

Aggression in South Korean Middle School Students



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Background

- Aggression is a behavioral and emotional response made on purpose for the sake of destroying or damaging other persons or things. Currently South Korean society suffers from violent and inhuman juvenile crimes like collective bullying and school violence that are due to aggression. This behavior in adolescence causes juvenile crimes, hinders healthy interpersonal relationships, and can develop into social maladjustment and criminal behavior in adulthood
- Juvenile violence due to aggression in South Korean society is not just a current issue. Seven out of 10 cases of juvenile violence occurring between 2008 and 2010 were committed by middle school students, and 69% of school violence cases occurred in middle schools. Considering these data, more attention should be dedicated to studying aggression in middle school students who are in early adolescence.
- Previous studies have attempted to clarify various factors that influence juvenile aggression. Otherwise, concentrated re-investigation is necessary to reveal factors influencing Korean middle school students' aggression.
- In this study depression and academic stress as negative emotional aspects, and self-esteem, decision-making competency, happiness as positive emotional aspect of middle school students were investigated specifically.

Purpose

- To assess levels of aggression among South Korean middle school students.
- To determine factors affecting aggression among South Korean middle school students.

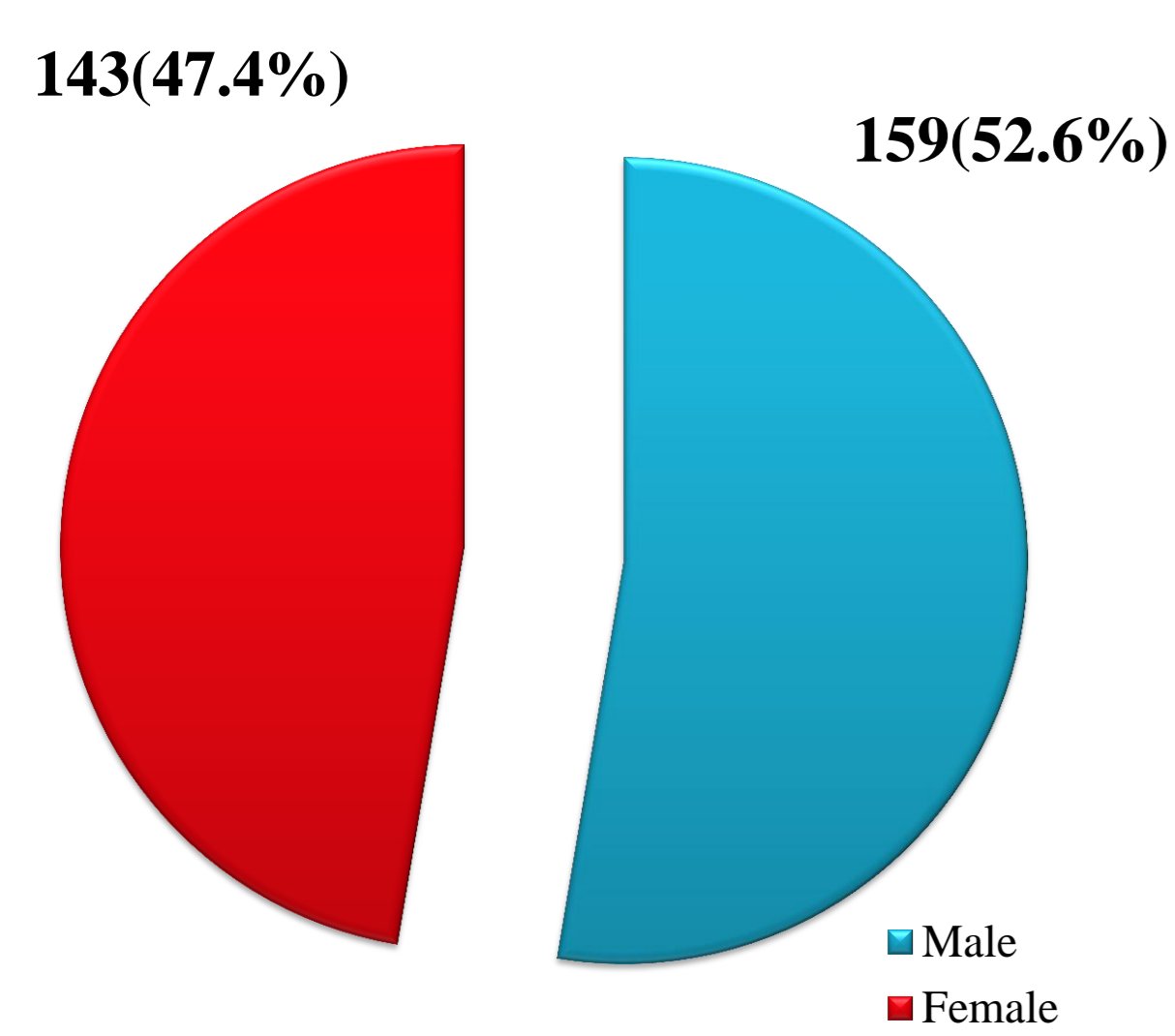
Methods

- Design: Cross-sectional descriptive study.
- Data Collection: Used self-report questionnaires. Data collected from May 9th to 13th 2013.
- Subjects: 302 adolescents who were attending a boys' or girls' middle school in Seoul.
- Instruments: Used structured questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of questionnaires was from 0.79 to 0.93.
 - Academic stress measured by 'Academic stress questionnaire' developed by Lee (2007)
 - 25 items, 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher mean score indicates a higher levels of academic stress
 - Depression measured by 'Symptom Checklist-90-Revision questionnaire' developed by Derogatis, Rickels, and Rock (1976)
 - 13 items, 5-point Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very serious), higher mean score indicates a higher levels of depression
 - Self-esteem measured by 'Rosenberg's self-esteem scale' developed by Rosenberg (1965)
 - 10 items, 4-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), higher mean score indicates a higher levels of self-esteem
 - Decision making competency measured by "Decision making competency inventory" developed by Miller and Byrnes(2001)
 - 18 items, 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher mean score indicates a better decision making abilities
 - Happiness measured by single question "Do you think you are living happily now"
 - 1 item, 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher mean score indicates a higher levels of happiness
 - Aggression measured by 'Aggression questionnaire' developed by Buss & Perry (1992)
 - 24 items, 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher mean score indicates a greater levels of aggression
- Data Analysis: Used PASW 20.0
 - Descriptive statistics for general characteristics of participants
 - T-test, one-way ANOVA, Post hoc Scheffe test for differences in study variables based on general characteristics
 - Pearson correlation coefficient for relations among study variables
 - Linear multiple regression for identification of influencing factors to aggression in South Korean middle school students

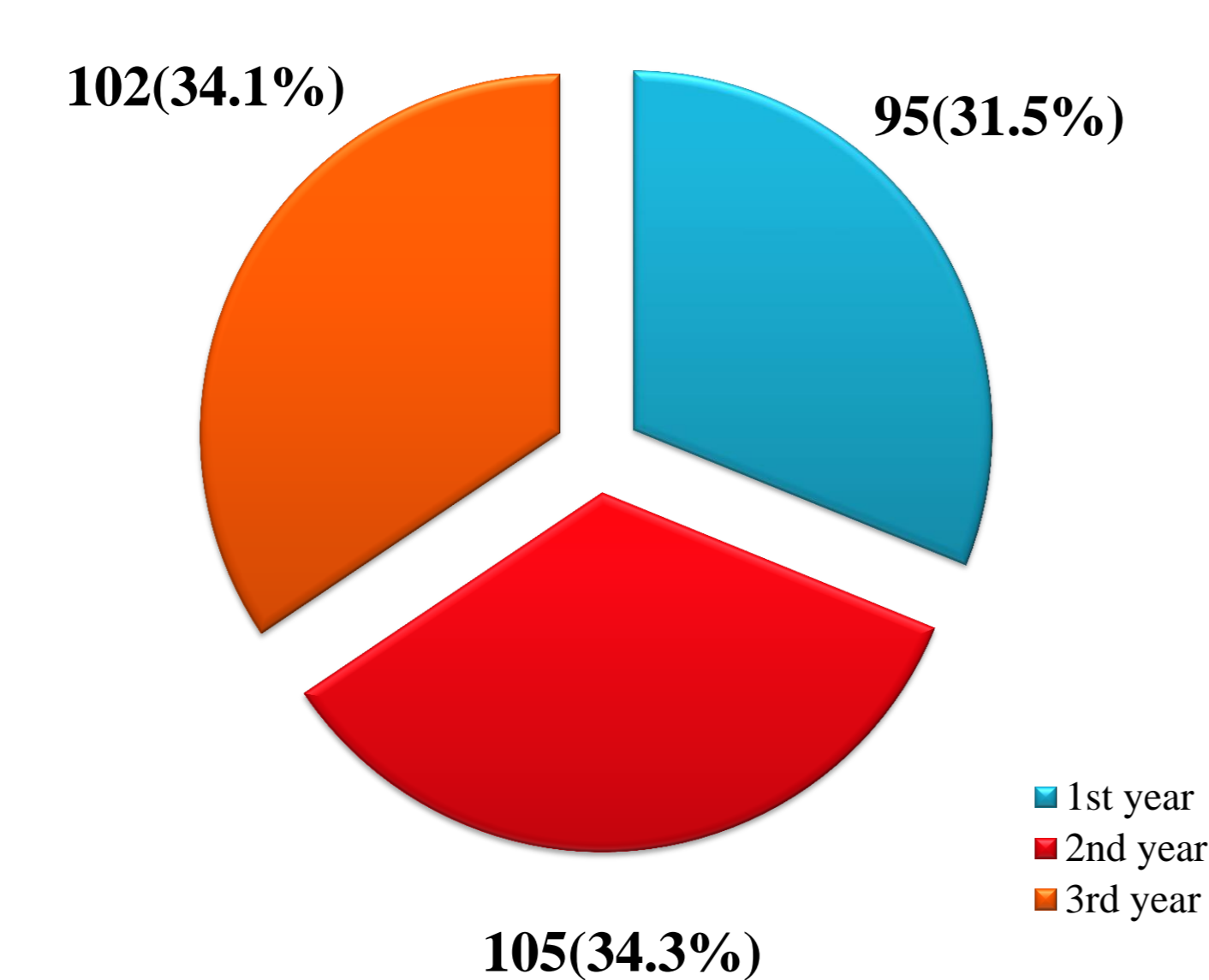
Results

1. General Characteristics of Participants (N=302)

Gender



School Year in Middle School



2. Mean Score of the Study Variables (N=302)

Variables	Range	Min.	Max.	M±SD
Academic stress	1 - 5	1.00	4.76	3.38±0.95
Depression	1 - 5	1.00	4.80	2.56±0.87
Self-esteem	1 - 4	1.50	4.00	2.86±0.41
Decision-making competency	1 - 5	1.94	4.78	3.28±0.46
Happiness	1 - 5	1.00	5.00	3.82±0.99
Aggression	1 - 5	1.00	5.00	2.49±0.83

3. Correlations of the Study Variables with aggression (N=302)

Variables	Aggression
	r (p)
Academic stress	.21 (<.001)
Depression	.43 (<.001)
Self-esteem	-.25 (<.001)
Decision-making competency	-.25 (<.001)
Happiness	-.21 (<.001)

4. Predictors of aggression (N=302)

Variables	B	S.E	Beta	t (p)	R ²	F (p)
(Constant)	1.67	0.49		3.38 (<.001)		
Grade (2nd year)	0.40	0.09	0.23	4.39(<.001)		
Suicidal impulse in the previous month	0.21	0.11	0.10	1.90 (<.059)		
Academic stress	0.13	0.05	0.14	2.78 (<.006)	.269	16.06 (<.001)
Depression	0.28	0.06	0.30	5.03 (<.001)		
Self-esteem	0.06	0.13	0.03	0.43 (<.668)		
Decision-making competency	-0.14	0.10	-0.10	-1.40 (<.166)		
Happiness	-0.06	0.05	-0.07	-1.14 (<.255)		

Conclusion

- Author conducted a descriptive study to identify positive and negative emotional factors that influence aggression in South Korean middle school students, among whom the rate of juvenile delinquency is currently high. It was expected that negative emotional factors (academic stress and depression) and positive emotional factors (self-esteem, decision-making competency, and happiness) affect the development of aggression in South Korean middle school students.
- Results of this study indicate that only depression, academic stress, and grade (second grade) influence aggression of middle school students. To decrease violent behavior in South Korean young adolescents, it will be necessary to provide systematic and political intervention programs in schools and local communities that ameliorate negative emotional factors like depression and academic stress. Additionally, the development of positive factors such as self-esteem, decision-making skills, and happiness in middle school students is important to increase overall well-being and reduce aggression.
- Based on these results, we suggest future studies determine additional factors affecting aggression in middle school second graders, investigate their coping strategies, and explore the development of an effective nursing intervention program to control middle school students' aggression.