



# A Comparison between Aggression and Self-Esteem among Universiti Teknologi Mara (Uitm) Shah Alam Athletes

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## Research Article

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## Abstract

Human aggression is a major worldwide health issue that brings negative effects to victims, perpetrators, and society. One of the areas that may be potentially variables for understanding aggression is self-esteem that can influence whether someone will display aggressive behaviour. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the relationship between the level of aggression and level of self-esteem among Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam student-athletes. This study is very important to determine the athlete's aggression and self-esteem level based on the differences of genders and types of sport. Furthermore, the findings of this study may help in promoting a beneficial knowledge among coaches and athletes about aggression level and also self-esteem level toward maintaining and improving sports performance. A correlational study was selected in order to conduct this study. This correlational study was selected because this study was closely related to both descriptive and causal-comparative research. The instrument used for this study comprised of a 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and 19-item of Aggression Questionnaire (AQ), which had been distributed in UiTM Shah Alam. The samples consisted of 260 UiTM Shah Alam athletes, included male and female, individual and team sports, age ranged between 18 until 26 years old. Independent t-test showed there was no significant difference between genders and types of sport on aggression level,  $p > 0.05$ . Result also showed that there was no significant difference on self-esteem between types of sport,  $p > 0.05$ . Meanwhile, a result found that there was a significant difference on self-esteem between genders,  $p < 0.05$ . Result also showed that there was a positive correlation between aggression and self-esteem among UiTM Shah Alam athletes, ( $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Present findings indicated that athletes who had higher aggression level tend to have a higher level of self-esteem. Therefore, psychological skill training (PST) recommended as a better coping technique in order to promote better adaptation to the constraints of sports involvement.

**Keywords:** Aggression; Self Esteem; Athletes; Coping; Behaviour

## Introduction

One of the potential variables when understanding aggression is self-esteem is this can influence whether

someone will display an aggressive behaviour or not [1]. It is possible to how self-esteem leads to maintaining and promoting a healthy self-perspective particularly for athletes in sports environments [2]. As such, it would seem logical

to infer that having low self-esteem is much more likely to result aggressive behaviour, whilst having high self-esteem is much more likely to result in positive, productive behaviour. The relationship between self-esteem and aggression is supported by several studies which set out exactly how and why low self-esteem is linked to aggression [3,4]. Other studies however, has posited that it is that high self-esteem can be associated with and lead to aggressive behaviour [5,6].

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

A correlational study was selected to conduct this research. This was because the study itself was closely related to both descriptive and causal-comparative research. The main purpose here was (1) to determine whether, and to what extent, a relationship exists between two or more variables and (2) to use relationship to make predictions [7]. The study specifically sought to determine the relationship between the level of aggression and level self-esteem among UiTM Shah Alam athletes. The prediction variables employed were gender and the types of sport (team & individual) of the athletes – under analysis – while the outcome variables were self-esteem and aggression. The research design as constructed is shown on page 3.

### Sampling

Samples were selected by using non-probability sampling (subjects were not randomly selected). Here, the subjects were selected because they possessed certain characteristics or satisfied a specific criterion set by the researcher. This purposive sampling approach saw 260 UiTM Shah Alam athletes selected for the study, their selection premised upon their specific characteristics in a certain segment of the university's student population, namely being a male or female UiTM Shah Alam students' athlete, aged between 18 to 26 years old, who had represented the university at least in any sporting events.

### Instrumentations

**Aggression Questionnaire (AQ):** The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 1992) was used to assess the propensity toward aggression of the selected UiTM Shah Alam athletes. The AQ assessed aggressive tendencies across 29 areas and were divided into four subscales of physical aggression (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), verbal aggression (10, 11, 12, 13, 14), hostility (15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22), and anger (23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29). Responses were made on the 5-point Likert scales ranging from one (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to five (extremely characteristics of

me). The internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's Alpha reported for previously studied was  $\alpha = 0.77$  [8] while for present study it was  $\alpha = 0.94$ .

**Self Esteem:** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) was used in this study in order to assess the self-esteem level of the UiTM Shah Alam athletes. This RSES consisted 10-item instruments according to how they generally feel about themselves. Responses were made on the 4-point Likert scales ranged from one (strongly agree) to four (strongly disagree). The internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's Alpha reported in the previous studied with  $\alpha = 0.84$  [8]. The Cronbach's Alpha for present study was reported  $\alpha = 0.66$ .

**Data Collection:** Approval to conduct this study was obtained from Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Selangor. Prior to data collection, the consent form was distributed to the participants and they were informed that participation was not only voluntary, but they would also be allowed to withdraw from the study (if they agreed to participate in it) at any time. The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) and The Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale (RSES) were distributed to participants who were willing to participate in this study. This was to measure the relationship between aggression and self-esteem among the athletes. On average, participants answered all questionnaires in approximately 20 minutes.

**Data Analysis:** Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0) for Windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the mean and standard deviation for athlete's demographic informations. Independent t-tests were used to determine the differences of aggression and self-esteem level between genders. In addition, independent t-tests were also used to determine the differences in the levels of aggression and self-esteem between the different types of sport played by the athletes. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was conducted to determine the correlation between aggression and self-esteem among athletes. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . The findings were revealed either to reject or failed to reject null hypotheses.

## Results

### Profile of Respondents

The mean and standard deviation for demographic profile of the respondents was presented in Table 1. Mean and standard deviation for the respondents are: height (M = 166.22, SD = 7.83), weight (M = 63.19, SD = 12.51), age (M = 21.05, SD = 1.91) and sport involvement (M = 5.93, SD = 3.59).

Variable	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Height (cm)	166.2	7.83	145	191
Weight (kg)	63.19	12.51	40	119
Age (years)	21.05	1.91	18	26
Sport (years)	5.93	3.59	1	20

**Table 1:** Descriptive of Respondents' Demographic.

### Dependent Variables

The mean and standard deviation of physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger, aggression and self-esteem is presented in Table 2. Mean and standard deviation

for all dependent variables is physical ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), verbal ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), hostility ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), anger ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), aggression ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), and self-esteem ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ).

Vari Variables	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Physical aggression	2.33	0.99	1	5
Verbal aggression	2.71	0.77	1	5
Hostility	2.87	0.89	1	5
Anger	2.7	0.77	1	4.71
Aggression	2.63	0.73	1.03	4.48
Self-esteem	2.48	0.46	1.4	4

**Table 2:** Descriptive of Dependent Variables.

### Aggression between Genders

Independent t-tests were conducted to compare difference in aggression levels between genders. The results are presented in Table 3. Based on the results, there is no significant differences in aggression levels between the male

and female UiTM Shah Alam athletes with  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it was suggested that the null hypothesis was failed to reject. In addition, male ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) was reported to have a higher level of aggression when compared to female ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ).

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Aggression	Male	130	4.03	1.16	0.21	258	0.84
	Female	130	4	1.06			

**Table 3:** Comparison of Aggressions between Genders.

### Aggression between Types of Sport

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Aggression	Team	169	3.97	1.17	0.98	258	0.33
	Individual	91	4.1	1			

**Table 4:** Comparison of Aggression between Types of Sport.

To compare differences between aggression levels in different types of sport, independent t-tests were conducted. The results are presented in Table 4. Based on the results, there is no significant difference between aggression level and the types of sport played by UiTM Shah Alam athletes with  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it was indicated that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

### Self-esteem between Genders

Independent t-tests were also conducted to compare the difference of self-esteem level between genders. The results

are presented in Table 5. Based on these findings, there was a significant difference in term of self-esteem levels between male and female UiTM Shah Alam athletes with  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, it was suggested that the null hypothesis was

rejected. In addition, results also illustrated that the males sampled ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ) had significantly higher level

of self-esteem than their female counterparts ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ).

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Self-esteem	Male	130	2.55	0.4	2.5	258	0.01
	Female	130	2.41	0.5			

**Table 5:** Comparison of Self-esteem between Genders.

### Self-Esteem between Types of Sport

Independent t-tests were conducted to compare the difference of self-esteem level between types of sport. The results are presented in Table 6. Based on these results, we can see that there was no significant difference of self-esteem

level between team and individual sport among UiTM Shah Alam athletes with  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it was suggested that the null hypothesis was failed to reject. Furthermore, teams ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ) scored higher in self-esteem levels than their individual sport counterparts ( $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ).

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Self-esteem	Team	169	2.5	0.5	1.1	258	0.26
	Individual	91	2.44	0.5			

**Table 6:** Comparison of Self-Esteem between Types of Sport.

### Relationship between Aggression and Self-esteem

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between aggression and self-esteem among UiTM Shah Alam athletes. The results are presented in Table 7. The results show that there was a significant positive relationship between aggression and self-esteem with  $r(260) = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Thus, it was suggested that the null hypothesis was rejected. Although there was a relationship, it was weak relationship at less than 0.30. Therefore, it can be concluded that individuals who demonstrated higher self-esteem levels did tend to be more aggressive.

had been reported [10,11]. In this study, there was no significant difference between male and female aggression levels (something possibly due to the personalities of the athletes involved?). In contemporary sport, aggression can see those involved open to more exposure to aggressive behaviours and situations which might in turn, influence their individual behaviours. Furthermore, winning is an essential part of an athlete's goal toward successful performance. As such, becoming aggressive may actually help some athletes. As was mentioned over page, the current findings are contradicted by other previous studies which reported significant differences in the levels of physical aggression exerted by both genders [10,11]. This may be linked to the condition or situational context athletes find themselves in or to the personalities of those sampled in this study. It is perhaps important to be cognisant that athletes tend to be both competitive and ambitious.

Variable	Self-esteem		
	N	Correlation	p-value
Aggression	260	0.20**	0.002

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Table 7:** Correlation between Aggression and Self-esteem.

## Discussion

### Aggression between Genders

The result of this study had shown that there was no significant difference in term of aggression levels between males and females. Our results were consistent with previous studies [9]. This was in contrast to more recent studies where significant differences between male and female aggression

Therefore, for most individuals involved in competitive sport – whether males or females – being in a typically more aggressive environment is almost unavoidable [12]. It is perhaps due to this reason more than any other that athletes adopt a physical aggressive approach as a strategy to help them in their effort to win to use physical aggression in order to seek an advantage over their opponents. It is that may well account for the fact that was no difference in the levels between male and female UiTM Shah Alam athletes as physical aggression – irrespective of gender – was seen to be an essential strategy for success. While there were no significant differences in levels of physical aggression between genders, the males did exhibit a higher level of

physical aggression than their female counterparts. This is a finding which supports research undertaken by Shaheen, et al. [11] who reported males in their study as having a higher level of physical aggression than females and also by Ali, et al. [10] who also found this to be true. Other studies showing that males are more physically aggressive than females include Giles, et al. [13]; Maughan, et al. [14]; and Ostrov, et al. [15].

### Aggression between Types of Sport

The findings showed no significant difference in aggression levels between team sports and individual sports. This supported recent studies by Moghadam, et al. [16] who also found there to be no significant difference in aggression levels between athletes who played on teams or who competed individually. However, it also contrasted with study undertaken by Mashhoodi, et al. [9], whose work highlighted significant differences in aggression levels depending on the types of sports played. Whilst it is important to be mindful here that in a study conducted by Moghadam, et al. [16], the specific sport an athlete plays were simply one of a number of variables behind aggressive behaviour. It is also important to identify that again. Most of the previous studies have not supported our finding [9,17-19]. In a sports context, the losing of a game can be an important factor elicit frustration [20]. In fact, there is a vast difference between individual sport and team sport. In an individual sports context, an athlete's performance (and ultimately their success or failure) relies much more on their own individual performance. whereas in team sports it is shared much more amongst teammates. Because of that, individual athletes may experience more frustration than athlete in a team setting and as such it can be assumed that athletes playing individual sports may exhibit more aggression than athletes involved in teams. Indeed, frustration has been long established as one of the sources for aggression. The frustration-aggression theory refers to aggression arising as a direct result of goal blockage or failure to achieve a specific goal. Again then, in an individual sports context, athletes may experience more frustration and by extension become more aggressive compared to team athletes because ultimately, their success relies much more on their own efforts.

### Self-Esteem between Genders

The finding also showed that there was a significant difference in self-esteem levels between male and female of UiTM Shah Alam athletes, with males scoring higher. This was both consistent with [21-27], and also contradicted other finding [28-31]. The significance difference in levels of self-esteem between the genders in this study may be due to a number of reasons: males developing more self-esteem from physical activities with females more than extracurricular

activities; participation in competitive sport being more popular amongst males; cultural factors such as gender conditioning and internal negative stereotyping. Shaheen, et al. [11] would also point to males typically having higher level of self-esteem because they tend to be typically stronger and typically have more opportunities / less obstacles placed in their way.

### Self-Esteem between Types of Sport

Regarding the comparison of self-esteem between sport types, this finding found that there were no significant differences between UiTM Shah Alam athletes who participated in team and individual sports. The supports findings from Moghadam, et al. [16] which also failed to identify any significant differences in self-esteem scores between those sampled involved in team and individual sports. It is once more important to be cognizant that in terms of participation, a few of the athletes may well have been involved in both team and individual sports. In addition, previous studies have suggested that team sport tends to be higher in term of self-esteem, as being part of a social group may promote a feeling of belonging and a lack of isolation.

The fact that during this current study and in order to practice and to prepare for competition, athletes worked in social groups. As such, individual athletes may well have been much more exposed to an environment typically more akin to that faced by team athletes. In the line comparison between the team and individual sports differences, team sports showed higher on self-esteem level as compared to an individual sport. This current finding was supported by the previous study which shows a similar finding. However, this current finding was contrasted with the other previous study that individual sport found had a higher level on self-esteem than a team sport. According to, individuals who spent more time in team sports than individual sports have higher self-esteem level.

### Relationship between Aggression and Self-esteem

This study found that whilst there was a positively significant relationship between aggression and self-esteem among UiTM Shah Alam athletes, the relationship between aggression and self-esteem showed weaker correlation. From this study, it was assumed that an individual who had a higher level of aggression would also have a higher level of self-esteem. This again matches [5,6], contradict [4,32] the findings of other studies. Although an individual may have a high level of self-esteem, when questioned, mocked, or challenged, they may well react aggressively against what they may see as a threat. With the current study, the positive relationship might be explained or influenced by the personal



success of the athletes in terms of their sports performance. Success here may result in them being confident in their personal sense of worth and level of self-esteem. However, in order to maintain these feelings, they may tend to be more protective and aggressive, so as to protect their positive values from being challenged by others toward the source of threat.

## Recommendation

### Aggression between Genders

Based on the present findings of this study, there was no significant difference in aggression levels between male and female UiTM Shah Alam athletes. In order to delve deeper into this area and further improve the accuracy of findings, a recommendation would see greater samples sizes employed in a future study. In addition to that, assessments of biological, hormonal, and neural factors might also be examined when analysing aggression levels in and between the genders.

### Aggression between Types of Sports

The findings showed no significant difference on aggression levels between team and individual sport among UiTM Shah Alam athletes. In future studies, the nature of sports participated in should also be assessed, so as to further investigate patterns in aggression both in and across different types of sport. Perhaps also a greater number of sports might be included in order to get a more representative sample of team and individual athletes. By doing this, a future study may provide a clearer understanding of aggression levels in different sports, allowing for a deeper exploration of it, and how team and individual sports differ.

### Self-esteem between Genders

Regarding levels of self-esteem between the genders, the findings showed a significant difference in levels of self-esteem between male and female UiTM Shah Alam athletes. Further analysis to test the accuracy of the findings here, might see a greater samples size sought. In addition, the achievement of the individual in question should also be taken into consideration. In a future study, the utilization of different instruments and measurement would also be recommended. These initiatives would help provide additional data to be analysed from which a more accurate understanding of the levels of self-esteem between the genders may arise.

### Self-esteem between Types of Sports

The current finding showed that there was no significant difference in self-esteem level between types of sport among

UiTM Shah Alam athletes. To provide accurate finding and better understanding about self-esteem between types of sport, the level of experience, achievement level of the athletes, and years of involvement should be recommended in future study. Moreover, greater sample size and greater number of sports that are more representative of team and individual should be recommended in future study to gain more accurate finding for clearer understanding that relate with self-esteem level between types of sport.

### Relationship between Aggression and Self-esteem

Based on the present finding, it was found that there was a positively relationship between aggression and self-esteem among UiTM Shah Alam athletes. Thus, in the future study it was recommended to use other measurement tools to assess aggression and self-esteem of the athletes. Greater sample size and greater sport types also can be recommended in the future study to gain accurate finding regarding the relationship between aggression and self-esteem. Other than that, level of experience, years of involvement, athlete's achievement, and variation of aggression forms should be recommended in the future study to explore deeply regarding relationship between aggression and self-esteem among athletes.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided relevant findings pertaining to the differences between genders and types of sport in aggression and self-esteem level. Findings demonstrated a positive correlation between aggression and self-esteem. As such, it can be assumed that the individual who has a high aggression level will also have a high level of self-esteem. Although the relationship was not stronger, there is evidence to support a hypothesis that self-esteem levels influence aggression levels. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to place more importance on an athlete's self-esteem and the minimization of the levels of aggression. In addition, psychological skill training is recommended. This should be focused on by coaches; the aim being to improve and develop self-esteem and concomitantly furnish the athlete with the capacity to better develop coping techniques. These initiatives help promote better adaptation to the environment and circumstances in which the athlete may find themselves [33]. Psychological skill training applications such as imagery, self-talk, stress management, goal setting, relaxation and others are also recommended.

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