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ASSERTIVENESS AMONG DEGREE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

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Abstract:- Assertiveness is a skill that involves speaking and acting with power while maintaining respect for others. The aim of the present research is the investigation of assertiveness among college students with regard to gender and level of education. In order to study the problem, the survey method was used to collect the data. The sample for the study was collected from the four degree colleges of Sonipat city (Haryana). 120 students (60 male and 60 female) were randomly and equally selected from undergraduate and postgraduate level. "Rathus Assertiveness Schedule" developed by Rathus was administered to the selected sample to assess the assertiveness. The data so collected was analyzed statistically by employing mean, SD and t-test. The finding reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their assertiveness but there is significant difference with regards to their level of education.

Keywords: Assertiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness refers to the ability to make requests, actively disagree; express personal rights and feelings; initiate, maintain, or disengage from conversations; and to stand up for self. It is defined as behavior which enables people to act in their own best interest by expressing their thoughts and feelings directly and honestly. According to Smith, in order to be assertive a human being not only ought to know his/her rights, but also should be able to apply them in different situations and under different circumstances. Assertive rights were important not only for the specific person (as means to realize his/her potential), but also for the society as a whole, as they would help to harmonize the social and labor relations (Smith, 2006). Assertiveness is defined as interpersonal behavior that allows the direct expression of one's feelings, without cognitive distortions or anxiety, combining verbal and nonverbal components, and the defense of one's rights, while respecting those of others (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Caso & Hernández, 2007; Dietz, Jennings & Abrew, 2005; Monjas & González, 2000; Swanson, 2007; Turner, 1992). It involves standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways which do not violate another person's rights. (Lange and Jakubowski, 1976), Assertive behavior is interpersonal behavior involving the honest and relatively straight forward expression of thoughts and feelings. Assertion is a behavior which enables a person to act in his/her best interests, to stand up for herself/himself without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably or to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others (Hargie, Saunders & Dickon, 1994). Alberti and Emmons (1990) stated that "assertive behavior promotes equality in human relationships, enabling us to act in our own best interests, to stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably, to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others". Instead of passively giving up power or aggressively demanding it, assertiveness enables youth to positively and authentically influence others. This skill is particularly helpful when youth are faced with situations of potential conflict. According to Galassi and Galassi (1978), "assertion is the direct and appropriate communication of a person's needs, wants and opinions without punishing, threatening, putting down others, and doing this without fear during the process". Assertive behavior is not an individual's stable and general trait; a person may be sufficiently assertive in some situations and inefficient or even inhibited in others. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a personal

tendency to behave according to certain prototypes in one's social interactions, such as assertive or socially skilled behavior, passive behavior, and at the other extreme, aggressive behavior (Carrolles, 1986).

Highlighting the benefits of assertiveness as a communicative device and ability of self-assertion, Sue Bishop stressed that they were not acquired at birth but absorbed over time with individual experience. (Bishop, 2010, pp. 129-130). Particular attention was paid to the role of assertiveness in the modern educational system. Many authors accepted the assertive behavior as the most constructive method of communication in the teaching process and its application in the teaching practice not only increased the effectiveness of training activities, but it also had a positive educational impact on young people, facilitating the development of valuable personal qualities in them (Edwards, 2005; Korobkova, 2000; Nelsen et al., 2001). People who are assertive are often competitive and their behaviour is goal directed. Though they play to win they also retain fairness and act in accordance with the rights of others. Caballo (1993) explains that assertive individuals usually cope well in their interpersonal relations, are satisfied with their social life, and are confident that they can change when they need to. Caballo also states that an unassertive person, in addition to showing a lack of self-respect, also displays some lack of confidence in others' capacity to deal with frustrations, responsibilities, etc. Ultimately, they hope to appease others and avoid conflict. If one is assertive, one can protect oneself from being victimized and taken advantage of by others (Hersen & Kobacoff, 1995). If someone is not assertive for his/her own rights then he can not shave himself from regrets in life and this can be significant cause of depression. Currently, there is no doubt that students with assertive competence will develop easier in the school setting, because this setting will allow them to deal adequately with interpersonal social situations.

Assertiveness is a positive trait that in benefit of every person. From the discussion it becomes very obvious that assertiveness leads a person towards a healthy personality without any complexes and regrets. A non-assertive person is never satisfied with his life that creates his life difficult for himself as well as for others. Reference to social competence implies assertiveness, an important social skill that has a singular manifestation in the school or college setting. There are many situations at collage where the lack or excess of this skill generates many difficulties for the teacher and also for the students. Special attention was paid to the formation of assertive skills in upper grade and college students, as it was believed that this age was conducive to build a vision, perseverance, self-reliance and initiative, qualities that were objective prerequisite for development of assertiveness (Khokhlova, 2008, p. 11; Mutafova, 2007).

The present research is under taken to study the assertiveness among degree college students in relation to gender and level of education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1- To find out whether male and female degree college students significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 2- To find out whether undergraduate and postgraduate college students significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 3- To find out whether male undergraduate and postgraduate college students significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 4- To find out whether female undergraduate and postgraduate students significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 5- To find out whether undergraduate male and female degree college students significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 6- To find out whether postgraduate male and female degree college students significantly differ on assertiveness.

HYPOTHESES

1. Male and female degree college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.
2. Undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 3- Male undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 4- Female undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 5- Undergraduate male and female college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.
- 6- Postgraduate male and female college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

In the present study, a sample of 120 male and female college students (60 undergraduate and 60 postgraduate) from four degree colleges of Sonipat city, Haryana were selected through simple random sampling technique through survey method.

TOOL OF RESEARCH

To obtain data, Rathus Assertiveness Scale has been used. It is a Likert type scale, which is consisted of 30

articles pointed between 1 and 6.

PROCEDURE

Descriptive survey method of research was employed for the present study.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

t-test was used for testing the hypotheses for the significance of mean difference in the assertiveness of various groups was compared.

Table 1
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between Male and female degree college students

Category	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Male students	60	103.58	9.89	2.02	0.57	Not Sig.
Female students	60	103.42	12.09			

Results in the table 1 show that there is insignificance difference among two gender (t = 0.57, df = 118, p= n.s). This result suggests that it is not necessary that assertiveness is more common among male students. Both the gender (male and female) can express same level of assertiveness. The findings of this study supports our hypothesis that male and female degree college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.

Table 2
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between undergraduate and postgraduate college students

Category	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Undergraduate	60	100.7	10.24	1.98	2.32	Sig.
Postgraduate	60	105.3	11.37			

The results shown in table 2, revealed that value of t is 2.32 witch is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mean values of undergraduate and postgraduate students' score for assertiveness are 100.7 and 105.3 respectively. So second hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that postgraduate students are better on assertiveness than undergraduate students.

Table 3
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between male undergraduate and postgraduate college students

Male students	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Undergraduate	30	100.30	8.19	2.43	2.70	Sig.
Postgraduate	30	106.87	10.48			

The above table reveals that the mean value regarding assertiveness of postgraduate male students (106.87) is high in comparison to the mean value of undergraduate male students (100.30). The t-value is found to be 2.70,

which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis three stating that, “Male undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness” is rejected.

Table 4
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between female undergraduate and postgraduate college students

Female students	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Undergraduate	30	101.1	12.08	3.13	0.84	Not Sig.
Postgraduate	30	103.73	12.17			

Table 4 shows that there is insignificant difference in female undergraduate and postgraduate students on assertiveness (t = 0.84). The findings further suggest that postgraduate female students have more assertive behavior than undergraduate female students but the difference is not significant. Thus result supports the hypothesis that female undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.

Table 5
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between Undergraduate male and female college students

Undergraduate students	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Male	30	100.3	8.19	2.66	0.30	Not Sig.
Female	30	101.1	12.08			

The findings of table 5 show that there is insignificant difference in assertiveness among undergraduate male and female students (t = 0.30). The results indicate that not only undergraduate male students are assertive, but undergraduate female students can also show assertive behaviors. They also have the tendency of assertiveness. These findings support our hypothesis.

Table 6
Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing the significant differences on assertiveness between Postgraduate male and female college students

Postgraduate students	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t- value	Level of significance (0.05)
Male	30	106.87	10.48	2.93	1.07	Not Sig.
Female	30	103.73	12.17			

It is evident in table- 6, that t-value is 1.07 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mean values of male and female postgraduate students’ score for assertiveness are 106.87 and 103.73 respectively. The difference between two scores is not significant. Thus, the hypothesis- 6 “Postgraduate male and female college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness” is accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Present research was done to investigate the assertiveness among undergraduate and postgraduate, male

and female college students. Education plays an important role for assertive behavior. The result shows that both the variables influence assertiveness. Findings also show that men are commonly more assertive in comparison with women. Results also indicate that education plays significant part in assertiveness. It shows that postgraduate students are more assertive. Undergraduate students are less assertive.

It is generally assumed that women are less assertive than men. Men tend to be more assertive because they are considered to be having a strong and thoughtful personality. So our society not only accepts but also supports a man to be assertive. Some studies with college students have supported this assumption. For instance, Chandler, Cook and Dugovics (1978), Kimble, Marsh and Kiska (1984), and Adejumo (1981) with Nigerian university students found men to be more assertive than women. A recent study by Costa, Terracciano and McCrae (2001) with college-age and adult samples across 26 cultures showed that men are more assertive than women. On the other hand, in a study by Stebbins, Kelly, Tolor and Power (1977) with US subjects, however, male college students were found to be less assertive than female students. In another study with US university students, Bridges, Sanderman, Breukers, Ranchor and Arrindell (1991) found female students to be more assertive when expressing and dealing with personal limitations and male students to be more assertive when displaying negative feelings. Result of present research is not compatible with all these studies. The first finding of the study supports our hypothesis. According to the result there is no significance difference in assertiveness of male and female college students. It may be due to equal education opportunities for both, boys and girls. It is also true that now our society gives space also to women to show their assertiveness. The second finding of this study do not verify our hypothesis that undergraduate and postgraduate college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness. Postgraduate students are more assertive than undergraduate students. Postgraduate students tend to be more confident because of their higher education. It is very clear that once a person learns, he becomes aware of one's own self. He becomes aware of one's own rights. Higher education makes a person more confident. So it is quite clear why higher educated students become more assertive. The results of the hypothesis also show that male postgraduate students are more assertive than undergraduate male students but in the case of female students, insignificance difference is found between postgraduates and undergraduates regarding assertiveness. The next finding hypothesis is based on undergraduate male and female students. According to the results, there is no significant difference between undergraduate male and female students on assertiveness. The last finding of the result also supports the hypothesis that postgraduate male and female college students do not significantly differ on assertiveness.

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