Attitude to Aggressive Behaviour and Intention of Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescent School Children in Selangor state-Malaysia

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Abstract:

This paper was written to entails the results collected after conducting an empirical research which focuses on attitude to aggressive behaviour and Intention of aggressive behaviour among adolescent school children in Selangor state Malaysia. This research was conducted in other to observed adolescent attitude that allow the students to engage in aggressive behaviour. The aim and objective here is to explore the level and relationship in attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour among secondary school children. The research work also tries to explore how school children's attitude can contribute to intention of aggressive behaviour. The total of 426 respondents was selected through random sampling techniques. And the instrument used for data collection was survey questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed by using Pearson correlation analysis to examine the strength of the relation between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour among the respondents. The t-test analysis was also run to examine the significant difference of race to intention of aggressive behaviour. And the research work used 426 school children for effective coverage, collecting information and validated data which can justify the accrued result against the respondents. The data collected from the survey was analyzed and the result shows that there is a moderate level of attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour among the respondents. This result comes up by using descriptive analysis. While the correlation analysis shown that there is a significant positive medium relationship between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour (r= 0.278, p < 0.05). While the t-test results show that there is a significant difference between Malay and Non- Malay on intention to involve in aggressive behaviour. Thus, it is recommended that Ministry of Education, teachers, parents, and policy makers in any level of government should assist school children in making their school environment safe for learning.
Key words: Adolescent School children, Attitude to aggressive behaviour, Intention, aggressive behaviour.

I. Introduction

Aggressive behaviour among school children is a big problem that has become a concern to many people in this era and the world all over, causing serious individual and social damages, particularly to adolescent school children, who according to figures are the most surely injured and who most commit murders (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2005; Health Link - Medical College of Wisconsin, 2005; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002).Moreover, aggressive behaviour at school is a severe and difficult social problem, and probably the most common and noticeable problem among school children. The term aggressive behaviour covers all sorts of aggressive acts, including interpersonal conflicts, damage of property, criminal acts (Elinoff, Chafouleas & Sassu, 2004). Children aggressive behaviour as one may see it is feared and worrisome which results from the interaction between individual development and social settings like school, family and community. Unfortunately, the world outside school is imitated within the school, transforming safe places that are usually tempered by discipline, friendship and cooperation into aggressive places where there are suffering (Neto, Saavedra & Diga, 2004). Moreover, aggressive behaviour is an act performed by school children against others that involve causing pain and distress (Eslea & Rees, 2001; Lyznicki, McCaffree & Rabinowitz, 2004; Pearce & Thompson, 1998). More sure, psychologists have defined aggressive behaviour as behavior intended to inflict harm or injury to a person (Baron, 1977; Berkowitz, 1964). Similarly, Fishbein & Ajzen (2010) define attitude as a cognitive process influenced by personal experiences and is expressed by either behavioral or emotional responses.

Moreover, aggressive behaviour exposed by adolescents school children is a rising and common difficult of concern (Bushman & Anderson, 2001a), and which many studies in research on aggressive behaviour have recognized a grouping of various types of aggressive behaviour in terms of its form and behavior (Underwood, 2003). Aggressive children are at high risk of later serious and chronic aggressive act (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2005). Adolescent aggressive behaviour poses a stubborn challenge in societies, and the finding in Europe show

that the nature of crimes committed by adolescents has been changing the number of forceful crimes which has increased in many European nations (Stevens et al. 2006). Real aggressive behaviour has been known as one of the leading causes of death among school children, particularly in males and an estimated 430 school children aged 10 to 24 years die on daily basis through interpersonal aggressive act in European Union Region (Sethi et al. 2010). Moreover, in health care settings, individuals' aggressive behaviour is a major problem worldwide (ICN 2007). Aggressive behaviour is a dynamic and wonder due to the difficulty of children's behaviour (Gendreau & Archer 2005, Kempes et al. 2005, Lewis 2005; Maguire & Ryan 2007). Similarly, aggressive behaviour is when school children had kicked, punched, or beaten another student, which may result or aiming to destroy life (Fineran, Bennet & Sacco 2001; Govender & Killian 2001). More sure, intention is in the state of mind process of realization, and it is also the active desire to achieve some future goal through some specific behavior in a particular circumstance that predict real aggressive act which may relate to individuals, interaction, and environment which have been known as interactional in nature that lead to aggressive behaviour (Johnson 2004; Raymond, 190; Woods & Ashley 2007; Lewis 2005, Hage et al. 2009).

Intention to engage in aggressive behaviour is a complex issue that can be observed from diverse viewpoints such as being a result of a drive aiming to destroy life of other children as a learned reaction to frustrating events (Shaver & Mikulincer 2011; Lewis 2005; Liu 2004, Liu & Wuerker 2005). Clearly, real aggressive behaviour comes through some aspects like social-learning theory and social interaction theory, being now the major theories of aggressive behaviour in research (Shaver & Mikulincer 2011). Moreover, the idea of attitudes is one of the most influential usually used in social psychology, and it is the evaluation of a psychological object or behaviour and it is measured on semantic difference scales and by using bipolar adjectives like good and bad, harmful and beneficial, pleasant and unpleasant (Ajzen, 2001; 2002; Bargh et al., 1996; Fazio et al., 1986). Attitude like fighting influence one to aggressive behaviour which could be seen as any behaviour that causes painful experience to another children or belongings. It is clear to note that children's conflicts in the school and what causes it may contributes to aggressive behaviour. Attitude and aggressive behaviour is likely to occur in non-stressful situations where one has time and sufficient motivation to pay considerable thought to attitudes (Warshaw et al., 1983; Bagozzi and Yi, 1989; Fazio, 1990; Connor et al, 2006; Gendreau & Archer 2005; Lawson & Rowe, 2009). It is thus believed that attitude to aggressive behaviour of school children may bring assault and injuries from the recurrence of a previous fight or disagreement that may also allow a person to have desire to retaliate and to maintain or restore one's reputation following occurrence that may be perceived as a threat to one's reputation and identity (Jacobs, 2004; Rich & Grey, 2005; Pitner, Astor, Benbenishty, Haj-Yahia & Zeria, 2003; Cheng et al., 2006; Mollen, Fein, Localio & Durbin, 2004; Rich & Grey, 2005). Similarly, Johnson and colleagues (2004) argued that adolescent school children desire for retaliation led to continued intention to engage in aggressive behaviour.

Moreover, attitude towards aggressive behaviour would lead people to get involve in aggressive behaviour. Of important, attitude is determined by the expectation of various consequences, beliefs about the aggressive behaviour, and the corresponding evaluations of these consequences in the sense that attitudes in social situations can influence children to involve in aggressive behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Vernberg & Jacobs, 1999) they also found that school children who hold more positive views of violence acts commit more acts of aggressive behaviour. In addition, positive attitudes to aggressive act have been found to predict involvement in aggressive behaviour, even when controlling for gender, and thus views of aggressive acts are directly linked to aggressive behaviour as well (Boulton, Bucci, Hawker & Hawker, 1999). Furthermore, attitude towards aggressive behaviour do not always occur by broad cognitive processing of information by the individual, but may be caused by simple disturbing mechanisms as well (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Moreover, attitude towards aggressive behaviour such as fighting seems to occur more often among adolescent school children in the school environment (Bedford et al., 2001). In the other hand, attitude and behaviour is far from perfect, it is reasonable to propose that developing a positive attitude to aggressive behaviour and a normative belief that acts of aggressive are acceptable and appropriate is a precursor to or essential for engaging in aggressive behaviour. Moreover, school children who like to fight always may end up believing that the use of aggressive behavior against other children is the best way to spread popularity, power and became bullies too (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick,2005).

2. Statement of Problem

This study attempts to examine the relationship between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour among secondary school children in Selangor state, Malaysia. School children attitude that leads to aggressive behaviour has attracted the researcher to conduct this research work on this topic due to how

their attitude really contributes to aggressive behaviour. Moreover, the focus of this paper is on the school children's attitude, and how this attitude influences children to engage in aggressive behaviour.

Objective of the research

Three central objectives were listed by the researcher to solve the attitude to aggressive acts which has been observed in the districts areas studied.

To describe the level of attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behavior among school children in Selangor state, Malaysia.

To examine the difference between Malay and Non-malay in term of intention of aggressive behaviour.

To identify the relationship between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour.

3. Materials and Methods

The study adopted quantitative research design that employs survey questionnaire. The study was carried out in Selangor state in Malaysia. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study consists of all school children in six government daily secondary schools. Statistical data collected from the statistical department of the Ministry of Education Selangor State put the number of the population at 361,269 school children. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the six schools and 426 secondary school children constituted the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection on attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour was survey questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered to school children. Data was collected within the period of six months from 4th February to April, 2013 in which the months were usually the peak period when all children were in school, and this gave the researcher the opportunity to meet most of the respondents at their respective schools. Other than that, this research was conducted by using self-report measure of survey method. This study includes school children male (N = 199) and females (N = 227) from six secondary schools in urban and rural school districts. Students ages are from 13 to 17 (M = 14.38, SD =1.48). Overall, 53.3% of the school children were female. Most were Malay (88.6%) and Chinese (9.6%), with 3.8% Indian. The instruments used for data collection were validated by experts in Social Psychology, with measurement and evaluation based on face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was established through Cronbach Alpha technique and the correlation coefficient obtained were 0.866 for intention of aggressive behaviour and 0.78 for attitude to aggressive behaviour.

3.1. Instrumentation

3.1.1. **Attitude toward aggressive behavior**: The instruments are self-report items adapted from Bosworth & Espelage, (1995). The instrument was used to measures attitudes to aggressive behavior and its acceptability, particularly in relation to aggressive behaviour. Six items were designed in this section. The six (6) items in the questionnaire for this study were measured using the Likert scale: 1= strongly agree; 2= agree; 3= disagree; and 4= strongly disagree. (If I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward; I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with being mad; It's okay to hit someone who hits you first; If a kid teases me, I usually cannot get him/her to stop unless I hit him/her; If I really want to, I can usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me; If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm afraid). Some of the items were asked in a reverse manner; so that scores would have to be adjusted accordingly. The scale had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.775, indicating that it had a high degree of reliability.

3.1.2. Intention of aggressive behavior:

Aggressive behavior questionnaire was used to measure the intention of aggressive behavior. The scale was originally developed by Buss & Perry (1992). This instrument comprises 34 items referring to different types of aggressive behavior. It assesses some aspects of aggressive behavior: (My friends say that I argue a lot, At times I can't control the urge to hit someone, I get into fights more than most people, other people always seem to get the breaks, I flare up quickly, but get over it quickly, I often find myself disagreeing with people, I can't help getting into argument when people disagree with me, I have threatened people I know, I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things, I let my anger show when I do not get what I want etc). The 34 items in the questionnaire for this study were measured using the Likert scale. They are as follows: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3= strongly disagree; and 4= agree. In this study the internal consistence of the intention of aggressive behaviour scale was found to be acceptable (Cronbach alpha =.78), indicating that it had a high degree of reliability.

3.2. Data analyses

The data analysis in this study was performed using SPSS (version 20). It was also used for descriptive statistics to describe the level of intention of aggressive behavior and attitude to aggressive behavior. Thus, this study used measures of central tendency in analysing data obtained in this study. Data obtained was analysed using mean, standard deviation, and inferentially using Pearson Correlation to determine relationship between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour. T-test was also used to determine the difference in intention of aggressive behaviour among school children based on race.

4. Results and Discussion

School children were Malay, Chinese and India. Majority of the respondents was Malay 369 (88.6%) follows by Chinese 41 (9.6%), and Indian 16 (3.8%). Respondents were from the three religious groups and from urban and rural areas. And majority of the respondents were living together with their parents that came from urban and rural areas as well.

Table 1: Personal profile of respondents (N= 426)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Race		
Malay	369	88.6
Chinese	41	9.6
India	16	3.8

Table 2: levels of Attitude to aggressive behaviour and Intention of aggressive behaviour

Variable	N	%	Mean	SD
Intention of Aggressive behaviour			98.66	12.41
Low	79	18.5		
Moderate	249	58.5		
High	98	23.0		
Attitude to aggressive behaviour			Mean	SD
Low	77	18.1	14.64	2.30
Moderate	261	61.5		
High	88	20.7		

Source: Field work, 2014

Table 2 describes the school children level of attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour. Results shows that 261(61.5%) was emerged as moderate level of the attitude to aggressive behaviour among the school children intention to involved in aggressive behaviour. While 77 (18.1%) was emerged as the low level of attitude to aggressive behaviour. Similarly, results shows that 88 (20.7%) was recorded as high level of attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour. This finding is in agreement with Smith, Flay, Bell & Weissberg, (2001) and Espelage, Holt & Henkel, (2003) who found a links between attitude to aggressive behaviour like fighting and a person's behaviors as well as between perceptions of children's fighting and an individual's intention to involve in aggressive behaviors. Also, Pearce & Thompson, (1998) found that witnessing aggressive acts is enough to make a child unhappy with the school and to affect his or her social performance. Moreover, that may show how individuals grow up to be attracted to, and willing to engage

in aggressive behaviour. Thus, attitude to aggressive behaviour like fighting increases more support for school children intention to engage in aggressive behaviour. Attitudes toward aggressive behaviour like fighting are viewed as having a vital intervening role in the conversion of aggressive feelings into aggressive behaviors (Velicer, Huckel & Hansen, 2003). this can lead to greater risk taking and aggressive behaviors, and the development of retaliatory attitudes and beliefs that support aggressive behaviour (Bradshaw & Garbarino, 2004; Jipguep & Sanders-Phillips, 2003; Copeland-Linder et al., 2007).

It is also clear to know that witnessing aggressive behaviour and abusive (sexual, physical) behaviour of a significant adult are linked to intention to engage in aggressive among minors. In another study Eke & Ogel, (2006) argued that the rate of getting involved in at least one physical fight was 68.8% among boys and 29.7% among girls. The result shows that attitude towards aggressive behaviour like fighting significantly influence aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation between independent variable and outcome

Variables	Y	X_1
Y (Intention of Aggressive Behavior)	1	
X_1 (Attitude to aggressive behaviour)	0.278*	

*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The analysis shows that there is significant with positive relationship between attitude to aggressive behaviour and intention of aggressive behaviour (r = 0.278, p < 0.05).(table 3). This finding is in agreement with Huesmann & Guerra, (1997) that there are significant links between normative beliefs about attitude and behaviour to influence school children to engage in aggressive behaviors, which become more pronounced as children get older. Similarly, Lim and Ang (2009) found that normative beliefs about aggression predict intention to engage in aggressive behaviors. Beliefs about aggression influence children's processing of social cues, which renders them more likely to misinterpret casual encounters as hostile and thus respond aggressively (Zelli, Dodge, Lochman, Laird & Group, 1999). Importantly, research suggests a link between victimization and retaliatory attitudes from children to engage in aggressive behaviour (Rich & Grey, 2005). According to research conducted among Black male young adults (aged 18–30), victims may feel compelled to retaliate in order to protect their identity and because of pressure to behave according to norms in their environment that justify retaliation (Rich & Grey,2005). In contrast to the earlier theories, the social learning perspective does not attribute aggression to one or more causes. It suggests that the roots of such behaviour are varied, involving aggressors past experiences and learning and a wide range of situational factors, like the presence of other people. (Lewis 2005.). This shows that adolescent's school children who always like fighting and retaliation be likely to be involved in aggressive behaviour.

Table 4. Significant differences on intention of aggressive behaviour based on Race

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Malay	369	98.09	11.99	-2.381	0.018
Non-Malay	57	102.28	14.40		

Source: Field work,2014

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the intention of aggressive behavior for Malay and Non-Malay. The result show that there is a significant difference in scores for Malay (*M*=98.09, *SD*=11.99) and Non-Malay (*M*=102.28, *SD*=14.40) where *t* (426) = -2.381, *p* = 0.018). This finding is in agreement with Tosh, & Simmons, (2007) who found that mixed-race Asians who claim themselves as Asian but from another racial background were more likely to appear higher intention to engage in aggressive. In line with Spano, River & Bolland (2006) found that when children from any race are been exposed to and witnessing acts of aggressive behavior that may in turn influence children to have intention to engage in aggressive behaviour. The finding of the study found that non-Malay school children had the highest score. This means that the higher the mean score by racial differences signified the higher intention to involve in aggressive behavior.

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5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study provided a fresh view on the development of children's attitude to predict intention to engage in aggressive behaviour. The findings for this study allow for comparison to normative samples and imitation in future studies. These comparisons will aid in the accurate assessment of risk factors to aggressive behaviour. The flooding incidence of attitude towards aggressive behaviour among secondary school children is disturbing. Clearly, some adolescents today in secondary schools show one form of aggressive behaviour or the other. This act of aggressive behaviour against persons or property takes place very often in the secondary schools in Malaysia today. More sure, school children attitude leads to aggressive behaviour in a similar way and described aggressive behaviour as being an understandable phenomenon. One of the suggestions of the above findings is that aggressive prevention programmes should increase perceptions of self-efficacy to other school children in order to enhance their chances of behaviour maintenance. However, behaviour change and behaviour maintenance are not only dependent upon attitude, Prevention research indicates that several factors are relevant and which will have to be taken into consideration if schools want to influence health behaviours. Moreover, skills are needed for the understanding of the desired behaviour (Flay et al., 1983). Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations. The school counselors and counseling psychologist in every setting in the government should help the school children to correct to challenging and threatening situations and reduce high stress level which may expose them to engage in aggressive behaviour. In addition, teachers, parents, policy makers, ministry of education in the country should try their best not to allow school children to be expose to unnecessary worry situations. Of important, teachers should stop making children to fill isolated in the school environment but rather they should be properly corrected when they misbehave. Obviously, school counselors should assist their students not to point the causes of their failures to external factors but rather to themselves. This will motivate school children to work harder and reduce their intention not to engage in aggressive behaviour.

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