

Aggressive Behavior and Values Issues among Senior High School Students: Implications for Strengthening Guidance and Counseling Services

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between aggressive behaviors and values-related issues among senior high school students in the Philippines. It addressed the need to understand how learners' values formation relates to aggressive behaviors and how the findings may guide school-based guidance and counseling programs. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study described the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, grade level, track or strand, family structure, and socio-economic status. It also assessed aggressive behaviors in four dimensions: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression. The study examined values-related issues in six areas: respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, honesty and integrity, discipline and self-control, and peer influence and group conformity. Data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings showed that aggressive behaviors were generally minimal, with all four dimensions interpreted as "Never," although some students reported occasional aggressive acts. In contrast, positive values were strongly manifested, particularly respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, and honesty and integrity. Results also revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between aggressive behaviors and values-related issues ($r=-0.33$, $p<.001$), indicating that stronger values formation is associated with lower aggression among learners. The study concludes that schools should strengthen values formation, socio-emotional learning, and guidance and counseling services to help prevent aggressive behaviors among Senior High School students.

Keywords: aggressive behavior, guidance and counseling, senior high school students, values formation, youth behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behavior among adolescents remains an important concern in schools because it can affect student safety, peer relationships, emotional well-being, and learning. Aggressive behavior may take different forms, including physical aggression, verbal aggression, relational aggression, and aggression expressed through digital platforms. At the same time, schools also encounter values-related issues reflected in behaviors involving respect, responsibility, honesty, discipline, empathy, and self-control. These concerns are important during adolescence, a period when young people continue to develop their identities, values, relationships, and ways of managing emotions and conflicts.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has introduced policies and programs that promote positive behavior, values formation, and safe learning environments. These include the MATATAG K to 12 Curriculum, the Child Protection Policy, and measures implementing the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013. The MATATAG Curriculum emphasizes developing learners who demonstrate respect, responsibility, empathy, honesty, and discipline alongside academic competence (DepEd, 2025). These policies show that learner development involves not only academic achievement but also behavior, character, and relationships with others.

Despite these efforts, aggressive behavior among adolescents remains a concern that may be influenced by conditions within and outside the school. Previous studies suggest that aggression develops through the

interaction of personal, family, peer, school, and social factors. Socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, family structure, and socio-economic conditions may shape adolescents' experiences, coping patterns, and exposure to social influences (Pinquart, 2023). Family conditions, including parental supervision, parenting practices, and family conflict, may also influence the development of empathy, respect, and self-control (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Pinquart, 2023). These findings suggest that aggressive behavior cannot be understood only as an individual problem because students develop within several connected social environments.

School conditions also contribute to students' behavior. Teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, school climate, and disciplinary practices may either support positive behavior or increase the risk of conflict and aggression (Cohen et al., 2009). Psychological factors such as emotional regulation and self-esteem may further affect how adolescents respond to stress, disagreement, and peer pressure. Community conditions and access to supportive activities may likewise influence their social and emotional development (Anderson et al., 2023; McLeigh & Sianko, 2024). Taken together, these studies show that several related factors shape adolescent behavior rather than a single cause.

Digital environments have added another setting in which adolescent aggression may occur. Social media allows peer interactions to continue beyond school hours and may expose young people to aggressive language, harmful content, social exclusion, and online conflict. Cyberbullying may involve verbal attacks, humiliation, exclusion, threats, or the sharing of harmful material. Research suggests that online and face-to-face forms of aggression may overlap, as conflicts that begin in school can continue online and online conflicts can affect relationships within school (Anderson et al., 2023; McLeigh & Sianko, 2024). These conditions make it important for schools to consider both physical and digital forms of student interaction when addressing aggressive behavior.

Aggressive behavior may also be understood in relation to the values that guide students' decisions and interactions. Respect, empathy, responsibility, honesty, discipline, and self-control can influence how adolescents respond to disagreement, peer pressure, rules, and social situations. Weaknesses or difficulties in these areas may show up as disrespectful communication, dishonesty, poor conflict management, and disregard for others. Thus, examining aggression together with values-related issues may provide a broader understanding of student behavior than examining aggressive acts alone.

These concerns are also relevant to schools in the Tacloban City Division. A reported 48 bullying cases in Tacloban City in 2025 indicate that harmful peer behavior remains an issue requiring attention at the local level. School experiences may also include verbal conflicts, peer intimidation, disrespectful language, cyber-related conflicts, and other behavioral concerns. However, local evidence is still needed to determine the extent to which different forms of aggressive behavior and values-related issues are present among senior high school students and whether these concerns are related.

Existing literature has examined adolescent aggression, bullying, family influences, school climate, psychological factors, and online behavior. However, these areas are often examined separately, with greater attention given to aggression or bullying than to their possible connection with values-related concerns. Local evidence is also limited on how different forms of aggressive behavior relate to values-related issues among senior high school students in Tacloban City. This limits the information available to schools when deciding which behavioral and values concerns should receive greater attention in guidance and counseling programs.

Therefore, this study examined aggressive behaviors and values-related issues among senior high school students in the Tacloban City Division during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to describe students' aggressive behaviors and values-related issues and determine whether these concerns are associated with one another and with relevant student characteristics. The findings may provide guidance counselors, teachers, and school administrators with local evidence to identify priority concerns and strengthen preventive, developmental, and responsive guidance and counseling services. In doing so, the study may contribute to school efforts to promote safer, more supportive, and values-oriented learning environments.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, track or strand, family structure, parents' income, and parents' occupation?
2. What is the level of aggressive behavior among the respondents in terms of physical aggression, verbal aggression, relational aggression, and cyber aggression?
3. What are the prevailing values-related issues among the respondents in terms of respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, honesty and integrity, discipline and self-control, and peer influence and group conformity?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of aggressive behavior and their prevailing values-related issues?
5. What implications may be drawn from the findings for strengthening guidance and counseling services?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to describe participants' socio-demographic characteristics, aggressive behaviors, and values-related issues, and to determine the relationship between aggressive behaviors and values-related issues. The descriptive component summarized participants' characteristics and scores across the study variables, while the correlational component examined the strength and direction of the relationship between the two main constructs. The study did not manipulate variables because it examined them as they occurred among Senior High School students.

Research Participants

The participants were Grade 11 and Grade 12 students enrolled in selected public and private Senior High Schools in the Schools Division of Tacloban City during School Year 2025–2026. The study covered six public schools and four private schools. The public schools were Leyte National High School, Northern Tacloban City National High School, Sagkahan National High School, San Jose National High School, Sto. Niño Senior High School, and Tacloban City National Agricultural School. The private schools were ACLC College of Tacloban, Don Vicente Orestes Romualdez Educational Foundation, Inc., Holy Infant College of Tacloban, Inc., and Liceo del Verbo Divino. These schools were selected based on their Senior High School enrollment and representation of the public and private school sectors in Tacloban City.

The selected schools had a combined population of 9,467 Senior High School students, consisting of 4,761 Grade 11 and 4,706 Grade 12 students. The required sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample of 384 participants. Of these, 194 were Grade 11 students, and 190 were Grade 12 students. A total of 213 participants were drawn from public schools, which had a combined population of 5,248 students, while 171 were drawn from private schools, which had a combined population of 4,219 students. The sample was proportionally allocated according to the enrollment of the participating schools and grade levels. Within each group, eligible students were randomly selected from the official enrollment lists.

Research Instruments

We collected data using a three-part questionnaire. Part I gathered the participants' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, sex, grade level, track or strand, family structure, and socio-economic characteristics such as parents' income and occupation. Part II measured aggressive behaviors across four dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression, relational aggression, and cyber aggression. The items were adapted from established measures of aggression and were modified as needed to suit the context of Senior High School students. Part III measured values-related issues in terms of respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, honesty and integrity, discipline and self-control, and peer influence and group conformity. The items were developed with reference to relevant Department of Education

frameworks and were written to reflect situations experienced by Filipino Senior High School students. Responses to Parts II and III were recorded using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

A guidance counselor, a school head, and an education program supervisor validated the questionnaire's content. The experts examined the items for relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's objectives and variables. The researchers considered their comments when revising the questionnaire before pilot testing. The researchers pilot-tested the revised instrument with 20 Senior High School students from a school outside the research locale. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of .70 or higher considered acceptable. The aggressive behavior subscales obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .841 for physical aggression, .812 for verbal aggression, .850 for relational aggression, and .909 for cyber aggression. The overall aggressive behavior scale obtained an alpha coefficient of .918. For values-related issues, the coefficients were .940 for respect for authority, .905 for responsibility and accountability, .919 for empathy and concern for others, .855 for honesty and integrity, .752 for discipline and self-control, and .732 for peer influence and group conformity. The overall values-related issues scale obtained an alpha coefficient of .953. These results indicated acceptable to excellent internal consistency among the scales used in the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection began after ethics approval and the required administrative permissions had been obtained. The researcher first secured approval from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee and permission from the Dean of the Graduate School, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the heads of the participating schools. The researcher obtained enrollment data from the Schools Division Office and participating schools to determine the population and proportionally allocate participants by school and grade level. Eligible students were then selected using the specified random sampling procedure. The questionnaire was administered in coordination with authorized school personnel. Participants were instructed to answer the questions independently and honestly and were informed that their answers would not affect their grades, standing, or relationship with their school. The researchers collected completed questionnaires and checked them for completeness without identifying individual participants. The responses were then coded, entered into the data file, checked for errors, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Frequencies and percentages summarized categorical socio-demographic variables such as sex, grade level, track or strand, family structure, and parents' occupation. Appropriate descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were used for numerical variables where applicable. Mean scores described participants' aggressive behaviors across physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression, as well as their values-related issues across respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, honesty and integrity, discipline and self-control, and peer influence and group conformity.

For descriptive interpretation, mean scores from 4.21 to 5.00 were interpreted as Always, 3.41 to 4.20 as Often, 2.61 to 3.40 as Sometimes, 1.81 to 2.60 as Rarely, and 1.00 to 1.80 as Never. The direction of scoring was considered when interpreting the values-related items so that higher scores were interpreted consistently with the wording of the statements. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the composite scores for aggressive behaviors and values-related issues. The assumptions required for Pearson's correlation, including linearity and the absence of serious outliers, were examined before the analysis. If these assumptions were not met, the researchers considered an appropriate nonparametric alternative. Statistical significance was evaluated at an alpha level of .05.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed accepted ethical standards for research involving human participants and minors. Before data collection, the HICTCI-IERC granted ethical approval under Protocol No. **2025-0015**. The researchers also obtained administrative permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and the heads of the participating schools. The study followed applicable Department of Education research guidelines and child protection

policies. Participation was voluntary. All participants received information about the study's purpose and procedures, the nature of their participation, possible discomfort from answering questions about aggressive behavior and values-related concerns, and their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study without penalty. We obtained written informed consent from participants aged 18 years or older. For participants under 18 years old, we obtained written parental or guardian consent and student assent before participation. We provided appropriate assistance or referred participants to designated school personnel if they experienced discomfort or raised concerns during data collection. No names were recorded on the questionnaires, and the research team used participant codes during data processing and analysis. The research team did not disclose individual responses to teachers, school administrators, parents, or other students. Electronic and printed records were stored securely and were accessible only to authorized members of the research team. The data were used only for the stated purposes of the study and were retained and disposed of according to the approved ethics protocol and applicable institutional requirements. The researchers reported findings in aggregate form to protect the identity and privacy of individual participants and participating schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Learners

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents by age, sex, track/strand, and grade level. These characteristics provide essential context that may help explain patterns in aggressive behaviors and the prevailing values-related issues examined in the study. The demographic profile shows that the respondents were largely 16 to 17 years old, with females comprising 58.6% of the sample and Grade 11 (49.7%) and Grade 12 (50.3%) students almost equally represented. Most respondents were enrolled in STEM (52.6%), while smaller proportions came from HUMSS, ABM, the Academic track under the new curriculum, and technical-vocational strands.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Categories	f	%
Age		
Below 16	2	0.50
16	149	38.8
17	175	45.6
18	48	12.5
19	6	1.60
20 and above	4	1.00
Sex		
Male	159	41.4
Female	225	58.6
Track/Strand		
Academic - ABM	33	8.60
Academic - HUMSS	46	12.0
Academic - STEM	202	52.6

Academic - GAS	17	4.40
TVL – ICT	26	6.80
TVL – HE	14	3.60
TVL - IE	2	0.50
Academic (New Curriculum)	44	11.5
Grade Level		
Grade 11	191	49.7
Grade 12	193	50.3
Family Structure		
Intact Family (living with both parents)	251	65.4
Single Parent Household (living with either father or mother)	58	15.1
Blended (with step-parents/step-siblings)	21	5.50
Extended (with grandparents/relatives)	43	11.2
Guardian/Others	11	2.90
Aver. Monthly Family Income		
Below 10,000	152	39.6
10,000 – 20,000	92	24.0
20,001 – 30,000	58	15.1
30,001 – 40,000	28	7.30
40,001 – above	54	14.1
Occupation of Father		
Professional/Managerial	53	13.8
Skilled Worker/Technician	45	11.7
Self-Employed/Business Owner	50	13.0
Laborer/Unskilled Worker	40	10.4
Unemployed	43	11.2
Overseas Worker	11	2.90
Others	142	37.0
Occupation of Mother		
Professional/Managerial	74	19.3

Skilled Worker/Technician	15	3.90
Self-Employed/Business Owner	58	15.1
Laborer/Unskilled Worker	16	4.20
Unemployed	94	24.5
Overseas Worker	23	6.00
Others	104	27.1
Education of Father/Guardian		
Elementary	45	11.7
High School Level	133	34.6
High School Graduate	2	0.50
Vocational/Technical	10	2.60
College	140	36.5
Postgraduate	50	13.0
Did not indicate	4	1.00
Education of Mother/Guardian		
Elementary	19	4.90
High School Level	123	32.0
High School Graduate	2	0.50
Vocational/Technical	11	2.90
College	165	43.0
Post Graduate	64	16.7

The concentration of respondents in middle to late adolescence matters because this period involves continued development in self-regulation, identity, and sensitivity to social and peer influences (Steinberg, 2020). Adolescence is also an important period for emotional and behavioral development, during which difficulties in managing emotions and interpersonal relationships may emerge (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). The nearly equal representation of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students provides balanced coverage of the two senior high school levels, while the greater representation of females and STEM students should be considered when interpreting the overall behavioral findings, as these sample characteristics may influence the patterns observed.

In terms of family and socioeconomic background, most respondents came from intact families (65.4%), while 15.1% lived in single-parent households and smaller groups reported extended, blended, or guardian-led family arrangements. Nearly two-thirds also belonged to households earning below ₱20,000 per month, while parents varied in occupation and educational attainment. These characteristics suggest that respondents came from different family and socioeconomic conditions that may provide varying levels of support, resources, supervision, and exposure to stress. Research has consistently shown that socioeconomic disadvantage is associated with greater risks of mental health and behavioral difficulties among children and adolescents (Reiss, 2013), while parental educational attainment can influence children's development through parental expectations and the quality of the home learning environment (Davis-Kean, 2005). However, these demographic

characteristics should be treated as contextual factors rather than direct explanations for aggressive behaviors or values-related issues unless the study statistically tests their relationships with the variables.

Extent of Aggressive Behaviors

Table 2 discusses the extent of aggressive behaviors displayed by learners. The variables are categorized into different forms of aggression to capture the multifaceted nature of learner conduct.

Physical Aggression. The findings indicate that physical aggression was generally low among the Senior High School students, as shown by the overall mean of 1.22, interpreted as “Never.” This suggests that behaviors involving direct physical harm, such as fighting, hitting, pushing, and throwing objects, were uncommon among most respondents. This pattern is consistent with developmental research showing that physical aggression tends to decline from childhood into adolescence as young people develop greater self-regulation, cognitive control, and socially acceptable ways of responding to conflict (Steinberg, 2020). However, the low overall mean should not be interpreted as the complete absence of physical aggression because a small number of learners reported engaging in some aggressive behaviors “Often” or “Always.” This finding matters because persistent aggression among a smaller group of adolescents may be linked to individual, family, peer, and other contextual factors that contribute to differences in aggressive behavior over time (Lansford et al., 2021). Moreover, repeated aggressive behavior, even when limited to a small group, may affect peer relationships, student safety, and the overall school environment. Thus, the results suggest that physical aggression is not a widespread concern among the respondents, but the presence of students who frequently engage in such behaviors supports the need for early identification, appropriate guidance and counseling, and targeted preventive interventions rather than school-wide measures based solely on the overall mean.

Verbal Aggression. The findings indicate that verbal aggression was generally minimal among the Senior High School students, as reflected by the overall mean of 1.41, interpreted as “Never.” This suggests that behaviors such as name-calling, teasing, threats, insults, and other forms of overt verbal hostility were uncommon among most respondents. However, shouting at others when angry had the highest mean of 1.85, interpreted as “Rarely,” indicating that verbal aggression may occur more often in response to anger than as a regular pattern of hostile behavior. This finding is consistent with the view that adolescents may express aggression through verbal and other socially mediated behaviors as they navigate heightened emotions and increasingly complex peer interactions (Steinberg, 2020; Vaillancourt, 2022). Although most respondents reported little or no verbal aggression, the presence of students who reported shouting, name-calling, teasing, or insulting others “Often” or “Always” remains important because repeated verbal aggression can affect peer relationships and students’ sense of safety and belonging at school. Research has shown that exposure to bullying and other forms of peer aggression is associated with poorer psychological, social, and educational outcomes among young people (OECD, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, while verbal aggression does not appear to be widespread among respondents, the relatively higher occurrence of shouting when angry suggests the value of strengthening guidance and counseling activities focused on emotional regulation, anger management, respectful communication, and constructive ways to resolve interpersonal conflict.

Table 2 Level of Aggressive Behaviors

Indicators	Extent						
	Frequency					Mean	Interpretation
	5 (A)	4 (O)	3 (S)	2 (R)	1 (N)		
Physical Aggression							
1. I get into physical fights with classmates or peers.	3	5	9	29	338	1.97	Rarely

2. I hit, kick, or push others when I am angry.	3	7	17	36	321	1.27	Never
3. I damage school property or personal belongings when frustrated.	0	2	6	20	356	1.10	Never
4. I physically intervene in conflicts aggressively rather than seeking help.	2	6	22	35	319	1.27	Never
5. I throw objects or act violently when upset.	3	6	17	34	324	1.26	Never
<i>Mean</i>	2	5	14	31	332	1.22	Never
Verbal Aggression							
1. I shout at others when angry.	11	18	57	115	183	1.85	Rarely
2. I call classmates hurtful names or tease them offensively.	4	9	16	87	268	1.42	Never
3. I spread offensive jokes or comments about others verbally.	3	5	17	64	295	1.33	Never
4. I verbally threaten others when I feel provoked.	2	5	21	34	322	1.20	Never
5. I bully others through insults or harsh words.	4	1	14	29	336	1.19	Never
<i>Mean</i>	5	8	25	66	281	1.41	Never
Relational Aggression							
1. I intentionally exclude others from group activities.	2	6	19	38	319	1.27	Never
2. I spread rumors or gossip to damage someone's reputation.	0	3	16	28	337	1.18	Never
3. I encourage my peers to avoid or ignore someone.	5	5	21	56	297	1.35	Never
4. I use my friendships to control or manipulate others.	4	8	6	21	345	1.19	Never
5. I isolate classmates socially when I am angry at them.	10	6	32	54	282	1.45	Never
<i>Mean</i>	4	6	19	39	316	1.29	Never
Cyber Aggression							
1. I post hurtful or offensive comments about others online.	2	1	11	35	335	1.17	Never
2. I share embarrassing photos, videos, or memes of others without permission.	4	5	17	39	319	1.27	Never

3. I send threatening or insulting messages through chat or social media.	3	3	18	23	337	1.21	Never
4. I spread gossip or false information about others online.	1	1	7	27	348	1.13	Never
5. I participate in group chats that target or bully classmates.	2	2	10	28	342	1.16	Never
<i>Mean</i>	2	3	13	30	336	1.19	Never
Summary							
Physical Aggression	2	5	14	31	332	1.22	Never
Verbal Aggression	5	8	25	66	281	1.41	Never
Relational Aggression	4	6	19	39	316	1.29	Never
Cyber Aggression	2	3	13	30	336	1.19	Never
<i>Overall Mean</i>	3	6	18	42	316	1.28	Never

Note. Scores were interpreted as: 4.21-5.00 = Always; 3.41-4.20 = Often; 2.61-3.40 = Sometimes; 1.81-2.60 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.80 = Never

Relational Aggression. The findings indicate that relational aggression was generally minimal among the Senior High School students, as reflected by the overall mean of 1.29, interpreted as “Never.” This suggests that behaviors intended to damage peer relationships, such as spreading rumors, manipulating friendships, excluding classmates, and encouraging others to ignore someone, were uncommon among most respondents. However, socially isolating classmates when angry obtained the highest mean of 1.45, with some learners reporting that they engaged in this behavior “Sometimes,” “Often,” or “Always.” This pattern suggests that relational aggression may occur mainly during interpersonal conflicts rather than as a regular pattern of peer mistreatment. Relational aggression is often less visible than physical aggression because it operates through social relationships, yet it can still affect adolescents’ emotional well-being and sense of belonging (Vaillancourt, 2022). This is particularly important during adolescence, when peer relationships and social acceptance become increasingly significant to identity development and emotional adjustment (Steinberg, 2020). Evidence also indicates that peer exclusion and social isolation are associated with weaker school belonging and poorer psychological outcomes among students (OECD, 2021). Moreover, relational aggression may emerge in response to specific peer conflicts and social dynamics rather than through continuous or highly visible acts of bullying (Coyne et al., 2021). Therefore, although relational aggression does not appear to be widespread among respondents, social isolation and exclusion among a small group of learners support the need for guidance and counseling efforts that strengthen healthy peer relationships, conflict resolution, empathy, and constructive responses to interpersonal disagreements.

Cyber Aggression. The findings indicate that cyber aggression was generally minimal among the Senior High School students, as reflected by the overall mean of 1.19, interpreted as “Never.” This suggests that behaviors such as posting offensive comments, sharing embarrassing content without permission, sending threatening messages, spreading false information, and participating in online group harassment were uncommon among most respondents. However, cyber aggression was not completely absent, as a small number of learners reported engaging in these behaviors “Sometimes,” “Often,” or “Always,” particularly in sharing embarrassing content without consent and sending threatening or insulting messages. Although these cases represent only a small proportion of the respondents, they remain important because online aggression can reach a wide audience, persist through shared digital content, and occur beyond the physical boundaries of the school. This finding is consistent with evidence showing that cyberbullying perpetration is generally reported by a minority of

adolescents but is nevertheless associated with negative psychosocial and school-related outcomes (Kowalski et al., 2020). Cyber aggression may also be influenced by factors such as moral disengagement, impulsivity, and reduced social cues in online interactions, which can make harmful behavior easier to carry out without immediately seeing its effects on others (Runions & Bak, 2021). International evidence also shows that harmful online peer interactions can affect students' well-being, relationships, and sense of safety, even though they occur less visibly than face-to-face aggression (OECD, 2021). Therefore, although cyber aggression does not appear widespread among respondents, even a small group of learners engaging in harmful online behavior supports the need for continued digital citizenship education, responsible social media use, reporting mechanisms, and guidance interventions that promote empathy and accountability in online interactions.

Prevailing Values-Related Issues

This section examines the dominant values-related issues observed among learners. These indicators reflect aspects of character development that influence behavior and interpersonal interactions.

Respect for Authority. This dimension reflects learners' adherence to school rules, acceptance of guidance from teachers and school staff, and demonstration of courteous behavior toward authority figures. The table summarizes the frequency distribution, computed means, and descriptive interpretations for each indicator. The overall mean of 4.67, interpreted as "Always," shows that respondents strongly manifest respect for authority. All five indicators fall within the "Always" category, with particularly high frequencies for speaking respectfully to teachers (325), following instructions without arguing (302), and showing respect even when disagreeing (294).

Table 3 Prevailing Values-Related Issues

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Respect for Authority		
1. I speak respectfully to teachers and school staff.	4.80	Always
2. I follow teachers' instructions without arguing.	4.73	Always
3. I show respect even when I disagree with teachers' decisions.	4.68	Always
4. I avoid talking back or being rude to authority figures.	4.62	Always
5. I greet and acknowledge school staff politely.	4.54	Always
<i>Mean</i>	4.67	Always
Responsibility and Accountability		
1. I attend classes regularly and arrive on time.	4.29	Always
2. I submit school requirements on or before the deadline.	4.34	Always
3. I follow school rules and regulations even without supervision.	4.60	Always
4. I take responsibility for my actions when I make mistakes.	4.62	Always
5. I participate actively in school or class activities.	4.27	Always
<i>Mean</i>	4.42	Always
Empathy and Concern for Others		
1. I try to understand the feelings of my classmates.	4.48	Always

2. I help classmates who are struggling with schoolwork.	4.05	Often
3. I show kindness to classmates who are lonely or left out.	4.43	Always
4. I avoid laughing at others' mistakes or weaknesses.	4.24	Always
5. I offer support to classmates going through difficult situations.	4.41	Always
<i>Mean</i>	4.32	Always
Honesty and Integrity		
1. I avoid cheating during quizzes, exams, or assignments.	3.88	Often
2. I tell the truth even when it may get me in trouble.	4.15	Often
3. I do not take things that do not belong to me.	4.46	Always
4. I admit my mistakes instead of blaming others.	4.46	Always
5. I return lost belongings to their rightful owner.	4.52	Always
<i>Mean</i>	4.29	Always
Discipline and Control		
1. I stay calm and avoid fights when provoked.	4.35	Always
2. I can resist distractions and focus on my schoolwork.	3.85	Often
3. I think before I act when I am angry.	4.14	Often
4. I follow school routines and procedures consistently.	4.36	Always
5. I control my temper even in stressful situations.	4.14	Often
<i>Mean</i>	4.17	Often
Peer Influence and Conformity		
1. I join my peers in doing good deeds and positive activities.	4.44	Always
2. I sometimes go along with peers even if I know it is wrong. <i>(reverse coded)</i>	3.08	Sometimes
3. I stand by my values even when pressured by friends.	4.18	Often
4. My friends encourage me to follow school rules.	4.14	Often
5. Peer pressure influences my decision-making. <i>(reverse coded)</i>	3.61	Often
<i>Mean</i>	3.89	Often
Summary		
Respect for Authority	4.67	Always
Responsibility and Accountability	4.42	Always
Empathy and Concern for Others	4.32	Always

Honesty and Integrity	4.29	Always
Discipline and Self-Control	4.17	Often
Peer Influence and Group Conformity	3.89	Often
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.29	Always

Note. Scores were interpreted as: 4.21-5.00 = Always; 3.41-4.20 = Often; 2.61-3.40 = Sometimes; 1.81-2.60 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.80 = Never

These results suggest that learners generally adhere consistently to authority and institutional norms. The high levels of reported respect for authority align with contemporary research emphasizing the role of supportive teacher–student relationships and fair disciplinary practices in fostering rule adherence and prosocial conduct. Wang and Degol (2020) highlight that when students perceive teachers as fair, supportive, and consistent, they are more likely to comply with school rules and behave respectfully. Similarly, OECD (2021) findings from the Survey of Social and Emotional Skills indicate that positive school climate and strong student–teacher relationships are associated with higher levels of prosocial behaviors and institutional trust. From a developmental perspective, adolescence, particularly late adolescence, is characterized by increased capacity for moral reasoning and perspective-taking, which supports respectful engagement even during disagreement (Masten, 2021). Moreover, cross-cultural evidence suggests that school contexts emphasizing structured guidance and relational support promote stronger norm adherence and lower behavioral misconduct (Lansford et al., 2021). The consistently high means across indicators in Table 9 therefore suggest that learners in this study operate within an environment that reinforces respectful conduct toward authority figures. While the results are strongly positive, a very small number of responses fall under “Rarely” or “Never.” Although minimal, these instances indicate that not all learners uniformly demonstrate respect, underscoring the need for sustained reinforcement of character education and values formation.

Responsibility and Accountability. This dimension reflects learners’ capacity to take ownership of their actions, comply with school rules even without supervision, meet academic obligations, and actively participate in school activities. The overall mean of 4.42, interpreted as “Always,” indicates that respondents strongly demonstrate responsibility and accountability. All five indicators fall within the “Always” category, with particularly high means for taking responsibility for one’s actions (4.62) and following school rules even without supervision (4.60). These findings suggest that learners generally demonstrate internalized rule adherence and personal accountability rather than compliance based solely on external monitoring. The relatively high mean for regular class attendance and punctuality (4.29), as well as timely submission of requirements (4.34), further reflects consistent academic responsibility. Research indicates that students who demonstrate strong self-regulation and accountability are more likely to achieve positive academic and behavioral outcomes (OECD, 2021). The Survey of Social and Emotional Skills highlights that self-management competencies, such as responsibility, persistence, and task completion, are associated with improved academic engagement and reduced behavioral problems.

From a resilience-oriented developmental standpoint, adolescents who develop a strong sense of responsibility and accountability typically show enhanced executive functioning and self-regulation capacities, which act as protective buffers against risk behaviors (Masten, 2021). Moreover, school climate research suggests that environments characterized by fair discipline and clear expectations promote students’ internalization of rules and personal responsibility (Wang & Degol, 2020). The consistently high ratings in Table 10 may therefore reflect a school context that fosters structured guidance and values formation. Although the results are strongly positive, a small proportion of responses fall under “Sometimes” or “Rarely,” particularly in participation and punctuality. This suggests that while responsibility is generally high, situational or contextual factors, such as academic stress or external obligations, may occasionally influence consistent engagement.

Empathy and Concern for Others. This dimension reflects learners’ ability to understand peers’ emotions, demonstrate kindness, aid, and respond sensitively to others’ needs. The overall mean of 4.32, interpreted as “Always,” indicates that respondents strongly manifest empathy and concern for others. Most indicators fall

within the “Always” category, particularly understanding classmates’ feelings (4.48), showing kindness to those who feel left out (4.43), and offering support during difficult situations (4.41). These results suggest that learners generally demonstrate emotional awareness and prosocial responsiveness in peer interactions. The item “I help classmates who are struggling with schoolwork” obtained a slightly lower mean (4.05), interpreted as “Often.” While still positive, this may indicate that instrumental support (e.g., academic assistance) is somewhat less consistent than emotional empathy. This distinction aligns with research showing that affective empathy (feeling concern for others) is often more readily expressed than sustained prosocial helping behaviors, which require additional time, effort, and academic competence (Van Zalk & Van Zalk, 2021). Recent empirical studies consistently show that empathy protects against aggressive behavior and bullying involvement. A meta-analytic review by Zych et al. (2020) found that higher empathy levels are significantly associated with lower bullying perpetration and greater prosocial behavior among adolescents. Similarly, OECD (2021) reports that empathy and perspective-taking skills correlate positively with cooperative behaviors and school belonging, and negatively with rule-breaking tendencies. From a developmental resilience perspective, empathy is considered a core socio-emotional competency that supports healthy peer relationships and reduces externalizing behaviors (Masten, 2021). The consistently high means therefore suggest that learners possess strong prosocial dispositions, which may partly explain the generally low levels of aggression observed in earlier tables. However, “Sometimes” and “Rarely” responses indicate that empathy is not uniformly practiced across all contexts, particularly in academically demanding or socially complex situations.

Honesty and Integrity. This dimension reflects learners’ truthfulness, reliability, respect for property, and willingness to take responsibility for their actions. The overall mean of 4.29, interpreted as “Always,” denotes that honesty and integrity are generally well manifested among the respondents. Three indicators, refraining from taking things that do not belong to them (4.46), admitting mistakes instead of blaming others (4.46), and returning lost belongings (4.52), fall within the “Always” category. These results suggest strong adherence to moral responsibility and personal accountability in matters involving property rights and ownership of actions. However, two indicators, such as avoiding cheating (3.88) and telling the truth even when it may result in consequences (4.15), are interpreted as “Often.” The relatively lower mean for avoiding cheating suggests that academic integrity may present greater challenges compared to general moral behaviors such as returning lost items. This pattern is consistent with contemporary research showing that academic dishonesty remains a persistent issue among adolescents, particularly under academic pressure or performance-related stress (Brimble, 2020). Empirical literature emphasizes that integrity-related behaviors are influenced by both individual moral development and contextual factors such as school climate and perceived fairness. Wang and Degol (2020) highlight that schools characterized by fair disciplinary practices and strong relational trust promote higher ethical conduct among students. Additionally, OECD (2021) findings indicate that self-regulation and moral responsibility are strongly associated with reduced rule-breaking and increased prosocial engagement. From a developmental perspective, adolescents who develop strong internal moral standards are more likely to demonstrate consistent integrity across situations, even when facing social or academic pressure (Masten, 2021). The results therefore suggest that while honesty and integrity are generally high, academic contexts may present situational vulnerabilities. The difference between property-related honesty (e.g., returning belongings) and academic integrity (e.g., avoiding cheating) implies that contextual pressures may influence ethical decision-making.

Discipline and Self-Control. This dimension reflects learners’ capacity to regulate emotions, resist distractions, manage anger, and adhere to school routines, particularly in challenging or stressful situations. The overall mean of 4.17, interpreted as “Often,” reflects generally strong discipline and self-control among respondents, though not as consistently as other value dimensions previously presented. Two indicators, staying calm and avoiding fights when provoked (4.35) and following school routines consistently (4.36), fall under the “Always” category. These findings suggest that learners can generally regulate overt behavioral reactions and comply with structured expectations. In contrast, indicators related to cognitive-emotional regulation, such as resisting distractions (3.85), thinking before acting when angry (4.14), and controlling temper in stressful situations (4.14), fall under “Often.” This pattern suggests that while behavioral compliance is strong, emotional self-regulation under stress presents moderate challenges for some learners. Contemporary developmental research highlights that adolescence remains a period of ongoing maturation of executive functioning and impulse control, which explains variability in emotional regulation even among generally well-adjusted youth (Masten, 2021).

Empirical studies consistently identify self-control as a protective factor against aggressive and risk behaviors. For instance, Lansford et al. (2021) emphasize that adolescents with stronger regulatory capacities exhibit lower externalizing behaviors across cultural contexts. Similarly, OECD (2021) findings indicate that self-management skills, including perseverance and emotional control, are strongly associated with academic engagement and reduced behavioral problems. School climate research also underscores that structured routines and fair disciplinary systems support students' development of behavioral self-regulation (Wang & Degol, 2020). The findings suggest that while discipline is generally internalized, emotional regulation in cognitively demanding or stressful contexts may require continued support. The distinction between routine compliance (“Always”) and emotional regulation (“Often”) reflects the developmental reality that impulse control and stress management skills continue to strengthen throughout late adolescence.

Peer Influence and Group Conformity. This dimension examines the extent to which peers shape learners’ behaviors, decision-making, and adherence to group norms, including both positive peer encouragement and susceptibility to peer pressure. The overall mean of 3.89, interpreted as “Often,” illustrates that peer influence plays a meaningful role in learners’ behavioral choices and value orientations. The highest mean was obtained for joining peers in positive activities (4.44, “Always”), manifesting that peer networks largely reinforce prosocial behaviors. Similarly, standing by one’s values despite peer pressure (4.18) and having friends who encourage rule-following (4.14) fall under the “Often” category, suggesting generally constructive peer dynamics. Two reverse-coded items reveal important distinctions. The item “I sometimes go along with peers even if I know it is wrong” obtained a mean of 3.08 (“Sometimes”), while “Peer pressure influences my decision-making” yielded a mean of 3.61 (“Often”). These results indicate that although positive peer influence predominates, susceptibility to peer pressure remains present for a subset of learners. This pattern reflects the developmental reality that adolescence is marked by heightened sensitivity to peer approval and social belonging (Masten, 2021). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that peer norms significantly influence adolescent behavior. Lansford et al. (2021) found that adolescents’ externalizing behaviors are shaped not only by family processes but also by peer normativeness across cultures. Similarly, OECD (2021) reports that adolescents who perceive strong prosocial peer norms are more likely to engage in cooperative behaviors and less likely to participate in rule-breaking activities. Research on peer contagion also suggests that while association with prosocial peers buffers risk behaviors, affiliation with deviant peers increases the likelihood of aggression and misconduct (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; see updated synthesis discussions in Masten, 2021). Although peer pressure can promote conformity, it can also serve as a protective mechanism when group norms favor positive conduct. The findings indicate a predominantly positive peer environment, with peers encouraging good deeds and adherence to school rules. Nonetheless, moderate susceptibility to peer pressure underscores that conformity dynamics remain influential in shaping adolescent decision-making.

Relationship Between Level of Aggressive Behaviors and Prevailing Values-Related Issues

Table 4 presents the statistical relationship between the level of aggressive behaviors and prevailing values-related issues using Pearson *r*. The analysis determines whether higher manifestations of positive values are associated with lower levels of aggression, thereby clarifying how value formation may function as a protective factor against different forms of aggressive behavior.

Table 4 Relationship between the Level of Aggressive Behaviors and Prevailing Values-Related Issues

Aggressive Behaviors	Values-Related Issues	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Physical Aggression	Respect for Authority	-0.20	<.001	Significant
	Responsibility and Accountability	-0.14	.004	Significant
	Empathy and Concern for Others	-0.09	.054	Not Significant
	Honesty and Integrity	-0.20	<.001	Significant
	Discipline and Self-Control	-0.17	<.001	Significant

	Peer Influence and Group Conformity	-0.02	.659	Not Significant
Verbal Aggression	Respect for Authority	-0.16	.001	Significant
	Responsibility and Accountability	-0.16	.001	Significant
	Empathy and Concern for Others	-0.18	<.001	Significant
	Honesty and Integrity	-0.31	<.001	Significant
	Discipline and Self-Control	-.027	<.001	Significant
	Peer Influence and Group Conformity	-0.15	.002	Significant
Relational Aggression	Respect for Authority	-0.19	<.001	Significant
	Responsibility and Accountability	-0.19	<.001	Significant
	Empathy and Concern for Others	-0.21	<.001	Significant
	Honesty and Integrity	-0.26	<.001	Significant
	Discipline and Self-Control	-0.25	<.001	Significant
	Peer Influence and Group Conformity	-0.08	.118	Not Significant
Cyber Aggression	Respect for Authority	-0.25	<.001	Significant
	Responsibility and Accountability	-0.24	<.001	Significant
	Empathy and Concern for Others	-0.22	<.001	Significant
	Honesty and Integrity	-0.27	<.001	Significant
	Discipline and Self-Control	-0.21	<.001	Significant
	Peer Influence and Group Conformity	-0.09	.074	Not Significant
Overall Aggressive Behaviors	Overall Values-Related Issues	-0.33	<.001	Significant

The overall correlation between aggressive behaviors and values-related issues is moderate, negative, and statistically significant ($r = -0.333$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that as learners' values-related competencies increase, their levels of aggressive behaviors tend to decrease. The inverse relationship suggests that values formation may serve as a protective factor against aggression. Across specific dimensions, consistent negative and significant correlations are observed between most forms of aggression (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber) and values-related variables such as respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, honesty and integrity, and discipline and self-control. Notably, honesty and integrity show relatively stronger correlations with verbal ($r = -0.310$), relational ($r = -0.268$), and cyber aggression ($r = -0.278$), suggesting that internalized moral standards are closely linked to reduced engagement in aggressive behaviors. This finding aligns with contemporary research showing that moral disengagement and weakened ethical reasoning significantly predict adolescent aggression, particularly in verbal and digital contexts (Runions & Bak, 2021; Kowalski et al., 2023).

Similarly, significant negative correlations between aggression and discipline and self-control support evidence that self-regulation skills are inversely associated with externalizing behaviors. Adolescents with stronger impulse control and emotional regulation demonstrate lower levels across cultural contexts (Lansford et al., 2021). From a developmental resilience perspective, self-regulation serves as a core protective system that buffers youth from risk behaviors (Masten, 2021). Empathy and concern for others also exhibit significant

negative relationships with verbal, relational, and cyber aggression, reinforcing findings from meta-analytic research that empathy reduces the likelihood of bullying perpetration (Zych et al., 2020). Interestingly, empathy does not show a significant relationship with physical aggression ($p = 0.054$), suggesting that overt aggression may be influenced more strongly by impulse control and rule adherence than by affective perspective-taking alone.

Peer influence and group conformity show weaker or non-significant correlations with physical, relational, and cyber aggression, though a significant relationship exists with verbal aggression. This may indicate that peer norms exert stronger influence on socially expressive forms of aggression rather than overt physical misconduct. Contemporary research suggests that peer approval and normative beliefs particularly predict verbal and online aggression (Kowalski et al., 2023). Overall, the pattern of correlations suggests that values-related competencies, particularly honesty, self-control, and respect for authority, are meaningfully associated with lower aggression. Although effect sizes range from small to moderate, the consistency across dimensions underscores the practical importance of values formation in aggression prevention.

Implications for Strengthening Guidance and Counseling Services

Based on the study's findings, the following implications are proposed to strengthen the school's Guidance and Counseling Services in a comprehensive and developmentally responsive manner.

Developmentally Responsive and Differentiated Interventions. Given that most learners are in mid-to-late adolescence (16–17 years old), guidance programs should prioritize socio-emotional regulation, identity development, and healthy peer influence management appropriate for this developmental stage. With nearly equal representation of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, transition-focused interventions are recommended addressing adjustment concerns for Grade 11 learners and academic or career-related pressures for Grade 12 students. Considering the sex distribution and documented differences in aggression expression, gender-sensitive approaches should also be integrated to address both overt (physical) and relational forms of aggression. Furthermore, because many learners belong to academically demanding strands such as STEM, guidance programs should incorporate structured stress-management and resilience-building initiatives.

Family-Inclusive and Socio-Economic Sensitive Support Systems. The diversity in family structures and the high proportion of learners from low-income households highlight the need for family-inclusive interventions. Guidance services should strengthen parental engagement programs that recognize varied caregiving arrangements. Schools may implement differentiated parent education initiatives to address differences in parental educational attainment and employment conditions. Additionally, schools should integrate socio-emotional learning (SEL) and stress-coping interventions into classroom and counseling programs to help learners manage socio-economic pressures that may influence behavioral outcomes.

Preventive and Targeted Aggression Management Programs. While most students showed low levels of aggressive behavior, the fact that a small group reported frequent aggression shows why ongoing prevention matters. Schools should keep offering anger management and conflict resolution programs, as well as strengthen anti-bullying efforts that address all forms of aggression: physical, verbal, relational, and online. Teaching digital citizenship is also key to encouraging responsible online behavior. Early identification and focused counseling for students who repeatedly display aggression should be a priority. Maintaining positive discipline and strong child protection policies will help keep the school environment safe. Schools should also continue monitoring for peer exclusion and cyber incidents, even if such cases seem rare, because staying alert can help stop problems before they grow.

Strengthening Core Values Formation and Socio-Emotional Competencies. Given the significant negative relationship between aggressive behaviors and values-related issues, strengthening values formation is central to prevention. Guidance and counseling services should therefore sustain positive school climate practices promoting respect for authority and fair discipline. In addition, reinforce programs that promote responsibility, accountability, and academic integrity. Moreover, integrate moral reasoning and ethical decision-making discussions, particularly in academic contexts. Also, expand socio-emotional learning initiatives focusing on empathy, emotional regulation, impulse control, and stress management. Then, incorporate cognitive-behavioral

strategies to improve self-control and anger management. Also, expand socio-emotional learning initiatives focused on empathy, emotional regulation, impulse control, and stress management. Finally, strengthen assertiveness and decision-making skills to reduce susceptibility to negative peer pressure. Because honesty, integrity, discipline, and self-control showed stronger inverse relationships with aggression, guidance programs should prioritize these competencies as protective factors.

Comprehensive and Multi-Tiered Guidance Framework. Overall, the findings support developing a multi-tiered guidance and counseling framework that integrates developmental, family, school, peer, and digital dimensions. Preventive (Tier 1), targeted (Tier 2), and intensive (Tier 3) interventions should be systematically aligned to strengthen values formation while minimizing aggressive behaviors among Senior High School learners.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that aggressive behaviors among Senior High School learners were generally minimal, while positive values were strongly manifested across the assessed dimensions. Although physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression were not widespread, the presence of a small group of learners who reported more frequent aggressive behaviors indicates that these concerns should not be overlooked. Learners demonstrated strong respect for authority, responsibility and accountability, empathy and concern for others, and honesty and integrity, although discipline, self-control, and resistance to negative peer influence appeared comparatively less consistent. These findings suggest that the generally low levels of aggression may coexist with a strong foundation of positive values among the learners.

More importantly, the significant negative relationship between aggressive behaviors and values-related dimensions indicates that stronger positive values are associated with lower levels of aggression. The varying relationships across dimensions further suggest that specific values, particularly empathy, self-regulation, and positive peer norms, may play different roles in particular forms of aggressive behavior. The study therefore highlights the importance of sustaining school- and home-based efforts that strengthen values formation, emotional regulation, responsible decision-making, and healthy peer relationships. These findings provide a basis for strengthening guidance and counseling services through preventive and targeted interventions that address the needs of learners who may be more vulnerable to aggressive behavior.

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