

## Decision Making among Adolescents in relation to Peer Pressure

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to study the relationship of Decision Making with Peer pressure amongst the adolescents. Pearson Product moment correlational coefficient was calculated to study the relationship between the two variables. t-test was used to check the difference in the mean scores of decision making at low and high peer pressure. Data was collected with two standardized tools. The results concluded that the Decision Making is negatively correlated to Peer Pressure, i.e. as the Peer Pressure in adolescents' increases, their Decision Making ability decreases. And as per the results of the t-test, there exists a significant difference in the values of Decision Making at low and high Peer Pressure, i.e. the adolescents who have more Peer pressure have lower Decision Making ability as compared to the adolescents with low Peer Pressure.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, Decision Making, Peer Pressure.*

Decision making is a scientific procedure of identification and understanding of the problem or the issue regarding which a decision has to be made, gathering of information from all the possible sources, identification of alternative solutions to the problem, giving weightage to each alternative understanding, its pros and cons, further making a choice among these alternatives on the basis of the analysis, then taking the solution into action and then finally reviewing the taken decision and its effects.

It is also considered as problem-solving, as the decisions taken by an individual leads to some solution to a problem. It is a continuous interaction with the environment in order to achieve the desired goals.

Peers refer to the group of individuals of the similar age and pressure is the force exerted by something or someone. Now combining the two terms, peer pressure is the force of a person or group of people of the same age group on another person which makes a person to behave, think and act in a different manner in which they want. Few psychologists and educationist are defining peer pressure as:-

According to Singh and Saini (2010), a peer is a somebody, who is of the same societal association based on age, class, or rank, whereas a friend is a person to whom he/she is linked

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by affection or admiration. Peer pressure is a sense of force from another age buddies to do something dangerous for oneself and others. Whereas Palani and Mani (2016) is of the view that, a peer group is the group of persons who, experience identities in age, history and social strata. The members of the group are expected to affect an individual's thoughts and actions.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that when a person's attitude, behaviour or activities are changed under the influence of peers is called peer pressure. An adolescent on an average spends 11/12 hours with their peers or friends (at schools, reference coaching or at play), 8 hours at sleep and only around 4 hours with their parents or guardians at home. So, they spend the maximum of his/her active hours with peers. As a result, they always try to fit in themselves in the peer group by changing their behaviour, attitude, activities and even sometimes morals. To be a part of the group or to get peer conformity, they indulge in dangerous activities which not only destroy their present and future but, even cause harm to their parents and guardians.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the review also, according to Albert, Chein and Steinberg (2013) during adolescence, a teenager spends maximum time with their friends and age mates. Their brain circuit works to bring social acceptance. The peer interaction activates the reward and pleasure-seeking centre of the brain. In order to get the reward of peer acceptance, they get involved in some risky activities, showing very poor decision making. But, Birkeland, Breivik, and Wold (2014) writes in their research that feeling accepted by peers promote positive self-esteem and self-efficacy in the adolescents who do not have close and warm relationships with their parents.

They try to be a part of the group as Maduvanhu and Schenck (2014) found that peer pressure is the prominent reason behind adolescents start abusing drugs and alcohol. They intake these toxic substances to have fun and become part of the peer group. They join gangs to get their conformity and follow the illegal and antisocial rules, for the same reason.

Ogowewob & et.al. (2015) writes peer pressure not always bring negative impacts on individuals, but have positive effects also. Evidence shows that adolescents stop abusing drugs or to get rid of other anti-social activities in the influence of their peers. They even start executing pro-social behaviour due to peer influence.

Wolf (2015) observes that from the presence and absence of the peers at any situation also influences the chances of an adolescent to get involved in some risk-taking activity. The evidence has proved that they take more risk and participate in criminal activities in the presence of their peers as compared to in their absence. Their decision making ability declines or limits, when the peers are around them. They only want their conformity, even at the cost of losing their lives.

Esiri (2016) found that strong and negative peer pressure on adolescents is mostly understood in terms of getting involved in prostitution, romantic relations, smoking, alcohol consumption, etc, mainly at secondary schools and college levels. In addition to this, Rozi, Mahmud, Lancaster and Zahid (2016) found that the adolescents whose friends or peers smoke or intake drugs exhibit 6 times more chances of getting involved in the same harmful activity.

Additionally, Melanie and Winter (2017) found that more than half of the Adolescents are risk-averse and over two-thirds are loss averse. Their risky choices are strongly influenced by

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their peers. According to the results of Deepika and Prema (2017), peer pressure is negatively correlated to academic achievement. More an adolescent is inclined towards his/her peers, more decline is seen in the academic achievement. Peer pressure is prominent in adolescents from 16-18 years of age.

Mujiyati and Adiputra (2018), proved that with the support, mutual understanding, and encouragement from peers develops high self-esteem in adolescents. This is because they feel is highly accepted, valued and acknowledged. Whereas, if he/she gets rejected or unnoticed by peers, it arises a sense of loneliness and hostility, leading to low self-esteem and poor thinking capacity. Molero, Carmen, Bel, and Mar (2019) acknowledges that healthy habits must be inculcated in adolescents via value-based decision-making as this will reduce their susceptibility to peer pressure in terms of risk-taking. Education should focus on the positive development in adolescents.

### *Statement of the problem*

- Decision Making among Adolescents in relation to Peer Pressure.

### *Objectives*

- 1) To study the relationship of Decision Making of adolescents with their Peer Pressure.
- 2) To compare Decision Making of adolescents on the basis of their low and high Peer Pressure.

### *Hypotheses*

- 1) There exists no significant relationship of Decision Making of adolescents with their Peer Pressure.
- 2) There exists no significant difference in Decision Making of adolescents on the basis of their low and high Peer Pressure.

### *Delimitations*

- 1) The study was delimited to the government and private senior secondary schools located in Chandigarh only.
- 2) The sample was delimited to adolescents studying in class 11, in three academic streams, i.e. science, commerce and arts only.

### *Sample*

A sample of 150 students (75 boys and 75 girls) studying in class 11th in Arts, Science and Commerce streams was randomly selected, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample**

Gender	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total
Boys	25	25	25	75
Girls	25	25	25	75

### *Tools Used*

1. Making Decisions in Everyday Life by Mincemoyer, Perkins and Munyua (2001) revalidated by the investigators according to the Indian conditions.
2. Peer Pressure Scale- Revised by Singh and Saini (2016).

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was used for the present study. A sample of 150 adolescents studying in class 11th in Chandigarh was selected randomly. Data was collected using two standardized tools. The collected data was analyzed as per instructions given in the respective manuals, and was subjected to statistical analysis.

### Statistical Techniques

Pearson Product Moment method of Correlation and t-ratios were calculated to test the hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results drawn from the data after subjecting it to the statistical analysis are:

### a) Testing of hypothesis no. 1:

**Table- 2: Coefficient of Correlation between Decision Making and Peer Pressure.**

Variables	N	Coefficient of Correlation	Level of Sig.
Decision Making and Peer Pressure	150	-0.25035**	0.01

P<0.01

Table 2; reveals, that there exists a negative and significant relationship between Decision Making and Peer Pressure among Adolescents. The relationship was found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the adolescents who possess more Peer pressure have less Decision Making ability and vice-versa. Hence, the first hypothesis, "There exists no significant relationship of Decision Making of adolescents with their Peer Pressure" is not accepted and not retained.

### a) Testing hypothesis no. 2:

**Table- 3: Comparison of Decision Making on the basis of level of Peer Pressure.**

Variable	Level of Peer pressure	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Level of Sig.
Decision Making	High	31	59.29	6.5	5.37**	0.01
	Low	29	67.8	5.6		

P<0.01

**Figure 1: Difference in the mean scores of Decision Making, at low and high levels of Psychological Well Being**

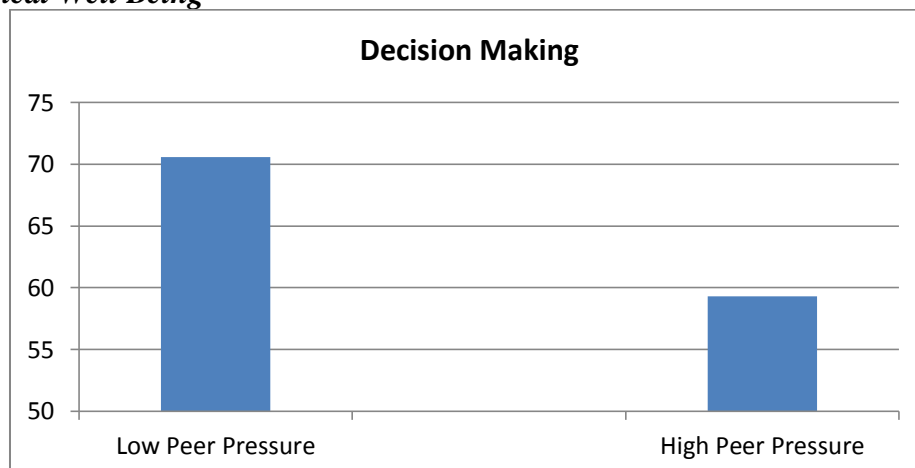


Table 3 and figure 1, reveals that there exists a significant difference in the mean scores of the Decision Making among adolescents possessing high and low Peer Pressure. The t- value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the adolescents who possess more Peer pressure have lower Decision Making ability as compared to the adolescents with low Peer Pressure. Hence, the second hypothesis, “There exists no significant difference in Decision Making of adolescents on the basis of their low and high Peer Pressure” is not accepted.

### CONCLUSION

From the results of the study it can be concluded that the Decision Making ability of adolescents is strongly and negatively correlated to Peer Pressure, i.e., the adolescents who possess higher Peer Pressure have lower Decision Making ability and vice versa. Additionally, there exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Decision Making of adolescents possessing low and high levels of Peer Pressure. The mean scores of Decision Making is more for the adolescents who possess less Peer Pressure.

The scale used in the present study measures the negative Peer Pressure in adolescents, i.e. the force exerted by the persons of the similar age group, that inclines them to do something wrong under this pressure. The act done under this influence is wrong, harmful and sometimes lead to many disastrous results. They do such acts in order to get conformity and acceptance of their peers. To get the peer acceptance they decide to smoke, gamble, take drugs, steal and destroy the properties of others. They get involved in malafied activities to get peer acceptance.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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