

A Study on Assertiveness of Women in India

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to find out the self-assertiveness of women in India. Stratified random sampling technique was used in this research and the sample consisted of 156 women who were chosen. Scale of measuring assertiveness validated by Rathus (1967) was used to collect the relevant data. Mean, S.D, t-test and f-test were used in this study. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the self-assertiveness of women who had studied arts, science and language as their major subjects. Women who have studied science subjects are highly assertive when compared to the other women. It is suggested that science subject develops in a person open mindedness, problem solving skills and personality traits.

Key words: Assertiveness, women's study of science.

Introduction

Assertiveness is the ability to express the emotions and needs without violating others rights and in the same time without being aggressive. People who are not assertive do their best to avoid rejection by becoming overly nice to win their friends but they end up losing their self confidence.

Assertiveness is not about showing people that they can shout and it is not about scaring them off, but it's something between being aggressive and being passive. Assertiveness is the act of asking for what they want in a confident way that harms no one but in the same time preserves their rights.

Definition of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is defined as the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. In the field of psychology and psychotherapy, it is a learnable skill and a mode of communication.

Nature of Assertiveness

Assertiveness involves acting in your own best interests by expressing your thoughts and feelings directly and honestly (Alberti and Emmons, 2001; Bower and Bower, 1991, 2004). Essentially, assertiveness involves standing up for your rights when someone else is about to infringe on them. To be assertive is to speak out rather than pull your punches.

Assertive Body Language

- Stand straight, steady, and directly face the people to whom you are speaking while maintaining eye contact.
- Speak in a clear, steady voice - loud enough for the people to whom you are speaking to hear you.
- Speak fluently, without hesitation, and with assurance and confidence.

Characteristics of Assertive People

- They feel free to express their feelings, thoughts, and desires.
- They are also able to initiate and maintain comfortable relationships with other people.
- They know their rights.
- They have control over their anger. This does not mean that they repress this feeling; it means that they control anger and talk about it in a reasoning manner.
- Assertive people are willing to compromise with others, rather than always wanting their own way and they tend to have good self-esteem.

- Assertive people enter friendships from an 'I count my needs. I count your needs' position.

Types of Assertion

Assertiveness training as a method of personal development grew in popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, and the subject is now taught in many universities and colleges. Initially, it was seen primarily as a 'woman's subject' and associated with feminism, with the assertiveness training viewed as a means for women to escape from traditional, submissive female roles. The majority of assertiveness training students are still women, but over the years an increasing number of men have discovered its benefits.

Review of Related Literature

Bindhu (2011) conducted a study on self assertiveness and emotional intelligence of Higher Secondary Students.

The aim of the study was to find out if there is any significant relation between self assertiveness and emotional intelligence of higher secondary school students with respect to their gender and type of family. The study was carried out on a representative sample of 520 higher secondary school students of Kerala state. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed. Two standardized tools were used to collect data, namely, Rathu's Assertiveness Schedule and Emotional Intelligence Scale by Kumar, et al. The study revealed that there is a negative relationship between self assertiveness and emotional intelligence.

Tripathi, et al. (2010) conducted a study on Assertiveness and Personality: Cross-Cultural Differences in Indian and Serbian Male Students. The study investigated the differences in assertiveness and the ability to discriminate assertiveness from aggressive and defensive/passive behaviour and the relation among them across Indian and Serbian cultures, besides exploring the relationship between personality and assertiveness in both the cultures. Measures of assertiveness, scale of discrimination among assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour and Big-Five personality inventory were administered on Indian (N = 108) and Serbian (N = 116) engineering students. Results indicated significant difference in the assertive behaviour of Indian and Serbian samples apart from significant relationship between personality and assertiveness.

Significance of the Present Study

Being assertive does not mean you will get your wants and wishes. Rather, to be assertive means to stand up for yourself, your beliefs, your opinions without demanding others support you or even agree with you. The assertive person is not pushy, selfish, or rude. These people respect the rights of other while at the same time protecting their own rights. This attitude is a reflection of maturity and good self-esteem. The assertive person learns how to keep the lid on in stressful situations when expressing thoughts, feelings, and emotions and, at the same time, respecting the other person's thoughts, feelings, and emotions. So the assertive person has the strength of character to respect his/ her own feelings and thoughts and then show the same respect to others. This strength of character will enable everyone to be a better communication in any environment.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the level of self assertiveness of women in India.
2. To find out the level of self assertiveness of women with respect to their age , marital status, educational qualification, major subject, location, occupation.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the assertiveness of employed and unemployed women.
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the assertiveness of employed women working in private and government sectors.
5. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the assertiveness of women in teaching profession and other professions

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women with respect to their age, marital status, educational qualification, major subject, location and occupation.
2. There is no significant difference between the assertiveness of employed and unemployed women.
3. There is no significant difference between the assertiveness of employed women working in private and government sectors.

4. There is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women in teaching profession and other professions.

Methodology

Survey method has been used for this study.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Stratified random sampling technique had been used for this study and the sample size was 156. Data has been collected from women in Tamilnadu, India .

Selection of tool

The data collection tool consisted of two sections, the first section inquired the demographic information about the participants and the second section was an assertiveness questionnaire which tried to find out the assertiveness of the women. The investigator has used the validated tool which was prepared by Rathus (1967). Each item of the tool focuses to measure the assertiveness.

The assertiveness scale included 32 items, in which 12 items were positive and 20 items were negative. It is a four point scale. Therefore, the higher the score on the tool represents the lesser assertiveness. The three levels of assertiveness may range 32-64 represents high assertiveness, 65-96 represents moderate, 97- 128 represents low assertiveness.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

F- Test table for comparing the assertiveness of women studied arts, science, and language as their major subject.

Sources of variation	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-value	'p' value
Between groups	2	655.838	327.919	4.092	0.019
Within groups	153	12262.059	80.144		
Total	155	12917.897			

Since the p value 0.019 is less than 0.05 , the null hypothesis is rejected. So there is significant difference between the assertiveness of women **who had** studied arts, science, or language as their major subject. Since there is difference between the groups at 0.05 level, following Post-Hoc Tests were done.

Table 2

Post-Hoc Test-- Difference between the assertiveness of women studied arts, science, and language as their major subject.

Type	N	Mean	Type	N	Mean	P-Value
Arts	51	84.33	science	79	88.91	0.023
Science	79	88.91	language	26	86.53	0.345
Language	26	86.53	arts	51	84.33	0.466

Since 0.023 is lesser than 0.05, there is significant difference between women studied arts and science as their major subject. The mean score of assertiveness of women studied science is greater than that of women studied arts as their major subject.

Since 0.345 is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference between women studied science and language as their major subject.

Since 0.466 is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference between women studied arts and language as their major subject.

Table 3

Difference between the assertiveness of women with respect to marital status, location, employment and profession.

Marital status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated 't' value	'p' value	Level of Significance
Married	63	85.59	9.019	0.591	0.106	0.05
Unmarried	93	88.00	9.122			

Location						
Rural	97	86.64	9.000	0.675	0.500	0.05
Urban	59	87.66	9.380			
Employment						
Unemployed	84	87.43	10.012	0.181	0.553	0.05
Employed	72	86.56	8.021			
Profession						
Teaching	68	85.76	8.589	0.468	0.678	0.05
Other	17	86.71	7.131			

Since the p value 0.106 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of married and unmarried women.

Since the p value 0.500 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women in rural and urban area.

Since the p value 0.553 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of employed and unemployed women.

Since the p value 0.678 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women in teaching and other profession.

Findings

1. There is significant difference between the assertiveness of women who had studied arts, science or language as their major subject.
 - a. Since 0.023 is lesser than 0.05, there is significant difference between women studied arts and science as their major subject. The mean score of assertiveness of women studied science is greater than that of women studied arts as their major subject.

- b. Since 0.345 is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference between women studied science and language as their major subject.
 - c. Since 0.466 is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference between women studied arts and language as their major subject.
2. Since the p value 0.106 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of married and unmarried women.
 3. Since the p value 0.500 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women in rural and urban area.
 4. Since the p value 0.553 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of employed and unemployed women.
 5. Since the p value 0.678 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, so there is no significant difference between the assertiveness of women in teaching and other profession.

Discussion and Conclusion

Assertiveness is the ability to express the emotions and needs without violating others rights and in the same time without being aggressive. The results of this study reveal that there is a significant difference between self assertiveness of women with respect to their major subjects. It is also revealed that the science students are having higher level of assertiveness than the Arts subject students. We can conclude that science students are having open mindedness, problem solving skills and scientific way of approaching the problem with the scientific attitude when compared to other women.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **16:2 February 2016**
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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **16:2 February 2016**

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