

Peer Pressure as a Causal Factor of Aggression

Asmaa Saiyed N.^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Aggression is the most vital and pressing issue faced by modern society today. Despite widespread education, independence, freedom of thought and speech, freedom from deprivation, fulfilment of basic needs and wants improvement of socio-economic conditions, aggression is on the rise (Kaur,2020). However, peer pressure plays a larger role in the psycho- social development of an individual. peer pressure can have effects ranging from positive ones to negative ones (kaur,2020). This research aims to examine aggression and peer pressure among adults. Research was conducted on a sample size of 90 young adults age ranging from 19 to 26 years. The data was collected by using Buss & Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) and the Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (PPPS) were used to quantify aggression and peer pressure among young adults respectively. For the interpretation and analysis of data, descriptive statistics and Regression was used through SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This study hypothesis that peer pressure will be a significant predictor of aggression. Data analysis by regression indicated that peer pressure will be a significant predictor of aggression among adults. Results demonstrated that peer pressure will be statistically significant predictor of aggression.

Keywords: *Adults, Aggression, Buss & Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), Peer pressure, Regression*

Peers are one's friend, classmate and people of his/her age who are equal to oneself in abilities, qualification, age, background and social status. Peer pressure is the feeling that someone of your own age is pushing you towards making a certain choice, good or bad.

Peers influence each person's life, even if someone doesn't realise it, just by spending time with anybody. It's only human nature to listen to and learn from other people in one's age group. Due to peer pressure, one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group in order to be admired or respected by them. E.g., a child may start drinking in high school because of peer pressure. (Rajesh Beniwal, 2017).

Peer pressure plays a larger role in the psycho-social development of a person. Peer pressure can have effects ranging from positive ones to negative ones. The positive effects can be increased levels of concentration and self-confidence; whereas, the negative ones can be criminal behaviour and aggression. The credibility, authority, power and influence of peers

¹Department of Psychology, Vanita Vishram Women's University

*Corresponding Author

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are greater during adolescence than at any other time in life (Weerman, 2010). It is possible that children and teenagers learn aggression from their peers. Most adolescents conform to it as they are afraid of being rejected by their peers. They become engaged in inappropriate behaviour just for approval (Whitmore, 2011).

How much a person is influenced by peer pressure depends on many factors. People are less likely to be heavily influenced by their friends and more likely to make their own decisions if they have: High self-esteem, Goals and a positive outlook on the future, good social skills, The ability to interact with people from many different backgrounds., Strong connections to family and community. (Rajesh Beniwal, 2017).

People are more likely to be heavily influenced by their peers and less likely to make decisions for themselves if they: Have low self-esteem, are experiencing problems in their family, such as divorce, alcoholism, drug addiction, or unemployment, come from families where there is little support or communication, strongly identify with only one ethnic group, feel distant from school and community activities, are afraid of not belonging or fitting in. (Rajesh Beniwal, 2017).

According to the Survelum Public Data Bank, 68.8% of teens expressed in a survey that they were never influenced by peer pressure. 49% of participants expressed that they had never lied to their parents because their friends told them to, while only 31% said they had (Survelum Public Data Bank, 2013).

Aggression is a complex social behaviour with many causes and manifestations. Over the past several decades, scholars have identified the many forms that aggression can take. Aggression can be physical (e.g., slapping), or verbal (e.g., shouting abuse). It can be direct in nature (e.g., directly retaliating against a co-worker) or indirect with the aim of inflicting reputational harm (e.g., spreading rumours about a co-worker behind their back). Aggression can be impulsive, elicited by anger in response to provocation (known as reactive or hostile aggression) or it can be premeditated, less emotional, and used as a means to obtain some other end (known as proactive or instrumental aggression). Aggression that is physically extreme is referred to as violence (e.g., aggravated assault, homicide). Despite their apparently different surface characteristics, these instantiations of aggression all conform to the scholarly definition of aggression as behaviour intended to cause harm to someone who is motivated to avoid that harm (Berkowitz, 1993; Baron and Richardson, 1994; Geen, 2001; Anderson and Bushman, 2002).

According to Reynolds and Kamphaus (2004) aggression is, “the tendency to do physical or emotional harm to others, encompassing both physical aggressions, through behaviour such as breaking others’ possessions, hitting or hurting others, as well as verbal aggression manifested through behaviour such as arguing, criticising, threatening, insulting or blaming.”

A variety of factors have been attributed as the root causes of aggressive behaviour, including genetics (Cherepkova, Elena, Maksimov, Vladimir, Aftanas, Lyubomir, Menshanov & Petr, 2015); culture (Thomas, 1958); media (Akert, Robin, Aronson & Wilson, 2005); gender (Archer, 2004) and social learning (Ofole, Awoyemi, Siokwu, Ojukwu & Uwakwe, 2015).

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Study done by Mrug et al. (2004) found that adolescents would be more aggressive if their peers belonged to aggression, antisocial activities and placed a high status. It is also found that if adolescents want to raise their status, they should behave in an aggressive manner. Researchers found that peer pressure is one of the important reasons for observed aggressive behaviour in childhood and adolescence (Ryan, 2000; Santor et al, 2000; Steinberg, 1999). Keenan et al, 1995 found that peers influence each other to engage in anti-social behaviour.

In a research, Kumar and Varma (2016) tried to examine whether Adolescents' aggression in relation to peer pressure and Family Relationship in different schools of Chandigarh. Sample consists of 210 adolescents (107 males, 103 females) selected randomly from different schools. It was observed that there is weak relationship between aggression and peer pressure and between aggression and various dimensions.

According to Djohari and Hernawati (2018) and Malonda, et.al., (2019). Lin, et.al., (2018) found out that there is no direct effect of peer pressure on aggression and examined that delinquent peer affiliation partially mediated the relationship between peer victimisation and aggressive behaviour.

Ofodile and Ofole (2018) Conducted research to find out Domination by Aggressive Behaviours among Students in Orumba North, Anambra State, Nigeria. The sample consists of 291 students from secondary schools in the Orumba North Local Government area of Anambra State. Three Community secondary schools were randomly drawn from 16 major towns in Orumba North local government area using ballot method. Simple random sample technique was used for the study. The finding obtained that there is a positive relationship between aggressive behaviour and peer pressure.

According to a study conducted by Kaur (2020), 800 participants of XI class of Government Senior Secondary Schools of Punjab represented the sample population. They used multistage randomization techniques to study aggression among adolescents in relation to peer pressure. The study revealed that aggression of adolescents shows a significant negative relationship with peer pressure which clearly means that peer pressure significantly contributes to the aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

The major objective of this research is to understand the effect of Peer Pressure on Aggression among adults.

Sample

The present study includes a sample of 90 young adults from Gujarat in the age range of 19-26 years filled up the google forms questionnaire. Convenience sampling method was used to collect the sample.

Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- People of age group of 19 to 26 years were taken into consideration.
- English speaking people were considerate.
- People from Gujarat are also taken into consideration.

Exclusion Criteria

- Not to be physically and mentally challenged.
- People outside of Gujarat state were excluded.
- People who do not know English language were excluded.

Hypothesis

- **(H₀):** Peer pressure will not be significant predictor of aggression among adults.
- **(H₁):** Peer pressure will be a significant predictor of aggression among adults.

Procedure

In order to collect the data, a Google form was created and circulated among 100 individuals in the month of March, 2022. The form consisted of 4 parts: Informed consent, demographic information, psychological assessments and debriefing used in the study. Basic information about the study was already mentioned in the forms and email address of the researcher was provided in case the participants had questions regarding the study before they decided to make an informed choice or if they wanted to withdraw from the study due to any reason. Demographic information including name, age, educational qualification, email address, gender and city collected. The two tests are used: the first is Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (PPPS) and the other is Buss Perry Aggression Scale (BPAQ). There were separate instructions for each test and were provided prior to the starting of each test. It was made sure that the participants' information was kept confidential. The aim of the study and information about the psychological assessments used were provided under the column of debriefing at the end of the questionnaire. It was made sure that all the ethics like sharing of results, debriefing, withdrawal from the study etc were followed. After the data was collected, SPSS Software was used and the statistical tool of regression was applied for analysis to come up with results.

Tools Used

1. Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (PPPS)

V. Palani and S. Mani developed PPPS consisting of 30 items and those items were categorised under three dimensions. The dimensions are: Yielding to Peer Pressure (11 items), Resistance to Peer Pressure (13 items) and Peers Encouragement (6 items). The reliability and validity value of the final tool was found to be 0.942 and 0.971 respectively. Hence, the perceived peer pressure scale is found to be valid for application.

2. Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ)

Buss & Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) was designed by Arnold H. Buss and Mark Perry, professors from the University of Texas at Austin in a 1992 article for the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. The BPAQ has test-retest reliability, strong convergent validity, and is appropriate for both adolescents and adults. The internal consistency of the scale was acceptable, and gender invariance was supported. The scale had a total of 29 questions - to determine physical aggression (9 questions), verbal aggression (5), anger (7), and hostility (8) - on a 5-point scale used to indicate how uncharacteristic or characteristic each of the statements is in describing oneself. The total score for aggression is the sum of these scale scores. Higher scores indicate higher aggressive behaviour.

Statistical tools

- **Descriptive Analysis-** Mean and Standard deviation.
- **Inferential Analysis-** Regression Analysis between Peer Pressure and Aggression.

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Ethics

- Confidentiality- maintain by not sharing the results with anyone.
- Informed consent from potential research participants was taken.
- Detailed debriefing to the participation was done.
- Anonymity was maintained.
- The Participants had the right to withdrawn from the study.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

To fulfill the objectives of the present research both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. In this Statistical tool of Regression was used. In addition to these descriptive statistics were also used to understand the nature of the data.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Peer Pressure and Aggression.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Peer Pressure	90	93.8667	10.72454
Aggression	90	84.1556	15.61900
Valid N (listwise)	90		

Descriptive Analysis sample of 90 Adults has been taken from Gujarat and the summary of the data is mentioned above in table 1 According to the survey Peer Pressure has mean score of 93.86 and aggression has mean score of 84.15. Standard deviation of Peer Pressure is 10.72 and Aggression is 15.61.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Peer Pressure and Aggression.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	123.752	14.038		8.816	.000
Peer Pressure	-.422	.149	-.290	-2.839	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Aggression

H₁: Peer pressure will be a significant predictor of aggression among adults.

The Hypothesis of this research states that peer pressure will be a statistically significant predictor of Aggression. For this purpose, Regression analysis was used. After Analysis statistically significant regression was found between both the variables.

Regression analysis was used to predict the dependent variable (Aggression) with the help of predictors variables (Peer Pressure) table helps to measure how regression equation fits the data. In Coefficients table the value of B is -.422, Standard Error is .149, Beta value is -.290, value of T is -2.839 and as shown in the table 2 sig, value is .006. This means that the regression model is statistically significant and a good predictor of the dependent variable which in this case is the Aggression.

Pung et al (2015) found that there was significant positive relationship between peer pressure and aggression among adolescents. Researchers found that peer pressure is the

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effective predictor in explaining adolescents' aggression level (Yavuzer et al, 2014). The role of parents, and peer groups are important determinants of modelling. People who are repeatedly exposed to aggressive parent or peer models will be more assaultive in their interactions than those who are not exposed. Peer Pressure can be either positive or negative and it will affect the aggression level of an individual as Bandura (1973) stated that children learn aggressive behaviour by observing and emulating others. The reverse is also true: children learn not to be aggressive by observing non-aggressive role models. Others claim that aggression arises from interactions between individuals (p., social and emotional difficulties, low self-esteem, peer rejection, academic failure) and environmental influences (eg, poverty, lack of family supervision, limited social support, family conflict) (Coie et al., 1993; Miller, 1994).

Therefore, in the light of the data from the present research and available literature, it is safe to say that Positive peer pressure or Negative peer pressure have an impact on Aggression. Thus, proving our hypothesis Peer pressure will be a significant predictor of aggression among adults.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in the light of the present collected data and literature review, this can be concluded that Peer pressure will be a significant predictor of Aggression among adults and there are several factors that might influence these variables. One must be made aware of the effects of peer pressure on their behavior which ultimately leads to aggression. Thus, it can be concluded that Peer pressure will be a predictor of aggression.

Limitations

- The sample was very limited.
- This data is not generalizable as the number of females and males are not equal, the data collected is biased towards females.
- Research is only based in the Gujarat state and hence the results interpreted from the data collected cannot be implied to any other states in the country.
- Aggression depends on person to person and the factors that cause to change also vary from person to person so their never can be an accurate measure for aggression.

Future Implications

- The Adults can be educated to pros and cons of peer pressure and how it impacts our aggression in life.
- The difference in male and female can be studied.
- The study focused only on adults; therefore, it cannot be generalized to any other population.
- Researchers have a chance to take probability sampling techniques and make sample more representative of population.
- The study can also be done on vernacular language speaking individuals.
- The adults can be taught coping skills which will ensure a better and healthy life style for them.
- Further research can also be done on the subject.
- Individuals may get aware about their aggression.
- Researcher can study different variables with Peer Pressure and Aggression.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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