

Contemporary transformations of aggressive behavior: insights from a border region

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Abstract. The authors focus on substantial characteristics of aggressiveness of men of different age groups. In particular, the paper analyzes key features of how aggression is implemented in men aged 21 to 44 years and from 45 to 59 years, living in a cross-border region of Russia.

Keywords: aggressiveness, aggression, aggressive behavior, men, age groups

1. Introduction

The relevance of the study of aggressiveness, aggressive behavior, hostility is not reduced, but continues to grow due to the high rates of development of society, as well as the level of tension in individual countries and border areas. Today, the tension of society is also connected with the actions of terrorist groups and extremist communities, which often attract men to carry out illegal actions on the territory of different states.

Modern studies more often consider aggressiveness in men and young men in the context of dependent or illegal behavior. The research purpose is to study the characteristics of aggressiveness in men of different age groups living in the Altai region. Identifying meaningful characteristics that reveal the willingness of men to display aggressive behavior and hostility will allow one to plan and implement preventive programs that contribute to improving social security. In addition, men's health and interpersonal relationships, well-being of other people, and harmonious development of society depend on the ability to cope with aggression.

2. Materials and Methods

The following methods were used in the study: the questionnaire survey, the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory (BDHI), the method of "Personal aggressiveness and conflict" by E. P. Ilyin, P. A. Kovalev. Mathematical statistical data processing methods (Mann-Whitney U-test) were used. A total of 68 men living in Altai region, a Siberian cross-border territory, and aged from 21 to 59 years took part in our research. They were divided into 2 age groups: 21-44 and 45-59 years old.

3. Results

The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to identify differences in the structure of aggressive behavior in men of different age groups – "21-44" and "45-59" years old. Analyzing results of the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory shows that men aged 45 to 59 years ($m = 5.38$) more often than men of the younger age group ($m = 4.29$) are indirectly aggressive against others, which is manifested in gossip and malicious jokes ($p=0.01$).

Also, men of the older age group are predisposed to undirected aggression in the form of rage explosions, manifested in shouting, stomping their feet, beating their fists on the table, etc. Usually, these explosions are chaotic and disordered, which eliminates direct confrontation with someone and the need to be responsible for their actions, while all witnesses of these manifestations become victims of this type of aggressive behavior. Probably, the prevalence of aggressive behavior in an indirect form among men of the older age group is associated with ingrained social and moral norms, fears for reputation and doubts about physical and moral abilities to resist retaliatory aggression.

Also, statistically significant differences ($p = 0.01$) between the severity of guilt feelings in men of different age groups were revealed. The average values of the group "21-44" ($m = 4.40$) are lower than the average values of the group "45-59" ($m = 5.74$). Most likely, the findings suggest that older men are convinced that they are unworthy people who commit bad deeds. Men aged 45-59 more often feel remorse. Guilt has a moderating effect on the manifestation of behaviors that are usually prohibited. Therefore, we can assume that younger men are more likely to display disapproving or forbidden behaviors. Suppression of aggressive manifestations and remorse of conscience become the basis for indirect aggression and the development of somatic diseases, which is more often observed in men of 45 to 59 years old.

Differences in the mean values of the "irritation" scale confirm that the degree of readiness for the manifestation of negative feelings at the slightest arousal (short temper, rudeness) in men of 45 to 59 years old ($m = 5.61$) is higher than in men of the age group "21-44" ($m = 4.54$). This is probably due to the status reached by this age or to a decrease in self-esteem due to the sensation of approaching old age.

The obtained results allowed to reveal similarities in the forms of aggressive reactions of men regardless of their belonging to the age category. On a scale of "physical aggression," the value is above the average in both age groups, which indicates that men aged 21 to 44 ($m = 6.59$), as well as men from 45 to 59 years old ($m = 6.58$), are predisposed to using physical force against another person.

Values on the "negativism" scale are well below the average for both groups. Thus, $m = 2.10$ in the group of young men, $m = 2.54$ in the group of older men, which indicates the absence of a predisposition to oppositional behavior. More often, men do not demonstrate behavior directed against authority or leadership, and rarely their behavior with respect to a single object or situation varies from passive resistance to active struggle against established laws and customs.

Also, envy and hatred of others caused by a feeling of bitterness, anger to the whole world for real or imaginary suffering are not typical for men of both age groups. This is confirmed by the average values on the offense scale: $m = 3.10$ in the group of men aged 21 to 45 years, and $m = 3.70$ in the older group of men.

The value on the "suspiciousness" scale for both men from 21 to 44 ($m = 4.24$) and for men from 45 to 59 ($m = 4.51$) tends to average. This value indicates the average probability of mistrust and caution towards people, based on the belief that others are going to harm.

The value on the scale of "verbal aggression" indicates a high probability of expressing negative feelings both through a quarrel, shout, and through the content of verbal responses (threats, curses, abuse) in men of both groups ($m = 7.59$, $m = 7.93$).

In addition to the eight scales, the calculation of an index of hostility and an index of aggressiveness is made on the basis of this questionnaire. The hostility index includes offense and suspicion scales, and its value is within the normal range for both age groups. The value for the group "21-44" ($m = 7.35$) is lower than the value of the group "45-59" ($m = 8.22$).

The aggressiveness index is defined as a set of values on the scales of physical aggression, irritation and verbal aggression, its value also corresponds to the standard values (21 ± 4). For the group "21-45" ($m = 18.72$), the value is lower than the value of the group "45-59" ($m = 20.12$).

For achieving a greater depth, the method of "Personal aggressiveness and conflict" (E. P. Ilyin, P. A. Kovalev) was used.

As a result, it was revealed that there are significant differences ($p = 0.01$) in the manifestations of temper in men of different ages. Men in the “45-59” group have a higher average indicator ($m = 6.58$) than men in the “21-44” group ($m = 5.59$). That is, men between the ages of 45 and 59 are more prone to inadequate, excessive reactions, such as emotional incontinence, explosive irritability to ordinary stimuli, and they are also more prone to anger.

Significant differences were established ($p = 0.01$) in the level of inclination in intolerance to the opinions of others in men of the age group “21-44” ($m = 4.48$) and in the group “45-59” ($m = 5.61$). On the one hand, men between the ages of 45 and 59 have a pronounced inability to accept beliefs, feelings, and behavior that is different from their own; on the other hand, they have reluctance to provide equal freedom of expression to another person. Young men are less prone to intolerance, probably due to dependence on the opinions of others or perceiving others as a source of information, experience and a tool to achieve goals.

Also, there are significant differences ($p = 0.01$) in the generalized indicator of conflict. Men in the “45-59” group have a higher average indicator ($m = 23.54$) than men in the “21-44” group ($m = 21.40$). Consequently, men between the ages of 45 and 59 are characterized with more categorical judgments, unshakable views, attitudes, principles and assessments, a reluctance to conduct equal negotiations and find mutually beneficial solutions. Uncompromisingness is probably associated with a decrease in the adaptability of thinking, flexibility in behavior and reactions.

Men of the group “45-59” ($m = 6.58$) are more characteristic of excessive emotional incontinence and explosive irritability than men of the group “21-44” ($m = 5.59$). Most likely, this emotional incontinence is due to internal benefits. Men in the “21-44” group ($m = 4.89$) are more susceptible to touchiness than men in the “45-59” group ($m = 4.77$). This is probably due to the fact that touchiness is a tool for attracting attention, it is also used as a psychological defense and for obtaining internal and real benefits.

General tendencies to be mistrustful, doubtful, and refrain from emotional attachment for fear of being offended are more clearly seen in men aged 45 to 59 years ($m = 5.00$) than in young men ($m = 4.45$). This is probably due to the previously acquired negative experience, with a decrease in the level of self-esteem, with the emerging sense of uselessness due to the loss of attractiveness and the approach of old age. On the other hand, it is possible that with age, these men’s need for close contacts with others is declining, their carefully preserved inner world comes to the fore, rather than contacts with society. And all attempts to invade their personal space are perceived with suspicion and doubt.

Men of both age groups are predisposed to strive, by all means, to achieve goals, even by committing acts that can cause protest and opposition from others. The value on the scale “assertiveness” indicates this ($m = 5.10$, $m = 5.22$).

Men in the age group “45-59” ($m = 4.61$) are more inclined to insist on their own than younger men ($m = 4.10$). Perhaps this is due to the presence of rich life experience and confidence in their own abilities, with a sense of the significance of their opinions for others. A man is aware of the need to defend his authority and dominate.

Also, older men tend to be more stubborn, even responding with evil to the evil, regardless of whether there is any expediency in this. This is confirmed by the values on the scale of “vindictiveness.” This is probably due to the fact that men of the age group “45-59”, having experience and achievements behind them, value their opinions more highly and prove their point of view more actively. Also, an older man more acutely perceives negative manifestations of those around him, more actively and even more aggressively reacting to them.

4. Discussion

Describing an aggressor, L. Berkowitz indicates that these are people prone to manifestation of anger or aggression, usually easily enter into an argument, like to make hasty conclusions and are often too harsh in judgments [1]. In our study, older men are more likely to fall under this category of people.

At the same time, it is important to say that an aggressive person is a completely mentally and physiologically healthy person who knows how to control his behavior and knows perfectly well

where, with whom, and how to behave, what to say and what to keep silent about. That is, the presence and social status of those around the aggressor have an important influence on his behavior.

A. Nalchadzhyan identifies the character traits inherent in the aggressor (anxiety, hatred, envy, revenge, selfishness, shame, rancor) and behaviors characteristic of the aggressor (fanaticism, superstition, betrayal, grumbling). He notes that "... the aggressor is afraid of victim's retribution and decides to make it completely incompetent or completely destroy it. Fear of retribution increases aggression" [2, p. 42].

Older men, more than young men, tend to exhibit features inherent to the aggressor, such as intractability and readiness to respond to the evil caused by evil, regardless of whether there is any expediency.

The study of A. V. Bocharov, G. G. Knyazev, E. R. Slobodskaya, and T. I. Ryabichenko shows that in contemporary society, men have to hide their aggressiveness in order to appear more civilized [3]. In our study, more "milder" results were obtained in a group of younger men, perhaps they are characterized by greater flexibility and social desirability.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can talk about certain features of aggressive behavior in men of different age groups, which are manifested in the fact that men aged 45-59 years are ready for hot temper and intolerance to the opinions of others. This is probably due to the fact that by this age, men have already gained quite a lot of experience, both in their chosen professional activities and in life, consider themselves to be professionals, and put their opinions above other people's opinions. Other opinions or criticism are perceived as doubt in their competence and generate aggressive reactions. In turn, men aged 21 to 44 are less likely to feel guilty for their own actions and are touchier. At the same time, they are ready for physical aggression (as the middle-aged men are).

References

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