



## THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF AGGRESSION ON CRIME

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**ABSTRACT:** *Many types of behaviors can be categorized as aggressive. Lying, Stealing, and vandalism are often used as visible indicators of aggression. Although disruptive and socially annoying, these types of behaviors do not necessarily constitute acts of aggression, and they certainly are not harbingers of chronic offending in adulthood. This study aimed to determine the influence of aggression on the commission of crime. This study utilized the descriptive research design. This method described the influence of aggression as perceived by the respondents and was likewise described the offenses/crimes committed as influenced by aggression. Respondents of the study were the detainees from BJMP Tuao, Cagayan who committed crimes/offenses due to aggression. An interview schedule and a structured questionnaire were used in gathering the data. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages and weighted mean. From the emerged findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that aggression leads to the commission of crimes and other offenses and being an aggressive person may sometimes lead to an impulsive decision and outright commission of unacceptable act. Considering the effects of being an aggressive person, it is strongly recommended that such persons should avoid confrontation situations and maintain the virtue of calmness and patience. Further, it is recommended that aggressive persons should seek for counseling and make themselves busy with some worthwhile activities and work.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Aggression, Crime, Perception, Forms of Crime, impulsive, are parricide, physical injury and malicious mischief, murder, theft, concubinage*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most consistently documented findings flowing from criminological research is that approximately 5% to 6% of the U.S. population commits more than 50% of all criminal offenses. This small cadre of offenders is often referred to as career criminals or habitual offenders, to capture their prolonged and frequent involvement in criminal offenses. Even more striking than the sheer volume of crime committed at the hands of habitual offenders



is their widespread use of physical violence; they also use physical aggression much more frequently. Rape, robbery, assault, and murder, for example, are crimes that are almost exclusively confined to habitual offenders. In all aspects, then, career criminals represent the most serious violent offenders, and they also pose the greatest danger to society.

One of the most firmly established criminological findings is the age-crime curve, which captures the age-graded nature of delinquent involvement not existing until around the age of 12, then rises sharply until around the age of 18 or 19, at which point it begins to decline relatively quickly. By age 30, rates of criminal involvement hover near zero and remain that way throughout the rest of life. The age-crime curve has been observed at different time periods, in different countries, and by means of different methodological techniques- it is, in short, a robust criminological finding. As a direct result, there has been little reason to suspect that the age-crime curve may not be painting an accurate picture of the ebb and flow of delinquency over time.

Part of the reasons that there has been little dispute of the age-crime curve is because most criminologists study adolescents and adults but fail to investigate antisocial behaviors among children. After all, how could children commit crimes such as rape, robbery, or assault? This is, of course, a rhetorical question; children do not-in fact, they cannot-commit these types of crimes. However, they can begin to display signs of antisocial behaviors, and they can engage in various forms of aggression during the first year or two of life. The problem, however, is that this section of the life course has not been studied extensively among criminologists. In recent years, a small group of researchers, spearheaded by Richard Tremblay, has examined the use of physical aggression among children (Tremblay, 2000, 2006; Tremblay et al., 1999). Their scholarship has pointed to the possibility that theory regarding the age-crime curve may perhaps need to be revamped.

Tremblay and his colleagues have examined aggressive behavior in very young children and tracked them throughout childhood. The results of their studies have been quite striking. They have found that some children begin using aggression, including hitting and kicking, well before their first birthday; in some cases, around 7 or 8 months of age (Tremblay,



2000). Even more revealing is that Tremblay et al. have reported that more than 80% of children began using physical aggression by age 17 months (Tremblay et al., 1999). Within childhood, the peak age at which children use aggression and violence is around 2 to 3 years, after which rates of aggression decline until mid-adolescence. Other types of antisocial behaviors that are not necessarily aggressive per se are also almost universal behaviors among children. For example, Tremblay and associates (1999) found that approximately 90% of children took things from others. With age, all of these types of behaviors became less prevalent.

Against this backdrop, Tremblay and others have argued that there are really two distinct age-crime curves (Tremblay, Hartup, & Archer, 2005). The first, the traditional age-crime curve described earlier, is based on official crime measures and captures involvement in law-violating behaviors. The second, age-crime curve measures not criminal involvement per se but rather physical aggression. This age-crime curve also resembles an inverted U, whereby physical aggression does not appear until around the age of 1, then increases sharply until around age 3, declining quickly thereafter. This latter age-crime curve indexes only acts of physical aggression, not official acts of crime or delinquency.

The fact that there are two age-crime curves is a somewhat new finding, and the next logical question is whether these two age-crime curves are interrelated or whether they are distinct from each other. Before tackling this issue, it is first necessary to determine whether behavior is stable and what is meant by behavioral stability. There are, in general, two types of stability: (a) absolute stability and (b) relative stability. It is easiest to make the distinction between these different types of stability clear by providing an example. Suppose a group of children was examined when they were 10 months old, again when they were 18 months old, and again when they were 24 months old. Suppose, further, that at each of these three ages, they were assigned an aggressiveness score (based on a valid measure of aggression) that ranged from 0 to 10, with higher scores representing more aggressiveness.

There is now a rich line of empirical research indicating that the use of aggression peaks during childhood, typically around age 3 years. Also, although the use of aggression usually



wanes by late childhood, and is not a predictor of future criminal behavior, most violent offenders have long histories of aggression that can be traced back to early childhood. Aggressive behaviors are relatively stable, even across very lengthy periods of time and the traditional age-crime curve that captures the ebb and flow of delinquency in adolescence is complimented by a similar age-crime curve that captures the ebb and flow aggression during early childhood. Research has revealed that the most effective intervention programs focus on at-risk families and implement prevention programs immediately after conception. In general, the earlier interventions are established, the larger the reduction in antisocial outcomes.

Career criminals are thus very different than all other offenders in terms of their frequent involvement in crime as well as their frequent use of aggression. The questions that come to bear, then, are the following: (a) What are the factors that contribute to the development of habitual offenders, and (b) are these the same factors that contribute to the development of all other types of offenders? The answers to these questions are obviously complex, but rich insight can be garnered by focusing on two intertwined issues. First, the use of aggression appears to be one of the main elements that distinguish chronic offenders from other offenders. Second and closely related, the making of criminals is a sequential process that begins at conception and continues throughout the rest of the life course. Any understanding of chronic, habitual offending, therefore, must begin by unraveling the development origins of aggression.

Many types of behaviors can be categorized as aggressive. Lying, Stealing, and vandalism are often used as visible indicators of aggression. Although disruptive and socially annoying, these types of behaviors do not necessarily constitute acts of aggression, and they certainly are not harbingers of chronic offending in adulthood. As a result, scholars often divide aggression into different components, each reflecting a relatively homogeneous set of behaviors. The underlying assumption is that different types of aggression may have different etiologies and may differentially relate to the odds of engaging in offending behaviors later in life.



One of the main distinctions made by scholars trying to define aggression is delineating indirect aggression and direct aggression. Indirect aggression is usually verbal and covert and includes actions such as gossiping and ostracism. Direct aggression, in contrast, is typically physical and overt and includes behaviors such as hitting, kicking, punching, and biting. In general, females are more likely than males to use indirect aggression, and males are more likely than females to use direct aggression. Although both forms of aggression have important ramifications, it is direct aggression that is most applicable to the etiology of criminal behaviors. As a result, this research paper focuses exclusively on direct aggression.

Simply focusing in direct aggression leaves open a lot of room for ambiguity and treats all forms of direct aggression as the same. For example, consider two men, both of whom engaged in a serious physical fight in the past week. Unprovoked, one of the men attacked an elderly woman. The other man, in contrast, was jumped by a group of teenagers and fought back in self-defense. These two types of direct aggression clearly are different, and thus it is essential that the definition of aggression be able to delineate between the two. In the preceding example, the behaviors were fighting; however, the intentions were quite different. For one man, using aggression was a way of inflicting harm on someone, whereas for the other man, using aggression was a defense mechanism. To take differences in intentions into account, this research paper defines aggression as direct aggression whereby the actor intends to inflict harm on or intimidate another person.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Generally, this study aimed to determine the influence of aggression on the commission of crime. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - a. Age
  - b. Sex
  - c. Civil Status
  - d. Occupation
  - e. Education attainment
2. How do the respondents perceive the influence of aggression on crimes?



3. What are the forms of offenses/ crimes committed as influenced by aggression?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive research design. This method described the influence of aggression as perceived by the respondents and was likewise described the offenses/crimes committed as influenced by aggression. Respondents of the study were the detainees from BJMP Tuao, Cagayan who committed crimes/offenses due to aggression. An interview schedule and a structured questionnaire were used in gathering the data.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The Likert Scale below was used in analyzing the responses of the respondents.

3 – very much agree

2 – agree

1 – do not agree

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	4	8.00
26-30	10	20.00
31-35	8	16.00
36-40	7	14.00
41-45	10	20.00
46-50	6	12.00
51-55	1	2.00
56-60	2	4.00
61-65	1	2.00
66-70	1	2.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Mean = 43.57 SD = 8.78</b>		

Table 1 presented the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents as to age. As gleaned from the table, the highest frequency of 10 or 20.00 percent belonged to the age



bracket of 26-30 and 41-45 years of age with a mean age of 43.57. The data imply that the respondents are already mature enough and capable of discernment.

**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	49	98.00
Female	1	2.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data showed that only one female detainee was included in the group of the respondents. The data imply that the males are more prone to commit crimes than the females.

**Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Civil Status**

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	20	40.00
Married	29	58.00
Widower	1	2.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data showed that majority of the respondents are married which is in consonance with the age bracket of the respondents.

**Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Level	17	34.00
Elementary Graduate	7	14.00
Secondary Level	5	10.00
Secondary Graduate	13	26.00
College Level	6	12.00
College Graduate	2	4.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Data in table 4 showed the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents as educational attainment. As gleaned from the table, the highest the frequency of 17 or 34.00 percent belong to elementary level.



**Table 5. Summary of the Item Mean on the Perceived Influence of Aggression on Crime**

Statements	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Value
Heated discussion leads to aggression acts of group members.	2.30	Agree
Aggression leads to hitting or pushing anyone.	2.29	Agree
Intimidation or verbally berating another person is a form of verbal, mental and emotional aggression.	2.25	Agree
Aggression asserts dominants in group.	2.42	Strongly Agree
Crime is committed as a result of aggression in the heat of the moment.	2.39	Strongly Agree
Telling and berating other people lead to impulsive aggression.	2.22	Agree
Commission of robbery or theft to obtain money is due to aggression.	2.31	Agree
Persons of lower IQ are more likely to have predatory aggression.	2.36	Strongly Agree
Men are more likely to engage in physical aggression.	2.28	Agree
People witnessing some forms of aggression are more likely to believe that violence and hostility are socially acceptable.	2.22	Agree
Aggression lies as the root of many social ills.	2.26	Agree
Children who observed adult acting aggressively are more likely to act aggressively.	2.25	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 5 showed the summary of the item mean on the perceived influence of aggression on crime. As reflected from the table, the respondents “strongly agree” that aggression asserts dominance in group, that crime is committed as a result of aggression in the spur of the moment, and that the persons of lower IQ are more likely to have predatory aggression with weighted means of 2.42, 2.39 and 2.36 correspondingly. However, the respondents rated “agree” on the other items. These findings imply that aggression on the part of a person normally leads to the commission of a crime and subsequently the detention of the aggressor.

**As to the crimes committed by the respondents,** mentioned crimes were parricide, physical injury and malicious mischief, murder, theft, concubinage, and others were due to drugs.





## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the emerged findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that aggression leads to the commission of crimes and other offenses and being an aggressive person may sometimes lead to an impulsive decision and outright commission of unacceptable act.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Considering the effects of being an aggressive person, it is strongly recommended that such persons should avoid confrontation situations and maintain the virtue of calmness and patience. Further, it is recommended that aggressive persons should seek for counseling and make themselves busy with some worthwhile activities and work.

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