

Research Paper

Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Peer Pressure and Decision-Making among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid psychological, cognitive, and social changes. During this period, peer influence becomes highly significant, often shaping adolescents' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes. At the same time, individual psychological factors such as self-efficacy play a crucial role in guiding behavior. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, peer pressure, and decision-making among adolescents. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from 110 adolescents using standardized instruments including the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire (PPSQ), and Child and Adolescent Participation in Decision Making Questionnaire (CAP-DMQ). Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and peer pressure ($r = -.409, p < .001$), a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and decision-making ($r = .744, p < .001$), and a significant negative relationship between peer pressure and decision-making ($r = -.528, p < .001$). The findings suggest that adolescents with higher self-efficacy are better able to resist peer pressure and demonstrate stronger decision-making abilities.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Decision-Making, Peer Pressure, Psychological Development, Self-Efficacy*

Adolescence is widely recognized as a crucial stage of human development marked by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive transformations. According to the World Health Organization, adolescence spans from 10 to 19 years and represents a transitional phase where individuals begin to develop identity, independence, and social awareness (Steinberg, 2014). During this stage, adolescents become increasingly sensitive to peer evaluation and social feedback.

Peer relationships become central to adolescents' lives as they shift from family-oriented interactions to peer-oriented socialization. Peer pressure, defined as the influence exerted by individuals of the same age group, plays a critical role in shaping behaviours and attitudes

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(Brown, 2004). While peer pressure can promote positive behaviours such as academic engagement and cooperation, it can also lead to risky or impulsive actions.

From a developmental perspective, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to peer influence due to ongoing brain maturation. The Dual Systems Model suggests that heightened emotional reactivity and reward sensitivity increase susceptibility to peer pressure (Steinberg, 2014). As a result, adolescents may prioritize immediate social rewards over long-term consequences.

In addition to social influences, psychological constructs such as self-efficacy significantly impact adolescent behaviour. Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and manage situations effectively. Adolescents with high self-efficacy tend to demonstrate confidence, independence, and better decision-making skills. Therefore, examining the interplay between self-efficacy, peer pressure, and decision-making is essential for understanding adolescent behaviour.

Significance of the Study

The present study holds both theoretical and practical importance in understanding adolescent development. Firstly, it integrates social and psychological variables to provide a comprehensive understanding of decision-making processes. This holistic approach contributes to existing literature by bridging gaps between individual and environmental influences.

Secondly, the study offers practical implications for educators, parents, and mental health professionals. By identifying self-efficacy as a protective factor, targeted interventions can be developed to enhance adolescents' confidence and reduce susceptibility to negative peer pressure.

Thirdly, the study is significant in the Indian context, where socio-cultural factors influence adolescent behaviour differently compared to Western populations. Understanding these dynamics can aid in designing culturally appropriate psychological interventions.

Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of promoting self-efficacy and decision-making skills, which are essential for healthy psychological development and long-term well-being.

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between self-efficacy and peer pressure among adolescents.
- To assess the relationship between self-efficacy and decision-making among adolescents.
- To investigate the relationship between peer pressure and decision-making among adolescents.

Hypotheses

- **H1:** Self-efficacy will be significantly negatively correlated with peer pressure.
- **H2:** Self-efficacy will be significantly positively correlated with decision-making.
- **H3:** Peer pressure will be significantly negatively correlated with decision-making.

Rationale of the Study

The study was conducted to explore how internal psychological factors and external social influences interact to shape adolescent behaviour. While peer pressure is a strong social force, self-efficacy may determine how individuals respond to such pressures. Limited research has examined these variables together, particularly in the Indian context. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous research highlights the critical role of peer relationships in adolescent development. Adolescents are highly influenced by peer norms, which shape their attitudes and behaviours (Prinstein & Giletta, 2020). Studies indicate that adolescents are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors in the presence of peers (Chein et al., 2011).

The increasing influence of social media has further amplified peer pressure by providing constant opportunities for social comparison (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). This continuous exposure can significantly impact adolescents' self-perception and decision-making.

In contrast, self-efficacy has been identified as a key psychological factor influencing behavior. Individuals with high self-efficacy demonstrate greater confidence, persistence, and independence (Bandura, 1997). Such individuals are better equipped to resist peer pressure and make rational decisions.

Overall, literature suggests that both peer influence and self-efficacy play significant roles in shaping adolescent decision-making, highlighting the need for integrated research.

Research Gap

Despite extensive research, several gaps remain. Most studies focus primarily on risk-taking behaviors rather than everyday decision-making processes. Additionally, many studies examine peer pressure in isolation without considering psychological factors such as self-efficacy.

Furthermore, existing research is largely Western-centric, with limited studies conducted in the Indian context. Cultural differences may influence how adolescents perceive and respond to peer pressure.

Lastly, there is a lack of studies examining the combined relationship between self-efficacy, peer pressure, and decision-making. The present study addresses these gaps by adopting a comprehensive approach.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine relationships among variables.

Participants

The sample consisted of 110 adolescents aged 10–19 years selected through random sampling.

Variables

- Self-efficacy

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- Peer pressure
- Decision-making

Instruments

- General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)
- Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire (Saini & Singh)
- CAP-DMQ (O'Hare et al., 2016)

Procedure

Participants were informed about the study and consent was obtained. Standardized questionnaires were administered, and responses were collected for analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyse relationships among variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Peer Pressure

Variable	1	2
Self-Efficacy	-	-.409**
Peer Pressure	-.409**	-

Table 2 Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Decision-Making

Variable	1	2
Self-Efficacy	-	.744**
Decision-Making	.744**	-

Table 3 Correlation between Peer Pressure and Decision-Making

Variable	1	2
Peer Pressure	-	-.528**
Decision-Making	-.528**	-

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and peer pressure, suggesting that adolescents with higher confidence are less influenced by peers. This supports Bandura's theory of self-efficacy.

The strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and decision-making indicates that confident adolescents are better equipped to make independent and rational decisions.

The negative relationship between peer pressure and decision-making suggests that increased peer influence may impair judgment and lead to impulsive decisions.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of self-efficacy as a protective factor in adolescent development.

Key Findings

- Self-efficacy negatively correlates with peer pressure
- Self-efficacy positively correlates with decision-making
- Peer pressure negatively affects decision-making

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- Self-efficacy enhances independent thinking

Future Implications

Future research should include larger samples and longitudinal designs. Additional variables such as family environment and personality traits should also be explored. Interventions can be developed to strengthen self-efficacy among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in adolescent decision-making and helps in resisting peer pressure. Promoting self-efficacy can lead to healthier psychological development and better decision-making outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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