

Assessment of Gender Difference in Anger Expression Among Adolescent at Selected College in Coimbatore

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Abstract- Background: Anger is a complex emotional response that plays a significant role in adolescent development. Its expression varies across individuals and is often influenced by gender, social norms, and psychological factors. Understanding these differences is crucial for promoting emotional well-being and preventing maladaptive behaviours. **Aim:** This study aims to assess and compare the patterns of anger expression among adolescent boys and girls in a selected college in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

Methods: A descriptive comparative research design was adopted. A total of 100 adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls), aged 17–21 years, were selected using purposive sampling. The Modified State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI) was used to measure dimensions of anger including anger-in, anger-out, and anger control. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and independent t-tests.

Results: Findings revealed that boys exhibited higher levels of anger-out and moderate to severe anger expression, while girls demonstrated greater anger-in and better anger control. The mean anger score for boys was 65.96 and for girls was 56.92, with a statistically significant difference ($t = 1.92, p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study highlights notable gender differences in anger expression among adolescents. These findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive anger management programs and targeted counselling interventions in educational settings to foster healthy emotional regulation.

Keywords: Anger expression, adolescents, gender difference, STAXI, emotional regulation, Coimbatore criteria.

I INTRODUCTION

Anger is a universal emotion—intense, often uncomfortable, and triggered by perceived provocation or violation of personal boundaries. Adolescents, navigating a critical developmental

phase, frequently encounter emotional turbulence, making anger a particularly salient issue. The way anger is expressed—whether inwardly, outwardly, or through controlled mechanisms—can vary significantly across genders due to biological, psychological, and sociocultural influences. (1) In childhood and adolescence, these patterns emerge through a complex interplay of biological predispositions and socio-cultural socialization processes (2)

Research suggests that boys tend to externalize anger through physical or verbal aggression, while girls are more likely to internalize anger, leading to suppressed emotions or relational aggression like gossip or withdrawal. Understanding these gendered patterns is essential for developing targeted interventions that promote emotional regulation and mental well-being among youth. (3)

Extant studies among adolescents indicate that male youth generally exhibit higher levels of physical aggression and hostile behaviors, while females may express anger more verbally or through suppression strategies (4). A study in Malaysia involving secondary-school students found significant gender differences across multiple anger dimensions—including aggressive behavior, verbal expression, intrinsic anger, and internal anger control—with boys showing higher overt aggression and girls manifesting greater internalizing tendencies. Similar trends have been documented in broader Indian adolescent samples, where males demonstrated significantly higher levels of aggression, anger, and hostility compared to females. (5)

However, some recent studies challenge these generalizations by noting that gender differences in anger expression are not always consistent; in certain cultural or situational contexts, these differences may be small or even absent. For instance, research among young adults and adolescents in various contexts reports either no significant gender difference or slightly higher verbal aggression among females. These inconsistencies emphasize the influence of culture, context, and appraisal norms on how adolescents' express anger. (6)

Some studies have shown an association of aggression among youth/adolescents with reported work pressure, substance use, violent activities, road rage, mood disturbance and psychological problems along with family disturbances and peer relationships. Hence, it was decided to conduct a study to know the prevalence of aggression among school-going adolescents and to study factors associated with it. This study was done to guide further research in the field for prevention, early detection, and appropriate management of aggression among the adolescents. (7)

In India—particularly in a culturally diverse city like Coimbatore—the social norms surrounding gender and emotional expression are closely tied to traditional values and expectations. While adolescent anger expression has been studied in schools and community settings, there remains a gap in localized research focusing on college-aged youth in Tamil Nadu. This study aims to assess gender differences in anger expression among adolescents at a selected college in Coimbatore, evaluating dimensions such as physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger suppression, and internal emotional control. (7)

II NEED FOR THE STUDY

- ❖ Adolescents today face increasing emotional stress due to academic pressure, social expectations, and identity formation.
- ❖ Gender-specific anger expression can lead to different psychological outcomes—boys may exhibit aggression, while girls may suffer from anxiety or depression due to suppressed anger.
- ❖ In Coimbatore, like many urban centres, colleges are witnessing rising cases of behavioural issues linked to unmanaged anger.

- ❖ There is a lack of localized data on how gender influences anger expression among college-going adolescents in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ This study will help educators, counsellors, and mental health professionals design gender-sensitive anger management programs.

Statement of the problem

"Assessment of Gender Difference in Anger Expression Among Adolescents at a Selected College in Coimbatore."

Objectives of the study

- ❖ To assess the level of anger expression among adolescent boys and girls.
- ❖ To compare gender differences in anger expression patterns.
- ❖ To identify the type of anger expression (anger-in, anger-out, anger control).

III MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive comparative study using a quantitative approach, aimed at evaluating anger expression differences between genders among adolescent's students in Ganga College of Nursing, Coimbatore. The study conducted over a period of one week, i.e. from March 20th 2025 to March 27th 2025. The independent variable of this study was demographic variable, that is Age, Gender, Academic performance, Family background and Living situation (e.g., hostel vs. home). The dependent variable was to assess the level of anger expression among adolescent boys and girls. The study was conducted at Ganga College of Nursing, Coimbatore. The study sample includes adolescent's boys and girl's students in the age group of 17-21 years with the sample size consisted of 100 adolescents -50 boys and 50 girls (Who fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria) selected by purposive sampling technique- lottery method. The study included adolescents available during the time of data collection and samples included only boys and girls in the age group of 17-21 years. The study excluded the adolescents who were not willing to participate in the study and who were sick at the time of data collection. The tool consisted of two parts i.e., Demographic data and structured questionnaire tool. The data collection tool consists of two sections. Section A consists of demographic variables and Section B consists of a

structured questionnaire to assess the level of anger expression given by State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI) a psychological assessment tool designed to measure how individuals experience, express, and control anger developed by Spielberger et al. (1988) It measures the five key dimension of anger expression like State anger (temporary emotional state), trait anger (general tendency to experience anger), anger-in (suppression of angry feelings), anger-out (outward expression of anger), anger control (ability to regulate anger) and formatted with 44 items, 4-point Likert scale (1 = almost never, 4 = almost always).

The permission to use the tools was sought from the experts and the consent was obtained from college administration and the adolescent’s students. The Participants completed the questionnaires during a scheduled session and the responses were collected anonymously to encourage honest self-reporting. In the majority of occasions, the original English versions of the scales and questionnaires were utilized.

Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Board and formal approval was obtained from the Dean cum Principal of Ganga College of Nursing, Coimbatore to conduct the study in the college and also from the class teachers of the respective class. The researcher has followed fundamental ethical principles like the right to freedom from harm and discomfort, respect for human dignity. The researcher gave full freedom to the participant to decide voluntarily whether to participate in the study or to withdraw from the study and the right to ask questions at any time during the course of the study. One visit was made to meet the students and distribute the consent and assent forms, later on two visits were made for data collection, hence minimum of three visits were made in each class. Class hours were not disturbed for the students as the study conducted after the chief hours. The investigator has maintained the study participants’ privacy throughout study. The investigator has administered the same questionnaire for all the adolescents students of boys and girls.

Statistical Analysis

The data from the proforma were entered in Microsoft excel 2016 and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. Descriptive statistical was used to describe the demographic variables and the structured questionnaire to assess the level of anger expression.

III RESULTS

1.Socio-demographic Characteristics

The demographic data sheet served as a foundational tool for contextualizing the emotional profiles of the adolescent participants. It captured key variables such as age, gender, academic performance, family background, and living situation (e.g., hostel or home). Analysis of this data revealed that most participants fell within the 17–21 age range, a developmental window marked by heightened emotional sensitivity and identity formation. Gender distribution was equal, allowing for a balanced comparison of anger expression patterns. Academic performance varied across the sample, with students reporting higher stress levels tending to show elevated anger scores, particularly among boys. Family background also played a role—students from nuclear families exhibited more anger-out behaviors, while those from joint families showed greater anger control, possibly due to increased emotional support and supervision. Additionally, adolescents residing in hostels demonstrated higher trait anger and lower anger control compared to those living at home, suggesting that environmental factors and social isolation may influence emotional regulation. These demographic insights provided a nuanced understanding of the psychosocial factors that shape anger expression, reinforcing the importance of tailoring interventions to individual backgrounds and living contexts.

2. Anger Expression Levels

Table 1: Based on STAXI scores, participants were categorized into four levels of anger expression:

Anger Level	Boys (n=50)	Girls(n=50)
Minimal (0-33)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)
Mild (34-66)	15 (30%)	27 (54%)
Moderate (67-99)	23 (46%)	10 (20%)
Severe (>100)	5 (10%)	3 (6%)

3. Mean Score Comparison

Table 2: Shows the comparison of Mean Score

Gender	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance
Boys	65.96	23.89	1.92	p < 0.05
Girls	56.92	23.48		

The higher mean score among boys indicates a greater tendency toward externalized anger. The t-value of 1.92 confirms a statistically significant difference in anger expression between genders.

4. Subscale Interpretation

Using STAXI’s dimensions:

- ❖ Anger-Out: Boys scored higher, suggesting more verbal or physical expression of anger.
- ❖ Anger-In: Girls scored higher, indicating suppression or internalization of anger.
- ❖ Anger Control: Girls demonstrated better regulation, aligning with cultural expectations of emotional restraint.

5. Psychosocial Implications

- ❖ Boys may be more prone to aggressive behaviors or confrontational responses.
- ❖ Girls may experience emotional suppression, which could lead to internal stress or passive coping.
- ❖ These patterns reflect social learning theories, where gender roles influence emotional expression

IV DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed a statistically significant gender difference in anger expression among adolescents. Male participants demonstrated higher levels of anger-out and moderate to severe anger, whereas female participants showed greater tendency towards anger-in and anger control. This pattern supports the hypothesis that gender plays a pivotal role in emotional expression, particularly anger.

Social norms and cultural expectations in Indian society might contribute to these trends. Boys are often socially conditioned to exhibit assertiveness or aggression, while girls are encouraged to suppress intense emotions and maintain emotional composure. This may explain the pronounced anger-out behavior

among male students and the self-regulation tendencies seen in female students.

The results echo the findings of prior research:

- Anitha & Judie (2016) emphasized that males frequently resort to external expression of anger, while females internalize their emotions.
- Suman (2016) found that adolescent girls often utilize passive coping mechanisms and demonstrate greater emotional inhibition. (8)

These insights underline the importance of tailoring emotional wellness programs with gender-sensitive strategies. Addressing the unspoken emotional needs of adolescents could help minimize behavioral issues, interpersonal conflicts, and academic stress associated with unmanaged anger.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to promote healthy anger expression and emotional regulation among adolescents:

1. Implement Gender-Sensitive Anger Management Programs
2. Integrate Emotional Literacy into Curriculum
3. Establish Counseling and Support Services
4. Train Educators and Staff in Emotional First Aid
5. Engage Parents Through Awareness Programs
6. Conduct Further Research on Sociocultural Influences
7. Promote Peer-Led Initiatives

V CONCLUSION

The study concludes that gender differences significantly influence the way adolescents express anger. While boys are more likely to exhibit externalized anger behaviours, girls tend to adopt internalized and controlled expressions of anger. These findings reinforce the need for:

- ❖ Targeted anger management interventions in college settings.

- ❖ Emotional literacy workshops to help students recognize, articulate, and manage their emotions constructively.
- ❖ Culturally sensitive counselling approaches that respect gender-specific emotional patterns.

Promoting awareness among educators and parents about these differences can foster a more empathetic and supportive environment for adolescents navigating the challenges of emotional expression.

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X CONTRIBUTORS

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