

Effect of Peer Pressure on Academic Stress among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of peer pressure on academic stress among adolescents. The present study was conducted on 200 adolescent (100 male and 100 female) students of K V schools from Delhi. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires of Peer Pressure (Dr Sandeep Sigh & Sunil Saini) and Academic Stress (Dr. Uday Kumar Sinha). Two-way analysis of variance was used to analyse the data. After analysis of the data, effect of peer pressure on academic stress was found significant at .01 level of confidence while gender difference was found significant at .05 level of confidence. The interaction effect was not found significant at any level of confidence. It can be concluded that peer pressure and gender difference were significantly affected the level of academic stress among adolescents.

Keywords: *Peer pressure, Stress, Academic Stress, Adolescents*

Every teenager experiences stress of some kind at some point in their lives in the competitive world of today. Some teenagers handle stress better than others, and some teenagers suffer higher levels of stress than others. The adolescence is a time of stress and pressure as the adolescents mark the transition from childhood to maturity (Byrne et al. 2007). Adolescents experience stress during this adolescence phase of life, and this stress may give rise to major problems (Howard & Medway 2004). Children's and teenagers' anxiety varies depending on the characteristics of their age. According to Gursory et al. (2005), anxiety experienced by teenagers during this time may be triggered by their own confused state. Some studies found that academic related stress is the most prevalent cause of stress for adolescents in Western and Asian countries (Assana et al., 2017; Shankar & Park, 2016).

Academic stress is defined as psychological discomfort resulting from perceived academic failure or even from not realizing that such failure could occur. Among the numerous issues noted in kids with high levels of academic stress include depression, anxiety, behavioural issues, impatience, etc (Deb et al. 2015). According to Lee and Larson (2000), this stress results from a combination of external stressors, students' assessments of them, and their responses to them. Students may experience academic stress due to a variety of factors, such as their surroundings, extracurricular activities, parental and peer pressure. Being referred to as a "career stopper" is becoming an unfortunate reality (Kadapatti &

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Received: July 17, 2024; Revision Received: September 12, 2024; Accepted: September 16, 2024

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Vijayalaxmi, 2012). Because it is an indicator of growing mental health issues in India, it consequently becomes a serious reason for concern (Nadamuri & Gowthami, 2011).

Students encounter various challenges and obstacles as they enter to new social and academic environment. Many students experience peer pressure in addition to other problems which affects their academic performance.

Peer pressure can be defined as the pressure placed on a person by friends to alter or fulfil their desires or characteristics. Positive or negative outcomes are possible (Guzman, 2007). Various factors, including gender, family background, grade level, and others, might contribute to peer pressure. Peer pressure forces individuals whose opinions conflict with the groups to conform when their behaviours or ideas do not align with the collective.

Positive peer interactions are linked to socialization and identity formation (Ragelienė, 2016). Nonetheless, teenagers are particularly vulnerable to social pressure during this period, making peer connections even more crucial (McCoy et al., 2019).

When given the right peer support, children can learn beyond their current capacity, focusing more on their academics and achieving well in school-related academic activities (Olalekan, 2016). Furthermore, teenagers' academic performance suffers when they hang out with close friends who engage in dangerous activities (Stanard et al., 2010).

According to Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015), students as a part of their peer group were influenced by their peers in academic and school-related aspects such as motivation to arrive on time, achieving good grades, learning with peers after class, supporting friends who are struggling academically, and working together to revise after class before an exam. This is in contrast to students who were not part of a peer group.

According to studies by Kadir and Saliya (2018), peer group members might make group members feel more anxious, particularly when it comes to their schooling. Professionals recognized that peer pressure, which many teens in society experience, can have a bad impact on them. However, this can be avoided by educating and equipping them to deal with the negative effects of social pressure (Temitope & Ogunsakin, 2015). Similar to this, peer pressure does not always have a negative impact on teenagers; rather, it influences them in different ways and to varying degrees depending on the students' perception of their peers' attitudes within the group (Mosha, 2017).

Peer pressure is certainly among those pressures which a student particularly experience in school days and which really has a impact on attitude, self- esteem, feeling of security and insecurity and also academic performance and stress. As researcher found studies stated negative impact of peer pressure, there were also studies which stated positive impact. To explore further researcher designed the present study.

Objective

- To study the effect of peer pressure and gender difference on academic stress among adolescents.

Hypotheses

- Peer pressure would significantly affect the level of academic stress among adolescents.

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- Gender difference would significantly affect the level of academic stress among adolescents.
- Interaction of Peer pressure and Gender difference would significantly affect the level of academic stress among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Present study was conducted on adolescent students. Age range of the sample was between 14-17 years. The sample was selected from K. V. schools from Delhi. The sample included 200 students, divided into high peer pressure and low peer pressure groups on the basis of their measured score on peer pressure scale. In each group there were 100 students (50 male & 50 female). In this way 2x2 factorial design was used in this research. Students were oriented about the study and were willing to participate in the same.

Tools Used

- **Peer Pressure Scale** Constructed by Sandeep Singh & Sunil Saini (2010). This scale was used to measure the level of peer pressure in adolescence, there were 25 Items in this test. The internal consistency of reliability is 0.79 and the test-retest reliability of this test is ($r= 0.33^{**}$, $p<.01$). The Concurrent validity was reported as ($r=0.38^{**}$, $p<.01$).
- **Scale for Assessing Academic Stress – (SAAS)** was developed by Dr. Uday Kumar Sinha (2014). There were 30 items in this full inventory. This test measures the academic stress of adolescence students. There were five components of academic stress indicating expression of academic stress through different channels: cognitive, affective, physical, social/interpersonal and motivational. The test-retest reliability was 0.88 and split half reliability was 0.75. The correlation coefficient of SAAS with AASC was found to be 0.54 which was statistically significant at .05 levels.

Research Design

2x2 factorial design was adapted for the present study. Two independent variables were studied both having two levels each, peer pressure (high & low) and gender (male & female).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Two-way ANOVA was used to assess the effect of the peer pressure, gender difference and interaction effect of these two variables on academic stress. Findings are presented in table no. 1

Table -1 Summary table of ANOVA for the Effect of Peer Pressure and Gender on Academic Stress (N = 200)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Peer Pressure(A)	340.605	1	340.605	15.429	0.01
Gender(B)	99.405	1	99.405	4.503	0.05
Interaction (AxB)	13.005	1	13.005	0.589	NS*
Error Variance	4326.94	196	22.076		
Total	4779.955	199			

NS* non-significant

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It is evident from the table no 1 that the main effect of peer pressure on academic stress was found to be significant beyond chance ($F= 15.429$, $df= 1$, $p <.01$), the main effect of gender difference was also found significant with regard to academic stress ($F= 4.503$, $df= 1$, $p<.05$). The interaction effect between peer pressure and gender of the students was not found to be significant at any level of significance. To summarize, it can be said that the peer pressure and gender difference were significant variable to affect the level of academic stress among adolescents.

Table 2: Mean scores of Academic stress based on Factor A (Peer Pressure)

A1 High Peer Pressure			A2 Low Peer Pressure		
N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
100	15.54	4.49	100	12.93	4.96

Table 3: Mean scores of Academic stress Based on Factor B (Gender)

B1 Female			B2 Male		
N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
100	14.94	4.81	100	13.53	4.91

Table No. 4: Mean Scores of Academic Stress Based on Interaction (AxB)

A1 High Peer Pressure				A2 Low Peer Pressure		
B1	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
(Female)	50	16.50	4.40	50	13.38	4.73
B2 (Male)	50	14.58	4.41	50	12.48	5.19

DISCUSSION

The finding of the present study revealed that the level of peer pressure significantly affects academic stress of students. Mean scores of academic stress based on peer pressure revealed that the students who have high peer pressure significantly scored higher on academic stress than the students who have low peer pressure (Mean scores 15.54 and 12.93 respectively). The Mean scores of academic stress based on gender reported that female students scored significantly higher on academic stress than male students (Mean scores 14.94 and 13.53 respectively). The Mean scores of academic stress based on interaction (AxB) clearly indicate that the female students who have high peer pressure reflected more academic stress than the females who have low peer pressure (Mean scores 16.50 and 13.38 respectively).

Similarly, male students who have high peer pressure showed more academic stress than the males who have low peer pressure (Mean scores 14.58 and 12.48 respectively). The obtained scores suggest that peer pressure can increase students' academic pressure. There may be pressure on students to perform well academically, earn high marks, and succeed in challenging courses. This pressure comes from peers who are high performers or from social expectations that one should want to be the best. Students who believe that they are unable to attain these standards are more likely to feel stressed and anxious, which can cause of academic difficulties. Joy et al. (2022) also found significant positive correlation between peer pressure and academic stress of higher secondary students. Kadir and Salija (2018) studied that the influence of peer groups among students can increase their anxiety especially pertaining to their education. Findings related to gender difference was also supported by Akhter et al. (2023) who found in his study that female students were experiencing more academic stress than male students.

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Present study is a step forward to understand the effect of peer pressure on academic stress, at the same time it has some limitations as it was conducted on the adolescent students, which cannot be generalized for adult population. Further, only effect of peer pressure on academic stress was explored. Attempt could be made to study family environment, self-esteem and personality factors in future studies.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the result of the study, it can be concluded that high peer pressure affects the level of academic stress significantly among adolescent students and female students were experiencing significantly more academic stress than male students.

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Acknowledgment

The authors are grateful to the authorities and teachers for their permission and support. The authors appreciate all participants for giving their consent and time to participate in the research.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

How to cite this article: Gautam, B. & Sharma, V. (2024). Effect of Peer Pressure on Academic Stress among Adolescents. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 12(3)*, 2129-2134. DIP:18.01.211.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.211