

# Effect of Parental Physical and Psychological Aggression on Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness Factors of Personality of Secondary School Students

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Parental Aggression on Neuroticism, Extraversion & Agreeableness Factors of Students

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To explore the effect of physical and psychological aggression on neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness factors of personality of secondary school students.

**Study Design:** Observational / descriptive study.

**Place and Duration of Study:** This study was conducted at the Hazara Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from October, 2013 to March, 2014

**Materials and Methods:** This study included 1438 of Grade 10 students. The data was collected through a pre-formed questionnaire to find aggressive behavior of parents while information about Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness, was collected through three subscales of Big Five Factors personality inventory. Data was analyzed through multiple regression model using SPSS 20 version.

**Results:** Results of the study indicated high mean scores of physical aggression ( $3.96 \pm 1.23$ ) and psychological aggression ( $3.79 \pm 1.08$ ). Male students were significantly higher extraverts ( $t=3.759$ ,  $\alpha=0.000$ ) as compared to female students. Moreover, parental Psychological Aggression proved as significant negative predictor of Extraversion ( $\beta= -0.067$ ,  $\alpha = 0.021$ ) whereas parental psychological aggression demonstrated significant positive predictor of Neuroticism ( $\beta= 0.106$ ,  $\alpha = 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Parental aggression in physical and psychological forms, make their children shy (Low Extraversion), increases Neurotic problems like anxiety and depression (High Neuroticism) and makes their children less cooperative, submissive, and obliging.

**Key Words:** Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Physical Aggression, Psychological Aggression, Secondary School Students

**Citation of article:** Shah SA, Majoka MI: Effect of Parental Physical and Psychological Aggression on Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness Factors of Personality of Secondary School Students. *Med Forum* 2017;28(6):149-152.

## INTRODUCTION

Change in behavior results from many environmental influences<sup>1</sup>. One core aspect of environment influence on the children is the effect of parental hostility<sup>2</sup>. Hostility or coercion in the form aggression shown by parents causes many behavioral problems like problem of self regulatory in their children<sup>3</sup>. Such problems may be caused by non- physical form of parental aggression like emotional or psychological violence<sup>4</sup> along with parental physical aggression. Thus Parental responses to children's behavior fall into three broad categories: (a) nonviolent (e.g., offering explanations, removing privileges), (b) psychologically aggressive (e.g. yelling,

name calling, threatening), and (c) physically violent (e.g., slapping, beating with an object)<sup>5</sup>. A large body of research has shown that such aggressive behaviors have bad consequences in the psychological perspectives<sup>6</sup>. Thus, psychological aggression damages social relationship of children, feelings of acceptance by others or inclusion in a social group<sup>7</sup>. Parental aggression such as yelling towards their children<sup>8</sup> or combination with physical aggression<sup>9</sup> may cause many Neurotic problems such as depression, dependency, low self esteem, and anxiety<sup>10</sup>. All such behaviors become an established part of their Personality with the passage of time. That is why personality is described as a set of established characteristics and tendencies which determine commonalities and differences in behavior, thoughts, feelings and actions of people<sup>11</sup> or it is referred to distinctive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that characterize the way an individual adapts to the world<sup>12</sup>. The development of such behaviors is discussed in different theories of personality. One of the widely recognized theories of personality is the Big Five Factors of personality.

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Received: April 03, 2017; Accepted: May 14, 2017

The Big Five Factors (Openness of Experience, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) approach has emerged as a result of the effort of social scientists to explore a practical set of variables which could predict the behaviour of humans<sup>13</sup>. In the current study, only three factors viz. Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness are used. They are elaborated in the followed paragraphs.

Neuroticism is often associated with anxiety, anger and hostility besides impulsiveness and pessimism<sup>14</sup>, negative self-esteem and lack of confidence to take initiatives<sup>15</sup>. High level may lead to psychiatric problems<sup>16</sup> while low score on neuroticism is indication of emotional stability<sup>17</sup>. Such parental practices like humiliation, guilt induction, and love withdrawal for the purpose of obeying the desires, have predicted the internalizing problems in both childhood and adolescence<sup>18</sup>.

Agreeableness often refers to cooperation, good nature, compliance, self sacrifice, truthfulness, and kindheartedness<sup>15</sup>. This factor of personality characterizes the way in which the person who makes relationship with others and have intentions to help in solution of problems of others<sup>19</sup>. People lacking agreeableness often lack trust regarding others and believe in competition rather than cooperation<sup>20</sup>. Children, who are exposed to parental aggression score low on cognitive ability tests<sup>21</sup>.

Extraversion refers to a person's confidence, vitality and energy<sup>14</sup>. Such individual have positive outlook on life and are outgoing<sup>21</sup>. Parental harsh and inconsistent behavior causes antisocial behavior in their children<sup>22</sup>. To our knowledge, no study was conducted on the issue, therefore, this study focused on the effect of parental physical aggression and psychological aggression on Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness factors of personality of secondary school students.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Participants:** The present study selected 1438 students who were appeared in class 9<sup>th</sup> annual examination under the BISE (Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education), Abbotabad, and were promoted to 10<sup>th</sup> class. Out of 1438 students surveyed, 50.4 % were from public sector and 49.6 % were from private sector. Similarly, 50.4 % of the students were females while 49.6 % were male students. 50.1 % of the data was collected from rural areas while the remaining 49.9 % was collected from urban area.

**Research instruments:** This research was conducted to explore the influence of different forms of parental aggression on Extraversion, Neuroticism and Agreeableness factors of personality of students. A questionnaire for measuring parental aggressive attitude towards their children was developed and validated through expert opinion.

A pilot study was conducted on 100 students of same grade (Grade10) in order to check whether the students understood the questionnaires and know how to answer the questions. The Cronbatch Alpha reliability coefficient of parental physical Aggression was ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ) whereas the reliability of parental psychological aggression was ( $\alpha = 0.722$ ) respectively. The overall Cronbatch Alpha reliability of instrument as a whole was reported to be high ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ). Respondents rated how often their family members repeated specific behaviors from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Lowest score represented highest aggressive behavior of family members.

Information regarding the Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness traits of students was collected by using Big five Factors of personality Inventory developed by Tom Bechanon.

**Procedure:** Schools were randomly selected from Abbotabad, Haripur, and Mansehra Districts of Hazara Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and data was collected through personal visits to the selected schools. After permission of school principals, the students were randomly selected for the collection of required data. It was ensured to the respondents that their names will be kept confidential and anonymous. The questionnaires were distributed among the participants of the study after detailed verbal instructions. The researcher was available during the whole data collection time for the purpose of clarification and answering the possible question of the participants. The completion of self administered questionnaires took about 20 minutes.

## RESULTS

To meet the objectives of the study, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Multiple Regression Model was used.

**Description of data:** The data was described by using Mean and Standard Deviation of the collected data about different forms of Aggressive behaviors performed by the parents.

**Table No.1: Description of variables**

	N	Mean	S. D
Physical aggression	1438	3.96	$\pm 1.23$
Psychological aggression	1438	3.79	$\pm 1.08$
Neuroticism	1438	3.07	$\pm 0.71$
Extraversion	1438	3.19	$\pm 0.58$
Agreeableness	1438	3.07	$\pm 0.64$

Table 1 highlights that the mean scores indicate that secondary school students perceive their parents to be more aggressive and that their parents show greater aggression in both physical and psychological form. Table 1 further highlights the Mean and Standard Deviation scores of personality traits for Neuroticism are (3.072 & 0.64), for Extraversion are (3.19 & 0.58), and of Agreeableness are (3.89 & 0.71). The mean

scores of Factors are greater than 3.00 which indicate a higher flow.

**Table No.2: Comparison of neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness traits among male and female students**

	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t- value	P- value
Neuroticism	Male	713	3.08	0.63	0.357	0.721
	Female	725	3.07	0.64		
Extraversion	Male	713	3.24	0.58	3.759	0.000
	Female	725	3.13	0.57		
Agreeableness	Male	713	3.05	0.65	-1.385	0.166
	Female	725	3.10	0.63		

Table 2 highlights the significant difference between male and female students regarding neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness traits of personality. The value of (t=0.357) for neuroticism indicates no significant difference between male and female students. On the other hand there is significant difference between male and female students as indicated by t value (t=3.759,  $\alpha=0.000$ ) where male students are found to have significantly higher extraversion trait as compared to female students. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between male and female students regarding the agreeableness trait as indicated by the t- value (t=-1.385,  $\alpha=0.166$ ).

**Table No.3: Effect of Parental physical and psychological Aggression on Extraversion in their children**

	$\beta$	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F value	$\alpha$
Physical Aggression	-0.068	0.034	26.66 ( $\alpha=0.000$ )	0.003
Psychological Aggression	-0.067			0.021

Dependent variable: Extraversion

Table 3 indicates that one unit increase in parental physical and psychological aggression brings 3.4 percent decrease in Extraversion (Adj. R<sup>2</sup>= 0.034) trait of personality of students. Furthermore, physical Aggression has significant negative effect on extraversion factor of personality ( $\beta= -0.068$ ,  $\alpha = 0.003$ ) whereas psychological aggression has significant negative effect on Extraversion ( $\beta= -0.067$ ,  $\alpha = 0.021$ ) factor leading the adolescents to become more shy with the increase in parental aggression.

**Table No.4: Effect of parental physical and psychological Aggression on Neuroticism in their children**

	$\beta$	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F value	$\alpha$
Physical aggression	0.035	0.015	7.226 (0.000)	0.271
Psychological aggression	0.106			0.001

Dependent variable: Neuroticism

Table 4 indicates that one unit increase in parental physical and psychological aggression brings 1.5 percent change in Neuroticism (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.015). Furthermore, Physical Aggression has positive but insignificant effect on Neuroticism factor of personality ( $\beta= 0.035$ ,  $\alpha = 0.271$ ) whereas psychological aggression has significant positive effect ( $\beta= 0.106$ ,  $\alpha = 0.001$ ), on Neuroticism factor of personality.

**Table No.5: Effect of Parental physical and psychological Aggression on Agreeableness in their children**

	$\beta$	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F value	t value	$\alpha$
Physical aggression	-0.014	0.007	5.96 (0.003)	-0.550	0.583
Psychological aggression	-0.039			-1.359	0.174

Dependent variable: Agreeableness

Table 5 indicates that one unit increase in parental Aggression brings 0.7 percent change in Agreeableness (Adj. R<sup>2</sup>= 0.007). Furthermore, physical Aggression has negative but insignificant effect on Agreeableness factor of personality ( $\beta= -0.014$ ,  $\alpha = 0.583$ ) whereas psychological aggression has negative but insignificant effect on Agreeableness factor of personality ( $\beta= -0.039$ ,  $\alpha = 0.174$ ) of secondary school students.

## DISCUSSION

Results indicate that physical aggression has the highest mean. It implies that physical aggression of parents is highest and that parents physically punishing their children. This research study has found profound difference in extraversion trait between male and female students.

Our research has found that parental psychological aggression demonstrates an increase in neurotic characteristics in secondary school students. Our findings are support by the findings of Pease, & Lewis (2015)<sup>23</sup>.

Parental physical and psychological aggression of parents has significant negative effect on extraversion factor of personality. These results are consistent with the study of (McGinley & Carlo, 2007)<sup>24</sup>. Parental aggression negatively affects perseverance, enthusiasm, and concentration of their children<sup>25</sup>. Additionally, parents who express related negative emotions, predict the behavioral problems of children (Belsky et al., 1995)<sup>26</sup>.

Our study also found that secondary school students' agreeableness is although not significantly but negatively affected by both parental physical and psychological Aggression. Prinzie et al. (2004)<sup>27</sup> also found that parental aggression will lead to irritable children behavior. Similarly, results of the study conducted by Jones et al (2011)<sup>14</sup> also found that aggression has negative correlation with agreeableness. On the other hand, Pease and Lewis (2015)<sup>23</sup> found agreeableness the most positively associated one with aggression. In spite of these contradictory results, the

literature about personality discuss that the scoring levels of personality traits including agreeableness may change their trends during the life span of individuals.

## CONCLUSION

Parental aggression in physical and psychological forms, make their children shy (Low Extraversion), increases Neurotic problems like anxiety and depression (High Neuroticism) and makes their children less cooperative, submissive, and obliging.

Acknowledgment: The Authors are thankful to the adolescents of Grade 10 class for their participation in the study, parents, and the school authorities for their cooperation to make this research possible.

**Conflict of Interest:** The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

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