

## Peer Pressure and Psychological Well being among Adolescents: A Correlational Study

Shashi Rashmi<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*Adolescents are individuals who are in the stage of development between childhood and adulthood. It is marked by increased independence, self-discovery, and the formation of personal identity. In this stage, they establish deeper relationships with peers which can shape their beliefs, values, and attitudes. Peer groups play an important role in the life of adolescents as they influence their thinking, perception, behaviour. Thus the purpose of the current study was to find out the relationship between peer pressure and psychological wellbeing among adolescents. Data was collected through peer pressure scale and psychological well-being Questionnaire. A sample of 60 adolescents from Rohtak district was taken. Findings of the present study revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being among adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Peer Pressure, Psychological Well-being, Adolescents

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### About authors

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Psychology,  
M.D. University, Rohtak

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents, also known as teenagers or young adults, are individuals who are in the stage of development between childhood and adulthood. This period is typically characterized by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes as they transition from childhood to adulthood (Larson, Wilson, Brown, Furstenberg, & Verma, 2002). It is marked by increased independence, self-discovery, and the formation of personal identity. This is the stage where adolescents develop their own beliefs, values, and moral reasoning. They begin to think more critically and question authority, including their parents and societal norms. Adolescence is also a time of exploration and experimentation. They may engage in risk-taking behaviours as they navigate newfound freedoms and societal pressures. Pressure means giving force to any actions (Daniel & Felix 2014). Socially adolescents seek independence and form new relationships with peers who can shape their beliefs, values, and attitudes. They often establish deeper relationships with peers and may become

more influenced by their social environment. They often feel pressure from their peer groups in various aspects of life. Peer pressure is the influence that peers or friends have on thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of an individual. While these general characteristics apply to many adolescents still their experiences can vary widely due to factors such as culture, family dynamics, socioeconomic status, peer groups and personal circumstances. Understanding and supporting adolescents during this transitional period is crucial for their overall well-being and successful transition into adulthood. Chein, Albert, O's, Uckert, & Steinberg (2010) found that teenagers exhibit overt peer pressure by engaging in risky behaviour like stealing, smoking, using drugs, or participating in other risky activities. They also exhibit covert peer pressure by adopting fashion trends like hairstyles and clothing. During adolescence, the desire to fit in and be accepted by peers is particularly strong, leading to increased susceptibility to peer pressure. Adolescents seek social validation and acceptance, and they often look to their peers for

guidance on what is considered “normal or desirable behaviour”. Peer pressure can occur in positive as well as negative manner. Positive peer pressure can have beneficial effects on adolescents. It can motivate them to engage in healthy behaviours, pursue academic achievements, or develop positive hobbies. Okorodudu (2010) revealed positive peer pressure can be a force for good and beneficial change in youngsters’ life. However, negative peer pressure can also be influential and potentially harmful. Peer pressure is the impact that peer groups have on individuals by rewarding those who follow accepted standards and penalizing those who do not (Mistry, 2019). Adolescents may feel pressured to engage in risky behaviours such as smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs etc. They have fear being labeled as “uncool” if they do not conform to these behaviours which affect their wellbeing. Psychological well-being refers to a person's complete sense of enjoyment, satisfaction, and fulfillment in life. It goes beyond the mere absence of mental illness and encompasses a person’s positive psychological state. Peer groups play an important role in the life of adolescents. Adolescents and peer pressure often have a significant relationship. Steinberg and Monahan (2007) found that younger adolescents were more susceptible to peer pressure and were more likely to experience negative psychological outcomes, such as anxiety and depression whereas Anthonyraj and Sasikala (2017) revealed that there is no connection between peer pressure and psychological health on autonomy dimension. Peers influence the individual’s thinking, perception, and behaviour. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents.

### Objectives

To find out the relationship between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents.

### Hypothesis

There would be a significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents.

### Method

#### Design

A correlational design was used for the current study.

#### Sample

For the present study, total 60 adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls ) studying in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes of different private schools from Rohtak District, Haryana was taken. The age range of these adolescents was between 15-17 years.

#### Tools

Following tools have been used for the present study.

1) *Peer Pressure Scale* (PPS)

2) *Psychological well- being scale*

#### Peer Pressure Scale

Peer Pressure Scale was developed by Singh and Saini in 2010. It consists of 25 statements on five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is a self administered scale with positive and negative statements. Scoring for positive items is 1,2,3,4 and 5 and vice versa. The reliability of the test was 0.77.

#### Psychological well- being scale

Psychological well- being scale was developed by Sisodia and Chaudhary in 2012. It consists of 50 items with five dimensions i.e. life satisfaction, efficiency , sociability , mental health and interpersonal relationship. It is a self administered scale with five likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and 5,4,3,2, and 1 scores were given respectively. The range of the scores on the entire scale was 50-250. A higher score indicates higher psychological well-being and vice-versa.

The test-retest reliability was 0.87 and the validity was 0.94.

### Procedure

Firstly, the contact with adolescents was done individually and then the purpose of the study was explained to the adolescents. After establishing good rapport, instructions were

given regarding the scales. Because there was no time limit to administer the test, the subjects were asked to complete the tests as early as possible. After completion of data, thanks were given to them for their cooperation. In this way, data from 60 adolescents was collected and scoring was done with help of manual and then analysis was done with the help of SPSS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are as follows.

**Table -1**

**Showing the correlation between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents (N=60)**

Variables	Peer pressure	Psychological wellbeing
Peer pressure	1	-.439**
Psychological wellbeing	-.439**	1

\*\*Significant at .01level

Table 1 indicates the correlation between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents. The results clearly shows that there is a negative relationship between peer pressure and psychological well being. The negative relationship between peer pressure and psychological well being among adolescents clearly indicates that higher levels of peer pressure are associated with poor psychological well-being among adolescents. The negative relationship suggests that as peer pressure increases, psychological well-being tends to decrease. During this stage, adolescents participate publically more in peer groups and feel pressure to conform to social norms, even if those norms go against their personal beliefs or values. This pressure to conform can manifest in various ways, such as dressing a certain way, engaging in specific activities, adopting certain attitudes, or participating in risky behaviours. They are more eager to blend in and win the approval of their peers in public platforms or open platforms which heightened stress, anxiety, low life satisfaction, low efficiency, poor mental health and interpersonal relationship, and feelings of inadequacy. They also undergo in stress when they feel compelled to conform to peer norms that may contradict their personal values or

preferences. Peer pressure can also lead to engagement in risky behaviours, such as substance abuse or delinquency, which further exacerbate psychological distress. The result is consistent with Cruz , Torre, Castanos, and Tus (2022) a they found significant relationship between peer pressure and mental well-being of students. Bansal and Bansal (2022) also supported the results and revealed that peer pressure in adolescents is significantly and negatively correlated to their psychological wellbeing. The result is also in line with the findings of Long, Gardani, Cann, Sweeting,Tranmer, and Moore (2020) as they identified a link between the development of adolescent mental health concerns and peer relationships. The results implicate that the negative peer pressure experienced by adolescents tends to have poor psychological well being. It is significant to keep in mind that not all adolescents are equally vulnerable to peer pressure. Factors such as self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness, and parental influence can shape an individual's ability to resist negative peer pressure. Additionally, the presence of positive role models and a supportive social network can help buffer the effects of negative peer pressure. Parents, educators, and other adults

play a crucial role in helping adolescents navigate peer pressure. By fostering open communication, providing guidance, and encouraging critical thinking skills, adults can empower adolescents to make independent and healthy choices, even in the face of peer influence. Building self-confidence, self-esteem, and teaching assertiveness skills can also be beneficial in strengthening adolescents' ability to resist negative peer pressure and make decisions aligned with their own values and well-being.

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