the higher self-esteem is low so rates are higher aggression but to a very small extent. It is possible that this result may be due to the fact that self-esteem is not an independent variable, and in the future other studies, will able to be used it as a mediating variable.

The experimental approaches that assessed aggression were and continue to be very numerous. In this purpose were used different methodologies, different conceptual approaches and perspectives. Given that some of these research results have been interpreted, sometimes contradictory, there were some criticisms of them.

Numerous authors have attempted an "accounting" of the results of these researches in order to formulate clear conclusions as though they are not widely accepted. Period characterized by a series of evolutionary changes, highly nuanced, such as bio - psycho - social, the adolescence, is the most complex stage of development of the young man on his way to adulthood. This step seems to pose the greatest difficulties to the educational process because of the frequent disruption of the physiological troubles, emotional imbalances, deviations of character and conduct disorder accompanying, often the maturing.

The literature speaks in this respect of a true "crisis" of adolescence, consisting of multiple internal and external conflicts, expressed hostility towards parents, rebellion against the educational prohibitions, the rejection of the cultural patterns and moral norms proposed by the adult, adult seen as authority.

The teenager, who is in the process of searching for his own identity, building of a self-image, to establish a future direction of development is perceived as being overwhelmed by parents who have certain expectations regarding his behavior, teachers with the same expectations, the representatives of social control. Most often, as a result of the presence of factors that promote aggression, he become to commit aggressive acts sometimes carried to extremes.

Without finding complete and definitive answers to the questions above, the main conclusion of this research is that there is a significant relationship between the verbal aggression, the physical aggression, the anger and the hostility, in the sense that verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility are positive correlated. And aggression and its specific forms of aggression recorded differences by gender.

The results of this study should be seen as a warning. Aggressiveness, whatever form it may take, is present to the high school adolescents. It must be find solutions; it must be identified factors that are responsible for the emergence of maladaptive manifestations.

It is necessary to build external support networks, by building more counseling and training centers with qualified personnel to provide expert advice in every school. Making "workshop" meetings with the subject, in which to analyze the results, the problems encountered and the solutions proposed. It will be necessary the validation of some intervention programs for specific bullying issues in schools in our country and promoting educational programs on the prevention of violence in schools.

### **Bibliography:**

Baron, R.A., Byrne, D., (1991), *Social Psychology Understanding Human Interaction*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon

- Berkowitz, L., (1993). *Aggression: its causes, consequences, and control*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia
- Buss, A.H., Perry, M., (1992). The Aggression Questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 452-459.
- Dragomirescu, T.V., (1990), *Determinism și reactivitate umană*, Editura Științifică, București
- Eagly, A.H., Steffen, V.J., (1986), *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 100. No.3, pp. 309-330, <http://saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/psych406-7.2.pdf>