

Peer Pressure among School Going Adolescents and its impact on Career Decision Making

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Abstract

The present study reveals Peer pressure among school going adolescents and its impact on career decision making. For this study 150 adolescents from Ludhiana district were taken. Peer Pressure Scale (Kaur and Kaur, 2020) and Career Decision Making Tool (Singh, 2014) are used to collect the data. Significant relationship found between peer pressure and career decision making as well as peer pressure and career indecision making among school going adolescents of schools of Ludhiana district. Significant relationship between peer pressure and career decision making as well as peer pressure and career indecision making was found among school going adolescents of schools of Ludhiana district with respect to gender. Also significant relationship between peer pressure and career indecision making was found among adolescents of schools of Ludhiana district with respect to locale but no significant relationship between peer pressure and career decision making was found among adolescents of schools of Ludhiana district with respect to locale.

Keywords- *Peer pressure, Career decision making, Career indecision making and School going adolescents*

Peer pressure, defined as the influence exerted by peers or social groups with similar interests, circumstances, or status, plays a significant role in shaping an individual's opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and particularly career choices. Since peer groups are often composed of friends of the same age, their impact on decision-making an evaluative process involving choosing among alternatives based on available information becomes highly relevant during adolescence when career decisions are formed. Career decision-making, as Kaur (2018) described, involves reviewing one's skills and interests to reach a rational choice, yet it is often molded by external influences such as peers, family, teachers, and counselors. From childhood, when career aspirations emerge through pretend play, to adolescence, students rely on information from various sources parents, siblings, peers, teachers, guidance counselors, media, and

career centers (Julien, 1999) but peers are often consulted most due to their availability and relatability. Strong peer relationships can positively correlate with higher levels of career exploration, encouraging the development of career-relevant skills like leadership, public speaking, and teamwork. Studies indicate that students' career paths may align with dominant peer groups (Astin, 1993), as peer pressure often motivates choices that ensure belongingness among like-minded individuals. While friends and peers play a central role in shaping perceptions and aspirations, parental expectations and career congruence remain equally influential in collectivist cultures, significantly guiding students' career decisions (Dian, Peter, and Melaine, 2014). Thus, peer pressure, alongside family and societal influences, becomes a critical factor in shaping students' career aspirations and decision-making processes.

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Related literature highlights that peer pressure plays a significant role in adolescents' career decision-making, with several studies (Richard and Maria, 2012; Singh, 2015; Ogutu, Odera and Maragia, 2017; Anand and Bhaskar, 2019) reporting it as helpful in enhancing decisiveness, ignorance, inexperience, or peer influence without proper guidance may lead to wrong career choices. Peer pressure has been shown to positively impact independence, self-confidence, recognition, academic performance, social support, and identity (Kiran-Esan, 2003; Davis, 2012), while negative effects include risks of aggression, substance abuse, crime, depression, and strained family relations (Bahr, Hoffmann and Yang, 2005; Kaur and Kaur, 2020; Tuteja, 2022). Overall, career decision-making is influenced both positively and negatively by a range of factors such as gender, self-esteem, family influences, institutional support, peer networks, aspirations, planning, finances, knowledge of self, subject mastery, future orientation, and the socio-economic and educational context (Albion, 2000; Asghar and Ajmal, 2022).

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between Peer Pressure and Career Decision-making among adolescents in regard to gender and locale.
2. To find out the relationship between Peer Pressure and Career Indecision-making among adolescents in regard to gender and locale.

Method

Sample

For the present study 150 school going adolescents were taken randomly from schools of Ludhiana district. This study has been conducted on a sample of 150 adolescents. Multi-stage stratified sampling technique has been used. Students were selected randomly through sampling randomly from urban and

rural schools on the basis of gender on a proportionate basis. The sample male and female school going adolescents on proportional basis from urban and rural areas schools of Ludhiana district. Here the investigator had conducted a door to door collection of data.

Procedure

On selected sample, Peer Pressure Scale (Kaur and Kaur, 2020) and Career Decision Making Tool (Singh, 2014) were administered. In order to assess their peer pressure and career decision and indecision these tools were used in their respective institutions. Collected data were analyzed with the help of statically Techniques.

Measures

The Peer Pressure Scale (Kaur and Kaur, 2020), constructed and validated under Indian conditions, was used to measure peer pressure among school-going adolescents. It is a 25-item, five-point Likert scale with separate scoring for positive and negative peer pressure. The theoretical range for positive peer pressure is 19–95, with lower scores indicating higher levels. The scale showed good reliability (test-retest $r = 0.84$) and validity (Pearson's $r = 0.70$). The Career Decision Making Scale (CDMS) (Singh, 2014) was used to assess adolescents' career decidedness and indecision. It comprises two subscales: Career Decidedness Scale (CDS) and Career Indecision Scale (CIS), with responses on a three-point Likert scale (3 = exactly like me to 1 = not at all like me). The tool demonstrated high reliability ($r = 0.943$ for CDS; $r = 0.957$ for CIS) and strong validity, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.532–0.701 (CDS) and 0.257–0.659 (CIS).

Results

Table 1: Coefficient of correlation between Peer Pressure and Career Decision-making among school going adolescents (Total sample, Male and Female)

N	Group	r
150	Total	0.200*
75	Male	0.282*
75	Female	- 0.302**
75	Urban	0.006 ^{NS}
75	Rural	-0.054 ^{NS}

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

NS-Non Significant

Table 1 shows the coefficient of correlation between peer pressure and career decision-making among school-going adolescents as 0.200, significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates a significant positive relationship, suggesting that peer pressure impacts adolescents' personal and educational decisions. Hence, the hypothesis stating a significant relationship between peer pressure and career decision-making among adolescents is accepted, though results differ from Ogutu, Odera, and Maragia (2017), who reported stronger effects.

For male adolescents, the coefficient of correlation is 0.282, significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a significant relationship between peer pressure and career decision-making. Factors like competition, social pressure, and male-dominated expectations may explain this. Thus, the hypothesis on gender-based differences stands accepted.

For female adolescents, the coefficient is - 0.302, negative and significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels, showing a significant but inverse relationship. Family restrictions, gender bias, limited exposure, and parental insecurity likely contribute to this trend. Hence, the hypothesis on gender differences is accepted, aligning with Kaur and Kaur (2020), who found family and peer factors jointly predict decision-making for both genders.

Among urban adolescents, the coefficient is 0.006, not significant at either confidence level, indicating no relationship between peer pressure and career decision-making. This suggests that decision-making is more influenced by family climate or gender than locale. Thus, the hypothesis on locale differences is not accepted.

For rural adolescents, the coefficient is -0.054, also non-significant at both levels, showing no relationship between peer pressure and career decision-making. Dependence on family and parental influence appears stronger than locale effects. Hence, the hypothesis on locale differences is not accepted.

Table 2: Coefficient of correlation between Peer Pressure and Career Indecision-making among school going adolescents (Total sample)

N	Group	r
150	Total	0.245*
75	Male	1.252*
75	Female	1.997*
75	Urban	1.156*
75	Rural	2.04*

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

Table 2 shows the coefficient of correlation between peer pressure and career indecision among adolescents as 0.245, significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a significant relationship. This suggests that peer pressure negatively affects career decisions, and the hypothesis of a significant relationship stands accepted.

Among urban adolescents, the coefficient is 1.252, significant at the 0.05 level, showing a strong relationship between peer pressure and career indecision. This may be due to wider exposure, multiple career options, and resulting

confusion. Hence, the hypothesis with respect to locale is accepted.

For rural adolescents, the coefficient is 1.997, also significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a strong relationship between peer pressure and career indecision. Limited opportunities, lack of awareness, and fewer job options may explain this. Thus, the locale-based hypothesis is accepted.

For male adolescents, the coefficient is 1.156, significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a relationship between peer pressure and career indecision. Contributing factors may include societal expectations, exposure, family conditions, and lack of guidance. Hence, the gender-based hypothesis is accepted.

For female adolescents, the coefficient is 2.04, significant at the 0.05 level, confirming a strong relationship between peer pressure and career indecision. This may result from gender bias, family restrictions, fewer opportunities, and societal norms. Thus, the gender-based hypothesis is accepted.

Results and Conclusion

- Peer pressure and career decision-making among female adolescents show a significant relationship, influenced by family restrictions, gender bias, limited exposure, and parental insecurity.
- Among male adolescents, peer pressure significantly affects career decisions due to competition, jealousy, and pressures of a male-dominated society.
- No significant relationship exists between peer pressure and career decision-making among rural or urban adolescents, as decisions depend more on family and gender than locale.
- Peer pressure significantly relates to career indecision among female adolescents, driven by gender bias, restrictions, limited opportunities, and family climate.

- Among rural adolescents, peer pressure significantly affects career indecision due to lack of exposure, awareness, and job opportunities.
- Among urban adolescents, career indecision is significantly influenced by peer pressure because of multiple career options and confusion.
- For male adolescents, peer pressure significantly contributes to career indecision due to societal expectations, exposure, limited opportunities, and family conditions.

Educational Implications

The present research carries several educational implications for adolescents, parents, and teachers. It highlights the importance of making healthy and mature decisions in everyday life while avoiding the ill effects of faulty or immature ones. Adolescents should be guided through the right process of decision-making by understanding its stages and evaluating alternatives carefully. Teachers and parents can foster better decision-making skills by organizing activities like group discussions, counseling, projects, and self-evaluation, which improve self-awareness, confidence, interpersonal relations, and overall well-being. Parents are encouraged to adopt a democratic and responsive parenting style, providing autonomy, emotional support, and a safe home environment where adolescents feel free to share their concerns and seek guidance. Teachers and parents should also encourage adolescents to rely less on immature peer advice and instead weigh the pros and cons of choices to make rational, meaningful, and life-enhancing decisions.

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