

# Examining the relationship between self-efficacy and aggression levels of students interested in weightlifting sports

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between aggression levels and self-efficacy of students interested in weightlifting sport. Descriptive and screening research model was used in this study, which assesses the relationship between aggression levels and self-efficacy of students interested in weightlifting sport. The Aggression Questionnaire which was developed by Buss and Perry (1992) and whose validity and reliability study of the Turkish form conducted by Madran (2012) was used in the study as well as the Scale of Self-efficacy which was developed by Riggs et al. (1994), and adapted into Turkish by Öcel (2002). The results of the study show that there is a negative and low-level relationship between the participants' self-efficacy and physical aggression scores ( $r = -.112$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In this context, it can be concluded that when participants' self-efficacy level increases, their physical aggression level decreases.

**Keywords:** Aggression, students, self-efficacy, weightlifting.

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## INTRODUCTION

Aggression is defined as the desire to harm another person, group, or entity (James et al., 2005). The word aggressiveness is portrayed in Latin as "moving in one direction". In this context, it includes the meanings of treating and reacting to others with a certain attitude (Kılınc and Murat 2012). Aronson et al. (2010) define the concept of aggression as acting physically or psychologically in order to hurt another person; and deliberate intentional harm and behavior; while Bayram (2012) defines it as a way to overcome and frustrate the opponent or person in daily life with a disruptive, hurtful and hostile behavior. According to Yörükoğlu (2004), aggression is an innate drive in animals and humans, such as sexual drive. Expressing differences when defining aggression are associated with where aggression originates. Yıldız (2004) listed the possible factors which can cause occurrence of aggression as person's close environment, family structure, interpersonal relationships, intelligence level, personality trait, self-expression, economic and cultural

environmental conditions.

According to excitation-transfer theory, the causes of aggression are associated with an increase in the dose of emotional responses in a different setting, of a stimulus which the person is not aware of from an event or situation that has previously occurred. In short, this theory suggests that aggression is an emotional reaction resulting from the transfer of negative warnings from previous events to the next environments (Brewer and Crano, 1994). Social learning theory claims that many of the social behaviors, including aggressive behaviors, are also learned through observation, imitation and reinforcement (Arkonaç, 2005). In this sense, a sport is an environment in which negative events that may leave traces are experienced as well as positive experiences because the basis of sports constitutes constant competition and related tension (Filiz, 2002).

The feeling of anxious or stressed people due to the competition and tension brought by the sports environment is anger, and anger may be reflected in

behaviors as aggression (Köknel, 2005). Aggression in sports can be defined as the behaviors of the athlete with the intention of going beyond the rules of the sport that they are interested in, with the intention of harming the other with words, body and signs (Demirel et al., 2006). There are two types of aggression in sports: Instrumental aggression and hostility. Instrumental aggression occurs in sports branches, which are carried out in the form of mutual contact, formed in the requirements arising from the special situation in the field of sports, which is and useful for the team. The second defines the aggression which contains hostile attitudes in which the rules are violated and carried out to harm the opponent (Yıldırım, 1997). According to Cox (2007), aggression reflected on the performance of the athlete increases the sportive success because aggression also causes an increase in the stimulation level. Doğan (2005), on the other hand, states that with the increased level of stimulation, symptoms such as irritability, indifference, difficulty in focusing and disability may also arise. Having a high level of self-efficacy in coping with such negativity and intensity of emotions, is an important factor for emotional regulation (Bandura, 2011).

Self-efficacy is defined as judgment about one's own potential to organize and develop the activities that a person needs to perform (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is the level of belief which determines the behavior of human beings in the face of their work and the events they may encounter. It can also be defined as acting according to the situation encountered, using one's own knowledge and equipment according to the performance expected (Acar, 2019). The concept of self-efficacy is among the topics of interest which have been emphasized in recent years (Kıran, 2010). While individuals with high self-efficacy have the characteristics of dealing with complex events, being patient and successful in their professional lives; those with low self-efficacy have the opposite features (Korkmaz, 2005).

Self-efficacy in sports means that an athlete can successfully show their talents and manage their emotions during the competitions (Feltz et al., 2008). Increasing self-efficacy in sports also means increasing athletic performance (Weinberg and Gould, 2015). As a result, it is evident that both aggression and self-efficacy are effective on sports performance and success. In this context, the main purpose of our research is to examine the relationship between the aggression levels and self-efficacy of weightlifting athletes.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research model

The study which assesses the relationship between aggression levels and self-efficacy of weightlifting athletes used descriptive and screening research model.

### Population and sample

The population of the study included 375 athletes who participated in the Naim Suleymanoglu Individual Adults Turkey Weightlifting Championship held in 23-26 January 2020 in Antalya's Manavgat district; while the sample of the study was comprised of randomly selected 337 athletes participating in the championship.

### Data collection tool and surveys

Data collection method through questionnaire was used in the data collection phase for the research. The survey form consists of three parts. In the first part of the survey, demographic questions were asked. In the second part of the questionnaire form, the aggression scale was used, and in the third part, the self-efficacy scale was used.

Cronbach alpha developed by Buss and Perry (1992) and validity and reliability study of Turkish form performed by Madran (2012) internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was found to be 0.85; while for physical aggression it was 0.78; for verbal aggression, 0,48; for anger, 0.76; for hostility, 0.71.

The other scale used in the research is the Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Riggs et al. (1994). The self-efficacy scale was developed in order to measure individuals' belief in their own capacities. The scale, which was adapted into Turkish by Öcel (2002), consists of 10 items. Subjects evaluate the extent to which they agree with the statements in the items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, and a single competency score is obtained by summing the numerical values marked for the items. Riggs et al. (1994) calculated and reported by other researchers, internal consistency coefficient was found as 0.86. As a result of factor analysis conducted by Öcel (2002), the scale has a single factor structure and the factor load values of the items ranged between 0.32 and 0.85. As a result of the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found 0.61.

### Data collection and analysis

The data were analyzed via SPSS 22 package program. For descriptive data analysis, Kruskal-Wallis Test, Independent Sample T test and Pearson's correlation analysis were conducted alongside the tests to define frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the number of male participants is approximately 1.57 times the number of female participants and the number of those who have licensed weightlifting athletes in their families are 3.6 times the

**Table 1.** Frequencies and percentages regarding demographic variables.

Variable	Groups	f	%
Gender	Female	131	38.9
	Male	206	61.1
Educational level	Secondary School	28	8.3
	High school	223	66.2
	University	86	25.5
Level of national athletes	Not a national athlete	238	70.6
	A level	30	8.9
	B level	35	10.4
	C level	34	10.1
Residential area	Village + Town	29	8.6
	City	150	44.5
	Metropolitan city	158	46.9
Family member who does weightlifting (licensed)	Yes	73	21.7
	No	264	78.3
Mother's educational background	Illiterate	21	6.2
	Literate	29	8.6
	Primary	92	27.3
	Secondary	101	30.0
	High school	84	24.9
	University	10	3.0
Father's educational background	Illiterate	12	3.6
	Literate	28	8.3
	Primary	87	25.8
	Secondary	100	29.7
	High school	93	27.6
	University	17	5.0

number of those who do not have. In addition, the majority of the participants is high school level and they are not national athletes; mostly reside in the city and metropolitan city. In the context of mothers' educational background, the highest number was in the middle school group the lowest number was in the university group; while regarding the educational background of the father, the highest number appeared in the middle school group and the lowest number in the illiterate group.

According to Table 2, the average age of the participants is 19.160 and the standard deviation is 2.7317; while the average experience in the branch is 5.092 and the standard deviation is 3.0707. Additionally, the average of experience with the current coach is 4.659 and the standard deviation is 2.8722; as well as average monthly income is 4024.807 and standard deviation is 2292.5185.

Table 3 reveals that the average of the physical

aggression dimension scores of the participants is 3.1072 and the standard deviation is 1.04933; while the average of anger dimension scores is 3.3065 and the standard deviation is .93749. Hostility dimension mean scores is 3.1877 and standard deviation is 1.06408. The average of verbal aggression scores is 3.2030 and the standard deviation is 1.17478; while the average of aggression (total) dimension scores is 3.1940 and standard deviation is .93264. Lastly, the average of self-efficacy scores is 3.3095 and the standard deviation is .52233.

According to Table 4, there is not a statistically significant difference among scale dimension scores with regards to the gender variable ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 5 shows that there is not a statistically significant difference among scale dimension score means with regards to the educational level variable ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 6 displays that there is a negative and low-level relationship between the participants' self-efficacy and

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics regarding the variables of age, experience in the branch, experience with current coach and total monthly income.

Variables		Age	Experience in the branch	Experience with current coach	Monthly income (Total TL)
n	Valid data	337	337	337	337
	Lost data	0	0	0	0
	Mean	19.16	5.09	4.66	4024.81
	Median	18.00	5.00	4.00	3300.00
	Standard deviation	2.73	3.07	2.87	2292.52
	Minimum	15.0	1.0	1.0	1500.0
	Maximum	30.0	17.0	17.0	17000.0

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics regarding the dimensions of the scales.

Scale dimensions		Physical aggression	Anger	Hostility	Verbal aggression	Aggression (Total)	Self-efficacy
n	Valid data	337	337	337	337	337	337
	Lost data	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	3.1072	3.3065	3.1877	3.2030	3.1940	3.3095
	Median	3.1111	3.2857	3.2500	3.0000	3.1034	3.3000
	Standard deviation	1.04933	.93749	1.06408	1.17478	.93264	.52233
	Minimum	1.00	1.29	1.00	1.00	1.28	2.10
	Maximum	4.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.86	4.50

**Table 4.** Independent sample t-test results regarding scale dimensions in terms of gender variable.

Scale dimensions	Gender	n	X	Std. Deviation	Sd	t	p
Physical aggression	Female	131	2.9720	1.06166	335	-1.893	.059
	Male	206	3.1931	1.03483			
Anger	Female	131	3.2574	.86451	335	-.767	.444
	Male	206	3.3377	.98185			
Hostility	Female	131	3.1641	1.01788	335	-.324	.746
	Male	206	3.2027	1.09463			
Verbal aggression	Female	131	3.1695	1.22750	335	-.417	.677
	Male	206	3.2243	1.14252			
Aggression (Total)	Female	131	3.1279	.90481	335	-1.037	.300
	Male	206	3.2360	.94969			
Self-efficacy	Female	131	3.3115	.53402	335	.055	.956
	Male	206	3.3083	.51606			

physical aggression scores ( $r = -.112$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In this context, it can be concluded that when participants' self-efficacy level increases, physical aggression level decreases. However, no statistically significant relationship was detected within the scope of other scale dimensions ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study reveal that the number of male participants is 206 and the number of female participants is 131. On the other hand, the number of those who have a licensed weightlifter family member is 73 and the

**Table 5.** Kruskal-Wallis test results regarding scale dimensions in terms of educational level.

Scale dimensions	Groups	n	X	Sd	$\chi^2$	p
Physical aggression	Secondary School	28	128.16	2	5.467	.065
	High School	223	173.60			
	University	86	170.36			
Anger	Secondary	28	136.32	2	3.478	.176
	High School	223	171.39			
	University	86	173.43			
Hostility	Secondary School	28	156.00	2	2.876	.237
	High School	223	164.94			
	University	86	183.76			
Verbal aggression	Secondary School	28	159.25	2	3.445	.179
	High School	223	163.81			
	University	86	185.63			
Aggression (Total)	Secondary School	28	138.09	2	3.551	.169
	High School	223	169.43			
	University	86	177.94			
Self-efficacy	Secondary School	28	174.59	2	4.152	.125
	High School	223	175.41			
	University	86	150.56			

**Table 6.** Pearson correlation analysis results between self-efficacy and aggression scales.

Scale dimensions		Physical aggression	Anger	Hostility	Verbal aggression	Aggression (total)
Self-efficacy	r	-.112*	.020	-.057	-.019	-.057
	p	.039	.717	.297	.722	.300
	n	337	337	337	337	337

number of those who do not have 264. In addition, 223 of the participants are high school level and 238 are not national athletes; while 308 participants reside in the city and metropolitan area. In the context of mother's educational background, the highest number is in the primary and secondary school group with 193, while the lowest number is in the university group with 10. Regarding the father's educational background, the highest number is in the primary and secondary school group with 187 and the lowest number is in the illiterate group with 28.

The present study did not find a difference as a result of the analysis conducted to explore a possible difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants in terms of gender variable. Studies with similar results are present in the literature. Sandıkçı (2017) did not find any difference according to the gender of the individuals participating in sports recreation activities. Özdemir (2019), in their study on athletes, did not detect a

significant difference between the self-efficacy of athletes according to the gender variable. Tırpan (2016) did not find any difference according to gender variable in their study on physical education and sports department students. Ekici (2008), Uysal and Kösemen (2013), Hodges and Carron (1992), Altunçekiç et al. (2005), Azar (2010), Çetin (2007), Yıldırım and İlhan (2010), Yokuş and Yürüdü (2015) and Yenice (2012) did not find any difference between gender variable and self-efficacy or general self-efficacy. There are also studies with contrary results on self-efficacy in the literature. Aypay (2011), Rimm and Jerusalem (1999), Scholz et al. (2002), Schwarzer and Scholz (2000) and Morgül et al. (2004) concluded that men's general self-efficacy was higher than women's general self-efficacy. In accordance with the results obtained from the findings and other supporting results in the literature, it can be said that the gender variable has no influence on self-efficacy levels. It can be interpreted that men and women consider

themselves equal on the subject of self-efficacy. However, there are also studies in the literature with different results, suggesting that studies which found difference should also be taken into consideration.

The present study did not find any difference between the aggression levels of the participants in terms of gender variable. There are studies in the literature with similar results. Sağlam (2018), as a result of the study conducted on taekwondo athletes, concluded that the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions did not differ according to the gender variable. According to the results of the study conducted by Yıldırım (2015) on the sportspeople who play hockey, aggression did not differ according to gender. The study conducted by Çobanoğlu (2006), did not find any significant difference regarding the aggression scores of the athletes in terms of their gender. Öztürk (2019) and Erşan et al. (2009) did not find any difference in terms of gender in their study. There are also studies in the literature with different results. Okyaz (2017) found that the average aggressiveness of male athletes was higher than female athletes in the study which examined the aggression levels of young individuals interested in Taekwondo and swimming sports. The study conducted by Aksoyak (2015) on university students found that the verbal aggression levels of men were higher than the verbal aggression levels of women. According to Bandura (1973), the occurrence of aggression parallels the behavior and purpose of the individual who is fully aggressive. According to the results obtained in the present study and the literature, it can be said that there is no relationship between aggression and gender variable and that aggression is caused by the psycho-social differences of individuals.

As a result of the study conducted to explore whether there was a difference between the educational level of the participants and their self-efficacy levels, no difference was found. There are studies in the literature with similar results. In their study, Toklu (2010) found that the self-efficacy levels of tennis coaches did not change according to educational status. Ünüvar (2007) concluded that the self-efficacy level of the students did not differ significantly according to the type of school. The study of Cengiz et al. (2012) stated that the self-efficacy beliefs of taekwondo coaches did not differ in terms of their educational status. Similarly, Çetinoğlu (2016) did not find any difference in their study on amateur footballers. The study conducted by Buğdaycı (2018) found that there was not a statistically significant difference between educational status variable and self-efficacy scores of male coaches; female coaches with primary education level had lower scores in the overall self-efficacy scores than other groups. As a result, it can be said that the level of education does not influence self-efficacy levels.

There was not a difference as a result of the study conducted to explore whether there was a difference

between the educational level of the participants and their level of aggression. There are studies in the literature with similar results. Topuz (2008) did not find any difference in their study on football players. Afyon and Metin (2015) concluded that the educational level did not cause any difference in their study which examined the aggression levels of football players. Yıldırım (2015) found that aggression level did not differ according to educational level in their study on football players. In the study conducted by Şanlı (2014) to examine the aggression levels of football spectators, there was not a difference between the aggression level of the audience and their educational level. Within the scope of the supporting results in the literature, it can be said that the educational status variable does not have an influence on aggression levels

As a result of the correlation analysis conducted to investigate any relationship between the self-efficacy levels of the participants and the sub-dimensions of the aggression scale, there was a negative and low-level relationship between the self-efficacy and the aggression sub-dimensions and physical aggression. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is a feature which is effective in the occurrence of behavior and the belief in the ability of the individual to successfully organize the activities needed to perform a certain performance. Zimmerman (1995) emphasized that self-efficacy is an ability assessment which is necessary for the individual to perform actions rather than their personal, physical or psychological characteristics. Self-efficacy is known to be effective in individuals' thinking styles, problem solving skills and sensory responses (Enochs and Riggs, 1990; Pajares, 1997). Individuals with low self-efficacy think that things are harder than they seem, and individuals with high self-efficacy are more confident and have higher problem-solving skills and determination when faced with a difficult task (Enochs and Riggs, 1990; Pajares, 1997). Bandura (1986) stated that studies in many different areas are defining in terms of behavior. According to the studies, self-efficacy shows that it has an important effect on people's success in various fields (Bandura, 1997). Aggression is defined as an attitude which intends to harm one living creature emotionally or physically (Ballard et al., 2004). It is stated that physical aggression is associated with motor behavior and is intended to harm the person/object (Buss and Perry 1992). According to Yavuzer and Karataş (2012), anger stimulates the individual physiologically, prepares them for aggression and creates the emotional aspect of aggression. In this context, it can be concluded that, with increasing self-efficacy levels, the participants control their emotional responses (anger, aggression) more easily and their physical aggression levels decrease accordingly.

As a result, gender variable and educational level do not seem to have an influence on aggression and self-efficacy levels. Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and aggression level, the results reveal that

physical aggression level decreases as self-efficacy level increases. It is thought that this study will be a reference for future studies and will be compared with future studies. In the context of these results:

- By increasing the sample size, more efficient results can be obtained.
- A study can be conducted for athletes who are interested in combat sports.
- Studies comparing athletes who are interested in different sports can be conducted.

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