

ANGER EXPRESSION AND PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AMONG ADOLESCENTS: MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

The present study explored the relationship between anger expression, self-esteem, and parent-child relationship among adolescents also the mediating role of self-esteem influencing the relationship between anger expression and parent child relationship among adolescents.

STUDY DESIGN

It was a correlational research design.

PLACE AND DURATION OF STUDY

The data were collected from four different government schools in Lahore by employing convenience sampling technique from June 2021 to April 2022.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD

The sample comprised 479 adolescents of age range 10 to 18 years with mean age 13.87+ 1.53 years including 239 (50%) boys and 240 (50%) girls. The data was collected from four different government schools of Lahore by employing convenience sampling techniques. The Anger Expression Scale for Adolescents (AESAs), Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS), Self Esteem Scale for Children (SESC) were used for assessment.

RESULTS

The results showed that anger expression is negatively related to self-esteem and closeness in parent-child relationship, while positively related to rejection and distant parent-child relationships. Results also showed that self-esteem is a positively related closeness aspect of the parent child relationship. The results of Mediation through PROCESS macro showed a significant mediating role of self-esteem in determining the relationship between anger expressions and parent-child relationship (closeness, rejection and distant) among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The mediating role of self-esteem in anger expression and parent-child relationship highlighted in the present study. This study has a major contribution in the field of counseling psychology, specifically focusing on the adolescent's behavioral problem, highlighting the significant role of parental relationship in their lives and resulting behavioural issues.

KEYWORDS

Anger expression, Self-esteem, Parent-child relationship, Adolescents, Behavioural issues.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional time between childhood and adulthood, characterised by adaptation, learning and changes. It is a period in which youth experiences physiological, emotional, social, and cognitive changes.¹ As a result, adolescents face many issues, and experiencing anger is one of the most significant problems that youth face. Some adolescents seem to coast through all of these; however, others find themselves in a significant challenge.² Anger has been defined as a negative, destructive emotion often related to sorrow, trouble, rage, and wrath.³ It is a subjective emotional state that involves the interrelationships of psychological components and cognitive appraisal and a negative emotional state associated with cognitive distortion, physiological changes, and behavioral reactions.^{4,5} Although anger is considered as a commonly occurring natural emotion, or internal event, but the problems arise when there is an inappropriate expression of anger.⁶

Anger is associated with serious harm and in the worst-case scenario, homicides may result. Further, if an adolescent's anger occurs with aggression, a host of additional negative consequences may ensue.⁷ It has been argued that the most common reason due to which adolescents are being referred for mental health services are anger-related problems (e.g., verbal, and physical aggression, violence).⁸ The adolescents also experience other difficult feelings such as sadness and frustration, which often trigger anger in them. However, anger can be one of the means of deflecting or avoiding these emotions.⁹ When adolescents fail to control anger, it leads to aggression. This is among the most serious concerns of parents, educators, and the mental health community. There are multiple factors that contribute to anger and its expression among adolescents. These factors include biological influences, sociocultural forces, cognitive and the role of school, peer and parents.¹⁰ A study found a link between feelings of anger and its expression with the decreased social support, problems in interpersonal relationships, lack of coping skills and rejection from peers among adolescents.¹¹

Furthermore, the changes that occur during adolescents' age also affect their feelings and perception of themselves, their parents and others.¹² As family is the first learning experience for adolescents, and poor relationships, and parent's aggressive behavior may lead to adolescents' tendency to easily express their anger in a hostile way.¹³ In terms of attachment relationships, the role of child's upbringing has been found very affective to influence the social/emotional development of a child. Those children who are not very



attached to their parents tend to show high levels of aggression and angry behaviour towards others, and they are found to have less closeness with their parents.^{14,15} Those adolescents who have two-way communication with their parents are likely to be willing to share the reasons for their anger with their parents.¹⁶ Unstable parent-adolescent relationship decreases the possibility of two-way communication and affects their self-esteem. The poor parent-adolescent relationships negatively influence self-esteem, while the closeness with parents is positively linked with adolescent self-esteem.^{17,18} Additionally, unstable high self-esteem is associated with high tendencies to experience anger and hostility.¹⁹ It is suggested that having low self-esteem leads to the weakening of ties with the society which reduces observance of social norms and increases delinquency and aggression.²⁰

Keeping in view the above-mentioned facts, the study has following objectives:

- * To find out a relationship between anger expression, self-esteem, and parent-adolescent relationship among adolescents.
- * To assess the mediating role of self-esteem influencing the relationship between anger expression and parent child relationship among adolescents.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD

The ethical approval was sought from the Institutional Review Board of the School of Professional Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore. The period of study was from June 2021 to April 2022.

Participants

The sample consisted of 479 adolescents of age ranged 10 to 18 years with mean age 13.87+ 1.53 years. The sample included 239 (50%) boys and 240 (50%) girls. Data were collected from four different government school from 6th to 10th grade students by employing convenience sampling techniques. Only Middle and high school level students were included as they fall in adolescent's category. Primary level students were excluded. The adolescents with any form of disability i.e., physical, or intellectual disability were excluded.

Instruments

The following measures were used in the present study:

Anger Expression Scale for Adolescents (AESA)²¹

It is a 30-items self-report measure which was used to assess the level of anger expression among adolescents. It consists of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 - 3 (0= never, 1= to some extent, 2= usually, 3= very much). It measures three types of anger expressions: passive anger expression, verbal anger expression, and active anger expression. The responses of all the items yield the score of the overall scale and its subscales. Higher the score indicated higher anger expression among adolescents. This scale has high content validity with simple and understandable words. It also had high internal consistency and reliability with $\alpha = .87$. However, its subscales reported the reliability ranged between .75 to .79.

Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS)²²

This scale was used to gather data about the type of relationship that adolescents have with their parents. It is 52 items scale with 4 points Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 3, where 0 = almost wrong, 1 = wrong to some extent, 2 = true to some extent" and 3 = almost true. It assesses adolescents' relationship with their parents in three different domains, i.e., closeness, rejection and distant. This scale has good alpha reliability, $\alpha = .72$.

Self Esteem Scale for Children (SESC)²³

It is a 44 items self-report measure used to assess the self-esteem of adolescents. It measures self-esteem in four different domains named as, academic self-esteem, self-confidence, social self-esteem, and low self-esteem. It is based on a 4-point Likert type rating scale that ranges from 0 to 4, with responses "not at all" to "always". The sum of all the items gives the score of self-esteem, higher the score, higher the self-esteem in adolescents. This scale showed good alpha reliability, $\alpha = .79$.

Procedure

Before starting the study, the formal permissions from the authors to use the scales were taken. Then, four different government schools of Lahore were approached for data collection. Permission was taken from the school principal and the students were approached in their classrooms. Before the administration, students were briefed about the purpose and nature of the study, and they were also ensured about their ethical rights. Informed consent was taken from the students, and they were also given the right to quit. All the ethical considerations were strictly catered. Students took an average half an hour to complete the protocol. The data was collected from 485 adolescents studying in 6th to 10th grade. Out of 485 samples, some of the data was discarded due to incomplete responses on the measures. So, the response rate was 98%. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. The results were reported accurately.

RESULTS

The analyses were done using SPSS version 22. In the first step, descriptive statistics and psychometric properties of the measures were determined using reliability analyses (Table 1). In the second step, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was run to see the relationship among the study variables (Table 2). In the third step, mediation analysis using PROCESS Macro was run to see the mediating role of self-esteem influencing the relationship of anger expressions and parent-child relationships among adolescents (Table 3).

The results of table 1 represent the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of the Anger Expression Scale for Adolescents, Self Esteem Scale for Children and Parent-Child Relationship Scale. The results showed that all the scales have good reliability and enough to carry out further analyses.



Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of the Scales and their Subscales

Measure	K	M	SD	Ranges	Cronbach's a
Anger Expression Scale	30	25.72	13.35	0-74	.87
Passive Anger Expression	13	15.28	7.38	0-36	.79
Verbal Anger Expression	8	5.89	4.68	0-24	.77
Active Anger Expression	9	4.54	4.67	0-24	.75
Self Esteem Scale	44	101.53	15.63	31-156	.79
Academic Self Esteem	10	27.18	5.10	3-40	.66
Self Confidence	12	31.94	7.24	7-48	.73
Social Self Esteem	12	32.99	5.91	10-46	.65
Low Self Esteem	10	9.41	5.48	0-34	.61
Parent-Child Relationship Scale	52				
Closeness	22	48.06	5.17	24-62	.57
Rejection	17	16.76	8.59	1-49	.76
Distant	13	19.22	6.29	6-38	.61

Note: k= No. of items

Table 2 showed that anger expression is negatively related with self-esteem and closeness in parent-child relationships, while positively related to rejection and distant parent-child relationships. Results also showed that self-esteem is a positively related closeness aspect of the parent child relationship. The same results were also seen among the subscales of the study variables. Results showed that academic self-esteem, self-confidence, and social self-esteem subscales positively related with closeness in parent child relationship and negatively related with distant and rejection in parent-child relationships, however low self-esteem subscale has negative relationship with closeness in parent child relationship and positive relationship with distant and rejection in parent child relationship among adolescents. Further, passive, verbal and active forms of anger expression showed negative relationships with academic self-esteem, self-confidence, and social self-esteem and positive relationships with low self-esteem among adolescents.

Table 2
Relationship between Anger expression, Self-esteem, and Parent-Child Relationship among Adolescents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Anger Expression	.85**	.77**	.75**	-.12**	-.20**	-.15**	-.21**	.27**	-.25**	.20**	.35**	
2. Passive		.44**	.41**	-.04	-.10*	-.08	-.10*	.19**	-.15**	.07	.29**	
3. Verbal			.50**	-.21**	-.25**	-.18**	-.32**	.21**	-.28**	.17**	.26**	
4. Active				-.07	-.15**	-.13**	-.13**	.27**	-.18**	.28**	.29**	
5. Self esteem					.74**	.82**	.79**	.24**	.25**	-.08	-.06	
6. academic self-esteem						.51**	.61**	-.14**	.24**	-.20**	-.17**	
7. Self Confidence							.55**	-.06	.23**	-.19**	-.12*	
8. Social self-esteem								-.12*	.25**	-.16**	-.13**	
9. Low self-esteem									-.10*	.37**	.29**	
10. Closeness										-.12*	-.07	
11. Rejection												.45**
12. Distant												
M	25.71	15.28	5.88	4.54	101.52	27.17	31.93	32.99	9.41	48.07	16.76	19.23
SD	13.34	7.37	4.67	4.66	15.63	5.10	7.24	5.91	5.48	5.17	8.59	6.29

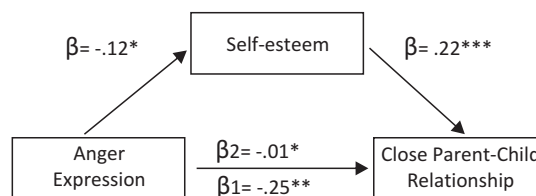
Note: *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Table 3 summarizes the mediation analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2020) for testing the proposed model of parent-child relationships (closeness, rejection, distant). The results revealed that anger expression negative predicted self-esteem ($\beta = -.12$, LL = $-.25$, UL = $-.04$, $p < .05$). Further, results showed that anger expression negatively predicted the close parent child relationship ($\beta = -.25$, LL = $-.13$, UL = $-.06$, $p < .01$) and self-esteem positively predicted the close parent child relationship ($\beta = .22$, LL= $-.13$, UL= $-.06$, $p < .01$). Further, an indirect effect showed a significant mediating role of self-esteem ($\beta = -.01$, LL = $-.02$, UL = $-.00$, $p < .05$) influencing the relationship between anger expression and close parent-child relationship. The conceptual model of direct and indirect effect on close parent child relation with significant path coefficients is presented in Figure 1.

Table 3
Schematic Presentation of Direct and Indirect path of self-esteem through anger expression and parent-child relationship (Closeness, Rejection, and Distant) among adolescents

Outcomes	Predictors	Direct Effect 95% of CI			Indirect Effect 95% of CI		
		B	LL	UL	B	LL	UL
Self-esteem	Anger Expression	-.12*	-.25	-.04			
Closeness	Anger Expression	-.25**	-.13	-.06	-.01*	-.02	-.00
	Self-esteem	.22***	.05	.10			
Rejection	Anger Expression	.20***	.07	.18	.01	-.01	.02
	Self-esteem	-.06	-.08	.02			
Distant	Anger Expression	.35***	.13	.21	.00	-.01	.01
	Self-esteem	-.02	-.04	.03			

Figure 1
Schematic Presentation of Direct and Indirect path of self-esteem through anger expression and closeness in parent-child relationship.



The figure summarizes the direct ($\beta_1 = -.25$) and indirect effect ($\beta_2 = -.01$) of anger expression on closeness in parent-child relationships among adolescents considering self-esteem as a mediator. This showed negative prediction of self-esteem from anger expression on closeness in the parent child relationship, whereas anger expression is found to be a negative predictor of closeness in parent child relationship among adolescents.



The results of Table 3 also showed that anger expression positively predicted the rejection ($\beta = .20$, LL = .07, UL = .18, $p < .001$) and distant ($\beta = .35$, LL = .13, UL = .21, $p < .001$) parent-child relationship. However, self-esteem did not show direct effect with rejection and distant child-parent relationships. So, a non-significant indirect effect was found indicating a non-significant mediating role of self-esteem affecting anger expression and rejection as well as distant parent-child relationships. As the mediation was not significant in terms of rejection and distant parent-child relationship, so the conceptual model of direct and indirect effects was not presented.

DISCUSSION

The present study highlighted that anger expression is negatively related with closeness in parent-child relationships and positively related to rejection and distant parent-child relationships, indicating that those adolescents who have anger expression, they feel rejected from their parents and do not feel close to them. Also, those adolescents who have scored higher on anger expression they feel withdrawn and distant from their parents. From the results, this could be concluded that those adolescents who have outward anger expression tend to have an unsatisfactory relationship with their parents, while low anger expression predict close parent-child relationship among adolescents. Adolescents with high anger expression have poor coping and social skills, and because of which they start having interpersonal problems with their parents. Such adolescents are unable to handle the situations and they use anger as a means of coping mechanism.²⁴ Since in collectivistic culture, the expression of anger is not appreciated, is considered as a disobedient and disrespectful behavior for others,²⁵ when adolescents express anger, they become less likable by their parents; the parents start criticising and conflicts arise among them, which further led adolescent to have high anger expression.²⁶⁻²⁷ Due to these conflicts, adolescents also start perceiving their relationship with parents as unsatisfactory. So, the results regarding the anger expression and parent-adolescents relationship are consistent with the literature.

The present study also highlighted that anger expression is negatively related with self-esteem among adolescents, indicating that those adolescents who have high anger expression are low in self-esteem, including academic self-esteem, social self-esteem, self-confidence. These results are consistent with the literature as reported in a study that adolescents who have high self-esteem also have high anger control and a decrease in anger expression.²⁸ Further, individuals with low self-esteem become angry more easily as compared to the individuals who have high self-esteem.^{29,30} Further, their expression of anger makes them feel like they have acted against the norm of the society as well as the religion, thus start considering themselves socially unlikeable.³¹ As the result, they start having low social self-esteem, which further leads them to lose their confidence and start perceiving themselves as academically poor.

Since parents play an important role in the development of self-esteem in their children, and in the present study, self-esteem positively predicts the close parent-child relationship among adolescents. It is suggested that, through consistent,

warm, and supportive interactions with a caregiver, a child is thought to develop an internal working model that consists of positive views of the self; that is, the child will develop a view of self as important and worthy of love, and hence linked with high self-esteem.³² On the other hand adolescents, who experience rejection from their parents, often feel that their parents criticize them a lot and as a result they develop feelings of insecurity and get withdrawn from their parents. As the sense of security is very important in the development of self-esteem, this further leads them to have feelings that no one likes them, which leads them to lose their confidence and have low social self-esteem.³³ Also, due to unsatisfactory relationships with parents, adolescents do not get appreciation from their parents, which also lowers their academic self-esteem. Overall unsatisfactory relationship with parents leads adolescents to have low self-esteem. So, these findings are consistent with the results of present study indicating a significant mediating role of self-esteem influencing the relationship of anger expression and close parent-child relationship. Hesari and Hejazi also contributed to support the same results who examined the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between the authoritative parenting style and aggression and they suggested that self-esteem has a mediating role in the relationship between an authoritative child-rearing style and aggression, further causal positive effect of an authoritative parenting style on self-esteem while the negative effect on aggression was also studied.³⁴ So, it can be suggested that high self-esteem among adolescents can influence the relationship between anger expression and parent-adolescent relationship.

CONCLUSION

Keeping in view all the findings, it is concluded that adolescents who showed high anger expression had low self-esteem. They showed a less close relationship with their parents and experience high rejection as well as distant type relationships with their parents. It was found that adolescents who showed low self-esteem had rejection or distant type adolescent-parents' relationships. Anger expression negatively predicts self-esteem as well as closeness in the parent-child relationship. Results also indicate that self-esteem plays a mediating role in the relationship between anger expression and closeness in parent-adolescents relationship.

Limitations & Recommendations

This study was conducted on adolescents studying in government schools and adolescents of private schools were not included. Only a large city school sample, the same must be done in other regions. A comparative study must be done to see the differences in public and private school adolescents in terms of study variables. A triangular approach should be used to get more information in terms of study variables from parents and teachers of the students.

Implications

This research is helpful in assessing adolescents' issues regarding anger and its influence on parent-child relationship highlighting the role of self-esteem as an influencing factor. This study is helpful in clinical and counseling settings highlighting the importance of counseling of parents so as to prepare them for the encounters they will have with



adolescents and children. This study suggested that parents can be educated about the impact of their negative relationships with the children and resulting behavioural problems. The early identification will be helpful in the prevention of long-term health risks in adolescents. Similarly, different techniques to adolescents should also be taught in order to cope with their issues regarding anger expression and self-esteem. They can also be educated about how they can maintain healthy relationships with their parents.

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UNDERTAKING FORM

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