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The Effect of Identity Development, Self-Esteem, Low Self-Control and Gender on Aggression in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Aggression seems to be an extensive and serious problem among adolescents and emerging adults, negatively affecting both the victims and the offenders. In adolescence and emerging adulthood, a lot of factors affect aggression. In this study, five factors were examined: gender, life periods, identity formation, low self-control and self-esteem.

Purpose of the Study: The aim of the study is to examine the relations between identity dimensions, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life period (adolescence and emerging adulthood) with aggression.

Method: For this purpose, a structural equation model was developed and tested. In this model, the dependent variable was aggression and the independent variables were demographic variables (gender and life period), identity dimensions, self-esteem and low self-control. Participants consisted of 240 adolescents (high school students—132 female and 108 male) and 244 emerging adults (university students—128 female and 116 male) and their age was between 15-24 years old (mean age=18.99, SD=2.62). The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire, The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale, The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and The Low Self-Control Scale were used to collect data.

Findings: Results of the overall fit indexes of the structural equation model revealed that fit indexes are at acceptable levels. Results of this study showed that life period, exploration in depth, ruminative exploration, self-esteem and low self-control significantly predicted aggression. According to model analysis, the best predictor of aggression was low self-control; the weakest predictor of aggression was life period.

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Conclusion and Recommendations: The present study provides important results. The first result is that aggression level changes according to life period. The second is that low self-control, self-esteem and some identity dimensions are crucial factors for aggression in adolescence and emerging adulthood. The results of the study provide several important explanations for counselors and educators. In order to reduce aggression, counselors, educators and mental health practitioners should consider identity, self-esteem and self-control. When counselors and educators prepare school-based intervention programs, they should consider the important predictors of aggression.

Keywords: Problem behavior, adolescent, emerging adulthood

Introduction

Aggression seems to be an extensive and serious problem among adolescents and emerging adults, and it negatively affects both the victims and the offenders (Arnett, 2000; Stein, Apter, Ratzoni, Har-Even & Avidan, 1998). Aggression has been defined through different perspectives; however, the most accepted definition is a behavior aimed at damaging others (Kassinove & Sukhodolsky, 1995). Aggression may be in different forms: physical aggression (to damage others physically), verbal aggression (to damage others verbally), anger (affective state of aggression), and finally, hostility (cognitive dimension of aggression) (Fives, Kong, Fuller & DiGiuseppe, 2011).

In adolescence and emerging adulthood, a lot of factors (i.e., gender roles, cultural norms, type of school, parental behavior, and conflict resolution skills) affect aggression. In this study, five factors were examined: gender, life periods, identity formation, low self-control and self-esteem. The basic constructions on adolescence and emerging adulthood appear around identity development (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). For adolescents and emerging adults, identity development seems to be the most important developmental issue. Marcia's *Identity Status Model* is based on Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Theory (1968), and the basic concepts of this model have been used in many researches. Marcia (1966) proposed four identity statuses based on exploration and commitment processes. They are achievement, foreclosure, moratorium and diffusion identity statuses. Although the identity status model has been used frequently, it has been criticized (Cote & Levine, 1988; van Hoof, 1999) in some ways. The major criticism is that the identity status model focuses on results of identity development. Recently, some new models have been proposed to focus more on processes of identity development than outcomes of identity development. Luyckx and colleagues (Luyckx et al., 2008a; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens & Pollock, 2008b; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens & Soenens, 2008c) proposed the *Five-Dimensional Model of Identity Formation Model*. This model has two main arguments. The first is that the exploration process may not be usually adaptive and the second is that the process of identity development should be investigated to evaluate identity formation. In this model, different types of exploration and commitment processes were defined. Respectively, *commitment making* shows the degree to which individuals have made decisions about alternatives related to identity. *Identification with commitment* shows the degree to which individuals

identify themselves with existing choices. *Exploration in breadth* shows the degree to which individuals search for alternatives about identity. *Exploration in depth* shows the degree to which individuals reevaluate their available commitments, and, finally, *ruminative exploration* shows that individuals permanently search different alternatives but the searching process isn't concluded with commitment making. That is, individuals become ''stuck'' in the exploration process. Studies have demonstrated (Author, 2013; Crocetti, Schwartz, Fermani & Meuss, 2010; Luyckx et al., 2008a; Schwartz et al., 2011) that ruminative exploration was positively related to both aggression and risk behaviors, but two commitment dimensions were negatively related to aggression and risk behaviors.

The low self-control theory proposed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) has been used in a lot of studies to explain crime and aggression. Low self-control is defined as behaving impulsively, enjoying risk taking, preferring physical activities to mental activities and being self-centered (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Ozdemir, Vazsonyi & Cok, 2013). Studies have demonstrated (Britt & Gottfredson, 2003; Hay, 2001; Ozdemir et al, 2013; Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2007) that low self-control is an important predictor of crime, deviance and aggression. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) proposed that experiences in early childhood determine a child's self-control and this is relatively transferred to later life periods. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), people who have low self-control are both impulsive and self-centered and they show more aggressive behaviors. Several factors (i.e., family structure, parenting behaviors) affect levels of self-control (Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2007). Research has demonstrated (Gibbs, Giever, & Higgins, 2003; Ozdemir et al, 2013; Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2007) that family processes and parental monitoring bring about low self-control.

Another factor that affects aggression is self-esteem. Self-esteem is generally defined as how the individuals feel about themselves (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem is an important psychological variable because it affects many parts of an individual's life (Kernis, 2003). Research has demonstrated (Bayraktar, Sayil & Kumru, 2009; Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt & Caspi, 2005; Fergusson & Horwood, 2002; Lowenstein, 1989; Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989) that individuals with low self-esteem show higher externalizing problems such as delinquency, antisocial problems and aggression. According to Rosenberg (1965), individuals with low self-esteem have weak relations with society, and this gives rise to more delinquency and aggression. Individuals with low self-esteem are generally unhappy and dissatisfied with themselves (Kernis, 2003).

Gender may be an important factor that affects aggression. Although some studies (Duncan,1999; Moroschan, Hurd & Nicoladis, 2009) have shown that males display higher aggression behavior, other studies (Archer, 2004; Leenaars & Rinaldi, 2010; Osterman et al.,1994) failed to find gender differences in aggression. According to Buss and Perry (1992), gender differences in aggressive behavior differ in terms of sub dimensions of aggression. Gender differences increase in physical and verbal aggression and decrease in hostility and anger.

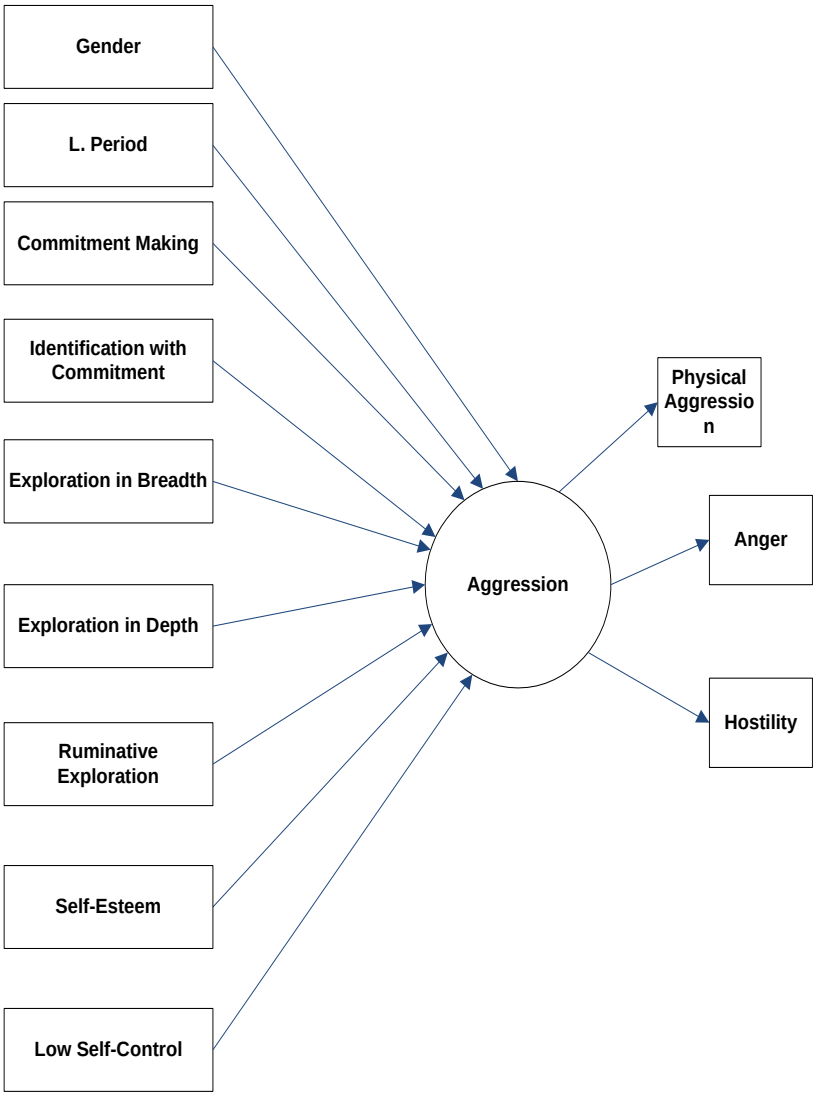
The last factor examined in the present study is life period. In the present study, both adolescence and emerging adulthood periods were investigated. According to Arnett (2000), identity formation is the main task during emerging adulthood, while

Erikson (1968) proposed that adolescence is a crucial life stage for identity formation. In the emerging adulthood period, individuals try to explore their identity and may show more risky behavior than adolescents (Arnett, Ramos & Jensen, 2001; White & Jackson, 2005). On the other hand, aggressive behavior peaks in middle to late adolescence and declines in emerging adulthood (Xue, Zimmerman & Cunnighham, 2009).

Until now, aggression has been examined generally either only in adolescence or only in emerging adulthood. In the present study, aggression was investigated both in adolescence and emerging adulthood periods. Moreover, aggressive behavior was explored in terms of different variables (identity formation, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life periods) in this study. Thus, this study will contribute to a better understanding of aggressive behavior in adolescence and emerging adulthood periods.

In light of the related literature, the aim of the study is to examine the relations of identity dimensions, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life period (adolescence and emerging adulthood) with aggression. The hypothesis model of this study has been shown below:

Figure 1. Hypothesis Model



In the present study, it was hypothesized that (1) being male would positively predict aggression, (2) being in the adolescence period would positively predict aggression, (3) commitment dimensions would negatively predict aggression, and exploration dimensions would positively predict aggression, (4) low self-control would positively predict aggression, and (5) self-esteem would negatively predict aggression.

Method

Research Design

This cross-sectional study was designed to examine the contribution of identity dimensions, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life period (adolescence and emerging adulthood) on aggression. For this purpose, a structural equation model was developed and tested. In this model, the dependent variable was aggression, and it was constructed as a latent variable. Indicators of latent variable were physical aggression, anger and hostility. Because Cronbach's alpha value of verbal aggression was low, it was not used in this study. Independent variables were demographic variables (gender and life period), identity dimensions, self-esteem and low self-control.

Research Sample

Data was collected from 484 (260 female and 224 male) students from several high schools in Aksaray and from the Faculty of Education at Aksaray University in the 2011-2012 academic years. Participants were selected through the purposive sampling procedure (Buyukozturk et al., 2008). Of the participants, 240 were adolescents (high school students, 132 female and 108 male) and 244 were emerging adults (university students, 128 female and 116 male) and their age was between 15-24 years old (M_{age} =18.99, SD_{age} =2.62). Adolescents' age was between 15-18 years old (M_{age} =16.63, SD_{age} =.79). Emerging adults' age was between 19-24 years old (M_{age} =21.31, SD_{age} =1.45). University students were defined as emerging adults based on results of previous studies (Atak & Cok, 2007; Atak & Cok, 2008; Morsunbul, 2013). The results of this study indicated that university students can be seen as emerging adults in Turkey.

Research Instrument and Procedure

Demographics. In order to obtain information on demographic features of the participants, a personal data form was used.

Aggression. The *Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BAQ)* (developed by Buss and Perry (1992) and adapted to Turkish by Madran (2013)) was used to determine aggression. This scale has 29 items and four subscales: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores on the scale items demonstrate higher levels of aggression. The Cronbach's alpha values were total aggression .85, verbal aggression .48, physical aggression .78, anger .76, and hostility .71 in the study of adaptation. According to the data of the study, Cronbach's alpha values were total aggression .76, verbal aggression .46, physical aggression .76, anger .74, and hostility .72. Because Cronbach's alpha value of verbal aggression was low, it was not used in this study.

Identity dimensions. The *Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS)* (developed by Luyckx et al. (2008a) and adapted to Turkish by Morsunbul and Cok (2014)), was used to determine identity dimensions. This scale has 25 items and five subscales: commitment making, identification with commitment, exploration in breadth, exploration in depth and ruminative exploration. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha values were commitment making .88, identification with commitment .87, exploration in breadth .84, exploration in depth .78, and ruminative exploration .79. According to data of the study, Cronbach's alpha values were commitment making .87, identification with commitment .84, exploration in breadth .84, exploration in depth.75, and ruminative exploration .80.

Self-esteem. The *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)* (developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted to Turkish by Cuhadaroğlu (1986)) was used to determine self-esteem. This scale has 10 items and each item was rated on a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores on the scale items demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem. Cuhadaroglu (1986) reported test-retest reliability coefficients of .71 during a 4-week period on the Turkish version. According to data of the study, Cronbach's alpha value is .73.

Low self-control. The *Low Self-Control Scale (LSCS)* (developed by Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik & Arneklev. (1993) and adapted to Turkish by Ozdemir et al. (2013)) was used to determine low self-control. This scale has 24 items and each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores on the scale items demonstrate higher levels of low self-control. Cronbach's alpha value is .83 in the study of adaptation. According to data of the study, Cronbach's alpha value is .82.

Data were collected voluntarily from students during class time. The aim of the study was explained to the students before the application of the instruments. The completion of the scales took approximately 40 minutes.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze participants' demographic features, descriptive statistics were used. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the contribution of identity dimensions, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life period (adolescence and emerging adulthood) on aggression. Prior to conducting a model analysis, the assumptions of the model (outlier, multicollinearity, relations between the variables, and sample size) were tested. Results indicated that the assumptions of the model were provided.

Results

In this section, first descriptive statistics then zero-order correlations among all variables and structural equation modeling results were given.

Descriptive Statistics.

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for all scales. Table 2 presents zero-order correlations among all variables. Consistent with expectations, commitment making ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$), identification with commitment ($r = -.09$, $p <$

.05) and self-esteem (r = -.28, p < .01) were negatively related to total aggression and ruminative exploration (r = .31, p < .01), exploration in depth (r = .14, p < .01) and low self-control (r = .53, p < .01) were positively related to total aggression. Inconsistent with expectations, exploration in breadth (r = .03, p > .05) wasn't related to total aggression.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	X	Sd
Total Aggression	68.33	11.42
Physical Aggression	25.76	4.92
Anger	19.74	3.73
Hostility	22.83	4.49
Commitment Making	18.95	3.72
Identification with Commitment	18.63	3.85
Exploration in Breadth	18.66	3.99
Exploration in Depth	18.49	3.58
Ruminative Exploration	15.05	4.69
Self-Esteem	20.11	4.68
Low Self-Control	68.20	12.56

Table 2

Zero-Order Correlations among the Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14
1Gen	-												
2L.Per	-.02	-											
3TA	.01	.18**	-										
4PA	-.07	.18**	.85**	-									
5AN	-.16**	.22**	.86**	.60**	-								
6HO	.07	.07	.87**	.58**	.71**	-							
7CM	-.16**	-.13**	-.15**	-.09*	-.12**	-.19**	-						
8IC	-.21**	-.10*	-.09*	-.08*	-.11**	-.14**	.73**	-					
9EB	-.13**	-.21**	.03	.05	-02	.02	.39**	.51**	-				
10ED	-.13**	-.17**	.14**	.11*	.10*	.14**	.37**	.40**	.64**	-			
11RE	.11*	.13**	.31**	.19**	.35**	.27**	-.47**	-.46**	-.07	-.07	-		
12SE	.04	.15**	-.28**	-.23**	-.27**	-17**	.20**	.23**	.10*	-08	-.39**	-	
13LSC	.02	.23**	.53**	.41**	.51**	.47**	-25**	-.26**	-.05	.06	.43**	-.35**	-

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Gen: Gender, L. Per: Life Period, TA: Total Aggression, PA: Physical Aggression, AN: Anger, HO: Hostility, CM: Commitment Making, IC: Identification with Commitment, EB: Exploration in Breadth, ED: Exploration in Depth, RE: Ruminative Exploration, SE: Self-Esteem, LSC: Low Self-Control

Results of Structural Equation Model

Table 3 presents overall fit indexes of the structural equation model. They revealed that fit indexes are at acceptable levels (Kline, 2005), (sd = 16, $\chi 2$ = 62.21 (p = 0.00), RMR=0.03, SRMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.054, GFI= 0.96, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.91). Overall fit indexes of the structural equation model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Overall Fit Indexes Related to Post-Hoc Model Variances

The good fit index	Value	Acceptable Levels
$\chi 2$/sd * (62, 21/16)	3.88	<5
RMSEA	0.05	<0.08
NNFI	0.91	>0.90
CFI	0.95	>0.90
RMR	0.03	<0.08
SRMR	0.05	<0.08
NFI	0.91	>0.90
GFI	0.96	>0.90

* p<.01

The standardized coefficients for each parameter are presented in Figure 2. Figure 2 showed that relations between aggression and independent variables vary between .04 and .46. According to demographic variables, there isn't a significant relation between gender and aggression (β = -.07, t = -1.76, p> .05); however, there is a significant relation between life period and aggression (β = .11, t = 2.49, p< .05). These findings point out that adolescents showed higher aggression behavior than emerging adults.

Among the identity dimensions, there are significant relations between exploration in depth and aggression (β = .15, t = 2.69, p< .01) and between ruminative exploration and aggression (β = .22, t = 3.74, p< .01). These findings showed that exploration in depth and ruminative exploration increased individuals' aggression level. Among the identity dimensions, commitment making (β = -.08, t = -1.26, p> .05), identification with commitment (β = -.09, t = -1.43, p> .05), and exploration in breadth (β = -.08, t = -.04, p> .05) didn't significantly predict aggression level.

In terms of self-esteem, there is a significant relation between self-esteem and aggression (β = -.19, t = 3.21, p< .01). This finding points out that higher self-esteem level diminishes aggression level.

In terms of low self-control, there is a significant relation between low self-control and aggression (β = .46, t = 8.83, p< .01). This finding points out that higher low self-control level increases aggression level.

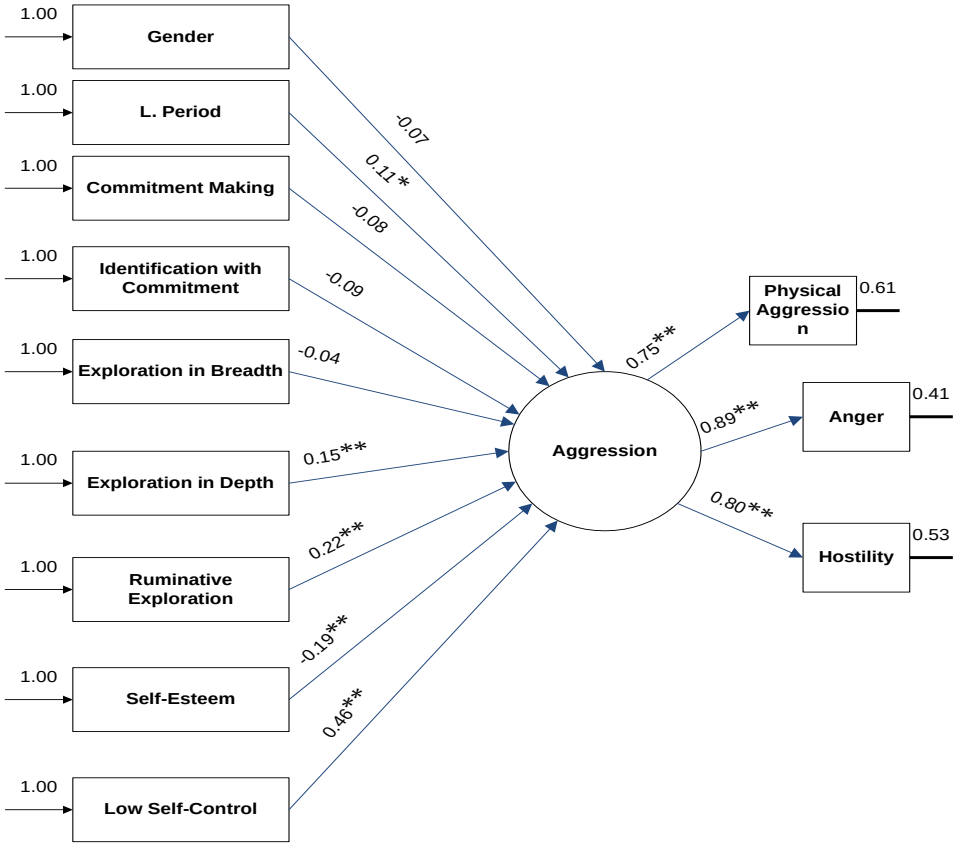


Figure 2. Final Model (Standardized Coefficients)

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Gender: 0=Female, 1=Male

Life Period: 0 = Emerging Adulthood, 1 = Adolescence

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the study is to examine the relations of identity dimensions, low self-control, self-esteem, gender and life period (adolescence and emerging adulthood) with aggression. Results of this study showed that life period, exploration in depth, ruminative exploration, self-esteem and low self-control significantly predicted aggression. These results are consistent with results of prior studies (Bayraktar et al., 2009; Britt & Gottfredson, 2003; Crocetti et al., 2010; Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt & Caspi, 2005; Fergusson & Horwood, 2002; Hay, 2001; Luyckx, Goossens & Soenens, 2006a; Ozdemir et al, 2013; Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989; Schwartz et al., 2011; Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2007).

According to demographic variables, life period significantly predicted aggression; however, gender did not significantly predict aggression. For gender, there are different results in literature. Some studies (Duncan, 1999; Moroschan, Hurd & Nicoladis, 2009) have indicated that males display higher aggression behavior, while others (Owens, Daly & Slee, 2005) have shown that females display higher aggression. However, other studies (Leeanare & Rinaldi, 2010; Osterman et al., 1994) have shown that there is no difference between the genders in aggression behaviors. The results of this study on gender might be associated with how aggression was examined. In the present study, aggression scores were examined as a latent variable. Thus, sub dimensions of aggression were not examined separately. According to Buss and Perry (1992), gender differences appear particularly in sub dimensions of aggression (especially in physical aggression).

Life period is also an important factor for aggression. Results of this study have indicated that being in an adolescent period increases aggression. This result is consistent with a second hypothesis of this study. According to Xue, Zimmerman and Cunnighham (2009), aggressive behavior increases in middle to late adolescence and declines in emerging adulthood. Studies also have shown that physical aggression decreases but indirect aggression increases from childhood to adolescence (Barker, Tremblay, Nagin, Vitaro, & Lacourse, 2006; Campbell et al., 2010; Cote, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin & Tremblay, 2007; Underwood, Beron & Rosen, 2009; Vaillancourt, Miller, Fagbemi, Cote, & Tremblay, 2007). Arnett (2000) has proposed that during the period of emerging adulthood, emerging adults try to explore their identity. In this process, they engage in different kinds of actions such as substance use and other risky behaviors. Studies have shown (Arnett, Ramos & Jensen, 2001; Morsunbul, 2013; Bukobza, 2009; Uludagli & Sayil, 2009; White & Jackson, 2005) that emerging adults display higher risk taking behavior than adolescents. This study has found that adolescents show higher aggression than emerging adults. Although risk taking and aggression are negative behaviors, they are different variables. Aggression implies any behavior aimed at damaging others, while risk taking is aimed at one's self (Uludagli & Sayil, 2009). Consequently, it may be said that aggressive behavior decreases while risk taking increases from adolescence to emerging adulthood.

Identity formation is an important developmental task for both adolescents and emerging adults (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). According to the results of this study, exploration in depth and ruminative exploration are crucial factors for aggression; both exploration processes increase individuals' aggression levels. In exploration in

depth, individuals reevaluate their commitment and, after this evaluation, individuals either identify with their commitment or turn back to the starting point. In ruminative exploration, individuals are permanently in an exploration process—this process does not finish with commitment (Luyckx et al., 2008a). That is, if the exploration process lengthens, individuals may show more aggression. Studies have indicated (Morsunbul, 2013; Crocetti et al., 2010; Luyckx et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2011) that exploration dimensions cause aggression and risk taking, but commitment dimensions are protective factors for aggression and risk taking. Model analysis revealed that commitment dimensions didn't significantly predict aggression.

Another finding of this study is the negative relation between self-esteem and aggression. Model analysis indicated that self-esteem predicts aggression in a negative way. That is, a high self-esteem level decreases individuals' aggression level. Individuals who have high self-esteem show lower aggression compared to those who have low self-esteem (Bayraktar et al., 2009; Fergusson & Horwood, 2002; Saylor & Denham, 1993). Individuals with low self-esteem have weak relations with society, and this gives rise to more delinquency and aggression. Moreover, individuals with low self-esteem do not use interpersonal conflict resolutions that are effective and constructive (Sahin, Basım & Cetin, 2009).

Another important result of this study is the high and positive relation between low self-control and aggression. According to model analysis, the best predictor of aggression is low self-control. Low self-control causes a high aggression level. According to Tangney, Baumeister and Boone (2004), high self-control positively contributes to individuals' lives while low self-control has a negative contribution. People who have low self-control show disorders such as hyperactivity, delinquency and conduct disorders (Douglas, 1983; Krueger, Caspi, Moffitt, White & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996; Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985). People who have high self-control may adapt to their environment more easily by controlling their inner responses and undesired behavioral tendencies (Tangney et al., 2004).

In summary, the resent study put forward important results. The first result is that aggression level changes according to life period. The second is that low self-control, self-esteem and some identity dimensions are crucial factors for aggression in adolescence and emerging adulthood.

The results of the study provided several important explanations for counselors and educators. In order to reduce aggression, counselors, educators and mental health practitioners should consider identity, self-esteem and self-control. When counselors and educators prepare school-based intervention programs they should consider the important predictors of aggression.

The present study has some limitations. A major limitation of this study is the cross-sectional study design. To understand the changes in aggression from adolescence to emerging adulthood, we need to carry out a longitudinal study. Another limitation is that participants of this study are high school and university students. We need to work with non-student groups to better explain aggression.

Despite these limitations, this study involved several strengths. First, gender, life period, identity development, self-esteem, and low self-control variables were used together in order to examine aggression. Second, this study revealed differences

between two groups since data was collected both from adolescents and emerging adults groups.

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Ergenlik ve Beliren Yetişkinlik Dönemlerinde Kimlik Gelişiminin, Benlik Saygısının, Düşük Benlik Kontrolünün ve Cinsiyetin Saldırganlık Üzerindeki Etkisi

Atıf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Saldırganlık artan biçimde hem ergenler hem de beliren yetişkinler arasında yaşanan bir problemdir. Saldırganlık hem saldırı eyleminde bulunanı hem de eyleme maruz kalanın hayatını olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Saldırganlık farklı bakış açılarından farklı biçimlerde tanımlanmaktadır ancak en sık kullanılan tanımı başkalarına zarar vermeyi amaçlayan davranışlar olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Ergenlik ve beliren yetişkinlik döneminde saldırganlığı etkileyen pe çok değişken bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma kapsamında kimlik gelişimi boyutları, benlik saygısı ve düşük benlik kontrolünün etkisi incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma kapsamında bu değişkenlerin incelenmesi ergenlik ve beliren yetişkinlik dönemlerinde saldırgan davranışların açıklanmasına katkı sağlayabilir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı kimlik gelişimi boyutlarının, düşük benlik kontrolünün, benlik saygısının, cinsiyetin ve yaşam dönemlerinin (ergenlik, beliren yetişkinlik) saldırganlık ile ilişkilerinin incelenmesidir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda yapısal eşitlik modeli geliştirilmiş ve test edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu araştırma kesitsel desenin kullanıldığı bir çalışmadır. Çalışmanın katılımcılarını 484 (260 kadın ve 224 erkek) öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların 240'ı ergen (lise öğrencileri,132 kadın ve108 erkek) 244'ü ise beliren yetişkindir (üniversite öğrencileri,128 (kadın ve 116 erkek). Araştırmada saldırganlığı belirlemek amacıyla 29 maddeden oluşan saldırganlık ölçeği, kimlik boyutlarını belirlemek amacıyla 25 maddeden oluşan Kimlik Gelişiminin Boyutları Ölçeği, benlik saygısını belirlemek amacıyla 10 maddeden oluşan Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği ve son olarak da düşük benlik kontrolünü belirlemek amacıyla 24 maddeden oluşan Düşük Benlik Kontrolü Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Çalışma da cinsiyetin, yaşam dönemlerinin, kimlik gelişimi boyutlarının, benlik saygısının ve düşük benlik kontrolünün saldırganlık üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek amacıyla yapısal eşitlik modeli geliştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın bağımlı değişkeni saldırganlıktır. Saldırganlık örtük değişken olarak tanımlanmıştır. Örtük değişkeni fiziksel saldırganlık, öfke ve düşmanlık gözlenen değişkenleri belirlemektedir. Çalışmada sözel saldırganlık değişkeni düşük güvenirlilik değeri nedeniyle analize dahil edilmemiştir. Araştırmanın bağımsız değişkenleri ise cinsiyet, yaşam dönemleri, kimlik gelişiminin boyutları, benlik saygısı ve düşük benlik kontrolüdür. Katılımcıların demografik özelliklerinin ve ölçme araçlarının ortalama puanlarının analizinde frekans ve yüzde dağılımı ve betimsel istatistikler kullanılmıştır. Bağımlı ve bağımsız değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri belirlemek amacıyla Korelasyon Analizi kullanılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında geliştirilen modeli test etmek amacıyla Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli Analizi kullanılmıştır. Çalışma da ölçme araçlarının sınıflar da uygulanması için derse giren ilgili öğretim elemanlarından izin alınmıştır. Ölçme araçları doldurulmadan önce araştırma grubuna çalışma ve ölçme araçları ile ilgili kısa bilgiler aktarılmıştır. Katılımcıların çalışmaya katılımın da gönüllülük esas alınmıştır. Ölçeklerin uygulanması araştırmacılar tarafından bir ders saatinde yapılmış olup yaklaşık olarak 40 dakika sürmüştür.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Korelasyon analizi sonuçlarına göre toplam saldırganlık puanı ile içsel yatırımda bulunma (r = -.15, p < .01), içsel yatırımla özdeşleşme ile özdeşleşme (r = -.09, p < .05) ve benlik saygısı (r = -.28, p < .01) arasında negatif yönde anlamlı ilişkinin olduğu saptanmıştır. Toplam saldırganlık puanı ile seçeneklerin saplantılı araştırılması (r = .31, p < .01), seçeneklerin derinlemesine araştırılması (r = .14, p < .01) ve düşük benlik kontrolü (r = .53, p < .01) arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır. Beklenenden farklı olarak toplam saldırganlık puanı ile seçeneklerin genişlemesine araştırılması (r = .03, p > .05) arasında anlamlı ilişki saptanmamıştır. Çalışma kapsamında geliştirilen yapısal eşitlik modeline ait iyilik uyum değerleri kabul edilebilir düzeydedir (sd = 16, $\chi 2$ = 62.21 (p = 0.00), RMR=0.03, SRMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.054, GFI= 0.96, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.91). Yapısal eşitlik modeli analizi sonuçlarına göre yaşam dönemi (β = .11, t = 2.49, p< .05), seçeneklerin derinlemesine araştırılması (β = .15, t = 2.69, p< .01), seçeneklerin saplantılı araştırılması (β = .22, t = 3.74, p< .01), benlik saygısı (β = -.19, t = 3.21, p< .01) ve düşük benlik kontrolü saldırganlığı (β = .46, t = 8.83, p< .01) anlamlı olarak yordamaktadır. Bulgular genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde saldırganlığın en güçlü yordayıcısı düşük benlik kontrolü iken en zayıf yordayıcısı ise yaşam dönemidir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu çalışmanın sonuçları yaşam döneminin, seçeneklerin derinlemesine araştırılması, seçeneklerin saplantılı araştırılması, benlik saygısının ve düşük benlik kontrolünün saldırganlığı anlamlı yönde yordadığını göstermiştir. Bu sonuçlar daha önce yapılan çalışmaların sonuçları ile tutarlı görünmektedir. Yaşam dönemleri açısından ergenlerin beliren yetişkinlerden daha yüksek düzeyde saldırganlık davranışları ortaya koyduğunu göstermiştir. Kimlik boyutları açısından bakıldığında seçeneklerin derinlemesine araştırılması ve seçeneklerin saplantılı araştırılması boyutlarının saldırganlık davranışlarını artırdığını göstermiştir. Seçeneklerin derinlemesine araştırılması bireylerin var olan içsel yatırımlarını tekrar derinlemesine değerlendirme sürecidir. Bu süreç içsel yatırımla sonuçlanmadığında bireyler tekrar seçenekleri genişlemesine araştırma sürecine başlar. Seçeneklerin saplantılı araştırılması sürecinde de bireyler herhangi bir içsel yatırımda bulunmadıkları için daha fazla saldırganlık gösterebilirler. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre bireylerin benlik saygısının yüksek olması saldırganlık düzeyini düşürmektedir. Bu çalışmanın en önemli sonuçlarından biri düşük benlik kontrolünün saldırganlığın en güçlü yordayıcısı olduğudur.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayanarak ergenlik ve beliren yetişkinlik döneminde saldırganlık açısından sorun yaşayan bireylerle çalışan uzmanların bireylerin kimlik gelişimini, benlik saygısını ve düşük benlik düzeylerini göz önünde bulundurmaları yararlı olabilir.

Bu çalışma önemli sonuçlar ortaya koymasına rağmen bazı sınırlılıklar göstermektedir. Bu çalışma kesitsel bir çalışmadır ancak saldırganlığın gelişimsel olarak daha iyi değerlendirilebilmesi için bundan sonraki çalışmalarda boylamsal desenin kullanılması daha yararlı olabilir. Çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlılığı da katılımcıların sadece öğrencilerden oluşmasıdır. Bundan sonraki çalışmalar da öğrenci olmayan gruplarla çalışılması saldırganlığı değerlendirme açısından daha doğru sonuçlar ortaya koyabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Problem davranış, ergen, beliren yetişkin