

# Violence and aggression during the Isolation Period in Kosovo

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## Abstract

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the life of the individual has changed a lot, starting from the spread of the virus, preventive measures; fear of the virus, and isolation, and this change has affected the lives of the individuals and their health.

The purpose of this study is to identify the violence and the level of aggression of the Kosovar population during the period of isolation.

The research was conducted through an online survey using the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). The target population of the study is composed of people over 18 years of age and above. The research included the whole country where a total of 178 participants participated, 83 females and 95 males, with an average age of 25 years. Data analysis was performed through SPSS.

According to the findings of the study, From Spearman correlation analysis, it results that isolated persons have a significant positive correlation of  $r = .75$ , between violence and aggression. According to the results, the degree of violence and aggression depends on total or partial isolation, the most common type of aggression was verbal aggression, then physical aggression, anger, and finally hostility.

From the research results, we conclude that violence during isolation has led to increased aggression in the Kosovar population during the pandemic period. These results also lead to the interest of other researchers to look at other variables that may have influenced the results.

**Keywords:** isolation; aggressive behavior; pandemic; kosovar population.

## Introduction

One of the most widely accepted definitions in the scientific community is that of Buss (1961), who defines aggression as “a response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism”. This definition was later expanded to include the perpetrator's intent and conceptualizes aggression as any behavior directed toward another person with the intent to cause harm (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

The term aggression is often used interchangeably with hostility and anger, representing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional components of a more complex concept (e.g., Buss & Perry, 1992).

"Quarantine" is the term used to describe measures taken against certain individuals or members of certain groups who have been identified as suffering from the virus or who are suspected of being actual or suspected carriers of the virus. People in quarantine are usually confined to a specified location, and are not allowed to leave for any reason until the danger they pose to others has passed. Quarantine usually goes beyond

“in-house” restrictions and can constitute deprivation or restriction of liberty depending on many factors.(Kruger, 2002).

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to people's lives, threatening their health, economic livelihoods, freedom of movement, and – not least – their social relationships. It is too early to gauge how fundamental and lasting these challenges will be, but we already see major changes in the way people live together in families, social groups, and societies at large. Researchers of aggression are particularly concerned about the potential impact of the pandemic on people's tendencies to show aggressive behavior, defined as behavior carried out with the intention to cause physical or psychological harm to others. From a social psychological perspective, there are several “ingredients” of the current situation that are conducive to aggression:

- The first is uncertainty, which relates to the probability of an infection and the potential severity of the illness at any given point as well as to the length of time before we will be able to resume a “normal life”. Uncertainty creates stress, and stressed

people are more likely to show aggressive behavior, not least because coping with stress requires resources, such as self-control, that are needed to inhibit aggressive behavior. (Krahé,2020).

- A second, related ingredient is lack of control, which violates humans' vital need to live in a predictable and safe environment. If restoring control is not possible at the factual level – the virus does not go away – it needs to be restored at the psychological level, which makes people susceptible to accepting simple truths or denying the risk and willing to attack anyone who challenges their position.
- Third, the current situation is characterized by a seemingly endless list of frustrations. Several prominent theories of aggression consider frustration, defined as the blocking of a goal-directed action, as a powerful instigator of aggression. One source of frustration for many people is that they are forced to spend most of the time at home, and we are already seeing increased rates of violence against children and intimate partners.
- Fourth, social distancing rules may promote a sense of loneliness and social exclusion that threatens another vital motivation, the need to belong. Experiments have shown that the desire to be included in social interactions is so strong that people respond with aggression even when they think they are excluded by a random computer algorithm or by a group they strongly dislike. (Krahé,2020).

## 1.2 Relevant research:

According to the findings of studies conducted during the COVID-19 isolation period, it was found that isolation has a significant effect during interaction, and there is a significant increase in aggressive behavior compared to those who did not report limitations. According to them there was physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. This research concluded that isolation was associated with elevated levels of aggression that were higher in the months following isolation, and was a response to restrictive measures.(William,D.Cloonan,E.Tyalar ,A.Dailey,S,2020).

According to a recent study conducted in China, where the goal was to test how COVID-19 information overload works in cyber aggression and whether all people are equally affected by it. Consistent with the hypotheses, the findings showed that COVID-19 information overload was significantly and positively correlated with

Cyber aggression among the Chinese, while depression and anxiety partially mediated this relationship. Furthermore, the Confucian view of responsibility moderated the direct and indirect relationship between COVID-19 information overload and cyber aggression. (Wang, Q.Luo, X.Tu, R .Xia, T. Hu, W.2022)

## Methodology

### 2.1. Participants and samples

The study's target population is Kosovo residents, aged 18 and over. We used the quantitative method for this research. This study's design is correlational. In this research participate 175 participants, 80 females and 95 males, with an average age of 25 years.

### 2.2. Instruments

The instruments used for research are: Socio-demographic characteristics were evaluated through several questions developed for this study.

Demographic data include: age, sex, social statute, followed by several other questions related to violence and social isolation.

The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ; Buss & Perry, 1992) is a self-report instrument consisting of 29 items, answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me). The BPAQ assesses four dimensions of aggression: 1) Physical Aggression (nine items); 2) Verbal Aggression (five items); 3) Anger (seven items); and 4) Hostility (eight items) (Buss & Perry, 1992).

### 2.3. Organization and procedure of research

The research was conducted through an online survey using the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). Following the translation stage, the questionnaire was translated into Albanian. Data were collected during the period June-August 2020 (after isolation) and included residents in the territory of Kosovo. The online survey method was the most convenient way for that period of time. In the online survey respondents were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. They have also been informed that their confidentiality will be maintained.

### 2.4 Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the data. After entering the data in the SPSS program, the data were first analyzed using the data normality test, and then non-parametric analyzes were applied to produce the conclusions because the data had an abnormal distribution. The level of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for Reliability of test per 178 for participants for the questionnaires resulted in .72.

## Result

Out of 178 participants in the research are included: 83 (47%) females and 95 (53%) males, as it pertains to the age of 18-20 years presents with 50 (28%), the age 21-25 years presents with 64 (36 %), age 26-30 presents with 30 (17%), age 31-40 presents with 22 (12%) and age 41-50 presents with 12 (7%).

Out of 178 participants, 105 were completely isolated (59%) while partially isolated were 73 (41%). Regarding social status during isolation from 178 participants in the study results; 64 (36%) students, 30 (17%) employees, and 84 (47%) was unemployed.

From Spearman correlation analysis, it results that isolated persons have a significant positive correlation of  $r = .75$ , between violence and aggression. According to the results, the degree of violence and aggression depends on total or partial isolation, the most common type of aggression was verbal aggression, then physical aggression, anger, and finally hostility.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify the violence and the level of aggression of the Kosovar population during the period of isolation. According to researchers depending on the type of harassment and violence, the level of aggression also varies. This is exactly the reason for our research to identify violence and the level of aggression in the population during the period of isolation. According to the findings of the study, the level of aggression in Kosovo society during the COVID-19 situation varies according to total or partial isolation, where individuals who were completely isolated exhibited more aggressive behaviors compared to individuals who were partially isolated. The BPAQ assesses

four dimensions of aggression, and it turned out that verbal aggression was more present than physical aggression, anger, and finally hostility.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, we find that violence during isolation has led to increased aggression in the Kosovar population during the pandemic period. These results are supported by other studies that have been done in the world during the pandemic period.

In terms of recommendations, this study was done in a way that fits the situation we are in due to the pandemic and due to the distribution of the online survey; we recommend that the next distribution be done physically. Another recommendation is the provision of online psychological services during the COVID period 19.

This study had limitations; completing online questionnaires, and a small number of participants. Despite the limitations of this study, the data provided by this study have significant potential social and psychological implications for other researchers.

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