

Influence of Peer and Family Pressure on Career and Relationship Decision-Making Among Youth: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Making a decision is an important step in one's life and making the right decision will help an individual to achieve success and happiness. Many social factors play an important role in making a life decision. In this study, a total of 86 participants among them 62 female and 24 male participants participated in the study with an age range between 18 to 28 years. This study explores how two social factors namely, family pressure and peer pressure influence an individual's decision-making process related to career and relationships. This attempt also compares family pressure and peer pressure and finds out which factor is more influential on major life decisions like career decisions and relationship decisions. The outcome suggests that for both cases career decision-making and relationship decision-making family pressure is higher than peer pressure and family pressure influences more while in the decision-making process as compared to peer pressure.

Keywords: *Family Pressure, Peer Pressure, Career and Relationship decision-making*

Decision-making is a process of choosing among various courses of action or alternatives. It can also be defined as the process of evaluating many options and choosing one among them, which can be helpful for an individual to achieve one or more goals. In our working hours, life provides us with a continuous series of choices such as what to eat, what to wear, where to go, whom to vote, whether to attend the classes or not, which university or college should join, which course to choose, etc. Cognitive psychologists use the term decision-making to refer to a set of mental activities that take place while choosing one option among many. Primarily decisions are made in the face of some amount of uncertainty.

In our lives, we make many decisions and expect them to turn right for us, giving us a maximum positive outcome. Decisions can be broadly categorized into two types: day-to-day decisions of life and the next one are major decisions of life. Day-to-day decisions are those we usually make in our everyday lives, such as what to eat, where to go, which clothes to wear and many more. This kind of decision-making process needs less cognitive stress and will not affect one's life. This kind of decision an individual can take without any

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problem and with less effort. But, in major decisions of life, an individual puts more effort and invests more time to choose among many. The cognitive stress is very high while making such kinds of decisions. This decision-making involves decisions like which subject to study, which university is good for admission, which job to apply for, and many others. These major decisions in life influence an individual's personal as well as social life. So, career decision-making and relationship decision-making are two examples of major decisions in life. These two decisions shape an individual's personal life and indicate their position in society.

The present study seeks to check the degree of influence that family and peer pressure have on career choice and relationship decisions among the youth. This attempt also compares family pressure and peer pressure and looks for which factor influences more on major life decisions and their reasons.

The main objective of conducting this research is to check to what extent family and peer pressure may influence career decisions and relationship decisions among youth. Here the study is conducted by comparing both the pressure groups with two major life decisions. Both choosing a career and choosing a proper relationship are to be considered one of the most important decisions that an individual makes in their life. Individuals cannot make these decisions on their own, because these decisions might have a large impact on one's life. So, to choose the right decision for them, they tend to rely on others, or in other words, many social factors influence an individual's decision-making process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Methany and McWhirter (2013) attempted to study the contributions of social status and family support to college student's career decisions, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations. The study suggested that family status and support are directly connected with career choosing and career decision development outcomes. In the same way, Kim (2014) conducted a study to see the relation between family background, student's academic self-efficacy, and student's career and life success expectations. The outcome showed that family background predicted academic self-efficacy positively and career and life success expectations negatively. Similarly, Khatri and Pariwal (2020) attempted to study the influence of family on the career decision of Indian management students. The study outcome indicates that family members positively impact and play a significant role in the career decision-making process.

Mtemeri (2020) studied the influence of peer pressure on career decision-making among high school students of Midlands Province, Zimbabwe. For doing this quantitative research, a design was used. The study's outcome says that young students are influenced by peers, making career decisions in many ways. Among them, peer advice, encouragement, peer education is the main factors. Similarly, Owusu and Owusu (2021) examine the influence of peers, teachers, and parents in career aspirant students of public senior high schools, which conclude that teachers do not play any significant role in influencing career aspirants. Still, parental influence plays a role in aspiring students; peer pressure also affects male and female career aspirants differently.

METHODOLOGY

Present Study

This study aims to provide a descriptive understanding of the influence of family and peers while making major life decisions of an individual. Along with this, the study tries to highlight a comparison between family and peer influence, which can be the most influencing factor while making a decision related to career and relationships.

Research Questions

- RQ1: - Does family pressure influence decision-making more than peer pressure?
- RQ2: -Do peer pressure and family pressure influence different career and relationship decision-making processes?

Hypotheses

- H1: - Family pressure will influence the decision-making process more than peer pressure.
- H2a: -Family pressure will influence the career decision process more than relationship decisions.
- H2b: -Peer pressure will influence the relationship decision process more than career decisions.

Sample

A total of 86 participants were taken for this study from the age group between 18 to 28 years. The respondents were a total of 43 each for both scenarios. The mean age of the participants is 22.54 years, with SD = 2.90. Choosing only those people whose age is between 18 to 28 is when they have to take some major calls for their future. Career decisions and relationship decisions are considered two major life decisions that can significantly affect an individual's life. These two decisions usually people make at a young age. Many aspects can influence the decision-making process. This is the major reason for choosing this particular age group of people as the participants.

Research Design

The experiment was a 2x2 mixed-factor design. Here two independent variables were social pressure (family pressure and peer pressure) and the nature of the decision (Career decision and relationship decision) and the dependent variable was the decision-making process. Both independent variables were manipulated by using different scenarios. In the first scenario, family influence influences career decisions, and peer influence influences relationship decisions. Similarly, in the second scenario, peer influence influences career decisions, and family influence influences relationship decisions.

Since data were collected in the online method, the experiment was designed in such a way that after the informed consent, participants get two options of different kinds of decisions. The participants were given the liberty to choose between forms A and form B, but they could only fill up one set of questionnaires.

Procedure

Participants were taken from various places with different educational backgrounds. At first participants were asked whether they wanted to be a part of this experiment and they agreed to be a part of it after that the form was provided to them along with the instructions such as

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how to respond to the given questions and how to submit it. After that, participants were introduced to the purpose of the result and were requested to fill out the questionnaire. The participants who volunteered for the study were given the instructions that there were different scenarios. The actors are in a dilemma, one actor is confused with career choice, and another is confused with relationship choice. The participants were asked to keep their responses discrete for their assurances of confidentiality; they were only asked to give their name, gender, age, and education qualification, but these were not compulsory responses.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 22. The mean age, standard deviation, and numbers of participants were computed for descriptive purposes. Independent sample t-test is used to see the mean differences and t-test for various kind of decisions like career decision and relationship decisions, similarly paired sample t-test is used to check the mean and paired t-test for comparing career and relationship decisions, Chi-square analysis is used to see ‘what the person should do’ in case of career decision-making and relationship decision-making, and McNemar test is used to analyze the comparison of two pressure irrespective of nature of the decision.

RESULTS

Table 1. - Mean differences and t-test for various kinds of pressures on Career and Relationship

Nature of decision	Items	Nature of social pressure	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Career Decision	Chances that respondent will follow self	Parents Pressure	43	3.51	.735	-2.353	.021
		Peer Pressure	43	3.88	.730		
	Chances that respondents will follow pressure	Parents Pressure	43	3.00	.951	2.064	.042
		Peer Pressure	43	2.60	.820		
	Chances that respondents will follow self	Parents Pressure	43	4.13	.804	-1.070	.288
		Peer Pressure	43	4.32	.808		
	Chances that respondents will follow pressure	Parents Pressure	43	2.51	.984	.848	.399
		Peer Pressure	43	2.34	.783		
Relationship Decision	Chances that respondents will follow self	Parents Pressure	43	3.58	1.005	1.141	.257
		Peer Pressure	42	3.35	.790		
	Chances that respondents will follow pressure	Parents Pressure	43	2.39	.791	-2.362	.021
		Peer Pressure	42	2.85	1.001		
	Chances that respondents will follow self	Parents Pressure	43	3.74	.875	.390	.697
		Peer Pressure	42	3.66	.954		
	Chances that respondents will follow pressure	Parents Pressure	43	2.60	1.115	-.167	.867
		Peer Pressure	42	2.64	.983		

The results show that there is no significant mean difference in terms of both conditions. But 3 conditions are significant at .05* and the rest of the conditions are not significant.

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Table 2. - Mean and paired sample t-test comparing Career and Relationship decision

Item	Decision	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Following Self	Career Decision	85	3.69	.756	1.705	.092
	Relationship Decision		3.47	.907		
Following pressure	Career decision	85	2.80	.910	1.268	.208
	Relationship decision		2.62	.925		
Respondents following self	Career Decision	85	4.22	.807	4.436	.000
	Relationship Decision		3.70	.910		
Respondent following pressure	Career Decision	85	2.42	.891	-1.766	.081
	Relationship Decision		2.62	1.046		

There is no significant difference is found among 4 pairs and pair 1 and pair 4 are significant at 0.05* and pair 3 is significant at 0.005* and pair 2 is not significant.

Table 3a. -Chi-Square analysis for 'participant's suggestions' in case of Career Decision-Making

Nature of social pressure	Family pressure	Peer pressure	Total	Chi-square	P
Following self	41	42	83	.345a	1.000
Following pressure	2	1	3		
Total	43	43	86		

Table 3b. - Chi-Square analysis for 'participant's suggestions' in the case of Relationship Decision-Making

Nature of social pressure	Family pressure	Peer pressure	Total	Chi-square	P
Following self	29	30	59	.057a	1.000
Following pressure	13	12	25		
Total	42	42	84		

The results show that there is a total of 25 responses who said individuals must follow the suggestions given to them. It indicates family pressure influence is slightly higher than peer pressure in terms of relationship decision-making.

Table 4 - Comparison of two pressures irrespective of nature of the decision

What the person should do in case of peer pressure	What the person should do in case of family pressure	
Options	Following self	Following Pressure
Following self	58	23
Following pressure	1	2
Total	59	25

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The result of McNemor test shows that in case social pressure its family, which pressure is higher than the pressure given by peer groups.

The result shows in the case of relationship decisions family influence is slightly more than peer influence, similarly, in the case of career, family influence is more than and peer influence. It means that both H2a: Family pressure will influence career decisions more than relationship decisions have proved. On the other hand, H2b: Peer pressure will influence relationship decision-making more than family pressure has not been proved.

From the overall analysis of the results, it is indicated that both family pressure and peer pressure have a significant impact on making-decision making process among youth, but family pressure will slightly more influence the decision-making process of youth than peer pressure. Hence H1: Family pressure will influence decision-making more than peer pressure.

DISCUSSION

The decision-making process plays a very important role in an individual's life. In case making decisions in one's life is always a chaotic situation, like what to do, how to do, how to achieve. These kinds of confrontations everybody faces during their life span. But many social factors help or can say pressurize an individual in the process of decision-making. The two major social factors or pressures are family influence and peer influence.

The focus of this present study is to understand the degree of influence both social factors (family pressure & peer pressure) have on career decision-making and the relationship decision-making process among youth. The study hypothesized that i) Family pressure will influence decision-making more than peer pressure. ii) Family pressure will influence career decision-making more than relationship decisions. iii) Peer pressure will influence relationship decisions more than career decision-making. The findings of the study suggest that social pressure does influence the decision-making process among youth.

The finding of the study indicates that there is no significant mean difference between the two social pressures (family pressure & peer pressure) that are studied. Also, there is no significant mean difference is found between the two pairs of samples (Section A & Section B).

According to Khatri & Pariwal (2020), in their study, the making of career choices depends on the influence of family. The family impact has a beneficent effect on career decision-making in undergraduate and postgraduate. The result of the chi-square analysis shows that family influence has more impact on career decision-making than peer influence. It also indicates that the H2a of the present study has been proved. One of the possible explanations can be the high level of trust factor that an individual has in their family members and the sense of belief and respect that they have for family's opinion and decisions and it will have a positive impact on their future life.

Another possible explanation can be individual shares a high degree of attachment and belongingness with their family members as compared with peer groups. Baskin (2013) supported this assumption in his findings and concluded that family belongingness has a significant relationship with psychological distress and academic motivation also has an indirect impact on career decision-making difficulties. A general family with more

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experience in the academic field can provide better exposure for the youth in choosing decisions related to their career. Fouad (2016) supported this assumption and described that family influence is correlated in expected ways with family obligation, work values, calling, and occupational engagement. Since every individual is an active member of their own respective families they are highly bound or attached to members of the family and rules-regulation of the family. So, it will also affect the career choice of an individual as compared with peer groups.

The outcome of the study also indicates that in the case of making decisions related to the relationship it is family pressure that influences more than peer pressure. This means H2b of the present study is not proven. MacDonald et al. (2012), explained in their study that countries that have low on collectivist attitudes and traditions tend to have independence in the mate selection process. But in the case of those countries where people practice the collectivist culture parents play a larger role in the mate selection process. The study also describes that the relationship between self-esteem and the value placed on a relationship is mediated both by reflected appraisals and the family's approval of the relationship. Similarly, Buuket. al. (2010), concluded in their study that people who belong to the collectivist country have experienced a large amount of parental influence as compared to the people who belong to the individualistic country.

In the present study, all the respondents are Indian, and Indian culture gives more importance to the practice of collectivism. That's why it is reflected in the result, that family will influence more in terms of relationship decision-making than peers.

Moreover, in the Indian context, individuals have a higher rate of dependency on their respective parents, along the higher rate of cohesiveness between family members allows the parents to take part in the major life decision-making process of youth. This assumption is also reflected in the outcome of the present study that family has a significant influence over the relationship decision-making process of youth. Along with that both parents and individual share a mutual respect and the individual believes that whatever suggestions parents will give to them will have a positive reflection on their upcoming life. This sense of attachment influences the individual's decision-making process related to career choice and relationship choice.

CONCLUSION

The findings concluded that in the case of career decision-making, it is family pressure that influences more and in the case of relationship decision-making, peer influence is slightly higher than family pressure. This study will help to understand the relationship of youth with their family and peers. It will encourage other researchers to study further the effect of social pressures on an individual's decision-making process of people from all categories and age groups.

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Conflict of Interest

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