

The Attitude Towards Ragging among College Students of Different Professional Courses

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INTRODUCTION

Kretch, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) proposed that attitude is the human recognition, assessment, emotional experience and behavior tendency toward specific things or value. Attitudes are judgments and they develop on the ABC model (Affect, Behavior, and Cognition). The affective response is an emotional response that expresses an individual's degree of preference for an entity. The behavioral intention is a verbal indication or typical behavioral tendency of an individual. The cognitive response is a cognitive evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual's beliefs about the object. Kotler (1991) thought that attitude is a long term judgment, emotional feelings, and behavior tendency of like or dislike toward object of concept. An attitude is thus a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for something. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event; often referred to as the attitude object. People can possess both positive and negative attitudes toward the item in question. Further, the characteristics of attitude are that, they tend to persist unless something is done to change them. It can fall anywhere along a continuum from very favorable to very unfavorable. Attitudes are directed towards some object about which a person has feeling.

Ragging means any act which causes, or is likely to cause any physical, psychological or physiological harm of dread, shame or embarrassment to a student. Ragging includes teasing or abusing of playing practical joke on, causing hurt to any student or asking any student to do any act, or perform anything, which he/she would not be willing to do or perform. Ragging can be explained in terms of verbal, physical and sexual aggression. It often takes a malignant form wherein the juniors may be subjected to psychological or physical torture. Ragging is different from other crimes because the motive is solely to get sadistic pleasure. Ragging is also different from other crimes. Unlawful intimidation, assault, battery, sexual abuse, rape, murder in a specific environment is included in ragging. Initially ragging was intended to provide good humor and harmless fun to students, but today it has assumed torturous, vulgar and inhuman forms that defy all norms of civility, ethics and value.

Justification of the problem

In recent scenario, ragging is one topic, which is very serious among the youngsters and needs immediate psychological interventions. With ragging becoming rampant in colleges, it is about time that the student community awakens its conscience to this ruthless practice. Moreover, ragging is found to be more prominent in professional colleges than others; as a result the investigator took the challenge to study the attitude towards ragging among college students of professional courses only. Consequently, the present study was formulated.

Aim

The aim of the present investigation is to study the attitude of male and female students of four professional courses viz.: Management, Law, Medical and Engineering towards ragging.

Operational Definitions

Ragging: "Ragging is any disorderly conduct, whether by words spoken or written, or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness any student, indulging in rowdy or indiscipline activities which cause or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension there of in a fresher or a junior student and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the psyche of a fresher or a junior student". (The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, 2001)

Attitude: According to Thurston (1946), "Attitude is the intensity of positive or negative affects for or against a psychological object".

METHOD

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present investigation:

- ❖ There is no significant difference in the attitude towards ragging between male and female students.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the attitude towards ragging among the professional courses viz.: Management, law, Medical and Engineering.
- ❖ There is no significant interaction effect of attitude towards ragging of male and female, and the above said professional courses.

Variables

- ❖ Independent Variables
 - Gender (Male and Female students)
 - Professional courses (Management, Law, Medical and Engineering).
- ❖ Dependent Variable
 - Ragging
- ❖ Relevant Variable
 - Age (The age of the sample will be between 18 to 25 years)

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 200 males and 200 females (50 male and 50 female students from the four professional courses). They were selected randomly from different colleges/ institutes/universities. The age range was between 18 to 25 years.

Design

2X4 factorial design was used substantiated with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Tool

A self constructed and standardized 'Attitude Towards Ragging Scale' (ATRS), developed by Agarwala, Kumar and Sadhwani (2010) was used to measure the attitude towards ragging. It is a five point Likert type scale, consisting of 30 statements. Test- retest reliability of the scale is 0.89 and Split- half reliability is 0.69. The construct validity was calculated. Norms of ATRS are on the basis of Mean and Standard Deviation.

RESULTS

The data obtained has been analyzed and interpreted on the basis of mean scores and two- way ANOVA.

Table- 1
Mean Scores of Males and Females (Gender)

GENDER	N*	MEAN SCORES
MALES	200	88.67
FEMALES	200	83.83

The result Table- 1 show that the mean value of males is 88.67 and females is 83.83 suggesting that males have higher favorable attitude towards ragging than females. This reflects that male professional students have more inclination towards ragging than females.

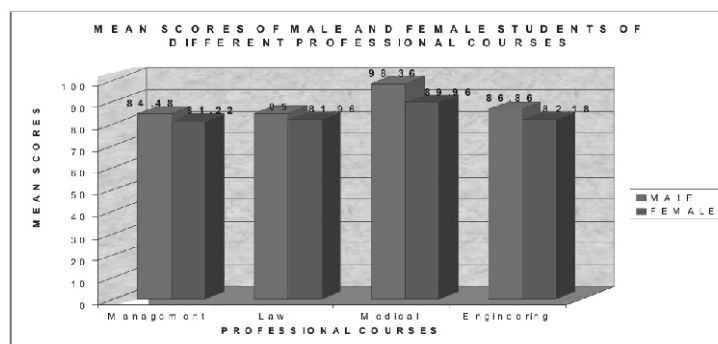
Table- 2
Mean Scores of four Professional Courses (Males & Females)

Professional Courses	Mean Scores (MALES)	Mean Scores (FEMALES)
Management	84.48	81.22
Law	85	81.96
Medical	98.36	89.96
Engineering	86.86	82.18

N = 50 male and female students in each Professional Courses.

Result Table- 2 indicates that the mean value of male students is highest for medical students (Mean = 98.36), second highest for engineering students (Mean = 86.86), next for law students (Mean = 85), and lowest for management stream (Mean = 84.48) respectively. In short it can be said that most favorable attitude towards ragging is seen in medical students in comparison to other professions. The result Table- 2 also depicts that for female students the most favorable attitude towards ragging is seen in medical students (89.96), second is engineering female students (82.18), then law students (81.96), and least favorable attitude is in management female students (81.22). Graphically the results of the mean scores of male and female students are reflected in Figure- 1.

Figure- 1



N = 50 male and 50 female students in each Professional Courses.

Table- 3
Mean Scores of Four Professional Courses

Professional Courses	Mean Scores
Management	82.85
Law	83.48
Medical	89.96
Engineering	84.52

N = 200 (100 males and 100 females) in the four Professional Courses.

On the basis of the test scores obtained, the mean scores calculated of male and female students on ATRS (100 males and 100 females in the Professional Courses), are shown in Table- 3. It indicates that the most favorable attitude towards ragging is of medical profession students (Mean= 89.98), followed by engineering (Mean= 84.52), law (Mean= 83.48) and management (Mean= 82.85) respectively.

Table- 4
Summary Table of Analysis of Variance

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	Level of Significance
Gender (A)	2347.403	1	2347.403	p<0.01
Professional courses (B)	8479.388	3	2826.463	p<0.01
Interaction (AB)	460.8875	3	153.6292	p>0.01
Within group error	57535.82	392	146.7751	

The results for ANOVA are depicted in the result Table- 4, indicating that there is a significant difference in the attitude towards ragging between male and female professional students ($F = 15.993$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, the first hypothesis stating: "There is no significant difference in the attitude towards ragging between male and female students" has been rejected.

Table- 4 also shows that there is a significant difference in the attitude towards ragging among the professional courses viz.: Management, law, Medical and Engineering ($F = 19.257$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, the second hypothesis stating: "There is no significant difference in the attitude towards ragging among the professional courses viz.: Management, law, Medical and Engineering" has also been rejected.

No significant interaction effect of gender (males and females), and the professional courses on the attitude towards ragging ($F = 1.046$, $p > 0.01$) was measured. Therefore, the third hypothesis stating: "There is no significant effect of male and female, and the professional courses on attitude towards ragging" has been accepted.

DISCUSSION

❖ Males and Females (gender)

The results reported in Table- 1 and Table- 4 ($F = 15.993$, $p < 0.01$), clearly points to the fact that male's attitude is more favorable towards ragging than females. Fleming and Petty (2000), in their study on students who were high or low in identification with their gender group tend to have a more favorable attitude toward the product under investigation, because they highly identify with their gender group. We compare ourselves with others and often adopt the attitudes that others hold. Gender stereotypes- beliefs concerning the characteristics of women and men; contain both positive and negative traits. Stereotypes of each gender are typically the converse of one another. For instance, on the positive side of the gender stereotype for women, they are viewed as being kind, nurturing, and considerate. On the negative side, they are viewed as being dependent, weak, and overly emotional (Eagly and Mladinic, 1994; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu, 2002). Folklore suggests that they are, and research findings suggest that when subjects are asked whether they have ever engaged in any of a wide range of aggressive actions, males report a higher incidence of many aggressive behaviors than do females (Harris, 1994). Males are generally more likely than females both to perform aggressive actions and to serve as the target for such behavior (Bogard, 1990; Harris, 1992; 1994). Gender differences in aggression are much larger in the absence of provocation than in its presence. Males are significantly more likely than females to aggress against others when they have not been provoked in any manner (Bettencourt and Miller, 1996). All the above arguments under discussion lead to accept the results observed in the present study that males have more favorable attitude towards ragging as compared to females.

❖ Professional courses

Next, the results of different professional courses (Table- 2 and Table- 4, $F = 19.257$, $p < 0.01$), shows that medical students (both males and females) scored higher than the students of other professional courses. It clearly proves that medical students are more inclined towards ragging than students of other

professions; hence has more favorable attitude towards ragging than others. In India the most severe cases of ragging are seen in the medical colleges. Next in line is the favorable attitude of engineering college students and then of management and law college students. During the early 90s rapid mushrooming of medical and engineering colleges led to a drastic increase in the cases of ragging in medical and engineering profession. In the present study it is observed that both male and female medical students' mean scores is most favorable than other professional groups (Figure- 1). Considerable evidence indicates that attitudes formed on the basis of direct experience with the object about which we hold a particular attitude can exert stronger effects on behavior than ones formed indirectly. This is because attitudes formed on the basis of direct experience are likely to be stronger and be more likely to come to mind when in the presence of the attitude object (Tormala, Petty, and Brinol, 2002). In the present study, this may be the reasons that the attitude towards ragging differ significantly between professional courses.

❖ Interaction effect (Gender and Professional courses)

In the present study, there was no significant difference found between gender and professional courses (Table- 4, $F = 1.046$, $p > 0.01$). Thus, the gender and the area of learning to which the students belong have no bearing on the attitude of the students towards ragging. Freud (1915) held that aggression stems mainly from a powerful death wish (Thanatos) possessed by all people. According to Freud, this instinct is initially aimed at self- destruction but is soon redirected outward toward others. A related view was proposed by (Lorenz, 1996; 1974), who suggested that aggression springs mainly from an inherited fighting instinct, which that only the strongest males will obtain mates and pass their genes on to the next generation. Unlike earlier views, modern theories of aggression (Anderson and Bushman, 2002) do not focus on a single factor (instincts, drives, or frustration) as the primary cause of aggression. Social learning perspective (Bandura, 1977) begins with a reasonable idea that human beings are not born with a large array of aggressive response at their disposal. Rather they must acquire these in the much the same that they acquire other complex forms of social behavior: through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others (i.e., social models – live people or characters on television, in movies, or even in video games who behave aggressively (Anderson, 2004; Anderson and Bushman, 2001; Bushman and Anderson, 2002).

CONCLUSION

To change the behavior we need to change the attitude first. For prevention of ragging, it's important to study the attitude towards ragging. If the attitude towards ragging is found favorable, it can be changed by psychological interventions. Behavior modification can be taken up for cases with favorable attitude towards ragging. It is high time that family should make a constructive effort to inculcate good 'sanskaras' in the children. Parents and elders should not model behavior like aggression / fights / abusive language etc in front of the children or young ones. School should teach the students to respect one another. The ethics and morality should be taught to children. Both juniors and seniors should know their boundaries of behavior. Junior students should respect seniors, while seniors should have healthy positive relationship with juniors. Information about their legal rights should be told to the students.

In the end it can be stated that both short term and long term remedies are needed to bring a change in the attitude of students towards ragging.

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