



The Influence of Self-Control on Aggressiveness in Adolescents: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Aggressiveness is the tendency to behave harshly, violently, or hostilely towards others. It can be physical, verbal, or even emotional. Aggressiveness is often considered a negative trait because it can lead to conflicts and harm both oneself and others. One of the factors that can influence it is self-control, which is the ability to restrain or manage impulsive or excessive urges and behaviors. Eight out of 15 international journals indicate that adolescent aggressive behavior includes various types, such as physical aggression, verbal aggression, and modeling aggression. Self-control has a significant influence on adolescent aggressiveness. The results of the systematic review show that good self-control can help manage and direct aggressiveness toward more positive and constructive outcomes. Other factors that influence aggressiveness include gender, parenting styles, and emotional regulation. Therefore, understanding the interaction of these factors is crucial in addressing and managing aggressiveness to foster healthier social interactions and personal well-being.

Keywords: *Aggressiveness, Adolescents, Control*

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INTRODUCTION

The adolescent period is a transitional phase that involves significant physical and cognitive changes (Santrock, 2011). The age range of 11-18 years marks a stage of development that is full of challenges, uniqueness, and expectations. During this period, individuals begin to face the journey toward social independence and experience difficulties in managing emotions and behaviors (Hardoni et al, 2019). Aggressive behavior can have psychological impacts on victims, including the emergence of both negative and positive emotions. Negative emotions involve feelings such as anger, discomfort, stress, low self-esteem, and sadness (Maskori et al, 2023).

Aggressiveness refers to behavior aimed at harming other living beings. Baron emphasizes that aggressive behavior can be physical or mental and can be clearly observed through forms such as hitting, kicking, and verbal expressions like insults, curses, and swearing. The emergence of aggressive behavior is often related to unpleasant situations or conditions in the surrounding environment. Aggressiveness tends to be triggered by anger, which serves as a psychological bridge between the behavioral and cognitive aspects of aggressiveness. When angry, individuals are generally more likely to demonstrate aggressive behavior compared to when their emotional state is not affected (Sentana & Kumala, 2017).

In adolescents, aggressive behavior can encompass a variety of complex forms. This includes physical aggression such as direct attacks by hitting, kicking, or pushing, as well as indirect attacks by throwing objects or destroying property. Adolescents may also demonstrate threatening behavior by using weapons and making intimidating gestures. Additionally, there is verbal aggression in the form of insults by belittling, demeaning, and mocking; threats through cursing, frightening words, and acts of terror; and rejection by ignoring, ostracizing, and refusing to communicate.

Relational aggression in adolescents can also occur, such as manipulating relationships by spreading rumors and forming alliances, social exclusion by distancing a peer from the group, and reputation damage by slandering and belittling in front of others. Additionally, adolescents can engage in indirect aggression, such as sabotage by damaging property and hindering work, abuse of power to cause harm, and neglect by refusing to provide help or information. There is also proactive aggression, which is instrumental in gaining power, status, and material goods; predatory aggression, where individuals attack others for personal gain; and hostility, where conflicts are initiated to dominate. Finally, adolescents can show reactive aggression, which is impulsive by reacting quickly without thinking, defensive to protect themselves from threats, and retaliatory as a response to others' hurtful actions.

Adolescents who demonstrate low levels of self-control and frequently break rules without considering the long-term consequences can be categorized as individuals showing aggressive behavior. Although in certain situations everyone might feel the urge to break the rules, most people tend to restrain such impulses to prevent deviant actions (Saputro, 2022). In a study conducted by Fasilita (2012) on the correlation between aggressiveness and self-control, it was found that as individuals age, they tend to develop better self-control, thereby reducing the tendency to behave aggressively. Self-control is the capacity of individuals to consciously and deliberately alter their responses with the aim of restraining or eliminating negative responses and replacing them with more appropriate ones (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Based on the explanation above, the lack of self-control can be a major contributing factor to aggressive behavior, including violence. Additional explanations also describe that individuals with low levels of self-control are more likely to engage in criminal and deviant behaviors compared to those with high levels of self-control. Aggressive behavior begins with the intention to commit an aggressive act, which will manifest if that intention

is reinforced by triggering factors. Conversely, if the intention is not supported by certain factors, the likelihood of aggressive behavior occurring will decrease. Therefore, the role of self-control in individuals is of great significance in regulating and preventing the emergence of aggressive behavior (Sitanggang et al., 2023).

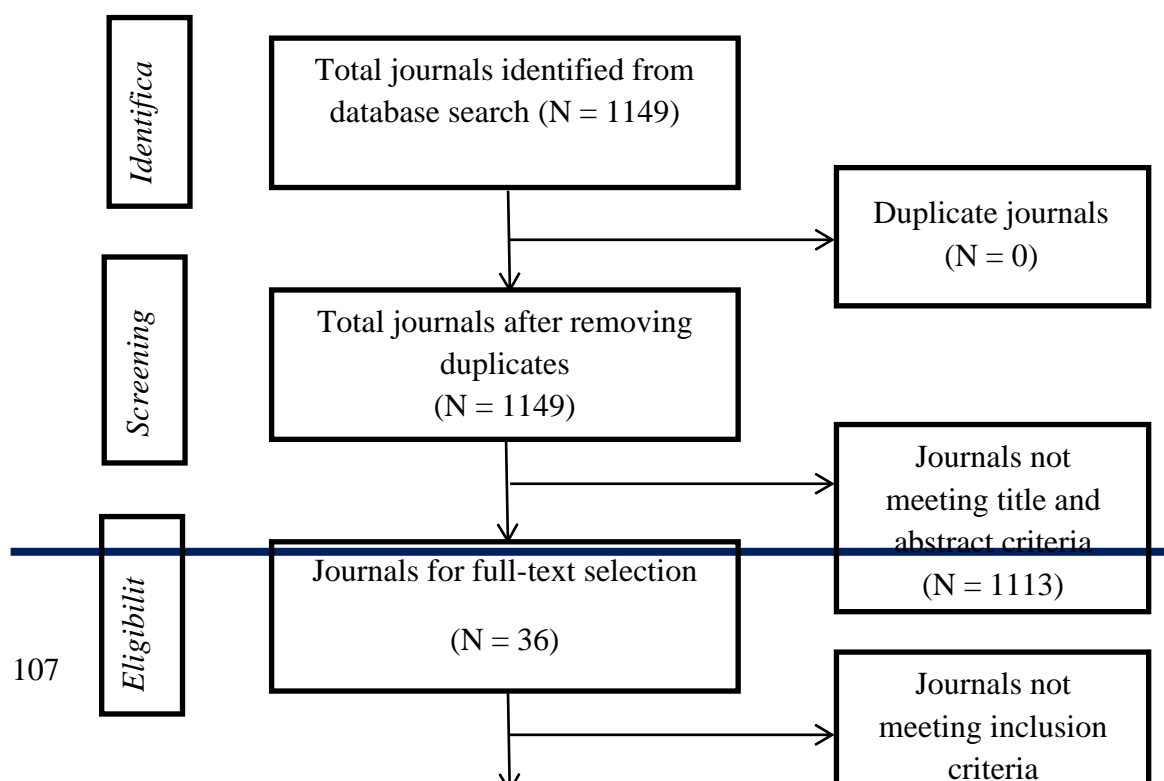
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the review process, the initial step taken by the authors was to formulate the research question. Using the SPIDER method (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type) and referring to systematic questions, the authors formulated the research question for this review: Does self-control affect aggressive behavior in adolescents? The authors then proceeded by designing search keywords to be used in the databases. After deriving terms from the research question, the authors conducted searches using the keywords they had developed, such as aggressiveness, self-control, and adolescents. The authors combined several search terms in the Google Scholar and Scopus databases. After collecting several articles, the authors conducted a duplication check using Mendeley and Rayyan. The screening process was carried out based on the titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review. After the selection process, out of 1149 journals obtained, 15 journals were found to meet the criteria, namely discussing the influence of self-control on aggressive behavior in adolescents.

The journal selection process can be seen through the PRISMA chart in Figure 1. The researchers set the boundaries for the journal review as follows: 1) The journal content discusses the role of self-control on aggressive behavior in adolescents, 2) The publication year of the journal is from 2013-2023, 3) The journal is in English, 4) The type of research is qualitative and quantitative. The criteria for journals that will not be selected include 1) Journals that discuss aggressive behavior but do not address the influence of self-control, 2) Articles in the form of books, meta-analyses, and literature reviews.

Figure 1

PRISMA Chart for Journal Selection Process



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The emotional changes in adolescents as they adjust to all the changes make adolescent problems very complex and require personal discussion. In this era, everyone will be in a state of failure or uncertainty, and when this period fails, it can have fatal consequences either in the future or the present. As a result, adolescents often have volatile emotions, become easily angered, and struggle with self-control. Adolescence is closely tied to the social environment in which they interact, demanding that they adapt well. In most cases, adolescents will spend increasing amounts of time in school, and when school activities are inadequate and do not meet their needs, adolescent problems often manifest excessive energy in negative ways, such as aggressive behavior (Aviyah, 2004).

Aggressive behavior itself can harm others both verbally and physically. Aggressive behavior has characteristics that can lead to negative actions that hurt others or the aggressors themselves (Atina et al., 2022). Adolescents with high self-control skills have lower levels of aggression. This can explain the mediating effect of self-control skills on the correlation between experiencing family violence and physical aggression (Agbaria & Natur, 2018). Those with low levels of self-control may have a greater risk of aggression. For example, high levels of self-control can help individuals refrain from using aggression as a response to frustration (Neaverson et al., 2020).

The function of aggression has been further studied, showing that instrumental aggression is often described as behavior performed intentionally for the benefit of the perpetrator in a certain way (Berkowitz, 1993). This aggressive behavior is linked to delinquency, crime, and internalizing problems, and sometimes can be associated with positive impacts such as popularity and leadership skills (Little et al., 2003). On the other hand, reactive aggression is generally described as an angry, defensive response to provocation, involving interpersonal or antagonistic responses. This type of aggression is often associated with peer rejection, lack of self-control, and a tendency to interpret intentions as antagonistic in problem-solving situations (Carr et al., 2016). According to Buss and Perry (1992), aggressive behavior can be divided into four components: 1) physical aggression, which includes actions such as hurting, disturbing others, hitting, kicking, and pushing, 2) verbal aggression, which involves verbally hurtful actions like teasing and insults, 3) experiencing anger, and 4) hostile attitudes.

Aggressive behavior in adolescents is influenced by various interacting factors, including individual, family, peer, school, community, and societal environmental conditions. At the individual level, personality characteristics such as impulsivity, lack of empathy, and low frustration tolerance can increase the risk of aggressive behavior.

Additionally, poor emotional regulation and inadequate problem-solving skills also play a role. A history of traumatic experiences in the past, such as maltreatment or neglect, can be a significant predictor of aggressive behavior. On the other hand, when adolescents have low self-control, they tend to react impulsively and emotionally to situations perceived as threats or provocations. The lack of ability to delay gratification and manage aggressive impulses can lead them to engage in physical, verbal, or relational aggression.

Self-control is an inner strength that involves regulating or restraining impulses, emotions, values, and actions that are inappropriate to achieve a goal. Self-control is necessary for individual behavior to align with one's moral framework, as the ability to control oneself relates to overcoming short-term desires, allowing adolescents to adhere to moral standards. Experts suggest that self-control inhibits the desire to place oneself above others, ultimately reducing harmful behavior toward others. Additionally, self-control manages angry behavior that stems from frustration and is expressed in the form of aggression (Vázquez et al., 2020).

Experimental studies have found that aggression can conflict with self-control-based inhibition of aggressive impulses. Angry thoughts and the desire for revenge seem to exert pressure on individuals, consuming self-control resources and thereby compromising the capacity to inhibit aggressive impulses. Thus, in the short term, high levels of self-control can prevent aggressive thoughts from turning into aggressive actions (Murray et al., 2016). For example, when someone becomes a victim of aggression, they typically have limitations in their ability to control themselves and in their social skills (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013).

Table 1. Aggressive Behaviors Influenced by Self-Control in Adolescents.

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
1	Maskori et al., (2023)	295 high school students	Direct online aggression (sending messages using profane language) and indirect aggression (posting content and spreading rumors)	There is a significant relationship between self-control and online aggression in high school students
2	Fried et al., (2015)	248 Adolescents	Hostile thoughts, anger, and physical aggression	Self-control skills are significantly positively correlated with positive emotions, social support, and happiness
3	Bin Li et al., (2018)	Adolescents (N=355, 146 males and 209 females)	Direct and indirect aggression	(a) Attachment to the father is associated with reduced aggressive behavior and victimization among boys and girls, (b) attachment to the

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
				mother is associated with fewer actions and victimization among girls, (c) self-control is related to reduced aggressive behavior and victimization among girls, and (d) self-control mediates the relationship between attachment to the father and victimization among girls
4	Agbaria & Natur, (2018)	160 Adolescents in grades 9-12	Physical aggression	A significant positive correlation was found between experiencing family violence and aggression, with a significant negative correlation between self-control and aggression
5	Neaverson et al., (2020)	Age 11 years (N=1144), age 13 years (N=1366), and age 15 years (N=1447)	Physical violence and aggressive behavior	The study results show that self-control has the strongest main effect on aggression at age 11, with the weakest main effect at age 15
6	Murray et al., (2016)	Adolescents aged 15 and 17 years	Aggressive thoughts and behavior	The tendency to experience aggressive thoughts appears stable and similar, declining between the ages of 15 and 17, and influenced by long-term aggressive behavior. Aggressive thoughts do not show evidence of a long-term causal relationship with self-control, but self-

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
				control appears to be influenced by aggressive behavior. The results are consistent with the self-control strength model, where changes in specific self-control behaviors can produce generalized effects
7	Özdemir et al., (2013)	546 Adolescents aged 14-18 years	Model aggression (parents)	The study results show that maternal closeness, peer approval from the father, and parental monitoring are positively and directly related to low self-control, and indirectly related to aggression through low self-control. Together, parenting processes and low self-control explain 21% of the variance in aggression
8	Bettencourt & Farrell, (2013)	502 students in grades 6-8	Behavioral intentions to engage in aggressive and non-violent behavior, instrumental and reactive aggression	Showing varying levels of aggression and the unique influence of internal and contextual factors on the development of aggression and victimization during adolescence. Specifically, these results illustrate how adolescents' social cognition becomes more sophisticated during adolescence due to increased social

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
				knowledge (e.g., beliefs that fighting is necessary in certain situations) and emphasize the growing influence of peers on adolescents
9	Shepperd et al., (2015)	1,040 Adolescents	Criminal behavior, risky behavior, and aggressive behavior	Self-control and compassion together mediate the religion-aggression relationship for both types of aggression
10	Morsunbul, (2015)	240 Adolescents (high school) and 244 Young Adults (college students) aged 15-24 years	Risky behavior, harmful behavior towards others, physical aggression (physically harming others), verbal aggression (verbally harming others), anger (affective aggression), and hostility (cognitive dimension of aggression)	The study results show that life course, deep exploration, ruminative exploration, self-esteem, and low self-control significantly predict aggression. According to the model analysis, the best predictor of aggression is low self-control; the weakest predictor of aggression in the life course
11	Vázquez et al., (2020)	1,000 Students aged 12 and 17 years	Proactive and reactive aggression in bullying/intimidation	The results show that gratitude and forgiveness are positively related to self-control. Gratitude, forgiveness, and self-control are also negatively related to reactive and proactive aggression. Forgiveness and gratitude have indirect relationships in reducing proactive and reactive aggression through their positive

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
				effects on self-control
12	Llorca et al., (2016)	470 Adolescents: (192 males & 225 females)	Physical and verbal aggression	Gender differences exist, and internal variables such as emotional instability are relevant to prevent the onset of depression directly in girls and the emergence of aggression later in life, mediated by anger, in both boys and girls. Therefore, anger management becomes an important goal to control other negative impacts.
13	Riva et al., (2017)	Participants (N=79)	Playing violent video games	This experiment highlights a possible neural basis underlying aggression related to violent media, specifically brain areas involved in regulating negative feelings and aggressive impulses.
14	Carr et al., (2016)	452 School-aged Adolescents aged 11-13 years	Physical aggression (hitting, pushing, and stabbing), verbal aggression (shouting and threatening), relational aggression, instrumental aggression, and reactive aggression	There are significant gender differences in the types of aggressive behavior and their predictors, suggesting the need to develop and implement more appropriate and gender-specific prevention and treatment approaches.
15	Moon & Jang, (2014)	296 School Students	Physical aggression (taking/damaging property, hitting/pushing, physical attacks) and psychological aggression	Strain and negative emotions are largely positively related to psychological or physical bullying, with

No	Authors	Subjects	Aggressive Behavior	Results
				negative emotions, anger, and depression partly mediating the bullying-strain relationship.

This systematic review aims to answer the research question about how self-control influences behavior in adolescents. Analysis of the research findings shows that out of the 15 journals investigated, 8 journals found a significant influence of self-control on aggressive behavior. Several other journals also explain that the higher the self-control ability possessed by adolescents, the lower their aggressive behavior, and conversely, the lower the self-control ability of adolescents, the higher their aggressive behavior.

The impact of aggressive behavior involves physical, mental, or psychological harm, including threats, mockery, slaps, and kicks. Lack of self-control can be a driving force for the most extreme aggressive actions, including acts of violence. Additional explanations also indicate that individuals with low levels of self-control are more likely to engage in criminal and deviant behaviors compared to those with high levels of self-control (Moon & Alarid, 2014). When aggressive behavior arises, the ability to control oneself can help individuals respond according to personal or social standards, which can restrain the occurrence of aggressive behavior.

Some problems that happen in adolescents are explained as failures in fulfilling developmental tasks. Some adolescents fail to develop the self-control that should be acquired according to their developmental stage. According to Havigurst, adolescent tasks involve responsibilities and understanding societal values (Monks, 2006). It is important for every individual, especially adolescents, to have good self-control skills. If adolescents cannot manage self-control effectively, there is a risk that they will experience an identity crisis, which can lead to negative behaviors (Widiarti, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Overall, research and findings from various studies affirm that self-control plays a significant role in shaping aggressive behavior in adolescents. The ability of adolescents to manage impulses, control emotions, and adhere to social norms is strongly correlated with lower levels of aggressiveness. High levels of self-control in adolescents tend to result in more positive behavior and reduce the tendency to engage in aggressive behavior. Self-control has a significant influence on aggressiveness in adolescents. The ability of adolescents to control impulses, manage emotions, and adhere to social norms can play a role in determining the extent to which they are likely to engage in aggressive behavior. Out of 15 journals, 8 state that self-control plays an important role in aggressive behavior in adolescents.

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