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## Factors Influencing Aggressive Behavior in Adolescents: A Systematic Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

Aggressive behavior among adolescents is a global psychosocial problem that continues to increase and poses serious implications for mental health, educational outcomes, and social stability. Previous studies have demonstrated that adolescent aggression is influenced by a complex interaction between internal and external factors; however, empirical findings remain fragmented and have not been systematically integrated. This study aims to identify the most salient internal factors and to analyze external factors that function as predictors of aggressive behavior in adolescents. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. Literature searches were conducted in November 2025 across four major databases—Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar—covering articles published between 2015 and 2025. Of the 2,637 articles initially identified, 27 empirical studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. The findings indicate that adolescent aggression is significantly associated with internal factors such as low self-control, poor emotion regulation, and low self-esteem, as well as external factors including maladaptive parenting practices, exposure to violence, peer influence, and digital media addiction. These results highlight the importance of integrative and context-sensitive intervention approaches in addressing aggressive behavior among adolescents

## INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behavior among adolescents represents a widespread and complex social issue that not only affects the individuals involved but also generates long-term consequences for public health, educational systems, family stability, and overall community well-being across diverse global contexts. Aggression is commonly defined as physical or verbal behavior intended to harm others (Siregar & Muljono, 1970). Such behavior encompasses a broad range of actions, including kicking, slapping, threatening, insulting, as well as indirect forms such as gossiping and verbal provocation. More extreme manifestations of aggressive behavior are typically classified as violence (Berlianti et al., 2016).

Adolescence is a transitional developmental period from childhood to early adulthood, characterized by substantial changes in physical, psychological, and psychosocial domains (Dewi et al., 2017). During this stage, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to emotional instability and antagonistic attitudes due to the ongoing maturation of psychological functions (Khoir, n.d.). High levels of adolescent aggression have been identified as a major global social and public health concern, as they are associated with increased morbidity and mortality and may lead to severe negative consequences for both perpetrators and victims (Muarifah et al., 2022). Adolescents, especially in the contemporary era, represent a crucial foundation for national development and sustainability. Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggests that adolescent aggression has increased annually, posing threats to community stability (Berlianti et al., 2016). Hurlock, as cited in Alfasma and Santi (2022), describes this phenomenon as adolescents' inability to effectively manage emotional fluctuations inherent in their developmental stage.

Adolescent aggression is a multifactorial phenomenon involving complex interactions between internal and external determinants (Cui & Lan, 2020). Data from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) conducted in Romania in 2011 revealed that 35.87%

of students reported involvement in physical fights during the previous 12 months, exceeding the European average of 31.25%, with group assaults identified as the most prevalent form of violence (Bucur et al., 2020). Research conducted in South Korea further indicates that adolescent aggressive behavior is influenced by family-related factors, particularly exposure to parental violence. Adolescents who directly witness interparental conflict are more vulnerable to externalizing symptoms, including aggression (Kim & Lee, 2021). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of adolescent aggression requires an examination of both internal factors, such as self-control, and external factors, including media exposure and parenting practices (Zhao et al., 2022).

Despite extensive research, debates persist regarding the mechanisms through which exposure to violence influences aggressive behavior. The General Aggression Model (GAM) conceptualizes exposure to violence as a direct trigger of aggression, reinforced by aggressive cognitive schemas. In contrast, the Catalyst Model (CM) posits that environmental factors merely activate aggressive tendencies in individuals who are already predisposed due to genetic influences (Zhao et al., 2022). From a mediational perspective, empirical studies suggest that self-efficacy in non-violent responses and normative beliefs supporting proactive aggression mediate the relationship between witnessing violence and physical aggression (Farrell et al., 2022). However, these beliefs do not operate uniformly. Victimization alone does not necessarily shape aggressive beliefs once exposure to violence or other adverse events is controlled, indicating that witnessing violence and experiencing victimization follow distinct pathways toward aggression.

Another theoretical gap lies in understanding the interaction between protective and risk factors. The concept of alternative social capital—derived from siblings, teachers, or neighbors—has been proposed as a mediating factor capable of reducing the adverse effects of parental violence, particularly when parental social capital is diminished or disrupted (Kim & Lee, 2021). However, the role of

social capital derived from classmates and online acquaintances remains complex and inconsistent, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive model to explain these compensatory mechanisms.

Adolescent aggression has become increasingly alarming given its detrimental long-term consequences not only for the individuals involved but also for society at large. In Indonesia, for instance, recent studies have documented groups of adolescents deliberately engaging in street violence, including random assaults with sharp weapons, as a means of seeking adrenaline stimulation. This phenomenon, locally referred to as *klithih*, has generated widespread public anxiety, particularly regarding nighttime activities (Muarifah et al., 2022). Beyond societal impacts, aggression is also closely associated with mental health problems among adolescents, such as depression and low self-esteem in perpetrators. Existing gaps in mediational and moderational mechanisms suggest that current intervention strategies may not be fully effective (Lee et al., 2021). (Hinduja & Patchin, 2022) argue that efforts to reduce adolescent cyberbullying should prioritize the development of cognitive empathy rather than affective empathy alone. Furthermore, individual factors such as low self-control, which consistently emerge as key predictors of aggression, require clearer explanations regarding their interactive mechanisms (Khoir, n.d.).

Accordingly, a systematic review is required to comprehensively compile and synthesize recent empirical evidence on factors that significantly predict or mediate aggressive behavior among adolescents, with the ultimate goal of identifying effective intervention strategies. Based on the issues outlined above, the primary objectives of this Systematic Literature Review are: (1) to comprehensively identify the most significant internal factors influencing adolescent aggression, and (2) to analyze external factors—including media, family, and peer influences—that function as direct predictors of aggressive behavior in adolescents.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The literature search was conducted across four major electronic databases—Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar (accessed using the Publish or Perish software)—to identify empirical studies examining factors influencing aggressive behavior among adolescents. The search strategy utilized combinations of English and Indonesian keywords with Boolean operators, as follows: (“aggression” OR “aggressive” OR “agresivitas” OR “agresi”) AND (“teen” OR “teenager” OR “adolescent” OR “student”), with additional keywords related to the digital context, including “cyberbullying,” “social media,” and “internet addiction.”

The search was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025 and available in full-text format. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: peer-reviewed journal articles; empirical studies with quantitative, longitudinal, or experimental designs; adolescent populations aged 10–19 years; and studies focusing on internal and/or external factors associated with adolescent aggression. Publications in the form of books, theses, dissertations, conference proceedings, editorials, and articles without a clearly defined methodology were excluded from the analysis. The study selection process consisted of three stages: identification, title and abstract screening, and full-text assessment. All retrieved records were managed using a reference management software to remove duplicate entries. The initial search yielded a total of 2,637 articles, comprising 295 from Scopus, 412 from PubMed, 1,930 from ScienceDirect, and the remainder from Google Scholar. After duplicate

removal, 1,842 articles were screened based on titles and abstracts. Subsequently, 78 articles underwent full-text review, of which 27 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis.

Tabel 1. Data Extraction Results

No	Judul, Peneliti, & tahun	Tujuan	Jenis Penelitian/ Sumber data	Hasil temuan utama
1	(Zhang et al., 2022)	This study investigated the relationship between internet use addiction and adolescent aggressiveness, mediated by depression and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, with gender examined as a mediating variable.	A quantitative approach was employed involving 999 secondary school students in China (485 females and 514 males).	The findings indicated that internet addiction was significantly correlated with aggressive behavior, and anxiety was identified as a significant mediating factor in this relationship.
2	(Karunia Saputra et al., 2015)	This study examined the association between authoritarian parenting styles and adolescent aggressive behavior at SMK Hidayah Semarang.	A quantitative design was applied to a population of 226 students, with a sample of 126 participants.	The results demonstrated a positive correlation between authoritarian parenting and adolescent aggressiveness, with male students exhibiting higher aggression scores than females.
3	(Alfasma et al., n.d.)	This study aimed to examine the relationship between loneliness and aggressive behavior among fatherless adolescents in Surabaya.	A quantitative design was employed involving 45 fatherless adolescents whose fathers were absent due to death, divorce, or long-term migration.	The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between loneliness and aggressive behavior among adolescents experiencing father absence.
4	(Soekoto et al., n.d.)	This study explored the relationship between friendship quality and relational aggression across gender and adolescent age groups.	A quantitative design was conducted with 380 adolescents in Surabaya, including early, middle, and late adolescence.	The results indicated a significant negative association between friendship quality and relational aggression as a form of revenge, with higher relational aggression scores observed among male adolescents and those in the late adolescent group.

5	(Dewi et al., 2017)	This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and aggressive behavior among adolescents on social media.	A quantitative approach was employed involving 262 students from SMA Negeri 1 “X” in Gresik.	The findings revealed a significant association between emotional intelligence and adolescents’ aggressive behavior on social media.
6	(Psikologi et al., n.d.)	This study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and aggressiveness among adolescents	A quantitative design was conducted with 269 students from SMA Negeri 1 Pacet.	The results indicated that low emotional maturity, combined with an uncondusive school environment, impaired adolescents’ ability to regulate their psychological functions, which in turn was associated with higher levels of aggressive behavior.
7	(Dumas et al., 2019)	This study investigated the impact of popularity motivation on relational aggression.	A quantitative design was employed involving 986 secondary school students in Canada.	The findings suggested that a strong desire to achieve popularity may encourage adolescents to engage in increased relational aggression, reflecting maladaptive and risky behaviors.
8	(Farrell et al., 2022)	This study sought to understand how exposure to violence—through witnessing and victimization—shapes acceptance of violence and self-efficacy in responding to violence.	A longitudinal quantitative design was conducted with 2,705 early African American adolescents attending schools and residing in high-crime urban areas.	The results indicated that witnessing violence shaped adolescents’ mindsets, increasing their endorsement of proactive aggression and reducing their confidence in responding to conflict without violence. These mindset changes partially contributed to increases in physical aggression over time..
9	(Shao & Wang, 2019)	This study analyzed the effects of internal factors (acceptance of aggression) and external factors (quality of the family environment) in the relationship between exposure to violent video games and adolescent aggression.	A quantitative design was conducted with 648 students from six secondary schools in China.	The results showed that exposure to violent video games had both direct and indirect effects on adolescent aggression, mediated by normative beliefs and acceptance of aggression. The direct effect was observed among adolescents with a high-quality family

				environment, whereas both direct and indirect effects were found among those with lower family environment quality.
10	(Khoir, n.d.)	This study examined the relationship between self-control and aggressiveness among adolescents whose parents serve in the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the National Police (POLRI).	A quantitative design was conducted with 100 adolescents from military and police families.	The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between self-control and aggressiveness. Adolescents with parents employed in the TNI and POLRI generally demonstrated higher levels of self-control and lower levels of aggressive behavior..
11	(Jamil et al., 2017)	This study investigated the relationship between internet addiction and aggression among adolescents, with a particular focus on the role of gender.	A quantitative design was conducted with 200 adolescents in Haripur City, Pakistan.	The findings demonstrated that internet addiction had a strong and statistically significant predictive effect on aggression. Male adolescents were found to exhibit higher levels of both internet addiction and aggressive behavior compared to females.
12	(Wang & Sang, 2020)	This study examined the role of shame regulation in explicit and implicit adolescent aggression.	Experimental designs were employed involving 87 students in Study 1 and 80 students in Study 2, drawn from the same grade level in China.	The findings indicated that shame regulation through self-blame directly increased explicit (conscious) aggressive behavior, while it did not have a significant effect on implicit (unconscious) aggression.
13	(Siregar & Muljono, 2017)	This study examined the effect of the intensity of violent video game play on adolescents' levels of aggression, with personal (gender) and situational factors serving as moderators.	A quantitative design was conducted with 90 vocational high school students in Bogor (45 males and 45 females).	The results indicated that adolescents with higher levels of game-playing intensity exhibited higher aggression scores. Male students tended to have greater gaming intensity than females. In addition, situational factors—such as parental restrictions, peer influence, and

				knowledge about games—significantly affected the intensity of video game play.
14	(Kim & Lee, 2021)	This study identified and examined the mediating role of different forms of social capital—derived from siblings, friends, teachers, and online acquaintances—in mitigating the negative consequences (aggression and depressive mood) of parental violence exposure.	A cross-sectional quantitative design was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 2,844 Korean adolescents.	The findings indicated that exposure to parental violence had a direct effect on increased adolescent aggression. Social capital obtained from siblings, teachers, and neighbors served as significant mediators in this relationship
15	Peng (2023)	This study examined how childhood violence influences adolescent aggressive behavior, with a particular focus on self-esteem and self-control as mediating variables.	A quantitative design was conducted with 454 incarcerated male adolescents in China	The findings indicated that exposure to childhood violence led to lower levels of self-control and self-esteem, which in turn were associated with higher levels of aggressive behavior during adolescence.
16	(Lin et al., 2020)	This study examined the association between parental physical punishment and adolescent aggressive behavior, mediated by peer victimization and the parent–adolescent relationship.	A quantitative design was conducted with 3,180 students from eight secondary schools in China.	The results showed that parental physical punishment was significantly and positively correlated with adolescent aggression. Peer victimization was also positively associated with aggressive behavior, whereas the quality of the parent–adolescent relationship was negatively correlated with adolescent aggression.
17	(Cui & Lan, 2020)	This study examined the relationship between parental harsh discipline (perseverance and consistency) and aggressive behavior among Chinese adolescents.	A cross-sectional quantitative design was conducted with 1,156 adolescents in China.	The findings indicated that parental harsh discipline may disrupt adolescents’ cognitive development, thereby predisposing them to aggressive behavior; however, this association was not statistically significant among female adolescents.
18	(Lin et al., 2020)	This study tested the relationships among school engagement and deviant peer	A one-year longitudinal study was conducted with	The findings indicated that deviant peer affiliation served as a stronger mediator of the

		affiliation as mediators in the association between adolescents' exposure to violence and aggressive behavior.	732 Chinese adolescents, assessed in the spring of Grade 7, the fall of Grade 7, and Grade 8..	relationship between violence exposure and aggressive behavior than school engagement.
19	(Lin et al., 2020; Sfeir et al., 2020)	This study measured the associations among alexithymia, depression, and aggressive behavior.	A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 568 young adolescents in two governorates of Lebanon.	The results indicated that adolescents with higher alexithymia scores exhibited significantly higher levels of both aggression and depression compared to those with lower levels of alexithymia.
20	(Lin et al., 2024)	This study investigated the roles of social media addiction, sleep quality, and aggressive behavior among adolescents.	A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 773 secondary school students in Northern Italy.	The findings indicated that social media addiction increased the intensity of nighttime internet use, which in turn impaired sleep quality and significantly heightened aggressive behavior.
21	(Zhao et al., 2022)	This study examined the directional relationship between internet addiction, depressive symptoms, and aggressive behavior.	This study examined the directional relationships between internet addiction, depressive symptoms, and aggressive behavior.	The findings indicated that internet addiction predicted increases in aggressive behavior over time, with deviant peer influence exacerbating this effect. Male adolescents with internet addiction were found to be more vulnerable to aggressive behavior than their female counterparts.
22	(Walker & Stockdale, 2020)	This study examined the relationship between parental media monitoring styles—specifically information management—and adolescents' prosocial and aggressive behaviors.	A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 945 nationally representative adolescents in the United States, including European American youth.	The findings indicated that controlling parental monitoring increased adolescents' media secrecy, which in turn mediated higher levels of relational aggression and lower levels of prosocial behavior. These effects were reported more frequently among female adolescents.
23	(Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021)	This study explored the role of gender traits (masculinity and femininity) in reactive	A two-wave longitudinal study was conducted with	The findings indicated that masculinity was positively associated with both reactive

		and proactive aggression through self-efficacy and emotion regulation.	390 adolescents in Spain.	and proactive aggression, whereas femininity was negatively associated with these forms of aggression. Moreover, femininity demonstrated an indirect relationship with reactive aggression through self-efficacy and emotional regulation.
24	(Lee et al., 2021)	This study examined the pathways linking bullying victimization to aggressive behavior by investigating the mediating effects of low life satisfaction, substance use, and deviant peer affiliation.	A repeated cross-sectional study was conducted with 1,676 adolescents in the United States.	The findings indicated that bullying victimization was significantly and positively associated with aggressive behavior, primarily through substance use and exposure to deviant peer networks.
25	(Fung, 2021)	This study examined levels of proactive and reactive aggression among adolescents from different family structures (intact and non-intact families).	A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 520 Chinese adolescents.	The findings indicated that adolescents from stepmother families exhibited higher levels of proactive aggression, general aggressiveness, and delinquent behavior compared to adolescents from intact families.
27	(Muarifah et al., 2022)	This study examined the role of maternal attachment in adolescent aggression, mediated by self-esteem.	A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 730 secondary school students in Indonesia.	The results indicated that self-esteem fully mediated the relationship between maternal attachment styles and adolescent aggression. Secure attachment was positively associated with aggression, whereas anxious attachment was negatively associated with aggressive behavior.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Internal Factors Influencing Adolescent Aggression

Aggressive behavior in adolescence is a complex phenomenon influenced by a range of internal factors inherent to the individual, including psychological characteristics, biological differences, and self-regulatory capacities (Dewi et al., 2017; Khoir, n.d.). Numerous studies have identified

significant internal factors that predict or are associated with levels of aggression in adolescent populations.

One personal factor that consistently influences aggressiveness is gender (Berlianti et al., 2016; Hutomo & Ariati, 2016; Siregar & Muljono, 1970). In general, male adolescents exhibit higher levels of aggression than female adolescents (Farrell

et al., 2022; Fung, 2021; Karunia Saputra et al., 2015). Male adolescents are more likely to engage in physical aggression (Berlianti et al., 2016), whereas female adolescents are more likely to experience cyberbullying victimization and report higher exposure to verbal violence from their mothers compared to males (Aguspita Dewi & Sriati Fakultas Keperawatan, 2020). Males have also been found to engage more frequently in violent video game play than females, a behavior that is significantly associated with aggressive outcomes (Bucur et al., 2020; Siregar & Muljono, 1970).

Individual capacity for emotional processing and behavioral regulation is a strong predictor of aggression. Difficulties in identifying and understanding emotions—commonly referred to as alexithymia—have been shown to be significantly associated with higher levels of total aggression, anger, physical and verbal aggression, and hostility among adolescents (Sfeir et al., 2020). Adolescents with alexithymia tend to have limited emotion regulation abilities, which may increase their likelihood of engaging in physical and verbal aggression due to poor emotional awareness. In addition, low self-control renders adolescents more vulnerable to deviant behaviors; failures in self-control contribute to aggressive acts involving violence (Khoir, n.d.). (Markiewicz et al., 2020) further demonstrated that impulsivity resulting from low self-control has a substantial impact on adolescent aggression.

Low self-esteem is another internal factor influencing aggressive behavior in adolescents. Individuals with low self-esteem are more prone to reactive aggression driven by feelings of anger and hostility (Muarifah et al., 2022). A study conducted in China revealed that low self-esteem mediated the relationship between parental violence and adolescent aggression (Kim & Lee, 2021). However,

in the context of cyberbullying, victims tend to report lower self-esteem, whereas perpetrators often exhibit higher self-esteem combined with low self-control (Hinduja & Patchin, 2022).

Internal factors underlying aggressive behavior also include beliefs and attitudes toward aggression. Adolescents with a strong motivation to attain popularity demonstrate higher levels of relational aggression (Dumas et al., 2019). Moreover, normative beliefs that support proactive aggression have been identified as significant mediators in the relationship between witnessing physical violence and engaging in physical aggression (Farrell et al., 2022).

### **Direct External Factors of Aggression**

External factors constitute powerful drivers of adolescent aggression, encompassing media and technology influences, family environments, and peer relationships, which operate as both direct and indirect predictors. Rapid technological development has increased adolescents' exposure to audiovisual media, particularly violent video games, which has emerged as a significant risk factor. Such exposure is more likely to intensify aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors compared to watching television or films (Siregar & Muljono, 1970). Moreover, high involvement in video gaming has been shown to predict antisocial aggression through cognitive mediating pathways, including self-oriented perspectives and reduced self-transcendence, even after controlling for violent content (Espinosa & Clemente, 2013).

Technological risks are not limited to media content but also involve digital addiction. Internet addiction has been found to be a significant and positive predictor of adolescent aggression (Jamil et al., 2017). Studies conducted in China and Pakistan have confirmed a strong association between internet addiction and aggressive behavior (Wang & Sang,

2020; Zhao et al., 2022). Longitudinal evidence further indicates that early internet addiction predicts increased depressive symptoms and aggressive behavior one year later (Zhao et al., 2022). A similar pattern has been observed in Italy, where social media addiction was positively associated with aggressive behavior through a serial mediation mechanism: nighttime social media use impaired sleep quality, which subsequently increased aggression (Lin et al., 2024).

Beyond digital influences, family factors—particularly maladaptive parenting practices—represent foundational predictors of aggressive behavior. Parental violence has been consistently linked to externalizing behaviors, including aggression (Kim & Lee, 2021). Evidence from China demonstrates that parental physical punishment is positively associated with adolescent aggression (Z. Li et al., 2022). Findings from Korea further indicate that alternative sources of social capital, such as support from siblings, teachers, or neighbors, can mediate the relationship between parental violence and adolescent aggression, functioning as protective factors when parental support within the family is diminished (Kim & Lee, 2021). Other studies have shown that mutual avoidance between parents and adolescents significantly increases both the frequency of family violence and adolescents' aggressive feelings (Berlianti et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with Fung (2021), who reported that family relationships play a crucial role in aggression, with adolescents from non-harmonious families—particularly those living with a stepmother—more likely to exhibit proactive aggression than those from intact families.

Peer-related factors also operate as salient triggers of aggression. Peer victimization, particularly experiences of being bullied, has been found to mediate the relationship between parental

physical punishment and adolescent aggression (S. Li et al., 2023). Adolescents who experience victimization are more likely to retaliate with aggressive behavior as a defensive strategy. In addition, affiliation with deviant peer groups is strongly associated with aggression, as such groups often serve as contexts for the reinforcement and modeling of aggressive behavior (Lin et al., 2024). Longitudinal research further demonstrates that exposure to community violence reduces school engagement, which subsequently increases affiliation with deviant peers and ultimately leads to heightened aggressive behavior.

The findings of this systematic literature review confirm that adolescent aggression is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single factor. The evidence indicates that internal factors—such as self-control, emotion regulation, self-esteem, and normative beliefs about aggression—serve as psychological foundations that shape individuals' vulnerability to aggressive behavior. Adolescents with low self-control, difficulties in emotion regulation, or beliefs that aggression is an acceptable response are more likely to externalize conflict through aggressive actions.

However, these internal factors rarely operate in isolation. External environments—particularly family, peer relationships, and digital media—function as both triggers and reinforcers of aggression. Exposure to parental violence, physical punishment, and dysfunctional family relationships has been consistently associated with increased aggression, either directly or indirectly through mediators such as self-esteem and self-control. These findings align with the General Aggression Model, which emphasizes the interaction between situational and personal inputs in shaping individuals' internal states that subsequently influence behavioral responses. Importantly, the results also demonstrate

that not all adolescents exposed to external risk factors exhibit high levels of aggression. Protective factors, such as social capital derived from siblings, teachers, and supportive school environments, have been shown to attenuate the negative effects of family violence. This supports a developmental ecological perspective that situates adolescents within interconnected social systems that mutually influence one another.

Digital technology emerged as a key theme in the recent literature. Internet addiction, social media addiction, and exposure to violent digital content not only increase aggression directly but also exacerbate adolescents' psychological vulnerabilities through sleep disturbances, depression, and anxiety. This discussion highlights that adolescent aggression in the digital era is often more covert, persistent, and difficult to detect, thereby requiring adaptive, digital literacy-based intervention strategies. Furthermore, consistent gender differences identified across studies suggest that aggression must be understood contextually. Male adolescents are more prone to physical and proactive aggression, whereas female adolescents are more frequently involved in relational and online forms of aggression. These differences imply that aggression prevention strategies should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather be sensitive to gender characteristics and social contexts.

### **Trends in Changes in Adolescent Aggression (2015–2025)**

Based on a synthesis of empirical literature published between 2015 and 2025, clear shifts can be observed in trends of adolescent aggression across regions and countries, both in terms of forms of aggression, dominant risk factors, and the sociocultural contexts underlying these behaviors. Overall, global trends indicate a transition from conventional physical aggression toward relational

and digitally mediated aggression, accompanied by increasingly complex and multidimensional determinants.

In the early period (2015–2018), studies conducted in several Asian countries—particularly China and Pakistan—predominantly focused on physical and verbal aggression associated with family-related factors, such as physical punishment, harsh parental discipline, and low self-control (Cui & Lan, 2020; Jamil et al., 2017). In these contexts, aggression was largely conceptualized as an externalizing manifestation of family stress and failures in emotion regulation, with pronounced gender differences, whereby male adolescents consistently exhibited higher levels of aggression.

During the same period, research in Europe and North America, including Canada and the United States, began to emphasize relational aggression in school settings, driven by popularity motivation, peer group dynamics, and bullying victimization (Dumas et al., 2019; Padilla-Walker et al., 2020). Aggression was no longer viewed solely as an impulsive response, but increasingly understood as a strategic social behavior aimed at maintaining status and power within peer networks.

Entering the period of 2019–2021, research trends in East Asia (particularly China and South Korea) showed a growing focus on psychological mediating mechanisms. Longitudinal studies revealed that exposure to parental or community violence did not directly trigger aggression, but rather operated through mediators such as low self-esteem, poor self-control, depressive symptoms, and affiliation with deviant peers (Kim & Lee, 2021; Z. Li et al., 2022). During this phase, proactive and relational aggression received increasing scholarly attention, gradually replacing the earlier dominance of physical aggression research.

In the most recent period (2022–2025), a significant global shift has occurred toward the study of digitally mediated aggression. Research in China highlights the growing role of internet and social media addiction in predicting adolescent aggression, both directly and indirectly through anxiety, depression, and normative beliefs supporting aggression (Zhang et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2022). In Europe—particularly Italy and Spain—studies have underscored how social media addiction and poor sleep quality contribute to increased aggression, as well as how emotion regulation and gender characteristics influence reactive and proactive aggression (Lin et al., 2024; Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021). In the United States, contemporary research increasingly adopts a multisystem perspective, emphasizing the roles of bullying victimization, substance use, and exposure to deviant peer networks in shaping long-term aggression trajectories among urban adolescents (Farrell et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021).

Overall, trends over the past decade reflect a global paradigm shift from linear, single-factor explanations toward ecological and cross-cultural models that conceptualize adolescent aggression as the outcome of dynamic interactions among individual, family, peer, and digital environmental factors. These interactions vary across national and regional contexts, underscoring the importance of culturally sensitive and developmentally informed approaches to understanding and preventing adolescent aggression (Cui & Lan, 2020; Zhao et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that adolescent aggression is shaped by a complex interaction between internal and external factors. Internal factors most consistently associated with aggression include low self-control, poor emotion

regulation, low self-esteem, alexithymia, and normative beliefs that support aggressive behavior. Meanwhile, the primary external factors acting as direct predictors of aggression are maladaptive parenting practices, exposure to violence within the family and community, affiliation with deviant peers, and addiction to digital media. Over the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the manifestation of adolescent aggression, from predominantly physical aggression toward relational and digital forms. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive, integrative, and contextual intervention approaches that address not only adolescents as individuals but also their families, schools, and the digital ecosystem.

The practical implications of this review highlight the importance of school- and family-based aggression prevention programs that emphasize strengthening self-control, emotion regulation, cognitive empathy, and digital literacy. For future research, the development of cross-cultural longitudinal models that simultaneously integrate risk and protective factors is recommended, as such models can provide a stronger empirical foundation for policy formulation and the design of global adolescent aggression prevention interventions.

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