

Influence of Peer Pressure on Decision-making in Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

The current research examined how peer pressure affects decision making and academic results of students. Adolescence and early adulthood are the periods of development where peer relationship is influential in major role of determining behavioral and academic performance. The research design was the quantitative correlational research design to explore the associations between peer pressure, decision-making and academic performance. The number of students who took part in the study was 100. The Academic Performance Scale, the Questionnaire of Peer Pressure Scale (Revised) and the General Decision-making Questionnaire were the instruments used to gather the data. The correlation of the variables was analysed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The result showed that decision-making and academic performance have a medium positive statistically significant association, meaning that the students with more effective decision-making tendencies are more likely to perform better academically. There was also a positive and significant relationship between peer pressure and academic performance that peer influence can have a positive influence provided it is consistent with academic objectives. Nonetheless, peer pressure and its relation to decision-making was not found to be statistically significant. The findings indicate that social and cognitive factors play a crucial role in determining academic performance. The research indicates that there is a necessity to conduct educational interventions that foster positive peer atmosphere and reinforce decision-making skills of students to improve academic performance.

Keywords: *Peer Pressure, Decision-Making, Academic Performance, Students*

The performance in academics is a multidimensional outcome, which is determined by cognitive abilities, motivation, family background, institutional issues, and social interactions. Among them, peer relations are especially important in the adolescence and young adulthood, a stage of development when social approval and group belonging increase. Students invest a great percentage of their academic attitudes and preferences. Peer pressure is one of the strongest forms of social pressure that is working in this environment.

Peer pressure is the direct or indirect influence exerted by individuals of comparable age or status in which the influence is aimed at conforming to the attitudes, behaviours, or making

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decisions. Peer pressure in the academic context can take many forms; peer pressure may be the pressure to fit in with the group in terms of study habits, classroom attendance, selection of subjects, attendance or even participation in maladaptive behaviours like procrastination or cheating. Although peer influence may at times encourage students to have positive academic behaviours- better effort, healthy competition, and goal orientation, peer influence may lead to poor academic choices, low motivation, and performance.

Academic decision-making entails making decisions involved in the study, academic attendance, course selection, time management, academic activity involvement and balancing academic and social life. These decisions are usually made by students with regard to acceptance by peer groups. As an example, a student can either go to a study session or meet his or her friends, and the result of such a choice can have a considerable impact on future academic performance.

Cognitive abilities, family, motivation, institutional support, and social influences are related to academic performance which is usually measured by grades, examination, attendance, involvement, and general academic progression. Peer influence is the least influential of these factors since students spend a lot of time together in the classrooms, hostels, libraries, and social places; hence, peer norms have a lot of influence.

Positive and Negative Dimensions of Peer Pressure

Peer pressure operates in both constructive and destructive ways.

Positive peer pressure may encourage:

- Participation in group study sessions.
- Healthy competition for academic excellence.
- Academic collaboration and peer tutoring.
- Motivation to pursue higher education goals.

Negative Peer Pressure may lead to:

- Skipping classes or neglecting assignments.
- Engaging in excessive social or recreational activities.
- Reduced academic focus due to fear of being labelled overly studious.
- Risk-taking behaviours that interfere with learning.

Therefore, the influence of peers is never bad in its effects it will depend on the group norms and individual vulnerability.

Peer Pressure and Academic Decision Making

The necessity to belong and be accepted is especially strong in the period of adolescence and initial adulthood. Students can also embrace behaviours that leave them in line with what their peers expect, although they may go against personal academic interests. Peer pressure has an effect on decision making in various fields of academics:

- **Study Habits:** Students may adopt either disciplined or careless study routines based on peer norms.
- **Class Attendance:** Peers may encourage or discourage attendance depending on group attitudes toward classes.
- **Academic Motivation:** Competitive or achievement-oriented peer groups can enhance motivation, while disengaged peer groups can reduce interest in academics.
- **Time Management:** Peer-led social activities can either enhance collaboration or distract students from academic responsibilities.

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- Career and Course Decisions: Students often choose subjects or career paths influenced by peer preferences or group trends.

Decision Making as a Mediating Process

It is through the process of decision making that peer pressure influences the academic performance. Students are always at a crossroad weighing between the personal objective and social acceptance. These decisions are influenced by cognitive and emotional processes such as the desire to be liked by peers, the fear of rejection, self-esteem, Academic confidence and Perceived consequences of choices.

Peer approval can be of more importance than academic objectives and therefore students can make compromising decisions. On the other hand, academically focused peer groups may influence the students to make choices that enhance learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Lu (2025) examined the peer influence on academic motivation in adolescents. It determines mechanisms (e.g., social reinforcement, normative influence) contextual factors (e.g., classroom climate, cultural norms), and gaps in the research especially in decision making and motivational processes. This research demonstrated how peer play is critical in the development of academic goals and behaviours in terms of emotional support, modelling and group expectations.
2. Ozonuwe et al. (2025) discussed the effect of peer influence and school environmental factors in influencing the academic performance of senior secondary students. The results of the 114 randomly selected students showed that peer pressure has a great impact on academic performance and majority of the students reported that peer pressure had an impact on their study behaviors. The results indicated that peer pressure is in interaction with more general contextual influences.
3. Seema (2025) emphasized on the specific effects of peer pressure on the decisions of the adolescents with specific interest in the psychological impacts on the behaviour and the pattern of choices. Known important channels in which peer effect affects decision making such as conformity pressure and social reinforcement. The results highlight how peer influence had a significant role in influencing the views of adolescents toward school participation and future aspirations.
4. Sarfika et al. (2024) researched the correlation between perceived peer pressure and academic pressure among 529 adolescents. Peer pressure and academic stress scales were used to establish scores. The results are applicable as academic stress usually mediates the impact of peer influence on study behaviors and performance outcome connected social influence to cognitive and emotional reaction in studies.
5. Wu et.al (2024) asked the question of the impact of peer relationships on academic achievement in the form of learning motivation and learning engagement. It was found through structural equation modelling (SEM) that there was a direct and indirect relationship between peer relationships and improved academic performance. The mediators such as motivation and engagement were important indicating positive social interactions between peers.

METHODOLOGY

Various psychological and social factors affect the academic performance. In the adolescent stage and early adulthood, peer groups are very powerful in attitudinal and behavioral and decision-making patterns development. Although peer relationships may be inspirational and helpful, they also cause pressure which influences students academic decisions and

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achievement. The interaction of peer pressure and decision making as well as academic achievement is crucial to formulating an adequate educational and psychological intervention. Therefore, the present was undertaken to systematically examine these relationships.

Aim: The primary aim of this study was to investigate the influence of peer pressure on decision making and academic performance among students.

Objective: To understand the combined influence of peer pressure and decision making tendencies on academic outcomes.

Hypothesis: Peer Pressure and decision making is positively associated with academic performance among students.

Method: A methodical examination of dissertations, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other academic publications.

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationships among peer pressure, decision-making and academic performance. A correlational approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore associations among naturally occurring variables without manipulating them.

Participant Sample Size

The study consisted of 100 participants. The participants students enrolled in academic institutions. Both male and female students were included to ensure representation. The sample size was deemed fine to carry out correlation analysis and investigate the correlation between the variables of interest.

Measures:

- 1. Academic Performance Scale:** Academic Performance was measured by using Academic Performance which is a structured self-report measure that was developed to evaluate academic functioning of students. The scale measures different areas of scholastic behaviour such as studying habits, time management, classroom behaviour, and regularity in doing the assignments, and perceived academic competence. The items will be rated using a Likert-type scale of strong disagreement to strong agreement. A high overall score indicates greater academic interest and academic performance. The scale offers comprehensive insight on the academic behaviour of students, other than the examination scores, through behavioural and attitudinal elements.
- 2. Peer Pressure Scale Revised:** The Revised Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire was used to test the level of influence the students feel exerted by their peer group. Areas measured in the scale include conformity to group norms, sensitivity to peer approval, social comparison, behavioural influence in both academic and social situations. The answers will be measured in Likes scale, whereby, the subject will be expected to give the extent to which he/she can concur with each statement. The higher overall scores portray increased perceived peer pressure. The restored edition makes the items clear and more relevant to modern student groups.
- 3. General Decision-Making Questionnaire:** Participants were tested in terms of the typical methods they apply when making decisions by the General Decision-Making

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Questionnaire. The tool measures various decision-making styles such as rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant and spontaneous styles. The respondents evaluate each item using a Likert scale and on how well the statement characterises their decision-making behaviour. The increase of the scores corresponds to the increased tendencies toward definite decision patterns. The questionnaire provides insight into cognitive and behavioural aspects of decision processes.

Recruitment

Recruitment was carried out through classroom announcements and online sharing of the questionnaire link. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used only for academic research purposes.

Inclusion Criteria

- Students currently enrolled in an academic institution.
- Participants within the specified age group relevant to higher secondary or undergraduate/ postgraduate education.
- Students who provided informed consent to participate.
- Participants who completed all sections of the questionnaires.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals not currently enrolled in an academic program.
- Participants who submitted incomplete responses.
- Individuals who declined to provide consent.

RESULT

The present study examined the influence of peer pressure on decision-making style and academic performance among 100 students. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to find the strength and direction of relationships between the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Academic Performance, Decision Making and Peer Pressure (N=100)

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	Sd
Academic Performance	100	19.00	40.00	29.26	4.35
Decision-Making	100	19.00	48.00	34.46	4.45
Peer Pressure	100	75.00	152.00	115.76	16.54

The mean score for **Academic Performance** was 29.26 (SD=4.35), reporting a moderate-high perceived academic performance and academic engagement among the participants. The range of scores was 19 to 40, which implies that there is a difference of academic behaviors among the sample.

For **Decision Making**, the mean score was 34.46 (SD= 4.45). This is indicative of a fairly consistent and mediocre tendencies of decision making amongst students. The range observed (19-48) means that there are differences in the approaches of the participants to decisions.

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The **Peer Pressure** scale yielded a mean of 115.76 (SD= 16.54), presenting moderate perceived peer influence. The standard deviation is relatively large, which implies that there is a significant difference among the degree to which students are subjected to peer pressure.

Table 2: Correlation for Academic Performance, Decision-Making and Peer Pressure

Correlation	r	P value
Academic Performance & Decision-Making Style	0.31	.002
Academic Performance & Peer Pressure	0.27	.007
Decision- Making Style & Peer Pressure	0.18	.072

Findings

The results are that decision-making style and academic performance have a moderately positive relationship significant at the statistical level ($r=0.31$, $p=.002$). This implies that students that exhibit better-organized and reflective decision-making styles have higher academic performance.

Peer pressure and decision-making style also had a statistically significant positive correlation ($r= 0.18$, $p=.072$) was not statistically significant. Even though there was the slight positive movement, it is not enough to determine that there is a significant correlation between these two variables in the current sample.

On the whole, the findings indicate that there is a positive relationship between decision making and peer pressure and the effect of decision -making style has a relatively better impact on academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this research was to review the peer pressure hypothesis on decision-making and academic performance among students. The results offer valuable information in the contribution of social and cognitive factors on academic functioning.

The strong positive correlation between decision-making style and academic performance means that students who make decisions in a rational and thoughtful way have higher chances to cope with academic task competently. The ability of decisions can help in the improvement of time management, goal setting, and problem-solving, which improves academic performance.

The constructive aspect of peer pressure has been pointed out by the positive correlation between the peer pressure and the academic performance. In spite of the conceptual portrayal of peer pressure as negativity, peers can be an encouragement to academic involvement by providing encouragement to fruitful activities like studying, attending classes, or even being disciplined. This indicates that peer influence is influenced by the nature and context of peer influence which are critical towards its effect.

The insignificant and weak correlation between per pressure and style of decision making demonstrates that, although peers can have certain influence, it is probably individual cognitive styles and personal traits that influence decision-making patterns rather than social pressure as a solitary attribute.

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On the whole, the results confirm the opinion that both interpersonal factors have an impact on the academic performance. Decision making style seems to have a relatively greater role to play with peer pressure playing a supportive, but less dominant role.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the paper shows that peer pressure, as well as decision-making style, has a positive correlation with academic performance. The style of decision-making has been found to be more positively related and consistent with academic achievement, but peer pressure has been observed to be enhancing in the presence of academic ambitions. The findings can help to understand the nature of interaction between social processes and mental activities that can lead to the academic success of students.

Limitations

Even though the current research makes important contributions to the understanding of the correlation between peer pressure, decision making style, and academic performance, it should be admitted that some limitations are present.

To begin with, the research design used in the study was a correlational research design that does not allow the establishment of causal relationships. Although the relationships between variables were established, one cannot say that peer pressure directly leads to the change in the decision-making or academic performance.

Second, the research population consisted of 100 individuals who were picked using convenience sampling and this can limit the external validity of the results. The outcome might not make all students in various levels of education, cultures, and geographical settings.

Lastly, personality traits, family environment, academic motivation and socio-economic status were not controlled other factors that could affect academic performance.

Future Implications

To begin with, the researchers can consider taking a longitudinal research design to gain a more thorough insight into the role of peer pressure and decision-making styles in academic performance across time. This would have given more information about the patterns of development and possible cause and effect relationships.

Second, to increase generalizability, larger and more varied samples, based on various institutions and demographic backgrounds, are to be mentioned as the subject of future research.

Third, the application of mixed-method techniques (e.g., interviews or focus group discussions) would give a more in-depth insight into the perception of peer influence by students and the influence of its act on their decision-making.

It is also possible to look at the mediating or moderating variables, including self-esteem, academic motivation, resilience, or parental support, as a focus of future research to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms behind these relationships.

Practically speaking, schools can use such results to develop intervention programs that enhance decision making skills and peer cultures. The workshops on the independent

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thinking, responsible thinking, responsible peer interaction and academic goal-setting could be beneficial in improving the overall performance of students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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