

# Effect of Parental Physical and Psychological Aggression on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

Parental  
Aggression on  
Academic  
Achievement

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The current study was conducted to explore the different forms of Parental Aggression and its impact on Academic Achievement of secondary school students.

**Study Design:** Observation / description study.

**Place and Duration of Study:** This study was conducted at the high schools at secondary level in three districts viz. Abbotabad, Haripur, and Mansehra of Hazara Div., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan from Oct. 2013 to March 2014.

**Materials and Methods:** This study included 1438 of secondary school students. The data was collected through a pre-formed questionnaire to probe aggressiveness of parents towards their children. Data was analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and multiple regression model. SPSS 20 version was used for the purpose of analysis. After establishing the validity of the research instrument through expert opinion, a pilot study conducted on 100 students. It established the reliability of the instrument.

**Results:** Results of the study indicated high mean level of physical aggression ( $3.96 \pm 1.23$ ) and psychological aggression ( $3.79 \pm 1.08$ ). Further, parental physical aggression has significant negative effect on academic achievement of students followed by the significant negative effect of parental psychological Aggression on academic achievement of students at secondary level. Furthermore, academic achievement of male students was significantly hampered by both parental physical and psychological Aggression while the academic achievement of female students significantly negatively predicted by psychological aggression of parents only.

**Conclusion:** Both physical and aggression employed by parents on their children significantly hampers their academic achievement.

**Key Words:** Academic Achievement, Physical Aggression, Psychological Aggression.

**Citation of article:** Shah SA, Majoka MI, Shah SM, Elahi H. Effect of Parental Physical and Psychological Aggression on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students. Med Forum 2017;28(5):122-125.

## INTRODUCTION

It is a universal fact and a vast collection of research findings that a quality home environment is decisive for the development of the individual. Home environment determines the multitude of meanings from personal identity point of view along with designating a dwelling<sup>1</sup>. One aspect of developing the personal identity is determined by parental disciplinary practices. Among the research conducted on the parental practices specifically from disciplinary method point of view, parental aggression has remained the most controversial topic<sup>2</sup>. Questions have been mostly raised about either positive or negative effects of parental aggression in the form of corporal punishment<sup>3</sup>. Some of the professional argue that corporal punishment is imperative and considered as "sometimes necessary" as 90% of the parents use it sometimes to regulate the behavior of their children<sup>4</sup>.

While others opine that both physical and psychological aggression have their damaging effects if they rise beyond control<sup>5</sup>. They can cause long term as well as short term effects such as depression, aggression and academic achievement<sup>6</sup>. The other aspect of parental practice is psychological.

Psychological aggression is "a communication intended to cause the child to experience psychological pain. Emotional abuse, verbal/ symbolic aggression, emotional maltreatment, psychological maltreatment, is the terms interchangeably used for psychological aggression<sup>7</sup>. This communicative act may be active or passive or verbal or nonverbal" e.g., name calling or nasty remarks, smashing something like door. This type of practice encompasses the techniques which interrupt the psychological world of the child by the use of verbal/symbolic or both types of aggression<sup>8</sup> like humiliation, guilt induction, and love withdrawal for the purpose of obeying the desires. Such parental practices have predicted the internalizing problems like depression, anxiety, and loneliness as well as maladjustment in both childhood and adolescence<sup>8</sup>. Such internalizing problems like anxiety and maladjustment can cause aggressive behaviors within the family.

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Received: March 11, 2017;

Accepted: April 18, 2017

These techniques equally affect their academic achievement. Students' academic achievement is negatively affected by many factors. Such factors include poverty, living in violent neighborhoods, deviant peers, lack of safe child recreational areas, and exposure to media violence, lack of social support, and bad parenting. Growing up in a culture of fear and hate, as in many ethnic minority communities around the world, may be the most extreme version of an aggression-fostering environment. Parents are often described as "controlling" or "authoritarian," are typically been found to predict poor academic achievement<sup>9</sup>. An extensive article review also 14 illustrates the relationship among parenting styles and adolescent school achievement. Harsh parenting such children cannot concentrate on their studies which in turn lead to poor school performances and bad results<sup>10</sup>. An investigation examining family conflict as a major risk factor for poor academic performance among first year indicate that higher family conflict prior to college enrollment was related to lower first-semester GPA<sup>11</sup>.

Very few studies have been conducted on effects of parental aggression in Pakistan because conducting research on this issue is considered prohibited due to which such cases go unreported<sup>12</sup>. For example, on the basis of parental report indicated that 42.30% of the children have conduct problems<sup>13</sup>. While the existence of emotional and behavioral problems were reported to be 34.4% among children and teachers placed 34.8% of the children in "abnormal" category<sup>14</sup>. But very recently Senate's functional committee on human rights adopted the Criminal Law (Amendment Bill), 2015 for the purpose of protection of children<sup>15</sup>.

On the basis of the available literature the current study was conducted to explore the parental aggression towards their children and their consequent impact on academic achievement at secondary level.

Although protection of children from Physical aggression and psychological aggression (Psychological abuse) is included in child's protection rights, it is still considered less serious as compared to sexual abuse. Since parental psychological abuse has become a global concern due to its long lasting effects on healthy development of adolescents including their academic performance, it is essential to provide reliable information about the effect of parental aggression on academic achievement of their children at secondary level. This research is expected to highlight the intensity of parental Aggression on their children and its effect on academic achievement. The results of this research will highlight the unreported as well as suspected parental aggressive behaviors and their effects on academic achievement of children at secondary level.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This survey study was conducted in Abbotabad, Haripur, and Mansehra Districts of Hazara Division. Detail of the research is given in the paragraphs.

**Sample of the study:** This research endeavor consisted of 1438 students from grade 10 selected from District Abbotabad, Haripur, and Mansehra of Hazara Division. Of these selected students, Public sector represented 50.4% whereas private sector representation was 49.6%. 50.1 percent were from rural area and 49.1% were from urban area. Female students constituted 50.4% of the sample while male students were 49.6%. Science students were 74% of the sample and 26% were selected from Arts group.

**Procedure:** Schools were randomly selected from Hazara Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan and data was collected through personal visits to the selected schools. After permission of school principals, the students were randomly selected the required data was collected. Anonymity and confidentiality was ensured to the respondents. The questionnaire was given to the participants after detailed verbal instruction. The researcher was available during the whole data collection time for the purpose of clarification and answering any question of the participants. The completion of self administered questionnaire took about 20 minutes.

**Measures:** A questionnaire comprised of 10 items that assessed the prevalence of parental aggression was developed as a result of review of related literature and validated as a result of expert opinion. The first four items were related to Physical Aggression, while final six items were related to Psychological Aggression of parents. The Cronbach Alpha reliability of Physical Aggression was ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ) whereas the reliability for Psychological aggression was ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) respectively which was achieved as a result of pilot study conducted on 100 students. The overall Cronbach Alpha reliability of instrument as a whole was reported to be high ( $\alpha = 0.937$ ). Respondents rated how often their family members repeated specific aggressive behaviors from 5 (never) to 1 (always). The lowest score represented highest aggressive behavior of family members.

## RESULTS

To achieve the research objectives and answer to the questions, the collected information was screened to ensure the meeting of basic assumptions (like normality, homoscedasticity & linearity) of regression analysis before data analysis.

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

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Physical Aggression	1438	3.96	1.23
Psychological Aggression	1438	3.79	1.08
Academic Achievement	1438	334.04	115.15

Table 1 highlights the mean and Standard Deviation scores of parental and psychological aggression towards their children. The mean scores indicate that secondary school students perceive their parents to be more

aggressive. These results highlight that children perceive that their parents show greater aggression in physical and psychological form. The mean and standard deviation scores of students indicate greater variability in their academic achievement.

**Table No.2: Effect of parental Aggression on Academic Achievement of students**

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T (sig.)	R <sup>2</sup>	F value (α value)
	β	S. E				
Physical aggression	-12.792	2.446	-0.131	-5.00 (0.000)	0.017	25.00 (α= 0.000)
Psychological aggression	-11.882	2.80	-0.111	-2.47 (0.000)	0.012	18.28 (α= 0.000)

Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

Table 2 highlights that parental physical aggression causes 1.7% changes in the academic achievement of the students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.017). The model is statistically good (F=25.00 and Sig. =0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -12.792 for physical aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental physical aggression brings 12.79 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -5.00, α= 0.000).

**Table No.3: Effect of Physical Aggression on Academic Achievement of Male and Female Students**

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T (sig.)	R <sup>2</sup>	F value (α value)
		β	S. E				
Male	Physical aggression	-22.97	6.91	-0.24	-3.32 (0.000)	0.02	5.43 (α= 0.000)
	Psychological aggression	-15.95	9.61	-0.17	-1.26 (0.024)	0.012	18.28 (α= 0.000)
Female	Physical aggression	-8.37	7.37	0.084	-1.12 (0.26)	0.023	8.58 (α= 0.000)
	Psychological aggression	-23.52	11.79	-0.203	-1.99 (0.04)	0.012	18.03 (α= 0.000)

Dependent Variable : Academic Achievement

Table 2 highlights that parental psychological aggression causes 1.2% changes in the academic achievement of the students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.017). The model is statistically good (F=18.28 and Sig. =0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -11.882 for psychological aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental psychological aggression brings 11.88 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -2.47, α= 0.000). As highlighted in table 3, parental physical aggression causes 2.2% of the

changes in academic achievement of male students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.022) with statistically fit model (F=5.43, α= 0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -22.97 for physical aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental physical aggression brings 22.97 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -3.32, α= 0.000) of male students. Additionally, table 3 indicates that parental psychological aggression causes 1.2% of the changes in academic achievement of male students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.012) with statistically fit model (F=18.28, α= 0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -15.95 for psychological aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental psychological aggression brings 15.95 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -2.26, α= 0.000) of male students.

As highlighted in table 3, parental physical aggression causes 2.3% of the changes in academic achievement of female students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.023) with statistically fit model (F=8.58, α= 0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -8.37 for physical aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental physical aggression brings 8.7 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -1.12, α= 0.26) of female students.

Additionally, table 3 indicates that parental psychological aggression causes 1.2% of the changes in academic achievement of female students (R<sup>2</sup>=0.012) with statistically fit model (F=18.03, α= 0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. β value with -23.52 for psychological aggression indicates that one unit increase in parental psychological aggression brings 23.52 units significant decrease in academic achievement (t= -1.99, α= 0.026) of female students.

Therefore, Results of the study indicate that parental aggression (Physical and psychological) has significant negative effects on academic achievement of the male students while academic achievement of female students is only significantly affected by psychological aggression from parents.

## DISCUSSION

This research is an attempt to highlight the extent to which parents use aggressive practices and their damaging effects to the academics of their children. Highlighting the results of this issue is even more important in developing countries like Pakistan as there is no awareness about the issue of ensuring protection of child's rights, lack of practice on mental health services, and recognizing the damaging effects of parental aggression. Results indicate that on the average parents use more aggressive behaviors while there is greater variation in the academic achievement scores of their children. These results are consistent with the results of Malik (2001) who state that parents usually use physical abuse as a common disciplinary method. The regression analysis predicted the negative effects of parental aggression on academic achievement in

students. Children, who are exposed to parental aggression such as corporal punishment, score low on IQ tests along with other cognitive ability tests (Klebnov, 2015). Furthermore, Allen (2008)<sup>16</sup> explored that due to parental terrorizing behaviors towards their children may become prone to anxiety which imply poor academic achievement of their children.

## CONCLUSION

The present study identified that severe parental aggression (both physical & Psychological aggression) was perceived to exist by their children at their home environment. Such harsh and aggressive parenting has vulnerable consequences in terms of their academic achievement. This hampering effect is more prominent in harming the academic achievement of male students both from psychological as well as physical point of view as compared to female students where female are only significantly affected by psychological aggression from parents.

The resultant situation is that students remain unable to concentrate on their studies which in turn lead to poor performance both for male and female students.

Acknowledgment: All the authors of the research study are grateful for the cooperation of adolescents of Grade 10 class, their parents, class teachers and school heads to make this research possible.

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

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