

Witnessing Domestic Violence and Trait Aggression among Chinese College Students: The Mediating Effect of Anger Rumination and the Moderating Effect of Objective Social Status

JinPing Cai¹, MeiJia Li¹, XiaoQing Li

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Introduction

Witnessing domestic violence has been found to correlate with multiple negative outcomes, especially aggression. However, most research focus on its relationship with adolescents' aggressive behaviors, while its effect on trait aggression is rarely researched and the age group of young adults is relatively ignored. The underlying mechanisms is also remained unclear. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship of witnessing domestic violence and trait aggression using college students. The mediating effect of anger rumination and the moderating effect of objective social status are also explored.

Method

A total of 650 Chinese college students (M age =19.68 years, SD = 1.17) completed self-report questionnaires, including Multiple Forms of Violence Scale, Anger rumination subscale (ARQ), Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), MacArthur Scale, and Objective SES. Then preliminary analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS version 25.0. Hayes's PROCESS macro was used to examine the mediation and moderation effect.

Conclusions

Findings of this study suggest a potential role of reducing rumination in the prevention and intervention of trait aggression, especially for the students of higher social class.

References

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Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for key variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.objective SES	5.25	1.54	1				
2.subjective SES	.00	.05	.42**	1			
3.exposure to domestic violence	.27	.37	-.05	-.10*	1		
4.anger rumination	1.67	.51	-.01	-.01	.27**	1	
5. aggression	2.10	.59	-.04	-.03	.29**	.63**	1

Table 2. Mediation analysis for anger rumination

Outcome variable	Predictive variable	R	R ²	F	β	t
Anger rumination	Exposure to domestic violence	.27	.07	16.70***	.37	6.90***
	Gender				-.04	-.87
	Age				-.04	-2.14**
Aggressive	Exposure to domestic violence	.65	.42	113.06***	.23	4.56***
	Anger rumination				.68	18.83***
	Gender				-.02	-.62
Aggression	Exposure to domestic violence	.30	.09	20.82***	.47	7.90***
	Gender				-.05	-1.02
	Age				-.01	-.57

Table 3. Moderation analysis for objective SES

Outcome variable	Predictive variable	R	R ²	F	β	t
Anger rumination	Exposure to domestic violence	.30	.09	11.94***	.51	20.57***
	Objective SES				-.99	-1.92
	Exposure to domestic violence *Objective SES				4.11	2.98**
	Gender				-.03	-.79
Aggression	Exposure to domestic violence	.66	.43	77.64***	.34	5.14***
	Anger rumination				.67	18.47***
	Objective SES				-.50	-1.09**
	Exposure to domestic violence *Objective SES				-.70	.56
	Gender				-.02	-.59
	Age				.02	.97

The results showed that witnessing domestic violence is significantly positively associated with anger rumination and aggression. Moreover, anger rumination partially mediates the link between witnessing domestic violence and aggression. Social class significantly moderates the association between witnessing domestic violence and anger rumination such that the effect of witnessing domestic violence is much stronger in higher social class than lower social class.