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Aggression in Thinkers and Feelers

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Aggression is usually viewed as a negative personality trait. However, it is openly accepted in the sports arena. It is tacitly accepted in profiling the careers of chief executive officers who have achieved great success. It is admired in the military and law enforcement. Aggression is a behavior that is intended to cause harm or injury to another person (Sternberg, 2000). Aggression can become a problem when it is not dealt with in a proper and timely manner. Aggression occurs when anger and resentment build up which could result in acts of violence or self harm. This research team would like to elaborate on the aggressive tendencies of people and how they correlate with the personality types "Thinkers" and "Feelers." We are interested in whether aggression is more apparent in a Thinker or a Feeler. To date there is no research on this subject. A Thinker bases decisions on logic, analysis and evidence. A Feeler bases decisions on empathy, warmth and personal values (Jacobi, 1973). Our hypothesis is as follows: the personality type of Thinker is more aggressive than the personality type of Feeler.

Aggression is the result of many different stimuli. Some stimuli that cause aggression are pain, frustration, and unpleasant events (Tucker-Ladd, 1996). We can deal with these different types of stimuli aggressively or non-aggressively. Eventually, in every person's life, he or she becomes aggressive. One problem is that some people do not know how to deal with their aggression (Tucker-Ladd, 1996). When people dwell on their anger in a situation, they are more likely to become aggressive. Toch (as quoted in Tucker-Ladd, 1996) found that 40% of aggressive prisoners needed to achieve some form of "victory" in order to make themselves feel special. A threat to one's self-esteem is often countered with an attack against the threatening person. This need to protect one's self-esteem often causes aggression towards other people (Tucker-Ladd, 1996). Another problem occurs when aggression is an everyday occurrence. Aggressive behavior becomes even more serious when a person's aggressive behavior affects those with whom the

aggressor interacts and deals with every day. Aggression can break down relationships, lead to verbal and physical abuse, be unpredictable, and therefore, can be harmful. Different people can exhibit the aggression that is triggered by stimuli in different ways.

When examining aggression, one personality type might display aggressive tendencies more than another. Aggressive behavior may be displayed differently between the personality types of Thinker or Feeler. There are sixteen different types of people, each characterized by four of eight characteristics (McCaulley, M., 2000). The two rational judging functions, Thinking and Feeling, interpret information from the Sensation and Intuition functions. The two extreme types of personality types are easiest to observe and compare. One of the two extremes is ENFP (extroverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving). This personality type would be considered a Feeling type. The other extreme is ISTJ (introverted, sensing, thinking, and judging). This personality type would be considered a Thinking type. An ENFP prefers relationships with humans and is often attracted to occupations that involve dealing with people. This contrasts with ISTJ's who are more likely to be attracted to occupations that deal with figures and objects.

Feelers are more likely to question the impact of a decision on their values and other people (McCaulley, 2000). Feelers consider the feelings of others and understand the needs and values of others which could result in their being effective mediators. Based on the assumption that Thinkers think logically and do not base decisions on emotions, one might conclude that a Thinker would be more aggressive than a Feeler. One could conclude this because Feelers may be less likely to strike out in a way that could hurt another because Feelers place emphasis on the needs and values and well-being of others. People with aggressive tendencies may exhibit sensation-seeking tendencies due to their need for excitement. In contrast, Thinkers are more likely to see the more efficient and logical outcome and the consequences of that outcome. Thinkers have critical thinking abilities and stand firm in their decisions once they have been made. Thinkers may not be able to show emotion and have a hard time showing empathy and mercy.

Aggression and Sensation Seeking

Studies in the past have attempted to link aggression with various personality types, one of these types is Sensation Seeking.

Sensation Seeking is one additional way in which aggression may be linked to Thinking and or Feeling. While all organisms have a need for sensation-seeking stimulation (Zuckerman, 1978, as referenced in Buss & Larsen, 2002), individual organisms may need different levels of stimulation, which can be reached in different ways. For some people the desired level of stimulation can be achieved through gambling. Others may need more intense stimulation, such as skydiving (Zuckerman, 1978, as referenced in Buss & Larsen, 2002). The different sensation needs in organisms create high-sensation seekers and low-sensation seekers (Zuckerman, 1978, as referenced in Buss & Larsen, 2002).

Aggression is directly linked to the amount of stimulation each sensation-seeker receives (Mawson, 1999). Whenever there is a lack of stimulus, sensation seekers become aggressive. This aggressive reaction is due to a sensation seeker's need to have constant stimulation. Many times people who become aggressive do so to relieve the need for stimulation, and will calm after an outburst (Mawson, 1999). The more a person who needs to be stimulated by sensation-seeking stimuli is deprived of these stimuli, the more aggressive he or she will become. This contrasts with those who require low levels of stimulation. Those who only need small levels of sensation to appease themselves will become aggressive if the stimulation is too high. For example, if a rat's cage is shocked with electrical energy, the rat is introduced to an overwhelming amount of stimulation. This causes it to become aggressive towards the other rats in the cage. In humans, there is apparently a need for stimulation, but this stimulation must occur at an appropriate level. Too much stimulation, as well as too little stimulation, can cause aggression.

Aggression and sensation seeking have also been linked in a study of cocaine abusers. Ball's (1995) study found that cocaine users are more likely to score higher on anxiety and lower on agreeableness and conscientiousness than non-users. The study also states that the Impulsive-Sensation-Seeking Scale shows that individuals may be characterized by a lack of thinking before acting or planning or involving oneself in risky behavior. The aggression sub-scale is marked by the tendency for one to be verbally aggressive, to have antisocial behavior, to be impatient, and to be vengeful.

Our study seeks to find the link between aggressive tendencies and personality types. Feelers are more likely to consider the

feelings and well being of others when making a decision, and Thinkers are more likely to make an efficient decision that is the most logical choice and will accomplish the goal most quickly (Jacobi, 1973). Thinkers are more concerned with the end result and how efficiently and successful the process was; Feelers, on the other hand, are more concerned with the morals and values and the well being of those involved after a decision is made. Based on the above studies, one might conclude that a thinking type personality would be more aggressive than a feeling type.

Method

Participants

One hundred eighty-eight university undergraduate students participated in this study. The students' ages ranged from 18-30 years old (average age=19.52, SD=1.563). The participants had various levels of college education in a variety of disciplines. Ethnic background held no relevance in the study. There were 70 men (37.2%) and 118 women (62.8%) involved in the study. Students were chosen based on what classes they were enrolled in (random classes were chosen). Students did not receive any compensation for involvement in this study.

Procedure

Members of our research team randomly chose classes from Georgia College & State University, then obtained permission to give the surveys from the instructors of the chosen classes. During the first fifteen minutes of class, research team members distributed consent forms to interested students. After the research team obtained consent, the students were given a survey. The survey included portions of the Aggression Questionnaire (29 questions), Personal Style Inventory (18 questions), The Sensation Seeking Scale (Thrill and Adventure Seeking subscale, 20 questions) and the Five Factor Model (16 questions). The survey took approximately fifteen minutes. Team members collected the surveys upon completion. Members of the research team then scored the surveys. Scores were then entered into a Microsoft Excel file spreadsheet for correlational analysis.

Instruments

The survey had 63 questions. Portions of the Personal Style Inventory (PSI), the Aggression Questionnaire, The Sensation Seeking Scale (Thrill and Adventure Seeking), and the Five Factor Model were used.

Personal Style Inventory

The Personal Style Inventory (PSI) (obtained through instructor) measures extraversion/introversion, thinking/feeling, sensing/intuition, and judging/perceiving. The PSI has validity, but norms were not available. The PSI has good reliability, but only if the subject taking it is honest (Craver, et. al., 2000). The portion used in the survey included all of the thinking/feeling subscale and a few questions from each of the other subscales.

Aggression Questionnaire

The Aggression Questionnaire (Corcora, 1994) had 29 questions and measures the four main aspects of aggression: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. The Aggression Questionnaire has good internal consistency ($r = .85, .72, .83$, and $.77$). Total scores have an alpha of $.89$. The AQ has good test-retest reliability proving it to be stable ($r = .80, .76, .72$, and $.72$) and $r = .80$ for total scores (Corcora, 1994).

Sensation Seeking Scale

The Sensation Seeking Inventory (obtained through instructor) measures the following: Thrill and Adventure Seeking, Boredom Susceptibility, and Disinhibition. Data on the validity and reliability for the Sensation Seeking Scale could not be obtained despite extensive effort to find the information. The portions used in the survey were the Thrill and Adventure Seeking scale and a few questions from each of the other scales.

Five Factor Model

The Five Factor Model (obtained through instructor) measures Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience. Data on the validity and reliability of The Five Factor Model could not be obtained despite extensive effort to find the information. The portion used in the

survey was the agreeableness scale and a few questions from the other scales.

Design

This is a correlational study to investigate the relationship between the independent variables, Thinking and Feeling subscale of the PSI and the dependent variable, aggression as measured by the Aggression Questionnaire. Other measures that were of interest were the Thrill and Adventure Seeking subscale of the Sensation Seeking Scale and the agreeableness subscale of the Five Factor Model. We were looking for links between Aggression and Thinking, Aggression and Thrill and Adventure Seeking, and Aggression and Agreeableness.

Results

Our study used a correlational analysis to compare the dependent variables, Aggression, and the independent variable, which was Thinking and Feeling. Our hypothesis is as follows: the personality type of Thinker is more aggressive than the personality type of Feeler. The study showed no significant correlation between aggression and thinking. Our study did show a significant correlation between agreeableness and aggression ($r(188)=-.39$, $p < .000$), agreeableness and thinking ($r(188)=.159$, $p < .03$), and agreeableness and feeling ($r(188)=.155$, $p < .034$). Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the data. Table 2 shows the correlations.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations

	Means	Standard Deviation
Age	19.52	1.563
Aggression Questionnaire	66.93	15.189
Thinking	17.98	5.244
Feeling	22.03	5.215

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Sensation Seeking/TAS	6.66	2.319
Agreeableness from 5 Factor	39.01	6.347

Table 2

Statistical Significance

	Aggression Questionnaire	Thinking	Feeling	Sensation Seeking/TAS
Thinking	.076			
Feeling	-.078	-.999***		
Sensation Seeking/TAS	.000	-.009	.011	
Agreeableness from 5 Factor	-.393***	-.159*	.155*	.079

* p ≤ .05

** p ≤ .01

*** p ≤ .001

Discussion

Our hypothesis was not supported because there was no correlation between Thinking and Aggression ($r(188) = .076$, $p < .297$). There was also no correlation between Aggression and Feeling ($r(188) = -.078$, $p < .284$). Although there was a strong correlation between Thinking and Feeling ($r(188) = -.999$, $p < .000$), one cannot be both a Thinker and a Feeler. A person must be one or the other. This result was expected. There was no correlation between Sensation Seeking (Thrill and Adventure Scale) and Aggression ($r(188) = .000$, $p < .997$). This result was surprising because research had suggested that there was a correlation. However, the outcome could be the result of not using all of the Sensation Seeking subscales. There was also no correlation between Sensation Seeking (Thrill and Adventure Seeking) and Thinking or Feeling.

The most interesting results that we found were with Agreeableness. Agreeableness and Aggression had a strong negative correlation ($r(188) = -.393$, $p < .000$). This means that as a person's

agreeableness increases, his or her level of aggression decreases. There was a negative correlation between Agreeableness and Thinking ($r(188) = -.159$, $p < .030$) indicating that as a person's agreeableness increases his or her thinking score decreases. There was also a positive correlation between Agreeableness and Feeling ($r(188) = .155$, $p < .034$). More agreeable people have a higher Feeling score. These results were unexpected to our research group. Of interest is that Agreeableness has a positive relationship with Feeling and a negative relationship with Thinking. There was also a strong negative correlation between Agreeableness and Aggression.

There were several study limitations. Students may have rushed through the surveys, not taking the time to read directions and thus not completing the survey properly. This limitation may be serious because it lowered the N value of the results. Many of the students who did not complete the survey scored high on aggression and thinking, however, they did not complete the rest of the survey correctly. Although this did not lower the N value, it did result in having to throw out those surveys, which were not completed correctly. This could have skewed the results of the experiment. Another limitation was age. Although the age span of the experiment was from 18-30, there was only one thirty-year-old individual. The limited age group could have biased the results. By sampling a larger variety of ages, income, and cultures, subjects will have different experiences. These experiences may help to influence their personality. These differences could result in a much higher level of aggression in urban areas due to things such as crime rates, gang activity, and the two extremes of higher and lower socio-economic levels. Areas that are more rural could experience lower levels of aggression due to a more controlled atmosphere, and possibly a more stable socio-economic level. A final possible limitation of the study was human error in calculating the results. While this was not a serious problem, it is always possible to improve the probability that human error does not occur. We suggest that future researchers use a larger sample that encompasses a larger age group, larger socio-economic variety, and a larger regional area that includes urban, rural and suburbia regions. We suggest that a computer scored survey be given, so that manual calculation errors can be minimized. We suggest that all subscales of the surveys be used so that more correlations can be made.

The most surprising data of this study are that agreeableness correlates negatively with both thinking and aggression, and it correlates positively with feeling. These correlations were both unexpected and meaningful. They have provided a possible link between aggression and thinking via agreeableness. While the link between agreeableness and aggression is understandable due to the opposite nature of the two traits, the links between agreeableness and thinking/feeling were interesting and provided new insight into the trait of agreeableness.

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Appendix: Survey

Age: _____

Gender: _____ M _____ F

Phone Number _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

For the following items please rate how characteristic each is of you. Using the following rating scale, record your answer in the space to the left of each item.

- 1 – Extremely uncharacteristic of me
- 2 – Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
- 3 – Only slightly characteristic of me
- 4 – Somewhat characteristic of me
- 5 – Extremely characteristic of me

- 1. Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person.
- 2. I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them.
- 3. I flare up quickly but get over it quickly.
- 4. I am sometimes eaten up with jealousy.
- 5. Given enough provocation, I may hit another person.
- 6. I often find myself disagreeing with people.
- 7. When frustrated, I let my irritation show.
- 8. At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life.
- 9. If somebody hits me, I hit back.
- 10. When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.
- 11. I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode.
- 12. Other people always seem to get the breaks.
- 13. I get into fights a little more than the average person.
- 14. I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.
- 15. Some of my friends think I'm a hothead.
- 16. I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things.
- 17. If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will.
- 18. My friends say that I'm somewhat argumentative.
- 19. Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason.
- 20. I know that "friends" talk about me behind my back.
- 21. There are people who pushed me so far that we came to blows.

- 22. I have no trouble controlling my temper.
- 23. I am suspicious of overly friendly strangers.
- 24. I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person.
- 25. I sometimes feel that people are laughing at me behind my back.
- 26. I have threatened people I know.
- 27. When people are especially nice, I wonder what they want.
- 28. I have become so mad that I have broken things.
- 29. I am an even-tempered person.

Just as every person has differently shaped feet and toes from every other person, so we all have differently "shaped" personalities. Just as no person's foot shape is right or "wrong", so no person's personality shape is right or wrong. The purpose of this inventory is to give you a picture of the shape of your preferences, but that shape, while different from the shapes of other persons' personalities, has nothing to do with mental health or mental problems.

- The following items are arranged in pairs (a and b), and each member of the pair represents a preference you may or may not hold.
- Rate your preference for each item by giving it a score of 0 to 5 (0 meaning you really feel negative about it or strongly about the other member of the pair, 5 meaning you strongly prefer it or do not prefer the other member of the pair).
- THE SCORES FOR a AND b MUST add up to 5 (0 and 5, 1 and 4, 2 and 3, etc.). Do not use fractions such as 2 1/2.

I prefer:

- 1a. making decisions after finding out what others think
- 1b. making decisions without consulting others.
- 2a. making decisions about people in organizations based on available data and systematic analysis of situations.
- 2b. making decisions about people in organizations based on empathy, feelings and understanding of their needs and values
- 3a. using methods I know well that are effective to get the job done.
- 3b. trying to think of new methods of doing tasks when confronted with them.

- ___ 4a. drawing conclusions based on unemotional logic and careful step-by-step analysis.
- ___ 4b. drawing conclusions based on what I feel and believe about life and people from past experiences
- ___ 5a. talking awhile and then thinking to myself about the subject.
- ___ 5b. talking freely for an extended period and thinking to myself at a later time.
- ___ 6a. being thought of as a thinking person.
- ___ 6b. being thought of as a feeling person.
- ___ 7a. considering every possible angle for a long time before and after making a decision.
- ___ 7b. getting the information I need considering it for a while and then making a fairly quick firm decision.
- ___ 8a. inner thoughts and feelings others cannot see.
- ___ 8b. activities and occurrences in which others join.
- ___ 9a. the abstract or theoretical.
- ___ 9b. the concrete or real.
- ___ 10a. helping others explore their feelings.
- ___ 10b. helping others make logical decisions.
- ___ 11a. using common sense and conviction to make decisions.
- ___ 11b. using data analysis and reason to make decisions.
- ___ 12a. planning ahead based on projections.
- ___ 12b. planning as necessities arise just before carrying out the plans.
- ___ 13a. convictions.
- ___ 13b. verifiable conclusions.
- ___ 14a. carrying out carefully laid, detailed plans with precision.
- ___ 14b. designing plans and structures without necessarily carrying them out.
- ___ 15a. logical people.
- ___ 15b. feeling people.
- ___ 16a. being free to do things on the spur of the moment.
- ___ 16b. knowing well in advance what I am expected to do.
- ___ 17a. being the center of attention.
- ___ 17b. being reserved.
- ___ 18a. experiencing emotional situations, discussions, movies.
- ___ 18b. using my ability to analyze situations.

DIRECTIONS: Each of the items below contains two choices: **A** and **B**. Please mark the choice on the answer sheet which best describes your likes or the way you feel. In some cases you may find items in which both choices describe your likes or feelings. Please choose the one that better describes your likes and feelings. **In some cases you may find items in which you do not like either choice. In these cases mark the choice you dislike least.** Do not leave any items blank. It is important you respond to all items with only one choice, A or B. We are interested only in your likes or feelings, not in how others feel about these things or how one is supposed to feel. There are no right or wrong answers. **Be frank and give your honest appraisal of yourself.**

- 1a. I like "wild" uninhibited parties.
- 1b. I prefer quiet parties with good conversation.
- 2a. I often wish I could be a mountain climber.
- 2b. I can't understand people who risk their necks climbing mountains.
- 3a. I dislike all body odors.
- 3b. I like some of the earthy body smells.
- 4a. I get bored seeing the same old faces.
- 4b. I like the comfortable familiarity of everyday friends.
- 5a. I like to explore a strange city or section of town by myself, even if it means getting lost.
- 5b. I prefer a guide when I am in a place I don't know well.
- 6a. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous.
- 6b. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening.
- 7a. I enjoy looking at home movies, videos, or travel slides.
- 7b. Looking at someone's home movies, videos, or travel slides bores me tremendously.
- 8a. I would like to take up the sport of water skiing.
- 8b. I would not like to take up water skiing.
- 9a. I would like to try surfboard riding.
- 9b. I would not like to try surfboard riding.
- 10a. I would like to take off on a trip with no preplanned or definite routes, or timetable.
- 10b. When I go on a trip I like to plan my route and timetable fairly carefully.
- 11a. I would not like to learn to fly an airplane.

- 11b. I would like to learn to fly an airplane.
- 12a. I prefer the surface of the water to the depths.
- 12b. I would like to go scuba diving.
- 13a. I would like to try parachute jumping.
- 13b. I would never want to try jumping out of a plane with or without a parachute.
- 14a. I am not interested in experience for its own sake.
- 14b. I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening, unconventional or illegal.
- 15a. I like to dive off the high board.
- 15b. I don't like the feeling I get standing on the high board (or I don't go near it at all).
- 16a. The worst social sin is to be rude.
- 16b. The worst social sin is to be a bore.
- 17a. A person should have considerable sexual experience before marriage.
- 17b. It's better if two married persons begin their sexual experience with each other.
- 18a. People should dress according to some standard of taste, neatness, and style.
- 18b. People should dress in individual ways even if the effects are sometimes strange.
- 19a. Sailing long distances in small sailing crafts is foolhardy.
- 19b. I would like to sail a long distance in a small but seaworthy sailing craft.
- 20a. Skiing down a high mountain slope is a good way to end up on crutches.
- 20b. I think I would enjoy the sensations of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope.

Instructions: Please read the following pairs of characteristics and circle the number that best describes you, in general. For example, for #1, if you see yourself as more passive than active, you should circle a number closer to "passive." If you see yourself as more active than passive, you should circle a number closer to "active."

1.)	passive	-->	active				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.)	cold	-->	warm				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.)	agreeable	-->	disagreeable				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.)	negligent	-->	conscientious				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.)	ignorant	-->	knowledgeable				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.)	critical	-->	lenient				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.)	flexible	-->	stubborn				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.)	disorganized	-->	well-organized				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.)	conforming	-->	independent				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.)	trusting	-->	suspicious				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.)	even-	tempere	-->	temperamental			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.)	unfair	-->	fair				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.)	simple	-->	complex				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.)	selfless	-->	selfish				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.)	stingy	-->	generous				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.)	subjective	-->	objective				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7