



ICHSECMICE -2025 11-12th October 2025

Sardar Patel Institute of Higher Education, Kurukshetra

Exploring Gender-Based Variations in Peer Pressure Among Secondary School Students in Punjab

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Abstract

The present study investigated gender difference of peer pressure among secondary school students of Punjab. For this study a sample of 560 adolescents were chosen from different regions of Punjab Majha, Doaba, and Malwa regions. in accordance with the following criteria, using a stratified sample technique. Drs. Sunil Saini and Sandeep Singh peer pressure scale was used. The results stated that the mean scores of peer pressure among males and females are as 95.43 and 96.62 respectively. T- ratio is calculates as $-.429$ with df 558 and p -value is $.668$. Given that women's mean score is higher than men's, it indicates that peer pressure is more prevalent among women than among men.

Keywords: Peer pressure, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Peer pressure is the influence that members of the similar social circle put on one another to adopt particular attitudes, beliefs, or actions, frequently in an effort to be accepted or prevent rejection. It may be constructive, promoting desirable behaviours like academic success, or destructive, resulting in dangerous behaviours like substance misuse (Brown et al., 2008). Developing ways to encourage good social impacts and lessen negative consequences requires an understanding of the impact of peer pressure. One important outside influence that greatly influences secondary school students' job decisions is peer pressure.

Peer pressure has the power to influence people in a variety of ways, affecting their choices and opinions on various career pathways. One important aspect of these young people's life is the impact of their peers. Students usually cave in to peer pressure because they want to feel like they belong and receive social acceptance. Peers and friends may have a significant impact on a student's decision about their future career by either encouraging them to pursue certain disciplines or discouraging them from pursuing others. Actually, "our stereotype of the harmful influences from friends is not the only way that peer influence is complex." First, peer influence may take both positive and negative forms. Peer pressure really motivates young people to put forth more effort in the classroom, volunteer for the community and social services, play sports, and engage in other admirable activities, despite the common misconception that it leads to teens engaging in harmful and dangerous behaviours.

Peer pressure has a big influence on how people think, feel, and behave during adolescence, which is a crucial time for psychological development. The increased demand for social acceptability, which can affect identity development and self-esteem, is one of the most noticeable psychological changes (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). When striving to live up to peer standards, adolescents may feel more stressed and anxious, which can cause emotional instability and mood swings (Brown et al., 2008). Because the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain involved in impulse control and thinking, is still developing, peer pressure can also affect how people make decisions and take risks (Casey et al., 2008).

Teens may therefore resort to actions they would normally refrain from, including substance abuse or disobedience to rules, in an effort to win over their peers. Furthermore, peer pressure can change how teenagers view right and wrong, resulting in moral and ethical quandaries that have an impact on their long-term psychological health (Santor et al., 2000). Positive peer impact can promote resilience, confidence, and the development of social skills, but negative peer pressure can exacerbate mental health conditions including depression and poor self-worth



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(Kirk, 2019). Thus, it is essential to comprehend the psychological effects of peer pressure in order to help teenagers develop positive social skills and mental health.

When friends support or encourage someone to make wise decisions, develop healthy habits, or engage in constructive activities, this is known as positive peer pressure. According to Brown et al. (2008), this type of peer pressure can result in academic achievement, personal development, and general well-being. Peer pressure, whether good and bad, emphasizes the strength of social impact. Negative peer pressure can result in harmful decisions, whilst good peer pressure can promote development and healthy behaviour. To effectively navigate peer influence, one must cultivate self-awareness, confidence, and the capacity for autonomous decision-making.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In order to comprehend how peer pressure impacts boys and girls differently during a crucial developmental period, the research "Exploring Gender-Based Variations in Peer Pressure Among Secondary School Students in Punjab" is necessary and significant. In order to create gender-sensitive guidance programs, encourage sound decision-making, and lessen harmful peer pressure, schools, parents, and counsellors must recognize these distinctions. By providing insights unique to Punjab's sociocultural setting, the study also closes a regional research gap and contributes to the development of more successful educational and psychological treatments.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To discover the gender difference of Peer pressure among secondary school going adolescents of Punjab

1.2 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There will be a noteworthy difference of gender of Peer pressure among secondary school going adolescents of Punjab

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Singh et al., (2023) The brief period of a person's life known as adolescence is what molds their entire life, both personally and professionally. Adolescents must deal with a variety of concerns, such as peer and parental pressure, problems with their bodies, low self-esteem, etc. Males and females, or both sexes, have different experiences and are not the same. The purpose of this essay is to examine the differences between teenage males and girls with regard to peer pressure, parental pressure, and self-esteem. The study's sample consisted of 200 teens sandwiched between the ages of 16 and 18, 100 of which were males and 100 of which were females. The results showed that peer pressure, parental pressure, and self-esteem all differed significantly by gender. Male adolescents were shown to be under more peer pressure than female adolescents, whereas female adolescents were found to have significantly greater levels of self-esteem and perceived parental pressure.

Nihaya A. et al., (2018) to evaluate the connection amongst teenage peer pressure and the risk of eating disorders. Students from the eighth through tenth grades, of both sexes, were recruited from northern Jordanian schools using a correlational, descriptive, cross-sectional design that employed a multistage group sampling technique. 738 participants completed an online, self-administered questionnaire that provided the data. Between adolescents with disordered eating habits and those with normal eating behaviours, there was a statistically important difference in the overall mean of the Inventory of Peer Influence on Eating Concerns (I-PIEC). The mean scores for likeability were statistically greater for boys than for girls, whereas the mean scores for interaction peer pressure were statistically higher for girls than for boys.

Sangeetha et al., (2015) The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between teenage happiness and peer pressure, as well as any gender-specific differences and the

International Advance Journal of Engineering, Science and Management (IAJESM)

Multidisciplinary, Multilingual, Indexed, Double-Blind, Open Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed-

International Journal, Impact factor (SJIF) = 8.152



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happiness and peer pressure of middle-aged and late-adolescent adolescents. A total of 120 teenagers from Bangalore made up the sample. The sample was given the Peer Pressure Scale by Singh and Saini (2010) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills and Argyle (2001). The 'r' and *t* tests developed by Pearson were used to analyse the collected data. The results showed that among teenagers, peer pressure and happiness had a substantial negative correlation. Furthermore, there were no discernible gender variations in adolescents' levels of happiness or peer pressure, nor were there any significant differences between middle-aged and late-adolescents.

MA Adeniyi et al., (2015) The impact of peer pressure on teenage social conduct is covered in this essay. One hundred participants were chosen at random from five secondary schools in Lagos State's Amuwo-Odofin Local Education District. The sample was given a twenty-item Peer Pressure on Adolescent Behaviour Questionnaire (PPABQ). Peer pressure was predicted to have no discernible impact on social behaviour, gender, self-concept, or parental raising style. This theory was approved. Peer pressure was found to have no discernible effect on the variables under investigation.

RESEARCH GAP

While peer pressure among adolescents has been broadly studied, there is a lack of focused research examining gender-based differences in how peer pressure is experienced and responded to by secondary school students in Punjab. Most existing studies are either generalized across regions or do not differentiate adequately between male and female experiences. Moreover, sociocultural factors unique to Punjab, such as traditional gender roles, academic expectations, and social dynamics, may influence peer pressure differently across genders. This creates a significant gap in understanding how boys and girls in Punjab perceive, internalize, and react to peer influences, which this study aims to address.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Along with a variety of data collecting and analysis strategies, research methodology encompasses both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In psychology, research methodology refers to the specific techniques and methods used to investigate psychological processes and address research questions. Not all psychologists use the same techniques.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The current study has looked into a sample of 560 adolescents from different secondary schools in Punjab's Majha, Doaba, and Malwa regions. in accordance with the following criteria, using a stratified sample technique.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL USED

1. Peer pressure scale- The **Peer Pressure Scale** developed by **Dr. Sunil Saini and Dr. Sandeep Singh** is a standardized psychological tool designed to assess the influence of peer pressure among adolescents, particularly in school settings. The scale measures how much an individual is affected by the opinions, behaviours, and expectations of their peer group. It includes various dimensions such as peer conformity, social acceptance, and resistance to peer influence. Widely used in educational and research contexts, this scale helps in identifying the extent to which peer pressure impacts students' decision-making, behaviour, and overall psychological well-being.

VARIABLE OF THE STUDY

1. PEER PRESSURE

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A statistical technique T-Test was used to find out gender-based difference among peer pressure



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Table 1.1: Showing gender-based difference with regards to peer pressure

PEER PRESSURE							
GENDER	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	df	't' value	P value	REMARK
MALE	280	95.43	33.28	558		-.429	.668
FEMALE	280	96.62	32.53	Insignificant			

According to this table, the mean scores of peer pressure among males and females are as 95.43 and 96.62 respectively. T- ratio is calculates as -.429 with df 558 and p-value is .668 which is insignificant at 0.01 as well as 0.05 level of confidence as the mean score of females is greater is than males it means that in females there is high level of peer pressure as compare to males. The mean score shown in the accompanying table depicts of peer pressure among males and females as there is insignificant difference found in males and females on peer pressure but there is a minor variation in mean score so therefore the hypothesis stated—**There will be a gender difference of gender peer pressure among secondary school students stand rejected.**

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT:

As there was minor variation in the peer pressure of males and females. females had high level of peer pressure as comparative to males because Peer pressure is more common among female secondary school students than boys for a variety of psychological, social, and cultural reasons. In general, social and emotional ties are valued more highly by females. In order to preserve connections and prevent social rejection, they are more inclined to follow group standards. Teenage girls frequently worry more about their peers' opinions of them. They might experience pressure to blend in, particularly with relation to social conduct, beauty standards, and fashion.

On social media, where peer comparisons are fierce, girls are frequently more active. There is additional pressure to fit in due to trends, beauty standards, and lifestyle demands. Girls' appearance and behaviour are generally more important to society. Peer groups put more pressure on women by reinforcing expectations for body image, fashion, and beauty standards. According to research, both positive and negative peer evaluations have a greater emotional impact on girls. They are more vulnerable to peer pressure because they fear rejection or exclusion. Indirect kinds of peer pressure, such exclusion, gossip, or silent treatment, are more common among girls.

Compared to the direct peer pressure that boys frequently experience, this kind of social pressure can be more powerful and challenging to resist. Girls frequently feel pressured to maintain social acceptance while achieving academic excellence. Peer pressure and increased stress levels may result from these two expectations. It's possible that boys are more prone to reject or fight against peer pressure by claiming their individuality. However, because they have a greater desire to keep friendships harmonious, girls may absorb the pressure.

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