

THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON THE TENDENCY TO BE AGGRESSIVE IN EARLY ADULT MEN TOWARDS THEIR PARTNERS IN DATING IN MEDAN CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to determine The Effect of Stress on Aggressive Tendencies of Young Adult Men Towards Partners in Dating in Medan City. Based on the results of a study conducted on 160 young adult men in Medan City who are currently or have been in a relationship, this study revealed that stress has a significant influence on aggressive tendencies. High levels of stress have been shown to be associated with increased aggressive tendencies, both verbally and physically. A total of 108 respondents (67.5%) were in the moderate stress category, 34 respondents (21.3%) were in the high stress category, and 18 respondents (11.3%) were in the low stress category. In the aggressiveness variable, a total of 100 respondents (62.5%) were in the moderate category, 52 respondents (32.5%) were in the low category, and only 8 respondents (5%) were in the high category. This indicates that even though stress levels are quite high, the aggressive tendencies displayed by respondents tend to remain at a moderate to low level. However, the results of statistical tests still show that the higher the stress experienced, the greater the tendency to behave aggressively, especially in the form of anger and hostility, which are aspects of aggressiveness according to Buss & Perry (1992).

Keywords: Stress, Aggression, Adult Men, Dating Couples

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui Pengaruh Stres terhadap Kecenderungan Agresif Pria Dewasa Muda terhadap Pasangan dalam Berpacaran di Kota Medan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan terhadap 160 pria dewasa muda di Kota Medan yang sedang atau pernah menjalin hubungan, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa stres memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kecenderungan agresif. Tingkat stres yang tinggi terbukti berhubungan dengan peningkatan kecenderungan agresif, baik secara verbal maupun fisik. Sebanyak 108 responden (67,5%) berada pada kategori stres sedang, 34 responden (21,3%) berada pada kategori stres tinggi, dan 18 responden (11,3%) berada pada kategori stres rendah. Pada variabel agresivitas, sebanyak 100 responden (62,5%) berada pada kategori sedang, 52 responden (32,5%) berada pada kategori rendah, dan hanya 8 responden (5%) yang berada pada kategori tinggi. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun tingkat stres cukup tinggi, kecenderungan agresif yang ditunjukkan responden cenderung tetap pada tingkat sedang hingga rendah. Namun, hasil uji statistik tetap menunjukkan bahwa semakin tinggi stres yang dialami, semakin besar pula kecenderungan berperilaku agresif, terutama dalam bentuk kemarahan dan permusuhan, yang merupakan aspek agresivitas menurut Buss & Perry (1992).

Kata Kunci: Stres, Agresi, Pria Dewasa, Pasangan Pacaran

INTRODUCTION

Dating is a form of interpersonal relationship between two individuals with the goal of getting to know each other through various shared activities. During the transition to adulthood, dating becomes an important part of individual development, particularly during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood, known as emerging adulthood (PUTRA, 2022).

Early adulthood, spanning the ages of 20 to 40, is a dynamic period of development. During this stage, individuals experience significant changes in various aspects of life, such as achieving financial independence, realistically planning for the future, and gaining freedom to determine their own identity (Ju et al., 2022).

Early adulthood, often referred to as young adulthood, is filled with progressive physical, Info Artikel : Diterima April 2025 | Disetujui April 2025 | Dipublikasikan Juni 2025

cognitive, and psychological-emotional changes. According to Erikson's theory, young adulthood, between the ages of 20 and 40, is the perfect time to start a serious relationship. Relationships at this age tend to deepen. As couples get to know each other better, they spend more time together, and their relationship becomes closer.

Dating is done for various purposes, such as building friendships or finding a life partner (DeMatthews et al., 2021). While dating generally has positive goals, these relationships often face challenges, including conflict that can lead to violence.

Aggression is behavior intended to harm or harm another person, whether physically, verbally, or psychologically. In interpersonal relationships, including romantic or dating relationships, aggression is often a major cause of conflict, leading to a decline in relationship quality. Research shows that aggressive behavior can manifest in various forms, such as harsh words, threats, emotional neglect, and even physical violence (Paais, 2018). Research shows that men tend to exhibit aggressive behavior more often than women, triggered by various factors, such as emotional frustration, gender norms, and social pressure.

Aulya et al. (Handayani, 2022) found that aggressive behavior in men was more often in the moderate category (38%), while women tended to have lower levels of aggressiveness, with the majority being in the low category (36%). Saputra et al. (Østerås et al., 2017) also reported that although there were no significant differences in levels of aggression, men were more likely to exhibit physical and verbal aggression, while women tended to express anger emotionally. Furthermore, women's aggression was generally indirect, such as relational or emotional aggression, which is difficult to measure in a dating context.

In dating, men often face pressure to fulfill traditional roles as controllers or leaders. These masculine gender norms, according to Randall and Bodenmann (Rabbani & Wahyudi, 2023) increase men's tendency to exhibit aggressive behavior when those roles feel threatened. As many as 70% of men facing masculine gender pressure exhibit higher levels of aggression toward their partners, particularly verbally and emotionally. This pressure also impacts how men manage conflict in relationships. When men feel out of control or unappreciated, they tend to vent their frustration through destructive behavior.

In addition to gender norms, personality factors also play a significant role in determining the tendency for aggressive behavior. Men with neurotic personality traits are more prone to aggression in dating. Neuroticism, defined as the tendency to experience negative emotions intensely, increases the risk of destructive behavior, especially in situations of conflict or high emotional stress (Yudhaningsih, 2021). This condition is exacerbated by men's inability to manage their emotions, which often leads to impulsive responses such as anger or aggressive behavior toward partners.

Research by Schreiber and Salivar (Foster et al., 2020) suggests that social pressures, such as stigma against men perceived as not meeting traditional gender expectations, can increase their tendency to engage in aggressive behavior. In dating, these social expectations often create additional pressure, with men feeling compelled to demonstrate dominance or control, which, if not met, triggers frustration that leads to aggressive behavior. For example, men experiencing unemployment or financial hardship are reported to be at higher risk of exhibiting aggressive behavior toward their partners.

Aggressive behavior can manifest in various forms, both physical and verbal. Physical aggression, such as hitting, pushing, or fighting, often occurs in the context of interpersonal relationships, especially when individuals are unable to manage their emotions and stress. Meanwhile, verbal aggression can take the form of insults, harsh words, or threats against a partner. In dating relationships, this aggression can lead to forms of dating violence, often known as dating violence.

Dating violence is defined as any form of aggression, whether sexual, physical, or psychological, perpetrated by a partner in a dating relationship. Murray (I. K. Sari et al., 2021) states that dating violence often begins with emotional abuse, which victims often go unnoticed because they perceive it as part of jealousy or affection. Some forms of emotional abuse include insults, control, baseless accusations, and isolation of the partner. This emotional abuse often becomes the gateway to physical and sexual violence in dating relationships.

Men who frequently exhibit aggressive behavior are at risk of social isolation, depression, and other emotional disorders. In dating, persistent aggression can create a cycle of conflict that is difficult to resolve, worsening relationship dynamics, and reducing the quality of communication between

partners.

Aggression in dating relationships can also be influenced by various factors, such as self-identity, self-control, and social influences such as peer and family circumstances. According to research, men have a higher tendency to exhibit aggressive behavior than women, who often replace aggression with non-aggressive strategies in resolving conflicts. This condition is further exacerbated by stress experienced by individuals in early adulthood, which can trigger aggressive behavior in dating relationships, especially in men.

Stress is a major factor influencing aggressive behavior. Stress is defined as a psychological response to pressure or demands perceived as exceeding an individual's ability to cope. In dating, stress often stems from economic pressures, work demands, interpersonal conflict, and social expectations. Poorly managed stress can affect how individuals interact with their partners, ultimately triggering destructive behaviors such as aggression.

Stress not only affects individuals individually but also has a "dyadic" impact, affecting both partners in a relationship. Randall and Bodenmann (Triatmanto & Wahyuni, 2023) explain that stress in one partner can create contagious emotional tension, worsen communication, and increase the frequency of conflict. This research also shows that chronic stress has a cumulative effect, where small, persistent stresses can trigger larger aggressive responses over time.

Chronic stress experienced in relationships not only influences momentary aggressive behavior but also has long-term impacts on relationship dynamics. According to Lawrence and Bradbury (Kartika, 2018), persistent stress can reduce an individual's ability to build healthy communication, creating a cycle of conflict that is difficult to overcome. In men, chronic stress often causes them to withdraw emotionally or become overly reactive to minor conflicts, ultimately damaging the emotional bond with their partner. This situation also increases the likelihood that aggression will become a recurring pattern of behavior, worsening the overall quality of the relationship.

The relationship between stress and male aggression in dating can be explained through specific psychological mechanisms. Based on the Instigation, Impellance, Inhibition (I³) model, aggression occurs when stress triggers an urge to act aggressively (impellance), while the individual's ability to control that urge (inhibition) is weakened (Eckhardt & Parrott, 2016). In other words, men who lack adequate emotion management skills tend to be more susceptible to aggressive behavior when faced with high stress.

Stress also serves as a direct trigger for aggression in male relationships. According to research by Eckhardt and Parrott (Saleem et al., 2021) involving men from various backgrounds, such as those serving in the military and those undergoing psychological treatment in the United States, 55% of men showed increased aggression under conditions of chronic stress. This study indicates that stressors such as economic pressure and work-related conflict significantly influence men's behavior in their relationships. When stress is not managed effectively, men tend to exhibit impulsive emotional responses, such as anger or neglect, which then trigger greater conflict in the relationship. Based on the second participant's statement, the stress experienced in dating often impacted how participants responded to conflict. Although participants attempted to manage conflict in healthier ways, such as providing space to calm down before discussing the problem with their partner, the stress they felt sometimes triggered aggressive emotional behavior. The impact of this stress was also seen in self-destructive behavior, such as self-harm by smashing glass. However, the aggression displayed by the participants was controlled and not excessive, indicating a conscious effort to maintain a harmonious relationship. The main coping strategy used, namely giving oneself time to calm down, was an effective way for participants to manage emotions and prevent the conflict from getting worse.

Although stress has a significant relationship with aggression, there are factors that can reduce the risk of this behavior. A study by Eckhardt and Parrott (2016) showed that strong social support, such as an open and empathetic relationship with a partner, can help men manage stress more adaptively. Furthermore, emotion regulation training has been shown to be effective in helping men cope with stress without acting out through destructive behavior. Family-based interventions that focus on strengthening communication can also be a solution in reducing conflict and improving the quality of couple relationships (Chandra, 2019).

This research is important because it provides in-depth insights into the dynamics of stress and aggression in dating relationships in men. Given the high tendency for aggression in men experiencing emotional distress, further understanding is needed of how stress contributes to men's aggressive

behavior toward their partners

METHOD

The research approach used in this study is a quantitative/statistical approach, aimed at determining the relationship between stress and aggressiveness. Quantitative research itself is a method based on the philosophy of positivism, used to examine specific populations or samples using data collection techniques using research instruments. The data obtained are then analyzed quantitatively or statistically to test the established hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2020). In this study, there are two variables: stress as the independent variable and aggressiveness as the dependent variable.

Aggression, or the tendency to be aggressive, is a tendency aimed at hurting, harming, or controlling someone, whether physically, verbally, or emotionally. This can arise in response to emotional tension, unresolved conflict, or persistent stress in a relationship. In this case, researchers used a measuring instrument developed based on the theory proposed by Buss and Perry (Putri Diana & Agustina, 2023) involving four aspects: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility.

Stress is a psychological condition that occurs due to an imbalance between demands placed on an individual and their ability to cope. This can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and prolonged tension. In this case, researchers used a measurement tool developed based on the scale proposed by Sarafino and Smith (H. R. Sari & Arjanggih, 2020) which incorporates two aspects: biological and psychological.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (Utami, 2020) a subject is a subset of the members of a sample. Research subjects are groups of individuals who serve as sources of information or data in a study. The subjects in this study were men aged 20 to 40, residing in Medan, and currently in or previously in a relationship. According to Arikuntoa sample is "a portion or representative of the population to be studied." Sinaga (Hardi et al., 2019) adds that the requirements for determining a sample are accuracy and precision. Accuracy means fewer errors in sample selection, while precision refers to how closely the estimate matches the characteristics of the population.

The technique used to determine the sample in this study was non-probability sampling, using the purposive sampling method. The definition of non-probability sampling is the presence of a number of characteristics for a research technique. Where the type used was purposive sampling, which aims to select samples based on certain criteria or characteristics that have been determined by the researcher in accordance with the research objectives. Sampling was determined using G-Power 3.1.9.7.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out using non-probability sampling techniques and a psychological scale as a measuring tool to reveal aspects related to stress and aggressive tendencies in men in dating in Medan City.

Non-probability sampling is a sample selection technique that is not based on random sampling, but rather utilizes specific characteristics tailored to the research objectives. The sampling method used in this study is purposive sampling, which is a technique for selecting samples based on criteria or characteristics established by the researcher. In this technique, sample selection is more subjective and is determined based on relevance to the variables being studied (Kusumawati et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Subject Overview

This study required 160 male subjects in Medan. Based on the scale distributed by the researcher to the subjects, a description of the respondents' characteristics was obtained, including age, relationship status, frequency of meetings, conflict intensity, and domicile. These characteristics provided initial information about the profile of the participants in the focus of the study: young adult men who were currently in or had previously been in a relationship. By understanding this data distribution, the researcher could gain a clearer context for analyzing the relationship between stress variables and respondents' tendencies to be aggressive (Shute et al., 2019).

Description of Research Subjects Based on Male Gender

This study was conducted involving male respondents in accordance with the inclusion criteria established by the researcher. Of the 160 respondents collected, all (100%) were young adult men in dating relationships in Medan City. All participants were selected because this study specifically focuses

on the tendency for stress to affect male aggressive behavior in the context of dating relationships. Therefore, there is no gender variation in this study because the subjects were only men as the focus of the study.

Table 1. Description of Research Subjects Based on Male gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage %
Man	160	100%
Total	160	100%

Research Implementation

This study was conducted on men aged 20 to 40 who were in or currently in a relationship and resided in Medan. The study was conducted from May 20 to June 18, 2025, using an online questionnaire.

The research scale was distributed to 160 men who had been selected according to predetermined inclusion criteria. After data collection, researchers then conducted data analysis. However, before conducting the analysis, researchers first identified the subjects' characteristics based on age, relationship status, frequency of meetings with their partner, intensity of relationship conflict, and domicile. These characteristic data were used as additional information to support understanding of the subjects' profiles.

Assumption Test

This assumption test serves to determine whether the data on stress variables and the tendency to behave aggressively in early adult men towards their partners in dating in Medan City are normally distributed or not, and whether there is a linear relationship between the two variables.

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data on stress and aggressive tendencies in young adult men toward their dating partners in Medan City were normally distributed. In other words, this test aims to determine the extent to which the deviations in the sample measurements are within reasonable limits. This normality test was conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the help of SPSS for Windows version 20.0.

The criteria used in this study are that if the significance value (p) > 0.05 , the data is said to be normally distributed. Whereas if the significance value (p) < 0.05 , the data is not normally distributed. The results of the normality test in this study can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Interpretation of Normality Test

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)c	A	Interpretation
Stress	0.692	0.05	Normally Distributed
Aggressiveness		0.05	Normally Distributed

Based on the results of the table above, it shows that the stress variable and the aggressiveness variable have a significance value of 0.692, which is greater than at 0.05 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). The results of the data analysis indicate that the residual values of both variables are normally distributed.

Linearity Test

The linearity test is used to determine whether the relationship between the two variables is linear or not. The condition for a linear relationship is when both variables have a p-value smaller than 0.05. The linearity test is performed using SPSS 20.0 for Windows. Linearity can be determined using the F test. The condition for a linear relationship between the two variables is when the calculated F value is smaller than or equal to the F table at a significance level of 5. The linearity test can be performed using software SPSS 20.0 for windows on the output row Deviation from linearity listed in the ANOVA table

Table 3. Interpretation Linearity Test

Variables		F	Sig	P	Interpretation
Stress,	Linearity	36,531	0,000		
aggressiveness	Deviation from linear it y	1,186	0.268	0.05	Linear

The stress and aggressiveness variables have a *Deviation from Linearity significance value* of 0.268, which means ($\text{sig} > 0.05$), and a *Linearity value* of 0.000 ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). The results of the data analysis indicate a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing using simple linear regression aims to examine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable in this study. This test was conducted to determine whether stress significantly influences the tendency to behave aggressively in young adult men in relationships in Medan (Wang et al., 2021).

The hypotheses in this study are as follows:

H_1 : There is an influence of stress on the tendency to behave aggressively in early adult men towards their partners in dating in Medan City.

H_0 : There is no influence of stress on the tendency to behave aggressively in early adult men towards their partners in dating in Medan City.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.429	.184	.179	9.61424

Based on the results of the regression analysis conducted in this study on the effect of stress on the tendency to behave aggressively in early adult men who are in a relationship in Medan City, the R value of 0.429 indicates a moderate relationship between the two variables. The R Square value of 0.184 means that approximately 18.4% of changes in the tendency to behave aggressively can be explained by the stress variable. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.179 indicates that this model can explain approximately 17.9% of the variability after taking into account the number of variables used. The Standard Error of the Estimate of 9.61424 indicates how large the error in predicting the tendency to behave aggressively (Sulistiyanto & Abdullah, 2023).

Table 5. T-Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
1	24,923	3,672	0.429	6,787	.000
(Constant)	0.841	0.141		5,964	.000
Stress					

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that in column B the constant value (a) is 24.923, while the stress value is 0.841. So the regression equation/model can be written as follows:

$$Y = a + Bx$$

$$Y = 24.923 + 0.841 x$$

Thus, the higher the stress score of the respondents, the higher their tendency to be aggressive towards their partners. Conversely, the lower the stress score, the lower their tendency to be aggressive. This indicates that stress has a positive effect on aggressiveness in young adult men in relationships in Medan.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine whether stress influences the tendency to behave aggressively in young adult men who are currently or have been in a relationship in Medan. Based on data analysis using a simple linear regression test, stress significantly influences aggressiveness, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the higher the level of stress experienced by an individual, the greater the tendency to behave aggressively.

Interestingly, the descriptive results show that the majority of respondents reported moderate to high levels of stress, while their levels of aggressiveness were moderate to low. This means that even though respondents experienced significant stress, this did not always translate into highly aggressive behavior.

This phenomenon can be explained using the theory of stress and aggressiveness, one of which is through the I³ (Instigation, Impellance, Inhibition) model approach from Finkel (2014), which states that the urge to be aggressive (impellance) can be high due to stressors, but if a person has strong inhibiting factors (inhibition)—such as self-control, cultural values, social norms, or good coping skills—then aggressive behavior can be prevented.

In the context of this study, it's likely that many respondents employed adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support, engaging in positive activities, or avoiding conflict with their partners. Furthermore, most of the subjects were university students, whose educational backgrounds and social environments may be more conducive to emotional regulation and understanding of interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, the forms of aggression examined in this study tended to include explicit behaviors (such as hitting, yelling, or swearing). However, in reality, young adult males may express aggression covertly or passively, such as withdrawing, giving the silent treatment, or acting cold. These types of aggression may not be optimally detected by the measurement instruments used, which may explain the low average aggression scores.

The tendency for stress to be in the moderate to high category can be explained through aspects measured in the stress scale according to Sarafino and Smith (2012), namely biological and psychological aspects. The research subjects, predominantly aged 20–25 years (71%), were in the transition period of early adulthood, where many life demands begin to increase, both in terms of education, career, and interpersonal relationships. These demands are in line with the thinking of Santrock (Alfatah Adi Nugroho et al., 2023) who stated that stress in early adulthood can be triggered by various significant changes in life, including pressure from romantic relationships.

Meanwhile, the low levels of aggressiveness, despite moderate to high levels of stress, can be explained by aspects of Buss and Perry's (1992) aggressiveness scale, namely physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. It is possible that the subjects had the ability to suppress emotional outbursts or express emotions more passively. This is relevant to the categorization data, which showed that most subjects did not have high levels of aggressiveness. Emotional suppression or passive expression can be a form of *coping mechanism* that individuals use to avoid open conflict in relationships, as illustrated in interview excerpts that indicate efforts to avoid direct confrontation.

Furthermore, Randall and Bodenmann (Sukmawati, 2022) explain that stress has a "dyadic" impact, meaning that stress experienced by one partner can affect the overall quality of the relationship. However, in the context of these findings, despite relatively high stress levels, aggressive tendencies remained low, indicating that subjects may have relatively strong *dyadic coping strategies*, such as maintaining temporary distance or providing quiet time for their partner (as also noted by one interview participant).

Another possibility is the influence of social support and educational factors. Most respondents were students (56%), meaning they were still in an educational environment that provided emotional education, problem-solving skills, and access to supportive social networks. This aligns with the findings of Eckhardt and Parrott (2016), who found that strong social support can act as a buffer against aggressive impulses arising from stress.

Another factor emerging from the data is the frequency of conflict. Although most subjects experienced stress in their relationships, 31% of respondents stated they rarely experienced conflict, and 3% never did. This confirms that not all stress in young adult men arises from the dynamics of relationship conflict, but can also stem from other external factors, such as academic, economic, or family pressures, as categorized by Sarafino and Smith (Fitri, 2020) as biological and psychological stressors.

Although there is a significant effect of stress on aggression, these results cannot be explained linearly, implying that every increase in stress will always be followed by a proportional increase in aggression. This means that there are other factors not examined in this study that may mediate or moderate the relationship between stress and aggression. For example, personality (such as neuroticism), family background, or communication patterns in relationships.

This is in accordance with the explanation by Lawrence and Bradbury (2007) that continuous stress can reduce a person's ability to build healthy communication, but not all individuals react to stress with aggression, depending on their emotional regulation capacity.

Thus, although statistically there is a significant influence between stress and aggressiveness, in a real context, the expression of aggressiveness depends on the complexity of the interaction between perceived pressure, sources of stress, coping abilities, personal values, and the relationship context in which the individual experiences it.

Furthermore, prolonged stress, especially if unresolved, can create tension that leads to defensive or reactive behavior toward one's partner. This aligns with Lawrence and Bradbury's (Dinata & Pratama, 2022) findings, which state that stress can impair communication skills and reduce tolerance for conflict in relationships. Therefore, even if aggressive behavior is not yet extreme, the foundations of negative emotions begin to form as stress increases.

These results also confirm that in dating relationships, stress remains a significant factor influencing the dynamics of male aggressive behavior, as described in the literature review. Even at low levels of aggression, stress contributes to the emergence of emotions such as anger and hostility, two aspects also measured on the aggression scale (Nadhifah & Karimulloh, 2021).

Thus, even though descriptively the aggressiveness score is at a moderate to low level, the role of stress as a trigger remains valid and significant in forming aggressive thought patterns and attitudes in the context of romantic relationships of early adult men in Medan City.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study conducted on 160 young adult men in Medan who were or had been in a relationship, this study revealed that stress has a significant influence on the tendency to behave aggressively. High levels of stress have been shown to be associated with increased tendencies for aggression, both verbally and physically. A total of 108 respondents (67.5%) were in the moderate stress category, 34 respondents (21.3%) were in the high stress category, and 18 respondents (11.3%) were in the low stress category.

In the aggressiveness variable, 100 respondents (62.5%) were in the moderate category, 52 respondents (32.5%) were in the low category, and only 8 respondents (5%) were in the high category. This indicates that even though stress levels were quite high, the aggressive tendencies displayed by respondents tended to remain at a moderate to low level. However, the results of statistical tests still showed that the higher the stress experienced, the greater the tendency to behave aggressively, especially in the form of anger and hostility, which are aspects of aggressiveness according to Buss & Perry.

These findings indicate that the majority of young adult men experience moderate levels of emotional distress, reflecting the challenges of navigating high-expectation dating relationships. Emotional, social, and economic pressures in early adulthood can trigger aggressive behavior if not managed effectively. This can manifest through behaviors such as yelling, using hurtful language, or being defensive when dealing with a partner.

Overall, this study demonstrates that stress is positively associated with aggressive tendencies toward partners. This demonstrates the importance of emotional regulation skills in navigating conflict dynamics in dating relationships. Inability to manage stress can contribute to aggressive behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, which risks damaging the quality of romantic relationships.

Based on the categorization, both stress and aggressiveness variables were predominantly at moderate levels. This finding aligns with research by Khaninah & Widjanarko (2015), who found that stress in romantic relationships can trigger aggressive behavior if individuals lack effective coping strategies. Meanwhile, the small group of respondents in the high stress and aggressiveness categories indicated a greater risk of conflict-ridden and potentially destructive relationship dynamics.

From the aspect of conflict frequency and face-to-face meetings, it was found that the majority

of respondents with a high frequency of meetings tended to experience conflict more frequently. This finding indicates that the intensity of interactions, if not balanced with healthy communication, can be a factor triggering stress and a tendency towards aggressive behavior. Research by Fitriani et al. (Wati & Syukur, 2021) supports this by stating that the quality of interpersonal communication influences an individual's ability to prevent and resolve conflict.

This research highlights the need for attention to mental health and emotional regulation skills in young adult men, particularly in the context of romantic relationships. Young adulthood is a developmental phase fraught with emotional, social, and economic demands, including challenges in fostering healthy interpersonal relationships. When stress is not recognized or managed appropriately, the potential for aggressive behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, increases. Therefore, education on recognizing emotions, managing stress, and assertively expressing discomfort needs to be instilled early on so that individuals can build healthy and respectful relationships.

Preventive psychological interventions, such as emotion regulation training and partner communication training, can be effective approaches to helping young adult men understand stress patterns and reduce their tendency to react aggressively when facing relationship conflict. By increasing awareness of the link between stress and aggressive behavior, individuals are expected to develop better self-control and form more emotionally stable relationships.

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