

Assertiveness Among Hostellers and Day Scholars: A Comparative Study

Sunil Nayak¹, Dr. Sowmyashree K N²

¹II Year M.Sc., Department of Psychology, Jnanabharathi Campus, Bangalore University, Bengaluru

²Assistant Professor & Guide, Department of Psychology, Bangalore University, Bengaluru

Abstract

Assertiveness is the capacity to communicate one's ideas, feelings, and opinions in a straightforward, truthful, and suitable manner without infringing on the rights of others, which is known as assertiveness. The present study aimed to compare these variables among hostellers and day-scholars. The study was conducted on 100 participants aged between 21 and 25, including 50 hostellers and 50 day-scholars. Data was collected using a purposive and convenience sampling technique. Standardised tool Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, used to measure the respective variables. Descriptive statistics, a normality test, and independent sample t-tests were used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that hostellers and day-scholars did not differ in assertiveness.

Keywords: hostellers, day-scholars, assertiveness.

1. Introduction

Study Background

There are numerous opportunities for personal development and many challenges with moving to higher education. Students move into a new stage of life marked by changes in their surroundings, social adjustments, emotional upheavals, and academic demands. The development and use of diverse psychological strengths and coping mechanisms are required due to these changes. Assertiveness essential psychological trait affecting students' mental health, interpersonal relationships and academic achievement.

Higher education living arrangements can significantly impact a student's psychological development, especially if they live at home (day-scholar) or in a hostel (hosteller). Hostellers must handle academic, emotional, and practical difficulties independently since they frequently live far from parental support. However, non-hostel people who live at home typically have more support from their families, but they might not have the independence or life-changing experiences that come with living in a hostel. Examining how residential status affects psychological resources like assertiveness is made possible by these diverse life contexts.

Conceptual Framework

❖ Assertiveness:

The capacity to communicate one's ideas, feelings, and opinions in a straightforward, truthful, and suitable manner without infringing on the rights of others is known as assertiveness. The statement states, "Assertiveness is the ability to express one's feelings, opinions, and needs in a direct, honest, and appropriate way without violating others' rights." Emmons, M. L., and R. E. Alberti (2001). "A confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without the need for aggression is a form of behaviour characterised by assertiveness." (S. A. Rathus, 1973). It is essential for upholding one's dignity and cultivating fruitful interpersonal interactions. Strong assertiveness skills increase students' likelihood of engaging in active class participation, negotiating with peers, and bucking harmful peer pressure. Compared to people who live at home and have less exposure to peers, hostellers may exhibit higher levels of assertiveness due to their constant social engagement and negotiation with peers, roommates, and staff. Another essential element of interpersonal functioning and psychological health is assertiveness. Using a behavioural framework, early theorists such as Joseph Wolpe (1958) believed that assertiveness was a learned behaviour that could be cultivated through desensitisation, modelling, and reinforcement. According to this perspective, assertiveness ranges from passive to aggressive communication. Aaron Beck created the Cognitive-Behavioural Theory (CBT) in 1976, and it later included assertiveness in its framework by associating insecure behaviour with maladaptive thought patterns like guilt or rejection anxiety. Restructuring these ideas and honing appropriate communication techniques are the main goals of CBT-based assertiveness training. Furthermore, the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, created by Spencer Rathus in 1973, views assertiveness as a quantifiable quality with practical applications in social adjustment, education, and anxiety. Restructuring these ideas and honing appropriate communication techniques are the main goals of CBT-based assertiveness training.

❖ Hostellers

Students who live in institutional hostels, frequently far from their families, are known as hostellers. This arrangement encourages self-reliance, self-control, and exposure to diverse social contexts. Hostel students often have to negotiate social interactions, manage responsibilities independently, and cope with challenges without immediate family support.

❖ Day-scholars

On the other hand, non-hostellers commute to college and live with their families or in private housing. Their family members typically offer them logistical and emotional support, which can be consoling and dependable. This could, however, also reduce their chances of making decisions independently and being directly exposed to the variety of peer dynamics typical in hostel life.

The current study's conceptual framework is based on established psychological theories describing how individual and environmental factors affect students' development. The framework is organised around fundamental psychological concepts of assertiveness. It also examines how these constructs relate to students' residential status, specifically whether they live in a hostel.

Need and Importance of the Study

Understanding how students' living situations, whether at home or in hostels, impact their psychological health and personal growth has drawn more attention in recent years. Students must cultivate critical psychological qualities like assertiveness to meet college life's academic, social and emotional challenges. These characteristics are essential for efficient functioning, particularly as people enter emerging adulthood and move toward increased autonomy and accountability.

Assertiveness is the capacity to communicate one's ideas, feelings, and opinions in a straightforward, truthful, and suitable manner without infringing on the rights of others, which is known as assertiveness. Whether a student lives at home or in a hostel, their residential environment can significantly impact how these psychological characteristics develop. Independently managing routines, social interactions, and responsibilities is a common requirement for hostellers, which can foster greater personal development. Although they enjoy the stability and support of their families, non-hostels may not have many opportunities to practice self-control and assertiveness independently. Therefore, contrasting these two groups can provide important information about how living conditions affect students' development.

Importance of Study

- It contributes to developing studies on students' personal growth and mental health in various living situations.
- It gives academic institutions evidence-based recommendations to improve student support networks, counselling services, and hostel life.
- It helps determine whether living in a hostel improves or detracts from psychological qualities like confidence, adaptability, and social skills.
- It helps educators, hostel wardens, and Policymakers to create training curricula that encourage students, irrespective of their living situation, to be assertive.

By investigating how residential status may influence important psychological traits that are necessary for both academic success and emotional well-being, this study seeks to close a significant research gap.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anuradha Kumari et al. (2025). This study aimed to examine nursing students' assertiveness and self-esteem. Method: An assertiveness training program was prepared and implemented for 45 nursing students via a one-day, 3-hour interactive face-to-face workshop after the pre-test. Assertiveness training can be an effective measure of improving self-esteem and teaching assertive communication skills to nursing students. This will help in producing assertive nurses in the future.

ElBarazi, Amani Safwat et al. (2024). To investigate the impact of assertiveness training on lowering anxiety, stress, and depression among college students at a private university in Cairo. It is possible that increasing an individual's level of assertiveness might be a helpful strategy for reducing feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression.

Reyhan Eskiuyurt et al. (2025). This study aimed to develop a cognitive behavioural therapy-based assertiveness training program to improve the nursing students' competencies and to evaluate its effectiveness. The study was completed with 53 students, 28 in the training group and 25 in the control

group. The results showed that the training program decreased the passive behaviours of nursing students and improved their assertive behaviours.

Parastoo Golshiri et al (2023). This study was a randomised clinical trial. The target population was 10th-grade female high school students in Isfahan, Iran. Ninety-six female public high school students were included in the study and allocated to two groups: 32 for the intervention group and 64 for the control group. Six 90-minute sessions were considered for problem-solving and assertiveness skill training, which included lectures, question and answer, movie displaying, brainstorming and role-play. The present study's findings showed that educational intervention based on problem-solving and assertiveness can enhance self-esteem and mental health in students.

Ahmad Ali Eslami (2016). This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of assertiveness training on the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression of high school students. A total of 126 second-grade high school students were collected using a simple random sampling method and divided into two groups: experimental with 63 participants and control with the same number. The results of the current study show that conducting assertive training in high school students decreases their anxiety, stress, and depression.

Galata Sitota (2018). The present study examined the relationship between assertiveness and academic achievement motivation of adolescent students in selected Harari Peoples Regional State secondary schools among a sample of 332 (145 males and 187 females). Findings indicated that Harari people's regional state adolescent students who participated in the present study scored low on assertiveness; male adolescents were found to be better in their levels of assertiveness than their female teenage counterparts. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between assertiveness and academic achievement motivation.

Methodology

Overview

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the current study, " Assertiveness among Hostellers and Day-scholars: A Comparative Study." The process, population and sample, data collection tools, statistical techniques, and research design are all described. The study aims to compare postgraduate hosteller and day-scholar students' assertiveness levels quantitatively.

Research Design

Using a quantitative, in-between-group research design, the present study investigates the differences in assertiveness between hostellers and day-scholars. Objective psychological variables can be measured and statistically analysed across two groups thanks to the design.

Aim: To compare the levels of Assertiveness among Hostellers and Day scholars.

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of Assertiveness among Hostellers and Day scholars.
2. To compare Assertiveness among Hostellers and Day-scholar students.

Hypothesis:

- H_{03} : There is no significant difference in assertiveness levels between hostellers and day-scholars.

Variables:

The following variables were looked at in this study:

Independent variables:

- Hostellers
- Day-scholars

Dependent Variables:

- Assertiveness

Operational definition:

Hostellers: for this study, Hostellers are defined as students who have been residing in the college/institution hostel for a continuous period of at least six months before data collection and who stay in the hostel for a minimum of five nights per week during the academic term.

Day scholars: Day scholars are defined as students who do not stay in the hostel and travel regularly from their permanent or rented accommodation to attend classes daily.

Assertiveness: the capacity to communicate one's feelings, needs, and rights in a direct, honest, and respectful manner without violating the rights of others. Measured by:

- The ability to express opinions needs to be clear
- Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries
- Communicate effectively without aggression and passively
- Standing up for oneself without violating others' rights

Materials:

- Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS)
- Keys and norms
- Writing Materials

Population and sample

The study participants were postgraduate students enrolled at Bangalore University's Jnanabharthi campus who lived at home or in the Hostel. A combination of convenience and random sampling methods was used to choose a sample of 100 students (50 hostellers and 50 day-scholars). The participants represented a diverse academic background and were between the ages of 21 and 26.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**Inclusion Criteria:**

- Postgraduate Students
- Willing to participate
- Residing in a Hostel or at Home

Exclusion criteria:

- Students with diagnosed psychological disorders.
- Incomplete responses

Procedure:

A pilot study was conducted on a small group of Hostellers and day-scholars using the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) to assess the levels of Assertiveness among the samples. From the results obtained, the objectives and the hypothesis of the study were formulated. Later, the scales were administered to the subject through a questionnaire using a survey method with appropriate instructions. The instructions were mentioned, and the Subjects were asked to respond to the items accordingly. The Scores were obtained and analysed using suitable statistical methods (SPSS).

Instruction:

“Here are some statements related to Assertiveness. Go through the statements carefully and mark your responses accordingly. Ensure you respond honestly to all the items and do not leave any statements unanswered. Your responses will be kept Confidential”.

Precautions:

- The Researcher should make sure the Subject has understood the instructions properly.
- The Researcher should clarify doubts
- The Subject should answer all the statements without fail.
- The subject should be informed to answer honestly.

Scale/Questionnaire**The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule**

Spencer A. Rathus created the popular self-report tool, the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS), in 1973 to gauge a person's assertiveness. It is beneficial for evaluating behavioural changes after assertiveness training programs and assessing assertiveness in clinical and research settings. There is no neutral option on the scale, which has 30 items with ratings on a 6-point scale from +3 ("Very characteristic of me") to -3 ("Very uncharacteristic of me"). Reverse scoring is necessary for 17 items (1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11–17, 19, 23, 24, 26, and 30). The respondent's overall assertiveness is reflected in the total score after correcting for reversed items; higher positive scores indicate stronger assertive tendencies, while higher negative scores indicate lower assertiveness. With a split-half reliability of 0.77 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.78 over two months, the RAS has shown strong psychometric qualities and moderate to high internal consistency. Its reliability was further supported by Gustafson's (1992) Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. Additionally, the scale has demonstrated discriminant validity, especially when differentiating between aggression and assertiveness.

Results and Discussion

Data analysis has a vital role in the interpretation of the research findings. Data is always collected with a purpose in mind. The data for the present study were collected with the help of the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) 30-item scale by Spencer A. Rathus. The findings of the statistical analyses were based on the variations in assertiveness between hostellers and day-scholars. Using SPSS, descriptive and proper statistics were used to analyse the data gathered from the 100 participants aged between 21 and 25 (50 hostellers and 50 day-scholars).

Table 1: Showing descriptive statistics and normality test in assertiveness of hostellers and day-scholars.

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Assertiveness Score	100	6.85	25.717	.363	.241	-.602	.478
Group (Hosteller/Day-scholar)	100	1.50	.503	.000	.241	-2.041	.478
Valid N (listwise)	100						

The shows present descriptive statistics for the assertiveness of hostellers and day-scholars.

With a sample size(N) of 100, Assertiveness scores showed a mean of 6.85 but had a notably high standard deviation of 25.72, with moderate positive skewness of 0.363 and slight platykurtosis of -0.602, indicating substantial variability in responses. The group variable, coded as 1= hostellers and 2=day-scholars, had a mean of 1.50 with a standard deviation of .503, no skewness and strong negative kurtosis of -2.041. Overall, the distributions of the variables were approximately normal, with the expectation of asset return, which may require further **investigation** due to its high variability.

Table 2: shows the mean, standard deviation, standard error of mean, and t-test of hostellers and day-scholars in assertiveness.

Independent sample t-test					
Residential status		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Assertiveness	Hostellers	50	9.70	28.705	.270**
	Day-scholars	50	4.00	22.263	.270**

**** Sign at level of 0.05**

The above table compares the mean scores for assertiveness between hostellers and day-scholars, using a t-test to assess significance.

For Assertiveness, hostellers have a mean score of 9.70 with an SD of 28.705, while day-scholars have a lower mean score of 4.00 with an SD of 22.263. The t-test value is 1.110, and the significance (p-value) equals .270. The result revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups, while hostellers had a higher mean assertiveness score than day-scholars, but the difference was not important. Hence, the third hypothesis is accepted, which states that “There is no significant difference in assertiveness levels between hostellers and day-scholars”.

The present study, supported by Kumari and Shukla (2016), conducted a comparative analysis and found no significant difference in assertiveness level between hostel and day scholar students. While another study by Mehta and Singh (2020) found that higher assertiveness in hostel students is due to increased social interaction and independence, the current findings do not support that trend.

Shehzadi et al. (2019) found that day scholars scored significantly higher on assertiveness and related traits compared to hostellers. These findings show assertiveness may be shaped more by personal, cultural, and environmental variables than by hostel residency alone.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate how residential status has a significant impact on college students' psychological strengths. The lack of a significant difference in assertiveness levels between hostellers and day-scholars, however, suggests that other factors, such as personality traits, upbringing, or individual temperament, may have a greater impact on assertiveness than just living arrangements. Overall, the study emphasises how living in a dorm has a positive psychological effect on students, particularly in terms of improving their capacity to handle difficulties and have faith in their own abilities.

References

1. Singh, P., Paniyadi, N. K., & Kumari, A. (2025). *Effectiveness of assertiveness training on self-esteem and assertiveness among nursing students*. *International Journal of Nursing Education*, 17(1), 45–52. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389028215>
2. Yildirim, N., & Aydin, A. (2025). *Effect of assertiveness skills training on nursing students' self-esteem, self-confidence, and communication skills*. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 20(1), 100–105. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0883941725000081>
3. Fernandes, S., & Nair, M. (2024). *Understanding facilitators for assertiveness among college students in India: A qualitative study*. *Current Psychology*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12144-024-05763-6>
4. Ganji, K., et al. (2024). *Efficiency of assertiveness training on the stress, anxiety, and depression of college students*. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 13(7), 150–156. https://journals.lww.com/jehp/fulltext/2024/07050/efficiency_of_assertiveness_training_on_the.203.aspx
5. Pusceddu, M., Pinna, R., Pitzalis, M., & Deriu, M. A. (2023). *Assertiveness in nursing: A systematic review*. *Education Sciences*, 15(3), 102. <https://www.mdpi.com/2039-4403/15/3/102>
6. Rani, D., Kumari, A., & Joseph, D. (2023). *Effectiveness of assertiveness training on self-esteem and assertiveness among nursing students*. *Journal of Advanced Nursing Practice*, 8(1), 22–29. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389028215>
7. Mousavizadeh, S., et al. (2023). *The effect of problem-solving and assertiveness training on self-esteem and mental health in high school female students*. *BMC Psychology*, 11(1), 154. <https://bmcp psychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-023-01154-x>
8. Arega, N. A. (2019). *Assertiveness and academic achievement motivation of adolescent students: The case of secondary schools in Bahir Dar city administration, Ethiopia*. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(2), 90–101. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1201589.pdf>
9. Speed, B. C., Goldstein, B. L., & Goldfried, M. R. (2018). *Assertiveness training: A forgotten evidence-based treatment*. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 25(1), e12216.

10. Shahraki, Z., Mirshekari, M., & Zarei, M. (2016). *Effectiveness of assertiveness training on the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among high school students*. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences*, 10(3), e3064.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4752719>
11. Kelly, K. E. (2002). *Construct validity of the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule*. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 79(1), 70–90.
12. Rathus, S. A. (1973). *A 30-item schedule for assessing assertive behaviour*. *Behaviour Therapy*, 4(3), 398–406.
13. Alberti, R. E., & Emmons, M. L. (2017). *Your perfect right: Assertiveness and equality in your life and relationships* (10th ed.). New Harbinger Publications.
14. Alberti, R. E., & Emmons, M. L. (2008). *Your perfect right: Assertiveness and equality in your life* (9th ed.). New Harbinger Publications.
15. Mayo Clinic Staff. (2024). *Being assertive: Reduce stress, communicate better*. Mayo Clinic.
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/assertive/art-20044644>