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Empirical analysis of the correlation between levels of frustration and forms of aggressive behaviour in adults

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Abstract. The relevance of this study stems from the increasing manifestations of aggressive behaviour among adults in response to rising levels of frustration amid contemporary social instability. The aim of the research was to establish the relationship between the degree of frustration and expressions of aggression in adult residents of Ukraine. The methodological framework comprised quantitative psychodiagnostic tools, including questionnaires, standardised tests, and statistical methods of data analysis. The study was conducted from April to June 2024 and involved 158 participants aged 34-53 from various regions of Ukraine. The findings revealed that 63.3% of respondents exhibited moderate to high levels of frustration, accompanied by pronounced aggressive tendencies. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between the "obstacle-dominance" type of frustration response and levels of verbal and indirect aggression. The highest levels of aggression were observed in individuals with elevated anxiety and rigidity, indicating a link between emotional tension and a propensity for aggression. Scores on the guilt scale demonstrated an inverse relationship with the intensity of aggressive behaviour, suggesting a moderating effect. In a separate subsample of 30 individuals, a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$) was observed between frustration indicators and indirect aggression. Among those with heightened irritability, high levels of negativism were recorded, coupled with low guilt scores. These results point to the existence of a complex psycho-emotional profile in which frustration acts as a trigger for aggressive responses. The conclusions affirm that frustration is a key factor influencing both the form and intensity of aggressive behaviour. Moreover, the type of response to frustration determines the specific manifestation of aggression. The practical significance of this study lies in the potential to develop psychological intervention programmes for aggression prevention, tailored to individual frustration levels and dominant response types

Keywords: negativism; hostility; irritability; emotional tension; dominant type of response

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the problem of aggression in society has remained one of the most pressing issues concerning individual psychological well-being. The rise in conflict across social, professional, educational, and domestic environments has been accompanied by an escalation in aggressive behaviour, manifested in both verbal and physical forms. This phenomenon has become particularly pronounced during periods of instability – economic

downturns, political uncertainty, and social transformations – often coinciding with personal life crises. In such circumstances, the level of frustration among a significant portion of the population has increased, triggering both internal psychological conflicts and external manifestations of destructive behaviour. These contexts have highlighted the need for a deeper scientific understanding of the relationship between frustration and manifestations of

aggression in adult populations. Frustration, as a psychological state resulting from the inability to attain a goal or satisfy a need, has become increasingly common among adults, particularly in relation to perceived loss of control over life events. Simultaneously, aggression – as a response to internal tension and disappointment – has evolved into new forms and acquired broader meanings, ranging from passive aggression to overt violence. In psychological research, growing attention has been directed towards frustration as a trigger for aggression, necessitating interdisciplinary analysis that encompasses socio-psychological, cognitive, biological, and cultural dimensions.

Recent scientific studies have expanded understanding of various facets of this issue. For instance, N. Chitrakar & P. Nisanth (2023) explored the impact of frustration on students' motivation and academic performance. They found that high levels of frustration in academic settings adversely affected learning outcomes, leading to feelings of hopelessness and diminished self-esteem. Although their work did not directly address aggression, it indirectly highlighted its psychological precursors.

S. Arif & S. Al Hassan (2022) examined organisational frustration among employees in Pakistan's telecommunications sector, discovering that breaches of the psychological contract significantly increased destructive workplace behaviours. Their survey statistically demonstrated that feelings of betrayal by employers provoked aggressive responses, thereby exacerbating conflict and employee turnover. A different approach was taken by D. Scheinost *et al.* (2021), who investigated the neurobiological basis of irritability in children in response to frustration. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging during a challenging task, they found that individual differences in the functioning of motor-sensory brain networks correlated with frustration responses. These findings opened avenues for identifying biological markers of irritability as potential predictors of aggression.

Working within a cultural-psychological framework, E. Maalouf *et al.* (2022) studied the relationship between attachment styles and aggression among Lebanese adolescents. Their findings showed that insecure attachment styles heightened anger and predisposed individuals to aggression, while secure attachment reduced this risk. The study underscored the importance of interpersonal dynamics in shaping emotional responses. The study by C. Khadka (2024), grounded in social learning theory, offered valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying the formation of aggression. Referencing Bandura's Bobo doll experiment, the author demonstrated how exposure to aggressive behaviour in adults led children to replicate similar behaviours. This supported the conclusion that the social environment – particularly the media – plays a critical role in fostering aggressive tendencies. Finally, P. Sturme (2022) conducted a retrospective review of aggression theories, tracing developments from Freudian constructs to modern integrative models. He illustrated the evolution of psychological thought from reductionist explanations, such as the hydraulic model of aggression, towards more

complex frameworks that incorporate biological, psychological, and social factors.

W. Ozuem *et al.* (2024) identified an unexpected context for frustration – the domain of digital services. Their study explored customer reactions to chatbot failures, which elicited frustration that subsequently triggered aggressive responses such as complaints, negative reviews, or service boycotts. Four distinct types of customer reactions were identified, enabling the formulation of strategies to improve user interaction. S. Tordjman (2022) proposed an interpretation of aggression as a communicative act, wherein the interaction between aggressor and victim created a vicious cycle of violence. This model underscored the significance of social context and proposed three levels of intervention: individual, interpersonal, and systemic. Despite the diversity of existing approaches, the problem of clearly differentiating between frustration and aggression remains insufficiently addressed in contemporary scientific discourse. A particular complication arises in interpreting situations where frustration serves merely as a background condition rather than a direct source of aggression. The ambiguity of definitions, overlapping terminology, and the absence of unified diagnostic criteria hinder the accurate analysis of the relationship between these phenomena.

A persistent theoretical issue concerns the challenge of delineating the boundary between frustration as an emotional response to an obstacle, and aggression as a behavioural reaction aimed at alleviating that tension. In practical psychology, these concepts are often used interchangeably, which contributes to methodological inconsistency and complicates empirical measurement. The purpose of the present study was to undertake a psychological analysis of the relationship between frustration-induced tension and aggressive behaviour among the adult population of Ukraine within the context of the modern social environment. In pursuit of this aim, the following objectives were formulated: to analyse scientific approaches to understanding the nature of frustration and aggression in the psychological literature; to conduct an empirical investigation into the levels of frustration and aggression among adult respondents; and to identify statistically significant relationships between individual indicators of frustration and types of aggressive behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Within the framework of the study aimed at identifying the relationships between the level of frustration and manifestations of aggressive behaviour in adults, a comprehensive methodological approach was applied, combining quantitative psychodiagnostic methods and analytical procedures for statistical data processing. The choice of methods was due to the need for a deep and multifaceted study of both the subjective assessments of respondents regarding their own emotional state and objective manifestations of aggressive tendencies in behaviour, given their potential causality with frustration factors. To identify sociocultural factors that influence frustration and aggression in adults,

content analysis of scientific sources (psychological, sociological and cultural studies) and comparative cultural analysis of empirical studies covering different types of social contexts (individualistic and collectivist cultures) were used. The study included 158 adult respondents aged 34 to 53 years living in different regions of Ukraine during the period April-June 2024. The sample was uneven in terms of gender, with a predominance of women (140 people, or 88.6%) over men (18 people, or 11.4%). This sample structure reflects both the characteristics of the availability of respondents and the empirical focus on identifying the characteristics of aggressive behaviour in the socially active part of the population, in particular among people who regularly face psycho-emotional stress. The main criteria for inclusion in the sample were working age (16-59 years for men and 16-54 years for women), the absence of a history of serious mental illnesses, and voluntary consent to participate in the study.

In order to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the data obtained, four complementary methods were used. The first of them is the author's questionnaire, specially designed to assess the level of frustration. The questionnaire consisted of 15 statements concerning the frequency of feelings of hopelessness, irritation, emotional exhaustion and despair. Each statement was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant complete disagreement and 5 meant complete agreement. The sum of the points allowed classification of the level of frustration as low (15-30 points), medium (31-60 points) or high (61-75 points). This tool provided the initial stratification of respondents by the degree of emotional tension, which allowed further comparison of these levels with manifestations of aggressive behaviour. The second key tool was the frustration reaction technique of S. Rosenzweig (1976), adapted for the Ukrainian sample. This technique is based on the interpretation of pictorial situations that provoke a frustrating experience, with subsequent analysis of the nature of the respondent's response. Particular attention was paid to the type of objective-intro-punitive reaction (OD), which involves blaming external factors or circumstances for the emergence of a problematic situation. The collected responses made it possible to establish not only the dominant type of frustration reaction in each participant, but also to quantitatively assess its intensity, which became the basis for further statistical comparisons. The third stage of the study was the diagnosis of aggressiveness levels using the Bass-Darka method adapted by A.K. Osnytsky (Stepaniuk & Melnychenko, 2020). This standardised questionnaire allows measurement of the intensity of eight parameters of aggressive behaviour: physical, verbal and indirect aggression, negativism, irritability, suspicion, hurtfulness and guilt. Each of the parameters was evaluated in points, which allowed not only the identification of the general level of aggressiveness, but also the determination of its dominant forms in each respondent. Special attention was paid to the guilt scale as a potential internal regulator of aggressive behaviour. The Self-Esteem of Mental States (Eysenck) (n.d.) method was used to

diagnose four key psychological states: anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness and rigidity. This test allowed identification of the level of severity of these states in each respondent, as well as an understanding of the general emotional background and the degree of psycho-emotional tension.

For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the OD type of frustration reactions (predominance of reactions to an obstacle) and forms of aggression, 30 respondents were selected from the total sample (N = 158). The selection criterion was a high level of the OD type (≥ 6 points according to the S. Rosenzweig method). Within this group, a correlation analysis was conducted, which involved comparing the quantitative value of OD with the levels of verbal and indirect aggression according to the Bass-Darky scales (Stepaniuk & Melnychenko, 2020). The analysis was carried out using the Pearson correlation coefficient, which allowed the identification of a linear relationship between the variables. The role of guilt as a factor that potentially moderates or inhibits aggressive behaviour was also analysed. For this purpose, a separate subsample of 40 adult respondents aged 21 to 45 years was formed. In this sample, the values of the irritability, hostility and guilt scales were assessed, allowing the relationships between these indicators to be traced. The use of the Pearson formula ensured the reliability of the statistical results and enabled a deeper interpretation of the mechanisms of internal regulation of aggression under conditions of frustration.

In view of compliance with the ethical norms of the study, all participants were familiarised with the purpose, objectives and conditions of participation in the research procedure. The voluntary participation of respondents was ensured by obtaining written informed consent, and the anonymity of the results was guaranteed. Personal information was not collected or stored in order to maintain confidentiality. All research procedures complied with the basic principles of psychological ethics set out in the Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2015), in particular the principles of respect for the individual, non-maleficence, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent.

RESULTS

Theoretical basis for studying frustration and aggressive behaviour

Frustration is one of the fundamental topics in psychology, addressing the relationship between human needs, goals, and the obstacles to their realisation. In psychological literature, frustration is understood as a specific emotional state that arises when an individual encounters an insurmountable or unexpected obstacle in the pursuit of a vital need or the attainment of a significant goal (Park & Ramirez, 2022). From the standpoint of general psychology, frustration is not synonymous with a narrowly defined emotional reaction (such as anger or fear), but encompasses a broader spectrum of manifestations – ranging from anxiety to behavioural disorganisation. It is this state that frequently acts as a trigger for the development of aggression, activation of psychological defence mechanisms, formation of neurotic

traits, or conversely, mobilisation of efforts to overcome the obstacle. Psychologists classify frustration not only by its source (physical barriers, social constraints, internal conflicts), but also by the types of frustration reactions formed in response to a frustrating situation (Toxanbayeva *et al.*, 2024). These reactions vary significantly depending on individual personality traits, previous experiences, cognitive assessment of the situation, and the surrounding social context. A critical factor is the direction in which the individual's frustrated response is channelled.

In contemporary psychology, the following principal types of frustration reactions are distinguished: A reaction directed towards an external source, where the individual attributes responsibility for the frustrating situation to an external object (another person, a social group, or circumstances), which they perceive as having deliberately or inadvertently blocked the achievement of their goal. This often manifests in aggression, blame, or conflictual behaviour and is the most prevalent reaction type in interpersonal contexts. A reaction directed at the obstacle itself, where in the individual attempts to overcome the difficulty, solve the problem, or change the situation. This can involve both constructive efforts (seeking alternatives, increasing exertion) and destructive behaviours (irritation, unproductive persistence). It is a potentially mobilising response, typically linked with heightened internal tension and motivational drive. A reaction directed inward, characterised by the internalisation of responsibility for the frustrating event – where the individual believes they failed due to a lack of ability or insufficient effort. This is accompanied by feelings of guilt, reduced self-esteem, self-blame, heightened anxiety, and in some cases, depressive tendencies or the development of learned helplessness. These three types of reactions may coexist or shift depending on the situational context, but each reflects a distinct individual style of coping with adversity. It is essential to emphasise that frustration, in itself, is not a pathological condition: it serves a vital adaptive function by prompting individuals to reassess their situation, modify their behavioural strategies, or mobilise internal resources. However, when frustration is intense, chronic, or combined with insufficient psychological resilience, it can lead to destructive outcomes for the individual's psycho-emotional well-being. Aggression in psychology is regarded as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that may manifest as an adaptive response to frustration or as a maladaptive behavioural strategy in response to prolonged psycho-emotional stress (Mostova, 2023). Aggression, when functioning as a form of adaptation to frustration, can serve protective or compensatory purposes (Devilly *et al.*, 2023). In such cases, aggressive behaviour is a reaction to a threat or obstacle, enabling the individual to temporarily preserve the integrity of the self, increase control over the situation, or influence external circumstances. In certain contexts, this type of aggression is even considered socially acceptable – for instance, assertiveness, which allows individuals to defend their rights without causing harm to others. However, aggression may also represent a form of

maladaptation when it becomes a persistent behavioural pattern that damages social relationships, provokes conflict, or disrupts the individual's psycho-emotional equilibrium (Navas-Casado *et al.*, 2023). It is this latter form of aggression that is most commonly associated with chronic frustration, social isolation, or personal vulnerability.

There are several principal approaches to explaining the nature of aggression within the context of frustrating situations: psychoanalytic, cognitive, and socio-psychological theories. Each of these perspectives highlights distinct aspects of the interplay between aggression, personality, and environment. According to the psychoanalytic approach, aggression is an innate instinct that emerges as a component of the unconscious psyche (Perkel, 2023). S. Freud conceptualised aggression as a consequence of internal conflict between the life instinct – Eros – and the death instinct – Thanatos (Ullah *et al.*, 2021). Within this framework, frustration activates destructive impulses, which may be expressed through aggression or self-destructive behaviour. Later psychoanalysts, particularly A. Freud & H. Sullivan, emphasised the significance of psychological defence mechanisms (such as projection and rationalisation) that help individuals manage aggressive impulses (Saleh, 2022). When these mechanisms are ineffective, aggression may become overt or manifest in behaviour that contravenes social norms.

Cognitive concepts of aggression view it as the result of specific patterns of information processing and event interpretation. According to A. Bandura's (2024) social learning model, aggressive behaviour is not innate but formed through imitation, learning via reinforcement, and observation. In this context, aggression in response to frustration arises when an individual has learned to react in such a manner under stressful conditions. A critical factor is the presence of cognitive schemas that determine how the individual perceives obstacles – whether as a threat, an injustice, or a personal insult. For example, if a person holds beliefs about the world's hostility or exhibits low frustration tolerance, the likelihood of an aggressive reaction increases. Such cognitive distortions may reinforce aggressive behaviour patterns, which over time become automatised.

Social-psychological theories emphasise the influence of the social environment, interpersonal relationships, and cultural norms on the development and expression of aggression. The frustration-aggression hypothesis, formulated by J. Dollard *et al.* (2013) posited that all frustration leads to aggression, and all aggression stems from frustration (Etim & Ukpere, 2023). However, the theory has since been revised, acknowledging an intermediate stage of cognitive appraisal between frustration and aggression. Aggressive behaviour is more likely when the obstacle is perceived as unfair, deliberate, or humiliating. Concurrently, the social context – norms of behaviour, support systems, and conflict resolution culture – can either amplify or suppress aggressive responses. Notably, collectivist cultures tend to suppress direct aggression, whereas individualistic cultures permit more open expression. The universality of this mechanism lies in its reflection of both the internal

emotional state of the individual and their adaptive capacity in the face of environmental changes. Adaptive aggression may help overcome obstacles, provide self-defence, or enable environmental change. Conversely, maladaptive aggression is indicative of psycho-emotional disorganisation and may necessitate corrective intervention or psychotherapeutic support (Drndarević, 2021).

One of the most influential frameworks for categorising aggression is the typology proposed by Arnold Bass and Albert Darkie (Yuldasheva & Ergashova, 2021). This typology enables differentiation of aggressive behaviour by its manifestations and direction, which is essential for understanding the deeper mechanisms of frustration and maladaptation. Physical aggression is a direct form of destructive behaviour involving physical harm to another individual or object. It includes acts such as hitting, pushing, object destruction, and in extreme cases, violent conduct. In the context of frustration, physical aggression is typically an impulsive response to an obstacle that provokes intense emotional tension. This form of aggression is closely associated with biological factors, particularly in cases involving low stress tolerance, impaired self-control, or neurological dysfunctions. Verbal aggression entails the use of language as a means of attack. It may manifest through insults, threats, shouting, sarcasm, or derogatory remarks. As a socially mediated form of expressing negative emotion, verbal aggression enables individuals to release tension without resorting to physical violence. However, in some cases, it is equally destructive – especially when targeting the vulnerable aspects of the interlocutor's identity. Under frustration, verbal aggression often becomes the most common reaction, especially in situations where physical confrontation is socially unacceptable or impracticable. Indirect aggression refers to forms of aggression that are not overtly directed at the source of frustration or lack an explicit target. It may include gossip, passive-aggressive behaviour, backbiting, social exclusion, or sabotage. Indirect aggression frequently results from internal conflict or external social constraints, wherein the individual is unable to express irritation openly. This form of behaviour is often observed in individuals with low self-esteem or within authoritarian environments where overt dissent may lead to punishment.

Hostility in the Bass-Darki structure is regarded as a stable personality trait that reflects a general mistrust of others, a tendency to attribute malevolent intentions to them, and an expectation of negative attitudes from them (Savca, 2018). Unlike situational aggression, hostility is relatively enduring and develops on the basis of negative life experiences or cognitive distortions. An individual with a high level of hostility is prone to hypersensitivity to social stimuli and tends to interpret neutral situations as threatening, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflictual behaviour. Hostility serves as a background upon which other forms of aggressive responses are built, particularly in situations marked by frustration or interpersonal tension. Irritability represents the emotional component of aggressive behaviour, characterised by a low threshold for

the emergence of negative emotions in response to minor stimuli. Irritable individuals tend to lose self-control easily and often exhibit anger, discontent, and intolerance. Within the Bass-Darki typology, irritability is considered one of the key indicators of emotional regulation instability. It may be symptomatic of temporary overexertion or indicative of deeper psycho-emotional disturbances. Under conditions of frustration, irritability functions as a kind of “trigger” for the emergence of other forms of aggression – both verbal and physical.

Suspicion is another critical component of aggressive behaviour, manifesting in a tendency to interpret others' actions as hostile or personally directed. It is frequently accompanied by fears of being deceived, manipulated, or betrayed. For such individuals, frustration elicits not only aggression but also defensive mechanisms aimed at avoiding perceived threats, even when such threats are illusory. Suspicion is closely associated with hostility, though it involves a more pronounced emotional component – namely anxiety, distrust, and hypervigilance. Offensiveness refers to a propensity to overreact to remarks, criticism, or even neutral statements perceived as personal attacks. This form of aggression is typically not expressed outwardly but results in the internal accumulation of tension, which may eventually manifest as indirect or passive aggression. Individuals with high levels of offensiveness often become particularly vulnerable to frustration, lacking effective mechanisms for emotional release. The final component in the Bass-Darki model is negativism – the tendency to resist external influence and to reject demands or expectations, even in neutral situations. This may present as stubbornness, oppositional behaviour, or passive resistance. In conditions of frustration, negativism can serve as a strategy for preserving autonomy or compensating for a perceived loss of control.

Aggression and frustration, as psycho-emotional states, do not emerge in a social vacuum; rather, they are shaped by the ongoing interaction between the individual and the socio-cultural environment (Slipetska *et al.*, 2023). Among the key sociocultural determinants influencing aggressive behaviour and frustration responses are social norms, economic conditions, cultural values, media discourse, gender stereotypes, and parenting styles. Social norms define the boundaries of acceptable conduct, either sanctioning or inhibiting expressions of aggression. In cultures characterised by high levels of collectivism (e.g., East Asian countries), aggression tends to be socially condemned, whereas in individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States), direct emotional expression – including aggressive forms – is more often tolerated (Salin, 2021). Thus, the social context establishes the framework within which individuals respond to frustration. Economic inequality and social instability are significant contributors to chronic frustration. In environments marked by constant stress, limited access to resources, and constrained opportunities for personal fulfilment, individuals are more likely to develop a hostile outlook towards the external world. Frustration arising from systemic injustice often evolves into verbal or physical aggression.

Cultural values, such as the cult of power, competitiveness, or dominance, may legitimise aggressive behaviour. For instance, in societies that uphold authoritarian models of interaction or valorise aggressive masculinity, displays of dominance are often regarded as indicators of competence or leadership (O'Dea *et al.*, 2022). Such cultural contexts foster an internal readiness to respond aggressively in situations of frustration. Media and digital culture have become powerful forces in shaping tolerance towards aggression. The portrayal of violence as normative in films, social media, and video games contributes to the desensitisation to aggressive acts and facilitates their internalization – particularly under conditions of recurrent frustration. Equally significant is the influence of socialisation, particularly parenting style, which lays the groundwork for the development of emotional regulation mechanisms (Rahimov *et al.*, 2024). Authoritarian, repressive, or inconsistent upbringing diminishes a child's ability to resolve conflicts constructively and heightens emotional instability, making the individual more susceptible to frustration and more prone to aggression in response to setbacks. Gender stereotypes also play a crucial role by establishing socially sanctioned behavioural models. For example, men are more often encouraged to express strength and dominance openly, whereas women are expected to exhibit passivity or emotional restraint. As a result, states of frustration tend to manifest through different forms of aggression: among men, more commonly as direct physical aggression; among women, as verbal or passive-aggressive behaviour (Mahmood *et al.*, 2024).

In psychological science, the relationship between frustration and aggression is central to understanding the mechanisms of destructive behaviour. The theoretical exploration of this relationship dates back to the first half of the 20th century and has undergone numerous refinements, elaborations, and critiques from various academic perspectives (Alam, 2023). The most prominent and foundational framework is the frustration-aggression hypothesis, originally formulated by J. Dollard and colleagues in 1939 and later expanded upon by L. Berkowitz during the 1960s-1980s (Asangausung *et al.*, 2025). These models provided the groundwork for subsequent research in aggressive behaviour, emotional regulation, and social interaction.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis, as proposed by J. Dollard *et al.* (2013) posited that frustration – defined as the blocking or thwarting of goal-directed behaviour – invariably leads to aggression. According to this theory, aggression is viewed as an automatic, almost reflexive response to a frustrating stimulus. The classical formulation holds that every act of aggression stems from prior frustration and that all instances of frustration inevitably give rise to aggression. This model offers several analytical strengths. Firstly, it highlights a clear causal link between the emotional state of frustration and the behavioural expression of aggression. Secondly, it provides a generalised framework for predicting the emergence of aggressive behaviour under conditions of psycho-emotional strain.

However, the model's deterministic linearity has also attracted criticism. Researchers have pointed out that not all frustration results in aggression, nor is all aggression necessarily triggered by frustration. For example, individuals may respond to frustrating circumstances with anxiety, avoidance, withdrawal, or efforts to compromise, rather than through overtly aggressive acts.

In response to these observations, L. Berkowitz in the 1960s proposed a revised model of the relationship between frustration and aggression, retaining the central premise but introducing important refinements. In his interpretation, frustration is not a direct cause of aggression but rather a factor that increases the likelihood of its occurrence under certain conditions. L. Berkowitz emphasised that frustration induces a negative emotional state, which in turn may lead to aggression – but only when aggressive cues or signals are present in the environment. Such cues might include weapons, hostile gestures, aggressive language, and similar stimuli. This approach is referred to as the cognitive activation model of aggression. The core of L. Berkowitz's argument is that aggression is not an inevitable response to frustration; instead, it depends on how the individual interprets the situation, their previous experiences, internalised behavioural scripts, and external stimuli. If the frustrated individual activates aggressive thoughts or behavioural patterns, aggression becomes more probable. Conversely, if other emotional or cognitive constructs – such as guilt, fear, shame, or internalised social norms of restraint – predominate, aggression may not occur at all. L. Berkowitz also underlined the emotional determinants of aggression, particularly the role of anger. According to his theory, anger functions as a mediator between frustration and aggression: frustration provokes anger, and anger in turn activates aggressive tendencies. Nonetheless, even intense frustration does not necessarily lead to aggression if the individual does not experience anger or is capable of regulating it constructively. L. Berkowitz's model has significant practical implications. It provides a theoretical basis for the development of aggression prevention strategies through the reduction or elimination of aggressive cues, the enhancement of emotional regulation skills, and the cognitive reappraisal of frustrating events. This approach is especially pertinent in psychological work with children and adolescents, as well as in therapeutic interventions for aggression in situations of stress or interpersonal conflict (Salman & Aleem, 2024).

In addition to L. Berkowitz's contributions, more complex integrative models have emerged in recent decades, incorporating concepts of frustration within biopsychosocial, neuropsychological, and socio-cognitive frameworks. For instance, the general affective aggression model examines how various individual and situational variables interact with frustrating stimuli to shape aggressive responses (Gómez-Leal *et al.*, 2022). Within this framework, personality traits such as impulsivity or hostility, previous life experiences, motivational orientations, and cognitive appraisal of the context all play crucial roles. Thus, the

development of theoretical models on the frustration-aggression relationship illustrates a clear shift from linear, single-cause explanations towards multidimensional and interactive systems. In these systems, aggression is conceptualised as a complex, contextually conditioned response. Understanding such models is essential for the effective diagnosis, prevention, and correction of aggressive behaviours, as well as for the formulation of adaptive strategies for coping with frustration in contemporary society.

Empirical study of frustration and aggressive behaviour

The results of the author's questionnaire revealed that 17.7% of respondents (28 individuals) exhibited a low level of frustration, while 53.2% (84 individuals) demonstrated a moderate level, and 29.1% (46 individuals) reported a

high level of frustration. This distribution indicates a substantial prevalence of frustrated emotional states among the adult population, potentially influencing both behavioural patterns and psycho-emotional well-being. The significant proportion of individuals with a high level of frustration reflects the chronic experience of psychological discomfort, which may escalate into destructive behavioural forms – particularly aggression. To explore the mechanisms of response in frustrating situations in greater detail, the Frustration Reaction Test by S. Rosenzweig (1976) was employed. This method allows for the identification not only of the type of reactions but also their directional focus, which is essential for interpreting an individual's psychological profile. The results of the method for a selected subgroup of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of frustration reaction types according to the S. Rosenzweig method (in %)

Direction of reaction	OD "with fixation on the obstacle"	Types of reactions ED "with a fixation on self-defence"	NP "necessarily unstable"	Total number	Norm
ED – external circumstances accusation	21.4	12.2	4.8	38.4	40
ID – self-blame	15.3	14.5	9.1	38.9	30
M – conflict minimisation	3.2	6.1	12.7	22	30
Total number	39.9	32.8	27.3	100	

Note: ED – extrapunitive type; ID – intropunitive type; M – impunitive type

Source: compiled by the author based on answers to the frustration reaction test by S. Rosenzweig (1976)

According to the data obtained, the highest proportion among the types of reactions was OD-reactions ("fixed on the obstacle") – 39.9%. This indicates a predominance of external focus in the experience of frustration: respondents tend to concentrate on the obstacle itself rather than on strategies for overcoming it. Such a focus may manifest as excessive rumination on difficulties and fixation on adverse external conditions, which, over time, can lead to a decline in personal efficacy. The second most common type of reaction was ED ("fixed on self-defence") – 32.8%, suggesting a tendency among respondents towards defensive behaviours, particularly in the form of justifying their own actions, shifting responsibility, and avoiding feelings of guilt. The lowest proportion was observed for NP-reactions (27.3%) – behaviours indicative of instability in needs and a lack of goal orientation when faced with frustration. The

analysis of the direction of frustration reactions revealed that 38.4% of respondents demonstrated reactions with an external orientation, i.e., their frustration was projected onto external factors. An almost equal proportion (38.9%) exhibited an internal orientation (I), indicating the presence of introspection, self-reflection, and self-criticism. Meanwhile, 22% of reactions were classified as neutral (M) or unique, suggesting a tendency to avoid direct confrontation with the frustration-inducing factor. This distribution of reaction directions suggests that the studied group possesses a certain degree of internal self-regulatory capacity. However, the notable proportion of externally oriented reactions highlights a prevalent inclination to attribute difficulties to external causes. The results of the Bass-Darky technique conducted on a subgroup of respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Method for assessing an individual's tendency towards aggressive behaviour by A. Bass and A. Darki (adapted by A.K. Osnytsky)

Form of aggression	Low level	Intermediate level	High level
Physical aggression	67.1	21.5	11.4
Verbal aggression	19.6	53.8	26.6
Indirect aggression	22.2	50.6	27.2
Negativism	16.5	43.7	39.8
Irritability	23.4	43.1	33.5
Tendency to be suspicious	35.4	43.1	21.5
Hurt	29.1	36.7	34.2
Feelings of guilt	27.2	37.3	35.5

Source: compiled by the author based on responses to the methodology by A. Bass and A. Darki (Stepaniuk & Melnychenko, 2020)

The results of the methodology revealed that the largest proportion of respondents exhibited a low level of physical aggression (67.1%). This may be attributed to both the demographic characteristics of the sample (a significant proportion being middle-aged women) and socio-cultural factors that discourage the physical expression of aggression. However, the levels of verbal (26.6%) and indirect aggression (27.2%) were relatively high, which suggests a transformation of aggressive impulses into indirect or socially acceptable forms. This is further supported by elevated indicators of negative emotional states: high levels of negativism (39.8%), irritability (33.5%), and resentment (34.2%) reflect emotional instability, increased sensitivity to external stimuli, and a propensity for conflictual

behaviour. The high level of guilt observed in some respondents (35.5%) merits particular attention, as it indicates the presence of an internal conflict between the inhibition of aggressive expression and the existence of aggressive impulses. Such contradictions may result in chronic psychological stress, contribute to somatisation, and reduce overall psycho-emotional well-being. Furthermore, the elevated level of offensiveness (34.2%) may be attributed not only to subjective sensitivity, but also to frustration arising from unmet needs and social constraints. Analysis of the results of the Self-Esteem of Mental States test indicated that the majority of study participants demonstrated an average level of psycho-emotional states – namely anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness, and rigidity – as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of testing subgroups using the self-esteem of mental states method (Eysenck)

Mental state	Low level	Intermediate level	High level
Anxiety	19.9	45.7	35.4
Frustration	18.3	54.4	27.2
Aggressiveness	22.2	54.4	23.4
Rigidity	27.4	56.3	19

Source: compiled by the author based on responses to the Self-Esteem of Mental States (Eysenck) technique (n.d.)

The results of testing using the Self-Esteem of Mental States method indicate that a significant proportion of respondents exhibit elevated indicators, which may suggest heightened emotional tension. Specifically, 35.4% of participants demonstrate a high level of anxiety, often associated with stressful conditions, while 27.2% show increased frustration, potentially reflecting difficulties in overcoming life obstacles. Additionally, 23.4% of respondents are prone to aggressive reactions, and 19% display rigidity, which may hinder adaptability to change. Although the majority of respondents fall within the average range (45.7% for anxiety; 54.4% for frustration and aggressiveness; 56.3% for rigidity), the presence of a considerable proportion with high levels of these states indicates potential risks to psycho-emotional well-being. This underscores the need for further diagnostic assessment and the development of psychological support measures aimed at reducing tension within the group.

Analysis of the relationship between frustration indicators and forms of aggression in adults

The behavioural characteristics of aggressiveness in the examined sample reveal a complex and contradictory picture of the dynamics of aggressive behaviour, which is mediated and shaped by social, psychological, and personal factors. Firstly, the results obtained using the A. Bass – A. Darki method (Stepaniuk & Melnychenko, 2020) indicated a predominance of low levels of physical aggression (67.1%) within the group. This suggests the existence of a significant social or internal prohibition on the direct, physical expression of aggressive impulses. In the context of the socio-demographic composition of the sample – namely, the predominance of female respondents – such a trend is expected, as traditional cultural models often instil a prohibition against overt aggression in women, viewing it as

socially inappropriate behaviour. Nonetheless, the role of individual psychological factors should not be overlooked, including well-developed mechanisms of self-control, a high degree of introversion (manifested by inward-directed aggression), and the presence of social restrictions that discourage direct aggressive responses. However, a low level of physical aggression does not imply the absence of aggressive tendencies per se. On the contrary, the findings demonstrate relatively high levels of verbal (26.6%) and indirect aggression (27.2%), which reflect the predominance of mediated or masked forms of hostility. Verbal aggression typically manifests through increased criticism, sarcasm, and accusations, while indirect aggression takes the form of covert harm – for example, passive resistance, gossip, or demonstrative ignoring. These forms can be regarded as compensatory mechanisms that allow the individual to regulate internal emotional tension by expressing aggressive impulses in socially acceptable ways.

This behavioural pattern aligns with the findings from the S. Rosenzweig test (1976), where 39.9% of responses were classified as OD-type (“fixation on the obstacle”), indicating a tendency to focus on frustrating factors in the external environment perceived as sources of aggressive tension. Furthermore, notable levels of irritability (33.5%), offensiveness (34.2%), negativism (39.8%), and guilt (35.5%) in the sample reflect a heightened emotional background of aggressive states, which may not always be overtly expressed in behaviour. These internalised emotional states can signal psychological discomfort and psycho-emotional overload, increasing the likelihood of emotional breakdowns or conflictual interpersonal interactions. In this context, the emotional sphere is saturated with aggression-coloured reactions that necessitate cognitive and behavioural regulation. A key factor underpinning

this behavioural configuration is the high level of frustration identified both by the author's questionnaire (53.2% moderate; 29.1% high) and the Eysenck method (frustration: 54.4% moderate; 27.2% high). The psycho-emotional state of frustration is known to be a potent trigger for aggressive reactions, particularly when needs remain unmet or goals are obstructed. This state is also associated with cognitive rigidity (19% with high rigidity according to Eysenck), which limits cognitive flexibility and promotes fixation on conflict-provoking stimuli.

Thus, the behavioural manifestations of aggression in this sample are characterised by a low frequency of overt physical aggression and a high prevalence of latent,

mediated forms. This pattern supports the conclusion that internally regulated forms of aggression predominate – where direct expression of negative emotions is inhibited but emerges through less conspicuous behaviours. Simultaneously, the presence of substantial frustration, rigidity, and emotional tension underscores the need for targeted psycho-correctional interventions aimed at developing emotional regulation, reducing destructive behavioural patterns, and enhancing adaptive capacities. Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between fixation on the obstacle and the level of verbal aggression. The correlation analysis data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation analysis of the relationship between frustration and levels of verbal and indirect aggression

Form of aggression	Level			Rating scale
Physical aggression	0.42	-0.1	0.58	
Verbal aggression	0.38	0.34	0.49	
Indirect aggression	0.12	0.55	0.2	
Irritation	0.45	0.2	0.3	
Hostility	0.1	0.52	0.18	
	ED	ID	Fixation on an obstacle	

Source: compiled by the author

The most pronounced positive correlation was observed between OD-type (obstacle fixation) reactions and verbal aggression ($r = 0.68$), as well as physical aggression ($r = 0.55$). This finding suggests that individuals who concentrate on the obstacle itself, without displacing responsibility either externally or internally, are more likely to exhibit direct and often impulsive aggressive behaviour – particularly in the form of verbal or physical attacks towards the perceived source of frustration. ID-type responses (self-blame) showed a moderate positive correlation with hostility ($r = 0.59$), irritability ($r = 0.53$), and indirect aggression ($r = 0.49$). These data support the hypothesis that individuals who internalise responsibility in frustrating situations are more prone to passive-aggressive behaviour, lowered mood, increased internal tension, and latent hostility – either towards themselves or others. ED-type responses, characterised by shifting blame to external factors, were most strongly associated with irritability ($r = 0.56$) and verbal aggression ($r = 0.47$), consistent with an externally directed reaction pattern. Respondents exhibiting this reaction style tend to express frustration through overt emotional outbursts, particularly in the

form of verbal aggression, as they attribute the source of the obstacle to external forces.

It is noteworthy that no strong or statistically significant correlations were found between any frustration types and physical aggression, aside from the moderate relationship observed with OD-type responses. This may reflect sociocultural constraints on the expression of physical aggression within the adult population, shaped by legal, moral, and ethical norms. Overall, the findings reveal a structured relationship between cognitive-emotional appraisal in frustrating situations and specific forms of aggressive behaviour. The type of response to frustration – shaped by how the individual interprets the obstacle – substantially influences behavioural outcomes, ranging from impulsive (physical) to verbal or latent (indirect) forms of aggression. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of emotional regulation mechanisms in interpersonal contexts and may inform psychological interventions aimed at correcting destructive behavioural tendencies. The results regarding the relationship between feelings of guilt and specific forms of aggressive behaviour – namely irritability and hostility – are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation analysis of the relationship between guilt and aggressive behaviour

Indicator	Guilt ↔ irritability	Guilt ↔ hostility
Correlation coefficient rr	-0.44	-0.51
Significance level (p-value)	<0.01	<0.01
Interpretation	Moderate inverse correlation	Noticeable inverse correlation

Source: compiled by the author

The results obtained indicate a statistically significant inverse relationship between guilt and both analysed forms of aggression. In particular, the correlation coefficient between guilt and irritability was -0.44 , representing a moderate negative correlation. This suggests that respondents with higher levels of guilt are less prone to affective reactions in the form of irritability. In other words, the internal experience of guilt functions as an emotional “brake”, reducing the likelihood of uncontrolled affective outbursts. An even stronger inverse relationship was observed between guilt and hostility, with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.51$. This indicates a consistent tendency for increased internalised guilt to be associated with reduced levels of hostile attitudes. It can be inferred that a predisposition towards self-blame or remorse not only inhibits expressive forms of aggression but also diminishes cognitive components – particularly the inclination to interpret others’ actions as hostile, aggressive, or provocative.

Importantly, these correlations were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that the probability of these results occurring by chance within the sample is exceedingly low. Thus, the findings support the hypothesis that the feeling of guilt serves as a restraining factor on both the affective (irritability) and cognitive-motivational (hostility) dimensions of aggressive behaviour. From a theoretical standpoint, this pattern aligns with classical psychoanalytic theory, which posits guilt as a central mechanism in the development of the superego and the inhibition of impulsive actions. Within the cognitive-behavioural framework, these results may also be interpreted as evidence that self-reflection and emotional self-regulation mitigate tendencies towards outwardly directed aggression.

Although statistically significant inverse correlations were found between guilt and verbal or cognitive forms of aggression, no comparable relationship was identified with physical aggression. The correlation coefficient between guilt and physical aggression was low ($r = -0.12$) and statistically non-significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating the absence of a linear association between these variables in the present sample. This outcome may be attributed to the sociocultural constraints typical of the adult population in contemporary society. Unlike verbal or emotional responses, which may be relatively tolerated in interpersonal contexts, physical aggression is subject to strict regulation by social norms, legal frameworks, and ethical standards. As such, individuals with heightened aggressive tension may suppress physical responses regardless of their level of guilt.

In other words, the absence of physical aggression does not necessarily indicate a low overall level of aggressiveness, but rather the effective suppression of its most socially unacceptable form. That is, even an individual with a low sense of guilt who internally justifies their own aggressive impulses is unlikely to act upon them physically, owing to social control and fear of consequences. This supports the hypothesis of culturally determined selectivity in the expression of aggression, whereby latent, verbal, or symbolic forms are more prevalent than physical manifestations in

socially developed environments. Consequently, the level of guilt primarily regulates the emotional and cognitive aspects of behaviour, while direct physical actions are more strongly influenced by external restraining mechanisms.

DISCUSSION

The results of the empirical study demonstrated the complexity and multidimensionality of the relationship between frustration and aggression, which is fully consistent with contemporary scientific approaches to this issue. The main empirical trend was the predominance of indirect forms of aggression (verbal, indirect, negativism, and irritability) alongside a generally reduced level of physical aggression, indicating the operation of social control mechanisms and the internalisation of social norms. These results align with the principles of the General Aggression Model, which conceptualises aggression as the outcome of the interaction between situational stimuli (notably frustration), personal dispositions (such as anxiety, rigidity, and impulsivity), and cognitive-affective processing of the situation. Comparison of the findings with contemporary scientific literature further enhances understanding of the observed trends. For instance, A. Kruglanski *et al.* (2023) proposed a new integrative concept, framing aggression not only as a reaction to frustration, but also as a means of restoring a sense of personal significance. In this light, the observed high level of fixation on obstacles (OD-type in the S. Rosenzweig method) and increased verbal aggression can be interpreted as compensatory responses by individuals attempting to regain a sense of control and significance in conditions of chronic stress and reduced influence over their environment. Accordingly, aggressive reactions serve a function of restoring psychological agency, in line with A.W. Kruglanski’s model of aggression as a response to perceived threats to significance.

The study by N. Din & M. Ahmad (2021), which highlighted the role of emotional regulation, offers a plausible explanation for the observed low levels of direct aggression in the sample. According to these authors, effective emotional regulation mitigates the effects of frustration, redirecting its expression into socially permissible forms – particularly verbal and indirect aggression. In the context of this study, the notable proportions of indirect aggression (27.2%) and negativism (39.8%) suggest that the respondents have partially developed mechanisms for regulating negative affect. However, where resources for constructive adaptation are lacking, these mechanisms tend to manifest in avoidant or less destructive, albeit still aggressive, forms. Q. Alam (2023) underscored the multifactorial basis of aggressive behaviour, highlighting the interaction of social, cognitive, instinctive, and educational components. This perspective helps reinterpret the elevated levels of emotional instability and anxiety identified using the Eysenck method. When combined with rigidity and insufficient social adaptation (35.1%), emotional instability may form additional cognitive and behavioural barriers to effective responses to frustration. In such contexts, individuals are

less likely to adopt active coping strategies and instead become fixated on the obstructing factors – a cognitive basis for aggressive behaviour.

According to the study's results, frustration emerges not merely as an emotional reaction to obstacles, but as a complex psychophysiological state shaped by personal, cognitive, and social factors. The finding that 29.1% of respondents experience a high level of frustration points to persistent psychological pressure, which, in the absence of adequate adaptation mechanisms, may lead to various forms of destructive behaviour. These data are consistent with the classical frustration–aggression hypothesis formulated by J. Dollard *et al.* (2013) which posited that blocking goal attainment naturally elicits aggression (Van Der Dennen, 2005). Nonetheless, as noted by C. Nickerson (2023) in his review, contemporary psychological science has identified limitations in this theory – especially its neglect of social context, learning processes, and regulatory mechanisms. In particular, the observed reduction in physical aggression (with 67.1% of respondents showing low levels) alongside elevated verbal (26.6%) and indirect aggression (27.2%) highlights the role of self-control and social conformity in curbing impulsive aggression, redirecting it into more acceptable expressions. This supports the view that aggression is not an automatic consequence of frustration, but a product of a complex interplay of emotional, cognitive, and socio-normative influences, as proposed by the General Aggression Model.

Particular attention should be paid to the results obtained using S. Rosenzweig's method (1976), which demonstrated the predominance of externally focused OD-type reactions (39.9%), indicating a cognitive fixation on obstacles without a corresponding orientation towards overcoming them. The observed strong correlation between the OD-type and verbal aggression ($r = 0.68$) supports the assertion that the nature of the cognitive appraisal of a frustrating situation is one of the key determinants of the form aggression takes. This conclusion corresponds with the findings of J. Dugré & S. Potvin (2023), who identified that the transition from frustration to aggression is accompanied by specific patterns of neuronal activation, particularly in the mid-cingulate–insular region. The activation of this area – associated with the processing of negative affect and the motivational salience of stimuli – highlights its critical role in the emergence of impulsive aggressive reactions. Furthermore, the present study also revealed elevated levels of negativism (39.8%) and irritability (33.5%), which, as outlined by Q. Alam (2023), may serve as mediating variables in the development of aggressive behaviour in response to frustration.

In this context, the study confirms the presence of a vicious cycle: frustration induces emotional destabilisation, which in turn reduces levels of social adaptation (reported in 35.1% of the sample), thereby increasing the likelihood of aggression in indirect forms. This is particularly evident in socially mediated behaviours, such as withholding information or exhibiting passive aggression, as discussed

in O.A. Alam's (2023) research, which explored the dynamics of frustration in professional settings. The findings obtained using Rosenzweig's method thus underscore the predominance of externally focused responses (OD-type), reinforcing the tendency to attribute the source of frustration to external circumstances. This observation aligns with L. Berkowitz's cognitive theory, which posits that the interpretation of a frustrating situation plays a decisive role in determining subsequent behavioural responses. The strong correlation between the OD-type and verbal aggression ($r = 0.68$) further reinforces the notion that cognitive fixation on obstacles contributes to the emergence of indirect aggressive forms. The reduction in physical aggression (identified in 67.1% of respondents) alongside elevated levels of verbal (26.6%) and indirect aggression (27.2%) suggests the operation of social control mechanisms that mitigate the likelihood of direct violent behaviour. This transformation of aggressive impulses into more socially acceptable behavioural forms aligns with the General Aggression Model, which emphasises the moderating influence of social context on the frustration–aggression relationship. These findings are also consistent with the study by K. Bertsch *et al.* (2021), which highlighted the role of anger as a specific emotional mediator between frustration and aggression. Their research demonstrated that, in women with borderline personality disorder, frustration elicited anger – a key emotional trigger for aggressive behaviour. Similarly, in the present study, aggression manifested in mediated forms as a response to frustration, underscoring the central role of anger in regulating reactions. However, unlike the clinical sample studied by K. Bertsch *et al.* (2021) the current sample exhibited no evidence of direct aggressive acts, pointing to the effectiveness of self-control and adaptive social strategies among the general adult population.

The study by I. Dewi & M. Kyranides (2022) demonstrated that while anger correlates with all forms of aggression, the expression of specific behavioural patterns is largely determined by individual strategies for managing emotional responses. Notably, their findings indicate that the influence of anger regulation is particularly pronounced in the context of romantic relational aggression. This partially aligns with the current study's findings on indirect aggression, which similarly reflects a socially masked expression of frustration. Consequently, it may be inferred that emotional self-regulation functions as a key buffer between frustration and destructive behaviour, although its effect may vary depending on the situational context. The theoretical model proposed by A. Lankford (2021) extends the conceptual understanding of frustration by incorporating sexual frustration as a distinct form of dissatisfaction that may provoke aggressive behaviour through mechanisms such as revenge, displacement, or assertions of dominance. While the present study did not explore sexual dimensions of frustration, the broader principle – whereby unmet needs are redirected into aggression – is congruent with the observed manifestations of indirect aggression and negativism. Accordingly, A. Lankford's model may

offer valuable directions for future investigations into the specific sources and dynamics of frustration. Equally important are the findings obtained using Eysenck's method, which confirmed emotional instability in a subset of participants, notably elevated levels of anxiety and rigidity. These results correspond with existing literature, where emotional lability is recognised as a factor that heightens vulnerability to frustration and impairs adaptive coping strategies. In such conditions, frustration – rather than serving as a stimulus for constructive mobilisation – may instead manifest through indirect or passive-aggressive behaviours, often complicated by internal conflicts.

The outcomes of this study are largely consistent with the classical frustration-aggression hypothesis advanced by J. Dollard *et al.* (2013), while also illustrating its limitations. As posited in the original theory, goal-blocking frustration evokes aggressive responses; however, empirical evidence shows that such responses are not automatic but are mediated by personal and contextual variables. The refinements introduced by L. Berkowitz, who underscored the role of affective arousal – particularly anger – as a determinant of aggression, are substantiated by the study's findings, especially the notable prevalence of irritability (33.5%) as a common expression of frustration. This suggests that it is not frustration *per se*, but its emotional interpretation and the intensity of affective arousal, that shapes the form of the aggressive reaction. In summary, the findings of the present research support the integrative nature of contemporary theoretical approaches to the frustration-aggression link. Frustration emerges as a critical, though not exclusive, factor in the genesis of aggressive behaviour. Its influence is modulated by cognitive interpretations, emotional regulation capacities, prevailing social norms, and underlying psychological needs – particularly the need for personal significance. These insights underscore the importance of accounting for multifactorial determinants in psychological counselling, violence prevention, and the design of socio-psychological support programmes for the general population.

CONCLUSIONS

Frustration, as a key psychological state, arises when goal attainment is obstructed and may elicit a spectrum of responses – from constructive mobilisation to destructive aggression. Research findings emphasise that the nature of the response (external aggression, self-blame, or focus on the obstacle) is shaped by individual personality traits, cognitive appraisal of the situation, and broader social context. Classical theoretical frameworks, such as J. Dollard's frustration-aggression hypothesis and L. Berkowitz's cognitive

model, alongside contemporary integrative approaches (e.g., the General Aggression Model), suggest that aggression is not an inevitable outcome of frustration. Rather, it is mediated by a combination of emotional (e.g., anger), biological (e.g., impulsivity), and sociocultural (e.g., norms, values, upbringing) influences. Sociocultural factors – including economic instability, media representations, prevailing cultural values, and parenting styles – play a crucial role in modulating both the intensity of frustration and the form of aggressive responses.

The empirical data revealed a substantial level of frustration among respondents, with 29.1% exhibiting a high level – indicative of chronic psychological strain and a potential risk of maladaptive or destructive behaviours. Analysis of frustration reactions using S. Rosenzweig's method showed a predominance of externally focused responses (OD-type, 39.9%), reflecting a cognitive fixation on obstacles rather than adaptive problem-solving. Results from the Bass-Darki method highlighted the transformation of aggressive impulses into more socially sanctioned expressions: while physical aggression was generally low (67.1%), there were notable levels of verbal aggression (26.6%), indirect aggression (27.2%), negativism (39.8%), and irritability (33.5%). The Eysenck test corroborated the presence of emotional instability in a portion of the sample, particularly through elevated levels of anxiety and rigidity.

The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the link between frustration and aggression. On the one hand, the reduced prevalence of overt physical aggression suggests the effectiveness of both social norms and internal control mechanisms. On the other, the elevated incidence of verbal and indirect aggression points to a redirection of aggressive tendencies into less overt but still potentially harmful behavioural forms. These results validated the need to consider aggression as a socially shaped and internally moderated phenomenon rather than a reflexive outcome of frustration. Future research should aim to expand the sample to include more diverse age, gender, and socio-economic cohorts, and further explore cross-cultural differences in the manifestation of frustration and aggressive behaviour.

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Емпіричний аналіз кореляції між рівнями фрустрації та формами агресивної поведінки у дорослих

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням проявів агресивної поведінки у дорослих у відповідь на підвищення рівня фрустрації в умовах сучасної соціальної нестабільності. Мета дослідження полягала у встановленні зв'язків між ступенем фрустрації та проявами агресії у дорослих мешканців України. Методологічну основу склали кількісні психодіагностичні методики, зокрема опитувальники, стандартизовані тести та методи статистичної обробки даних. У дослідженні взяли участь 158 осіб (34-53 роки) з різних регіонів України (квітень-червень 2024). Результати показали, що 63,3 % респондентів продемонстрували середній або високий рівень фрустрації, що супроводжувався вираженими агресивними тенденціями. Встановлено статистично значущу позитивну кореляцію між «obstacle-dominance» типом фрустраційних реакцій та рівнями вербальної й непрямой агресії. Найвищий рівень агресії було виявлено серед респондентів із високими показниками тривожності та ригідності, що свідчить про взаємозв'язок між емоційною напругою та схильністю до агресії. Значення шкали почуття провини виявили зворотну залежність від інтенсивності агресивної поведінки, що вказує на її модераційну роль. В окремій підвибірці з 30 осіб спостерігалася сильна позитивна кореляція ($r = 0,68$) між показниками фрустрації та непрямой агресії. У групі з підвищеним рівнем дратівливості спостерігався високий рівень негативізму, що супроводжувався низькими показниками почуття провини. Результати засвідчили наявність комплексного психоемоційного профілю, в якому фрустрація відіграє роль тригера агресії. Висновки підтвердили, що фрустрація є важливим чинником, який істотно впливає на форму та інтенсивність агресивної поведінки. Тип реагування на фрустрацію визначає специфіку прояву агресії. Практична значущість дослідження полягає у можливості розробки психологічних програм профілактики агресії з урахуванням рівня фрустрації та домінуючого типу реагування.

Ключові слова: навчальний процес; гейміфікація; критичне мислення; новітні методи; індивідуальні потреби