



Study on Challenges of Peer Influence Among Adolescents

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Abstract

This paper seeks to research the difficulties facing students in interaction with peers, especially how peer pressure impacts their conduct, learning achievement and their psychological well-being. Employing a mixed-methods approach with structured questionnaires and semi structured interviews, the study assesses the level of peer influence on vulnerability to negatives such as risk-taking behaviors, poor academic performance, and increased rates of emotional disturbances. The study embraced 100 adolescents of between 13 and 18 years and employed stratified random sampling on school going youths. According to the researchers the results show that peer pressure plays a huge role in influencing the adolescents' decision-making process which most of the time puts them at risk. Interventions on what should be done involve advice to adolescent social work on how to empower them not to be influenced negatively by peers.

Keywords: Bullying, friends, teenagers, academic achievement, behavioral problems, conduct disorders, mental health.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental phase that is associated with numerous developmental changes that are physical, emotional and social. This is the age when peer pressure is magnified as the child tries to find his or her independence and fit in a group of friends. Indeed, as helpful and constructive as peer pressure can be in other ways like in the promotion of social skills as well as the offering of emotional support, it is also characterized by a number of difficulties. Antisocial pressure can result in reckless behaviors among adolescents including substance use, school dropout and delinquent behavior leading to poor grades and high rates of depression. This paper will therefore seek to establish the difficulties of peer pressure among teenagers and among other things, measures that could be taken to deal with this vice.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- Consider the role of peer pressure in acting on the behavior of adolescents.
- Use peer pressure as an independent variable and academic performance as the dependent

variable and then examine the correlation between the two among adolescents.

- Discuss the influence of peers on mental health in adolescents.
- Suggest appropriate social work interventions which enable the adolescent to avoid the effects of the negative peer pressure.

3. Sampling Technique

The study uses a stratified random sampling technique in order to get a sample of adolescents which is equally representative of both Private and Government schools in Coimbatore. The method facilitates generation of a diverse sample based on age, gender, and status of school; whether it is private or Government in order to capture an array of views on peer influence.

4. Sampling Details

- Population: Adolescents aged 13-18 years from high schools in Coimbatore District.
- Sample Size: 100 students.
- Stratification Criteria: Age group (13-15, 16-18), gender (male, female), and school type



(Government, Private). Table 1 shows Sampling Technique Table

Table 1 Sampling Technique Table

Criteria	Number of Participants	Percentage of Total Sample
Age Group		
13-15 years	50	50%
16-18 years	50	50%
Gender		
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%
School Type		
Government	60	60%
Private	40	40%

5. Findings

The study reveals several key challenges associated with peer influence among adolescents:

- **Behavioural Impact:** Risky behaviors (such as substance use, truancy) were indicated by 65% of the adolescents whom most of them attributed to pressure from peers.
- **Academic Performance:** Peer pressure negatively impacted respondents' academic performance by a margin of 55%; distractions from study and influence towards negative attitudes about schoolwork were cited commonly. Table 2 shows Findings Table
- **Mental Health:** Thus, according to the survey, it was found that nearly 48% of adolescents experienced stress, anxiety or depression in relation to the problem of peers' pressure.

Table 2 Findings Table

Impact Area	Positive Influence (%)	Negative Influence (%)
Behavioural Impact	35%	65%
Academic Impact	45%	55%
Mental Health	52%	48%

6. Social Work Interventions

To address the challenges of peer influence, the following social work interventions are recommended:

- **Peer Education Programs:** Design interventions that increase levels of pro-social engagement among peers as well as hundred students with positive examples of behaviors.
- **Counselling and Support Groups:** Conduct parental and peer counselling and support groups that can educate adolescents on possible negative peer pressure and the ways they could be handled.
- **Parental Involvement:** Motivate parents to be involved in their adolescent's life and ensure that they are always discussing with them issues to do with peer pressure and decision making.
- **School-Based Interventions:** Schools should implement the strategies and measures which would help the students to make the right decision and not be induced by negative influences, for example, the practical sessions on assertiveness training.

Conclusion

Peer pressure plays a major role in the development of adolescent age due to their influence in nature and nurture of these young learners. Peer pressure is generally a negative influence on the adolescents as it leads them to wrong thinking and wrong practices. This however does not mean that autonomy that emanates from peer pressure is negative in every aspect since it can turn to be positive when controlled. To deal with the negative impacts which have been outlined above therefore, direct social work interventions become paramount. In other words, it is possible to help adolescents learn how to deal with such pressure in a positive way, with the help of such measures as forming the necessary conditions for constructive interactions with peers, providing an opportunity to receive counselling and



participate in programs that support personal resilience, and, finally, involving parents and educators. These are some of the strategies that are very important in helping young persons to grow and stand to be responsible citizens in societies amidst the influence from peers.

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