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Research Paper

Influence of Peers on Academic and Personal Motivation among University Students

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ABSTRACT

One important factor is the impact of peer relations on students' social, emotional, and academic motivation to learn in higher education. Good peer relations boost students' academic outcome and personal development, while bad peer influences demote them and result in lower academic performance accompanied by increased stress and anxiety. The objectives of this paper would include understanding the impacts on academic performance and personal growth which peer influence has on Indian higher education. The basis of this study is in the collection of large quantities of data, that will be generated through valid instruments. It means assessing the degree to which the students are affected by peers through the Peer Influence Scale, academic motivation through the Academic Motivation Scale, `and emotional well-being through the Personal Growth Scale. It will use a purposive sampling method to obtain the sample from the various disciplines and years. This dynamic will help determine in what ways universities might better support positive peer contexts to foster student motivation in efforts at lasting well-being. Such a study is particularly attentive when universities overlook the impact of non-positive peer interactions, largely within the competitive environments that characterize India, and inform university policies so that fostering may take place in collaborative and inclusive educational experiences.

Keywords: *Peer Relations, Personal Development, Academic Performance*

In higher education, weakening peer Pressure from University students is an important factor. Peer interactions can encourage or impede students' social, emotional and academic motivation; they impact learning experiences greatly. A strong culture of positive peer relationships can provide important gains in both the nuts-and-bolts academic outcomes we all care about, and, ultimately, personal development. On the other hand, negative peer influences may contribute to demotivation, decreased academic performance and more stress & anxiety (Tinto 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

It is important to be aware of how peer influence alters the functioning dynamics, as it can serve as a channel for administering interventions aimed at reinforcing student success. Some research has indicated that influential peers help shape students' attitudes, behaviors, and motivations (Astin). Yet, little is known about how peer interactions cause students to be

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demotivated and its negative effects on student learning across different cultural or institutional contexts. It is crucial to address these gaps as they contribute towards the creation of inclusive and supportive educational contexts that are necessary in order to satisfy diverse student needs (Kuh, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

This research questions how peer influence directly affects academic performance/motive and personal growth, that is studying in university students. Thus, the research attempts to understand these mechanisms and how universities can promote positive peer contexts while also supporting student motivation for lasting well-being.

Theoretical background

The coincident impacts of peer relationships on academic motivation and personal development in university students necessitate a more nuanced theoretical approach to gaining an understanding.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that people learn from observing, imitating and modeling. According to this view, students learn by seeing and doing what their peers are doing. For example, when a student is surrounded by peers who are very engaged and successful academically, the more likely that student will be to behave in similar ways (Bandura 1977). Such mechanisms as social reinforcement and peer approval affect this process, leading to important consequences for the motivation and performance of a student (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

The model of regulation and the theory *Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)* are based on motivational processes. The theory focuses on self-determination by satisfying three basic psychological needs, which are a sense of control (autonomy), competence, and connection to others. For instance, students who experience nurturing and satisfying peer relationships are likely to develop a sense of competence and connectedness (relatedness), improving their intrinsic motivation in the context of interpersonal relationships with peers behaviorally grounded within SDT principles. For instance, peers who offer useful tips on how to learn better and as well as provide comfort may be critical for student development in relation to an increased feeling of competence by encouraging them towards their academic goal.

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is a more holistic view that attends to the levels of influence on human development. This model posits instead that students are not subject only to their immediate circle of peers, but also the background educational and social environment. This shows the connections between different levels of systems (micro-, meso-, exosystem, and macrosystems) that according to Bronfenbrenner collectively contribute in forming students' academic work on themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The presence of a supportive network of peers in an enriching learning environment has been suggested as able to instigate academic engagement and motivation (Moen & Wethington, 1999).

Because relationships with peers significantly affect both motivation to succeed academically and self efficacy, by combining these theories they paint a broader picture of how peer interactions impact overall human development. While Social Learning Theory emphasizes how behaviors are observed and imitated, Self-Determination Theory indicates why intrinsic motivation is impacted by the satisfaction of psychological needs, Ecological Systems theory provides an overarching view on all contributing factors -within their realm- that informs student development. In combination, the frameworks highlight that peer interactions and

academic outcomes have complex feedback loops while also informing possible interventions for fostering positive dynamics in educational contexts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study explores the impact of college experiences on students The findings were that the college experience impacts cognitive, affective, and social development. Peer group experiences, as well as faculty characteristics, affect the outcomes of students' development. Institutional type, resource use, and campus climate also influence student development. These findings are really important for students, parents, administrators, and policymakers in understanding what matters with college choice and the elements that foster student success. (Astin, 1993).

This study explores the Self-determination theory (SDT) and that three psychological needs help achieve optimal well-being: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these needs encourages intrinsic motivation and positive mental health. On the contrary, environments that restrict the satisfaction of the needs mentioned above are related to poor motivation, performance, and well-being in general. Additionally, the paper explores the relation of the mentioned needs with cultural values, evolution, and other motivational theories. (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

In this longitudinal study, Furrer & Skinner (2003) probed the relationship between writing proficiency and student engagement of low-achieving adolescents (grades 7-9). While total proficiency in writing increased from pre-testing to post-testing, engagement measures did not predict gains in writing. However, engagement was related to the pre-existing level of proficiency in writing. The results explained the difference between overall achievement and growth in achievement while measuring the impact of engagement in writing skills. The results of these experiments further indicate that engagement is more important for the maintenance of proficiency rather than improvement. Implications for further research directions and education will follow. (Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

This mixed methods study investigates reasons for low participation among students in junior secondary schools in Sri Lanka, particularly in the lowest socio-economic districts. The key focus of this study centered on student motivation and engagement. Utilizing the self-determination theory by Ryan & Patrick, 2001 as an explanation of intrinsic motivation in the abstract. In the quantitative study, the sample used 200 students in grade eight, which found a correlation between motivation and scores on engagement. Using qualitative interviews conducted with 24 students labeled as least motivated, two general themes were generated related to the areas of influence: quality of classroom relationships and quality of curriculum and resources. Poorly maintained teacher-student relationships, through harsh punishments and boring teaching styles, presented in conjunction with fears about the material's difficulty and inadequate learning resources. All these findings infer the necessity of improving school-related conditions to positively influence student motivation, engagement, and, thus, participation in learning. (Ryan & Patrick, 2001)

The study by Dirlik et al. (2022) explores factors influencing university students' engagement. The study did this through burnout, personality traits, and academic achievement of 301 students. The study found that the relationship between burnout and engagement was the strongest. Of all the personality traits investigated, only conscientiousness was positively correlated with engagement. Engagement would be predicted by factors like exhaustion and cynicism (dimensions of burnout) and

conscientiousness (personality trait). Findings could help shed more light on the interaction between burnout, personality, and engagement among university students. (Dirlik et al. 2022)

Institutional experience of students at colleges is a result, and influenced by, their peers and other faculty members with whom they interact. According to *Astin,* the cognitive and affective results fall out of students' college experiences with peer groups and faculty interactions. In his study, he found differences in student experiences at different types of institutions, resource utilization, and campus climate; hence, his study appears relevant for faculty and administrators interested in improving the learning climate.

Explicating these motivational factors, *Deci and Ryan (2000)* outline the *Self-Determination Theory (SDT) model* of how innate psychological needs in relation to competence, autonomy, and relatedness are viewed as influencing motivation and well-being. The implication in the study is that supportive social contexts would be nurtured to develop these needs to promote intrinsic motivation among students.

Furrer and Skinner (2003) analyze the impact of relatedness on academic engagement and performance by focusing on the role social relationships play in educational contexts. Through a longitudinal study, these authors showed that writing proficiency in low-achieving adolescents rises with time but is not the result of engagement measures in particular, thus underlining a sophisticated interaction between affective and behavioral forms of engagement.

In Sri Lanka, in the research done by *Ryan and Patrick* in 2001, it was shown that student motivation and engagement were being strongly influenced by school-related conditions. That study was done with a mixed-methods design, focusing on the quality of classroom relationships and curriculum resources as ways to understand perceptions about this significant construct.

The article by *Mor Dirlik et al.,* published in 2022, explores the extremely complex relationship between school engagement, burnout, personality traits, and academic achievement among university students. According to their findings, engagement is strongly related to multiple dimensions of burnout and personality traits, especially conscientiousness. Thus, there is a need for interventions aimed at improving engagement and academic performance to be targeted towards the psychological well-being and personality characteristics of the students.

This article analyzed whether peer groups affect change in academic engagement between 11 and 13 years of age. 87% of the 366 sixth graders from a municipality started out and ended with the study participation. Teachers' reports on the students' class participation were used as motivation indicators, and the sociocognitive mapping tool was applied to assess the peer groups. Peer groups were balanced in their level of involvement, and their motivational composition remained stable across ages even as their membership changed significantly. Declines in levels of peer group involvement forecasted the changes in motivation for children's time. Even with controls for peer selection and controlling influences of involvement by parents and teachers, group effects remained, albeit at relatively small magnitudes (Kindermann, 2007).

This specific study followed two sample of sixth-grade students into early adolescence to explore the links between academic achievement and peer acceptance, group membership,

and reciprocal friendships. Group membership was the most reliable predictor of grades over time for both cohorts. Study 2 considered a number of prosocial behavior, antisocial behavior, and emotional distress constructs as explanations for these particularly interesting relations between academic success and peer relationships. Longitudinal studies suggest that the relationship between peer interactions and achievement is indirect, through strong associations with prosocial behavior. Furthermore, the study suggests that more detailed explorations of adolescent peer relationships and how these impact attitudes about social and academic capability in the classroom may be valuable for future work (Weltzel and Caldwell, 2006).

Recent research studies were reviewed which indicated that developmental lag between the early teenage 're-wiring' of the socioemotional reward system and slow, extended maturation of the cognitive-control system may underpin vulnerability to adolescent risk-taking. Friend-relevant cues may raise sensitivity of the reward system to the reward value of risky behavior during adolescence because this is when young people are spending more time with their friends, suggested studies. The development across adolescence of the capabilities to coordinate affect and cognition, and hence to execute self-regulation, especially in emotionally arousing conditions, is commensurate with increases in the steady maturation of the cognitive-control system. These capacities were thought to contribute to increasing resistance to peer pressure (Albert et al, 2013).

In accordance with the Social Cognitive Theory, the purpose of this study was to establish the understanding of how teenage peer relationships relate to learning engagement through the chain mediating functions of academic resilience and self-efficacy. The sampling procedure of the study included 250 pupils who were randomly chosen from a public middle school in Eastern China in June 2021. In this study, all participants completed the structured self-report questionnaires of learning engagement, academic resilience, peer relationships, and self-efficacy. Structural equation modeling in SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0 was used to analyze the data. The results indicated direct and positive association between learning engagement and peer relationships. Moreover, the findings showed that the peer relationship was sequentially and indirectly connected with learning engagement based on academic resilience and self-efficacy, respectively. More importantly, it found that indirect impacts, of which self-efficacy was the largest, far outweighed the direct effect by a significant margin. Adolescents' peer relationships, self-efficacy, and academic resilience were recognised as facilitators of right interventions and support, increasing learning engagement and academic performance (Shao and Kang, 2022).

In this collection of studies, four experiments tested the hypothesis that achievement goals generalize to the social domain. Results from Study 1 revealed that respondents' self-reported responses to open-ended questions about their social goals and social competence were differentiated in regard to their thoughts toward either achieving or demonstrating social competence. The new survey measure of social achievement goals was developed and explored across Studies 2 - 4. The proposed model of social achievement goals was confirmed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. It was determined that the new social achievement goal measure had both convergent and discriminant validity. As hypothesized, concurrently and longitudinally, a social demonstration-avoid goal was related to maladjustment whereas a social development goal with adjustment. Finally, instructor ratings of pupils' social adjustment were highly correlated with a social development aim in small sized classroom settings. Very often, such an approach-goal tendency had very little to do with adjustment. The crucial role of social achievement goals for an in-depth

understanding of social motivation and adjustment was also discussed (Ryan and Shim, 2006).

The Rationale of the Study

- **Educational Impact:** Academic motivation is a determinant of students' success and a direct determinant of learning outcomes; through these, it impacts retention rates and overall academic performance.
- **Personal Growth:** University years are significant for personal growth in terms of social skills, self-esteem, and career ambitions.
- **Lack of Research:** While in the case of Western settings, there is a considerable amount of research conducted regarding peer pressure, there is a lack of research conducted in an Indian setting.
- **Unique Challenges:** The problems that Indian students face in terms of societal pressures and competitive academic environments emanate from very different cultural backgrounds, and this could affect peer dynamics differently.
- **Future Policy Implementation**: Insights from the research can be used to inform university policies, which would foster positive peer interactions and support systems, thus building a more collaborative and inclusive university community. After identifying the role of peer groups, one can design targeted intervention programs at this level that will enhance academic motivation and personal growth to promote a supportive peer environment and facilitate community building.

Need for the study

This study aims to contribute knowledge to the field of research as this is an unexplored area of research especially in the Indian context. Though studies related to the topic might have been conducted before in the western context, research on this topic in the Indian context remains undone. This study aims to fill the research gaps of the previously conducted research in this field. This particular study is an effort to try and delve deeper into the field of social psychology. The focus of this study is to explore the influence of peer groups on the academic and personal motivation among university students. The study shall help foster a collaborative experience among peers and highlight the significance of positive peer dynamics in shaping one's academic and personal growth.

METHODOLOGY

***Aim*:** To investigate if there is an influence of peers on the academic and personal motivation on university students.

Research objectives

1. To investigate the impact of peer interactions among university students in maintaining academic preparation processes as well as derailed motivation.
2. To test the potential mechanism of self-efficacy and academic resilience underlying their associations between peer relationships and academic engagement.
3. To investigate how relationships with peers affect aspects of personal development (e.g., self- esteem, social skills, emotional well-being).
4. To help schools promote motivation, make peer environments positive and improve personal success.
5. To address an existing gap between the literature by identifying and investigating particular mechanisms of peer influence on academic motivation and personal development to provide a more complete account of these processes.

Hypotheses

- H1 (1): There is a significant correlation between the influence of peers and academic motivation among university students.
- H1 (2): There is a significant correlation between the influence of peers and personal motivation among university students.
- H1 (3): There is a significant correlation between personal and academic motivation influenced by peers of university students.
- H1 (4): There is a significant gender difference in peer influence on academic motivation among university students
- H1 (5): There is a significant gender difference in peer influence on personal motivation among university students

Variables

1. Peer Influence
2. Personal Motivation
3. Academic Motivation

Confounding Variables- Socio- economic background, Gender, Education, Mental Disorders and Physical Disorders.

Operational definition

- **Academic Motivation.** Academic Motivation refers to the internal drive and desire of university students to engage themselves in academic tasks, setting goals and striving for success. It comprises both intrinsic (such as interest and curiosity) and extrinsic variables (such as grades, rewards).
- **Personal Motivation**. Personal Motivation refers to a students' internal drive and aspirations that guide behavior outside the academic pursuits which includes, self worth, autonomy, and personal growth.
- **Peer Influence.** Peer Influences is a social process through which university students; attitude, beliefs, and behaviors are shaped through interaction with their peers. This encompasses influences both in the direct (for example, advice and encouragement) and indirect forms (for example, observing peer behavior) that motivate one toward studying or maintaining their personal lives.

Research Questions

1. Do peer groups influence academic motivation among university students?
2. Do peer groups influence personal motivation among university students?
3. Do gender differences influence how peer groups impact university students' academic and personal motivation?

Research design

This study uses Quantitative Research Methodology. Quantitative methods are employed because they allow for the collection of numerical data that is statistically analyzed to demonstrate patterns, relationships, and trends. Quantitative research ensures generalizability to a larger population by objective measurement and statistical analysis, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

It is a correlation study to establish the relationship between peer influence and university students' academic and personal motivation. A correlational study identifies whether, and to

what extent, there is a relationship between two or more variables that have not been manipulated. This approach would be useful in establishing any associations and probable predictive relationships between peer influence and various motivational outcomes.

This study uses questionnaires to access the variables and correlation between them. Three of the questionnaires used are Academic Motivation Scale, Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised by Sunil Saini and Sandeep Singh and Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS). The tests are performed with proper ethical conditions and guidelines.

Sample

The sample size for this study is 155. This sample size is chosen to ensure sufficient data for statistical analysis while maintaining a manageable scope for the research. The inclusion criteria of this research is that the participants must be Indian university students between 18 and 25 years old. This inclusion criterion is taken as university students are likely to be significantly influenced by their academic and personal development peers. The exclusion criteria for this research are non-Indians, under the age of 18 or above 25 years of age who do not study at a university.

Materials required

1. Google Forms
2. Academic Motivation Scale
3. Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised by Sunil Saini and Sandeep Singh
4. Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS)
5. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) application for statistical analysis of the data collected.

Procedure

The survey method is followed for data collection. This method helps us cater to the larger audience. A google form is constructed containing all the three questionnaires i.e., the Academic Motivation Scale, Peer Pressure Questionnaire- Revised and the Personal Growth Initiative Scale. The participants are informed about all of the ethical considerations and assured that all of the guidelines are strictly followed throughout the duration of the study. The participants are required to fill up the form and submit it.

Measurement

- **Academic Motivation Scale.** The Academic Motivation Scale, created and established by Robert J. Vallerand and colleagues, has been designed to empirically assess academic motivation through Self-Determination Theory, where motivation towards academics is a continuum from intrinsic to extrinsic and motivation. It consists of 28 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale in relation to different aspects of motivation. The internal consistency of the scale is ß = .71 to .92, and good test-retest reliability, r = .70 to .90. This all ensures the sound content, construct, and criterion validity of the scale to reflect motivation toward academics appropriately and to predict relevant outcomes—for example, grades. Interpretation of scores leads to the identification of the motivational profiles of students to inform educational intervention customized for that student (Vallerand et al., 1992).
  Interpretation of the Academic Motivation Scale will be done in the following way:
  1) Interprets based on degree measures of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
  2) High scores on subscales reflect more substantial motivation types.

3) Scores allow assessment and improvement in strategies related to academic motivation.

- **The Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised.** The Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised is a self-report measure of 29 items developed by Sunil Saini and Sandeep Singh that assesses peer influences in day-to-day life situations. The rating scale varies on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 indicates strongly disagree, and 5 indicates strongly agree. It has a subscale with five factors whose scoring is done in the opposite direction. The original version contained 53 items, that were further reduced to 29 items based on item analysis, expert comments and factor analysis. The final version had a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of.82 and it accounted for 55% of the variance. The scores are interpreted as indicating the extent of peer pressure one experiences. (Singh et al., 2011).

  Interpretation of the Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised will be done in the following way:

  1. The scoring of this questionnaire involves a review of responses to each item on the Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, for a total of 29 items.
  2. Higher scores in each of the five subscales indicate greater peer pressure applied to the individual in that particular form.

- **Personal Growth Initiative Scale.** The Personal Growth Initiative Scale was first designed by Christine Robitschek in 1998. This is a self-reported measure aimed at assessing a person's active and intentional involvement in personal growth and development through its nine items rated on a Likert scale from 1, strongly disagree, to 6, strongly agree. In PGI, the overall score is computed by adding the item scores. The PGIS has been related to higher psychological well-being and lower psychological distress, while it is supported by robust evidence for its reliability and validity. Inter-cultural validation of the PGIS across different cultural groups has been done, which proves to a great extent its wide applicability and relevance as a measure of personal growth initiative. The scale is reported to have internal consistency between .78 to .88 and test-retest reliability of .74. Convergent evidence of validity includes moderate positive correlations (r= 24-.56) with assertiveness, instrumentality, internal locus of control, and growth that is in awareness and intentional and moderate negative correlations (r = -24--.54) with chance locus of control and growth that is out of awareness and unintentional or in awareness yet unintentional (Robitschek, 1998, 1999). Discriminant evidence of validity includes small, non-significant correlations of the PGIS with Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, age, and social desirability (Robitschek, 2003).

  Interpretation of the Personal Growth Initiative Scale will be done in the following way:

  1. In PGI, the overall score is computed by adding the item scores.
  2. Higher scores demonstrate greater psychological well-being and lower psychological Distress.

Statistical analysis

Quantitative analysis techniques are used to analyze and interpret numerical data to quantify the correlation between the variables. The data is normally distributed, therefore, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, a parametric statistical technique is employed. It is used to measure the degree of linear correlation between the two variables (Profillidis and Botzoris, 2019). To conduct this test, we used the statistical software JAMOVI. We used Independent t-test to

find out the influence of gender differences on the changing academic and peer motivation among university students impacted by their peer groups.

Ethical consideration

Informed consent from the participants was taken before the study was conducted wherein they were informed about the processes and methods of the study. Voluntary participation was ensured and the participant had the right to leave at any given point of time during the study. The participants were also requested to answer the questions honestly as their confidentiality and privacy were ensured by safeguarding their personal information and using de-identification techniques when reporting study findings to maintain participants' anonymity.

RESULTS

The sample consisted of 155 participants (males and females) who were students (PUC, UG, or PG) ranging between the age groups of 18-25 years.

By conducting the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality we found that our data was normally distributed (> 0.05).

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

	W	p
Peer Pressure	0.988	0.197
Academic Motivation	0.993	0.601
Personal Growth	0.982	0.041

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

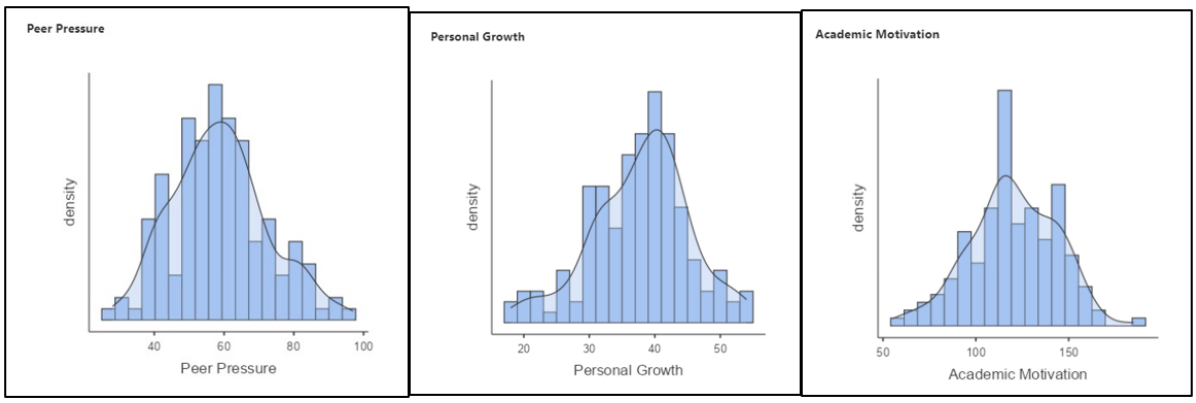

Fig 1: Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

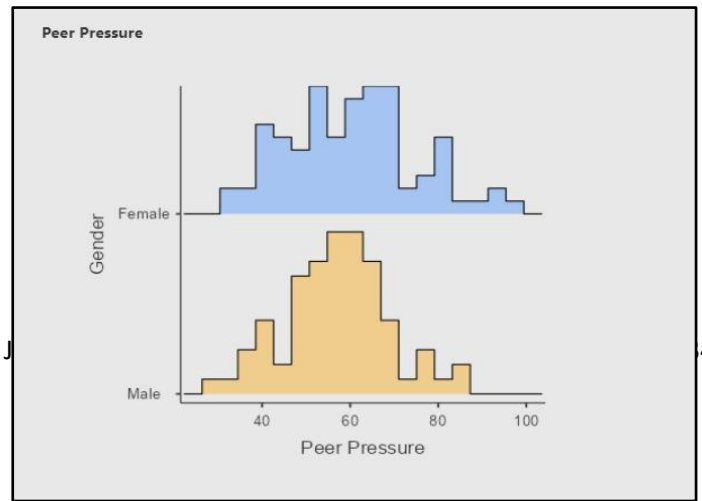

Fig 2: Graphical representation of the data distribution for Peer pressure among the genders

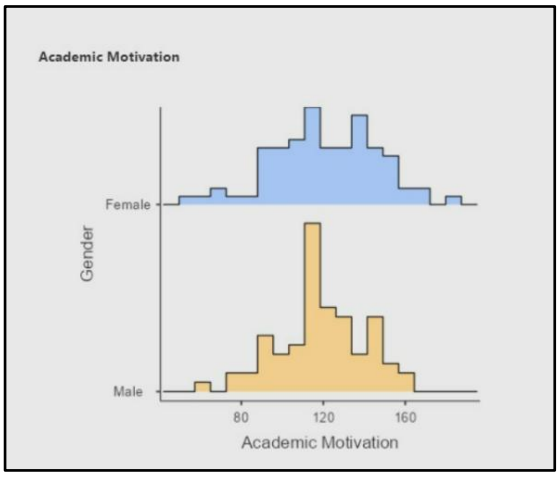

Fig 3: Graphical representation of the data distribution for Academic Motivation among the genders

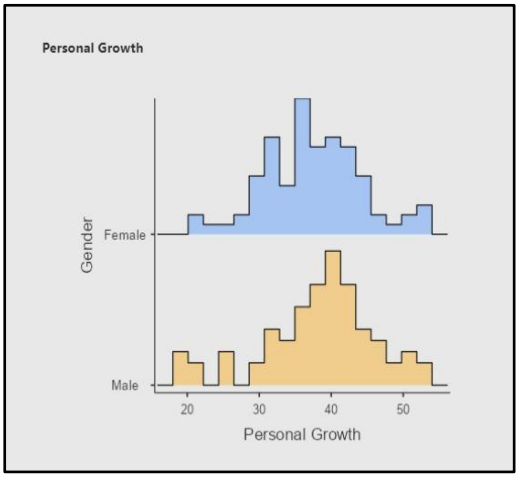

Fig 4: Graphical representation of the data distribution for Personal Growth among the genders

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Gender	Peer Pressure	Personal Growth	Academic Motivation
N	Female	83	83	83
	Male	72	72	72
Mean	Female	60.3	37.6	121
	Male	57.0	38.3	119
Standard deviation	Female	14.8	6.98	25.3
	Male	12.0	7.92	21.0

Fig 5: Tabular Representation of the Descriptives of the data

To fulfill our objective of checking whether there is a correlation between Peer Pressure, Academic Motivation and Personal Growth we evaluated our data through Pearson's correlation matrix. The results obtained showed:

1. Peer pressure (-0.185) is negatively correlated with academic motivation.
2. Peer pressure (-0.301) is negatively correlated with personal growth.
3. Academic motivation (0.379) is positively correlated with personal growth.

Thus, we can conclude that we failed to reject the alternate hypotheses H(1)1, 2, and 3 because we found significant correlation between the variables.

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Peer Pressure	Academic Motivation	Personal Growth
Peer Pressure	Pearson's r	—		
	df	—		
	p-value	—		
Academic Motivation	Pearson's r	−0.185	—	
	df	153	—	
	p-value	0.021	—	
Personal Growth	Pearson's r	−0.301	0.379	—
	df	153	153	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—

Fig 6: Pearson correlation Matrix

To fulfill our objective of checking whether there are significant gender differences between Peer Pressure, Academic Motivation and Personal Growth we evaluated our data through Independent sample t-test. The results obtained showed:

1. There is no or less significant gender difference between peer pressure (0.139) and academic motivation (0.622).
2. There is no or less significant gender difference between peer pressure (0.139) and personal growth (0.529).

Thus, we can conclude that we rejected the alternate hypotheses H(1)4 and 5 because we found no or less significant differences between the variables.

Independent Samples T-Test

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Peer Pressure	Student's t	1.487 [a]	153	0.139	3.25	2.18
Academic Motivation	Student's t	0.494	153	0.622	1.86	3.77

Note. H_a $\mu_{Female} \neq \mu_{Male}$

[a] Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Fig 7: Gender Differences on Peer Pressure and Academic Motivation

Independent Samples T-Test

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Peer Pressure	Student's t	1.487 [a]	153	0.139	3.249	2.18
Personal Growth	Student's t	−0.631	153	0.529	−0.755	1.20

Note. H_a $\mu_{Female} \neq \mu_{Male}$

[a] Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Fig 8: Gender Differences on Peer Pressure and Personal Growth

DISCUSSION

Out of the 158 participants who filled the questionnaire, only the data of 155 participants could be taken into consideration. The sample consisted of 83 (53.54%) female participants and 72 (46.45%) male participants. Thus, gender was taken as a grouping variable to investigate the variations caused by the same on peer pressure, academic motivation and personal growth.

To assess whether peer pressure has a relationship with academic motivation and personal growth among college students, the data collection was operationalized through online surveys. The survey consisted of three scales- Peer Pressure Questionnaire- Revised,

Academic Motivation Scale- College Version, and Personal Growth Initiative Scale. The scoring was done following the scoring norm following which the collected data was cleaned and analyzed.

The data collected from the sample was tested for normality or non-normality using the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The data was found to be normally distributed. The Shapiro- Wilk Test calculates a statistic, W to ensure the normal distribution of a random sample (Engineering Statistics Handbook, n.d.). The W statistic for this specific study are as follows: Peer Pressure (0.988), Academic Motivation (0.993), and Personal Growth (0.982). These high values of W statistic signifies the normality of the data. The confidence level of the data is signified by the p-value. A larger p-value points towards the normality of the data (Dahiru,2008). The p-value for the variables are- Peer Pressure (0.197), Academic Motivation (0.601), and Personal Growth (0.041). The p-values>0.05, therefore, suggesting the data to be normally distributed.

To draw out the correlation between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient, a parametric test was used. The results signified that peer pressure (-0.185) is inversely correlated with academic motivation, When peer pressure and personal growth were checked for correlation, the correlation coefficient signified inverse correlation (-0.301) between the two. On the other hand, academic motivation (0.379) was found to be positively correlated with personal growth. Degrees of Freedom are the values which are free to vary (The University of Texas, n.d.). The degree of freedom was found to be 153. This leads to an inclination towards finding significant results. The p-value of the correlation (0.021) between peer pressure and academic motivation thus shows p value>0.05. This thus indicates that the results are statistically significant. The correlation between peer pressure and personal growth as well as the correlation between academic motivation and personal growth show p value<0.05 thus signifying the results to be statistically significant. Therefore, from the above mentioned results, we failed to reject the alternate hypotheses H(1)1, 2, and 3 because we found significant correlation between the variables.

The mean and the Standard Deviation for the female group in the peer pressure, personal growth and academic motivation aspects are 60.3 and 14.8, 37.6 and 6.98, and 121 and 25.3 respectively. On the other hand, the mean and the SD for the male group in the peer pressure, personal growth and academic motivation aspects are 57.0 and 12.0, 38.3 and 7.92, and 119 and 21.0 respectively. The findings show that the female participants are more likely to be influenced by their peers than the male participants. It also shows that among the two groups the female participants are far more likely to be inclined towards personal growth and academic motivation.

To investigate the gender differences on the variables- peer pressure, academic motivation and personal growth, independent t-test, a parametric test was employed. Results showed that there was no or less significant gender difference between peer pressure (0.139) and academic motivation (0.622) as p value> 0.05. Furthermore, the findings also suggested a lack of significant gender difference between peer pressure (0.139) and personal growth (0.529) as p value> 0.05. The mean difference is an estimate of the difference in the mean values among the two groups (Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions, n.d.). The mean difference in peer pressure was calculated to be 3.25, academic motivation was 1.86, and personal growth was -0.755. The results show significant mean differences in the two gender groups. Standard error stands to measure the variability between the means (University of Connecticut, n.d.). The SE difference between the two gender groups in peer pressure was 2.18, academic motivation was 3.77, and personal growth was 1.20. The low SE

difference indicates that the sample is representative of the population and signifies less variability in the data thus increasing its reliability. Thus, the alternate hypotheses H(1)4 and 5 were rejected because we found no or less significant differences between the variables.

CONCLUSION

Major findings

Based on the results obtained from the statistical analyses, the findings of the research are:-

1. Peer Pressure has a negative influence on both academic motivation and personal growth among university students.
2. Personal growth and academic motivation are interconnected and positively correlated.
3. Gender did not appear to play a critical role in the impact of peer pressure on academic motivation and personal growth.

Limitations

1. Questionnaire Length: The lengthy questionnaires may have resulted in participant distraction and lower attention, affecting data accuracy.
2. Time Constraints: The time for collecting data was not abundant enough to sufficiently boost the number and quality of responses.
3. Social Desirability Bias: Participants may have provided social desirable answers influenced by a desire to be perceived positively by others.
4. Cultural Aspects: Cultural differences were not taken into consideration and there may be many aspects that were influenced by this in the responses and interpretations of the participants so far.

Significance and Impact

This study is necessary because it is important to realize the impact peer groups may have on university students' academic motivation and personal growth. Our study sample is mostly at an age when they go through rapid physical and mental changes. Their growth during this period of their life is thus affected by numerous factors. Peer groups typically act as a significant factor in shaping university students as individuals. The primary focal points for most university students are their academic and personal growth. The study helped us dive deeper into how peers positively or negatively affect the peers may have on the development of the personal and academic situation of the student. It also gave us a perspective on how the university students perceive their peer groups and the influence they have on the spheres of their life.

Therefore, it is only valid if the correlation between the influence of the peer groups and the students' academic and personal motivation was researched upon. It also proved to be a significant study in understanding young adults' psychology and interpersonal relationships.

Implications for future research

1) *Policy Initiatives:* The findings can be adopted in policy formulation to inculcate positive peer relationships among students. Such activities can be planned as organized peer mentoring, team learning workshops, or anti-negative peer influence awareness programs.
2) *Support Mechanism:* An institution of this kind may need to establish a support mechanism that can handle problems caused by peer dynamics, which might include counseling services addressing some of the influences provoked by friends or peers.

This will afford opportunities to guide perspectives on how better to deal with adverse influences and also help cope better.

3) *Curriculum Formulation:* Curricula used within the settings may be redesigned with social and emotional skills in mind, to assist fostering empathy toward others, improving communication skills as well as conflict resolution skills; it will help the chances of better handling amongst the students involving relations with peers.
4) *Cross-Cultural Comparisons*: While such implications go way beyond the Indian context, researchers are required to conduct comparative cross-cultural studies which reveal both universally applicable as well as those of specific contexts within varied educational contexts.
5) *Future Research Directions:* This study opens up future specific research channels on specific demographic factors as moderation factors of peer effects. Longitudinal studies could emphasize the dynamic development of these effects in a time sense and have implications for long-term effects on personal and academic issues.

This in turn would enable learning institutions to create conditions conducive not only to accomplishments within the school but to the overall development of learners to equip them to meet eventualities in life and work.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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