Adolescents disposition towards stress and perception that their failure depends upon their peers

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Abstract

Aim: This paper seeks to understand whether or not adolescents' success and failure are determined by their peers and whether or not adolescents are pressured by their friends.

Method: Chandigarh, India, public and private institution cross-sectional study. Chandigarh's eighth, ninth, and tenth graders provided the samples. One thousand students from each of the city of Chandigarh's 20 public and 20 private schools provided a total of 50 samples. Microsoft Office Excel 2007 was used for the data entry. Frequency tables, charts, and cross tables were used in the analysis. The chi-square test and the correlation coefficient were used to determine the degree of significance between the variables.

Findings: Adolescents can't imagine life without their peers, who play a pivotal role in shaping their identities and behaviors. Close friends share a special bond based on their interests, passions, and worries. Adolescents will resort to strategies to gain their peers' respect and acceptance. They are constantly influenced by their peers and adopt their attitudes, behaviors, and practices. Involvement in social circles is crucial, but it comes with a heavy price: one's social standing among their contemporaries can determine success or failure. They are constantly pressured to conform to the norms of their peers and are often teased or picked on if they don't. Adolescents are especially vulnerable to the effects of peer pressure because their success or failure often depends on their peers.

Implications/Novel Contribution: Adolescents will be able to use the findings to better understand the impact of peer pressure on decision-making. Thanks to the findings, parents will be better equipped to help their children overcome behavioral and social difficulties. They also give their kids the space and direction they need to become independent, responsible adults.

Keywords: Adolescents, Peer pressure, Acceptance, Success, Failure

INTRODUCTION

Different psychologists and sociologists have defined different age groups of an adolescent. Adolescence extends from 12-13 years to 19 years. This period can be studied in 2 parts:

1. Early Adolescence (12/13years to 16/17years)

2. Late Adolescence (14years to 18/19years)

Adolescence is the time in a person's life when they are transitioning physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially from childhood to adulthood. Teens can open up to their peers about their problems, ideas, and perspectives, and they will receive the kind of empathy, understanding, and support from their peers that they may not get from their parents or teachers.

One possible source of stress is an individual's inability to adjust to external (social) and internal (biological) shifts. Today, stress has emerged as a global epidemic, making it one of the most important psychological concepts in the world. Groups, bullying, isolation, skipping classes, absenteeism, and other problems can often be traced back to the influence of peers. Peer pressure to try out or participate in unethical activities is a common source of stress and unsafe behavior among adolescents.

Numerous sources of stress can severely and persistently impair adolescents' coping abilities. Teenagers may feel anxious for various reasons, including their thoughts and feelings, relationships with family and friends, social situations at school, and fear of rejection or acceptance.

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Adolescents are perpetually susceptible to the pervasive impact of their peers. They live in constant terror of being shunned by their peer group, which leaves them open to engaging in antisocial behavior. Under constant pressure from their peers, adolescents try to outperform their peers by engaging in healthy competition and a high degree of collaboration, collectively completing their assignments, tasks, and home works, grasping the concepts, learning new information, and preparing themselves to face the various challenges of life. Adolescents place a high value on the uniqueness, self-confidence, appreciation, acceptance, and encouragement that come from belonging to a peer group. The term "peer influence" refers to the collective pressure of a person's peers to bring about personal change or the fulfillment of aspirations (Alyami, Chipchase, & Pfeffer, 2019; Spear & Kulbok, 2001).

Freuds Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud's studies aimed to determine whether or not adolescent seeks social support from their peers in times of stress and uncertainty. He thought puberty was a time of inner conflict. When the baby enters the adolescent genital process, he or she is hit with a barrage of instinctual urges that throw off their equilibrium. The argument makes adolescence a time of great difficulty and anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence has long been recognized as a period of the heightened risk-taking stage that requires a special oversight from adults. Adolescence is a time of life that starts with biological maturation, during which people perform certain developmental activities, and ends when they reach an adult self-sufficient state as established by society A literature review indicated that the prevalence rate of emotional and behavioral problems among adolescents in India ranges from 13.7% to 50% (Masuo & Cheang, 2017; Mishra & Sharma, 2001).

Importance of Peers

Peers are one of the integral parts of any adolescents and they place a very significant role in any overall behavior development. For adolescents bonding with a peer is a very important part of growing up. During adolescence, peer relationships take on increasing importance and play a critical role in adolescents' development of intimacy, social skills and self-concept (Kiran-Esen, 2012). Adolescents individual seek love and recognition from their peer groups, the attainment of which please them in return (Sun, Dunne, Hou, & Xu, 2013). Adolescents may be particularly susceptible to social influence given their developmental stage and the importance of school and peer groups in adolescent life (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). Concerning the adolescents, peer bonding can be classified from three standpoints such as for some, bonding with peers provide them with an alternative to family ties and environment. When young people are developing autonomy from their parents, peers become a significant source of social and emotional support (Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2012). They may seek love, care, and comfort level from their peers of which they have either been deprived by the family members or have not received these in expected measure. They may also find a friendly environment not congenial for their growth and development.

Peer Pressure

If the bonding is closed and is need-based, it can lead to pressure from the peers. Peer pressure has healthy as well as unhealthy consequences. Peer pressure is a keyword describing how adolescents' behavioral patterns are modified with the wanting to fit in a social group. In other words, the sense of belonging to a social group and identifying with them is what makes them completely dependent on them. Berndt and Ladd (1989) define susceptibility to peer pressure as the influence that peer groups exert by rewarding those who conform to expected norms and/or punishing those who violate them. Clasen and Brown (1985) describe peer pressure as a kind of peer pressure exerted upon an individual by his/her peers to ensure that she/he will do or avoid a particular thing. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes, values to conform to group norms (Bandzeladze & Arutiunov, 2020; Kirk, 2000). Peer encumbrance varies in degree and has both positive and negative effects on adolescents.

Positive Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is described to have a positive and negative impact among individuals and even without effect to a person because peer pressure is continuous learning (Gulati, 2017). To know the teenager interact with peers and how they interact with each other and how the presence of peer-group affect student's academic achievement in school plays an important role for various categories and even the whole educational system (Leka, 2015). When a student is influenced and motivated by peers he will perform excellently at school and got good grades in mathematics (Boehnke, 2008). The most vital attachment that adolescents develop during this phase of life is with their peers. The more subtle form of peer pressure is known as peer influence, and it involves changing one's behavior to meet the perceived expectations of others (Burns & Darling, 2002). Adolescents develop a closet tie with mutual trust, respect, likings, adherence and true-heartedness.

Negative Peer Pressure

The effects of peer groups on adolescent substance use have been widely documented, much remains to be learned, especially regarding the mechanism of peer influence (Kobus, 2003). They offend the social norms and get dominated and manipulated by some members to have association of the peer group. The pressure among peer group among its member may engage to do undesired things or negative behavior with the presence of a particular peer group leader who engages its member to do deviant acts or promote undesirable things to the group (Dumas, Ellis, & Wolfe, 2012).

Peer Acceptance into a Group

A sense of connection to peers can facilitate cognitive engagement in the classroom (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). The success has therefore arisen to the point that group acceptance or rejection becomes a serious concern in teenage life. Social acceptance is generally operationalized as an indicator of like ability or positive regard from peers (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). However, Social acceptance enhances an adolescents motivation and interest in the school environment (Wentzel, 1991). Popularity is also a significant component among teenagers where they are recognized and supported at various levels as either academic or peer-ganging. Popularity in school peer groups is partially dependent on compatibility with the values and behavioral orientation of the larger crowd structure (Brown, Lohr, & McClenahan, 1986).

Gender Basis of Peer Acceptance

There is a difference in gender pressure of acceptance among groups. According to Heatherton and Tice (1994), researchers found that 14 to 15 years old boys especially those from higher social classes, strongly focused on peer groups while girls of the same age had a stronger preference for dyadic friendship.

Stress among Peers

A study in the Indian context identified a significant relationship between educational stress and mental health condition among adolescents (Jayanthi, Thirunavukarasu, & Rajkumar, 2015). Stress refers to any pressure or demand placed on the individual to adapt or adjust to the stressors. Academic related events are believed to be a major stressor, especially in Asian countries (Guo, Yang, Cao, Li, & Siegrist, 2014). It is generally believed that factors in the family, student and school environment influence stress (Sun et al., 2013). Stress can lead to major health problems in adolescents such as damage to the immune system, anxiety, ulcers, and sometimes related to chronic heart diseases.

Aims

1) To apperceive the feeling of stress that whether adolescents are pressurized by their friends.
2) To know whether the failure of adolescents depends upon their peers.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

Cross-sectional study from the public and private schools of Chandigarh.

The Locale of the Study

The locale of the present study was from Chandigarh and the samples were taken from several public and private co-educational schools. The samples were taken from 8th, 9th and 10th grades from the school of Chandigarh. Total of 50 samples was taken from 1000 students from the 20 schools of each private and public sector of Chandigarh city.

Study Tool

For data collection, the semi-structured interview schedule was prepared to keep all the objectives and parameters of the study.

Statistical Analysis Used

The data entry was done in MS Office Excel 2007. The analysis was done in the form of frequency tables, charts cross tables. For significance, chi-square test and correlation were found between various factors.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The objective of the study is to know the feeling that whether adolescents are pressurized by their friends or not and whether failure of adolescents depends upon their peers. An interview schedule method was used and results were obtained are shown in the below tables.

Whether Adolescents are Pressurized by their Friends

It is very usual for teens to have secret or visible social pressure on them. Peers typically pressurize their friends directly or implicitly for such things and their peers often refuse or embrace these pressures too.

Table 1: Whether adolescents are pressurized by their friends

S. No.	Response	Gender		S. No. Response
		Male	Female	
1.	Agree	151	195	346
		(30.2)	(39.0)	(34.6)
2	Disagree	349	305	654
		(69.8)	(61.0)	(65.4)
	Total	500	500	1000
		(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage. (Chi-square value = 8.556, p value = .003)

Social pressure often takes into account a significant area of concern in teenage life. Some several scholars and educators have concentrated primarily on the negative implications of peer control i.e. anti-social behavior. Peer groups in the present study are supportive and have a positive impact. There are fewer indicators of negative or adverse consequences that have hindered their academic or personal accomplishments in this study where peer groups have. They are constantly under pressure to perform well in academics and even in their relationship. In general behavior, teenagers may also perceive peer pressure as a constructive power. Students interaction with its peers could help enhance their capability and increase their academic performance in school performance in school because they could seek help from their peers that could seek help from peers that could serve as a motivation than working alone (Uslu, 2013). Even the presence of positive peer relationships can enhance the overall atmosphere of the classroom and encourage higher levels of both class particular and academic achievement (Spavin, 2007). Another factor includes the higher levels of trust in friendships could lead adolescents to attend school more regularly, while lower levels of conflicts and alienation in the peer group would serve as less of distraction in terms of academic participation (Spavin, 2007).

In the field investigation, the respondents were given a statement whether they accept or disagree that their friends usually pressurize them. In response to this survey, more than half of the total respondents (65.4%) shared their dissatisfaction with this assertion and felt that they were not pressured by their peers. It is their own will to act or not what is suggested or offered by their friends. The results show that male adolescents (69.8 per cent) were

more than female adolescents (61 per cent) who disagree with the statement that they feel any pressure from their friends.

There are numerous reasons to be cited why a teenager does not experience any anxiety from his peers but a positive motivation and drive to perform better. Parents play a significant role in influencing children's behavior, which helps them to confront any difficult situation and build trust to act and respond to the situation. Their self-esteem and commitment do not cause them to feel any undue pressure from friends or society. If parental efforts affect children directly, then how they try to manage their children's behavior should have an immediate impact on children's adjustment, especially among young adolescents (Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, & Miller, 2000). Educational researchers made this argument more specific; suggesting that pressure from peers reduces students' effort on school work and encourages students to spend their time and energy in non-academic activities (Coie et al., 1982). Likewise, with another positive approach, Adolescents may experience peer pressure as a positive force that encourages them to participate in extra-curricular activities (Brown, 2013).

However, (34.6 per cent) of the total respondents agreed that they were usually pressurized by their friends and under this pressure they act according to the advice or dictates of their friends. Peer pressure could easily affect the self-esteem of students that important factor adolescence. Individual adopt attitudes towards a certain aspect that they encountered or they are aware (Uslu, 2013). Adolescents have a general sense that their friends may not value them or that a feeling of inferiority among friends may cause them to feel stressful. Self-conscious worrying about how others will react to future actions is the most common way adolescents are influenced by peers (Burns & Darling, 2002).

The comparative analysis of male and female adolescents highlights that among the female respondents a little more than three-fifth (39 per cent) replied positively that they were pressurized by their friends. This result illustrates that boys are usually stressed free and do not come under any strain easily while girls feel more stress to appear to be in the form a circle where they need emotional support and relationship closeness. In the annual report of Sarah (2017) reported that more girls than boys reported high levels of communication in peer relationships. At age 12-13, 91% of girls and 78% of boys reported high levels of communication with their peers. A high level of trust with peers was reported by around 85% of boys in both age groups, and by 88% and 85% of girls at ages 12-13 and 14-15 respectively. Further, (30.2 per cent) agreed to this notion that they were always pressurized by their friends.

Failure of Depends Upon Peers

It's a basic human trait we still own our accomplishment or achievement and blame others for failures. Progress and failures have several causes among adolescents. This may be social pressure, shifts in the personality, physiological or emotional aspects.

Table 2: Whether failure of adolescents depends upon peers

S. No.	Response	Gender		S. No. Response
		Male	Female	
1.	Yes	126	156	282
		(25.2)	(31.2)	(28.2)
2	No	374	344	718
		(74.8)	(68.8)	(71.8)
	Total	500	500	1000
		(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage. (Chi-square value = 4.445, *p* value = .035)

Surprisingly, few studies have looked at how the transition and parental support are key factors that don't rely on peers for adolescent failure. The purpose, self-control is the ability and indeed operates like a muscle, such that increased strengths afford the individual more opportunities to achieve desired outcomes (Chen, 2008).

Peer pressure is often taken as a negative approach and there are plenty of studies showing the peer groups are hampering teenage development. However, the present research has led to adolescents today not blaming any burden on their peers. For centuries, adults have expressed concerns about the negative influence of peers

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on children and adolescents (Kindermann, 2016). Adolescents are mature enough in today's time to make their decision without any emotional pressure either it's to determine their future goals or personal connection. There is also a reduction in the vulnerability of teenage delinquent activity in a wider context since they are more stable psychosocially.

The literature on self-control identifies four major domains of self-control, namely the control of thoughts, emotions, impulses and performance (Boehnke, 2008; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Also, parental function plays an important role where the rearing style of adolescents and parents-children laid the foundation for child behavior. In adolescent development, the balance of the amount of liberation, self-esteem, decision making and understanding evolves positivity among adolescence. Self -concept is generally defined as a person's perception and evaluations of his/her personal qualities and abilities. It is developed through experience with the social and physical environment, interactions with significant others and attributions of one's behavior (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976).

Sarah (2017) illustrate that at ages 12-13 and 14-15, over 80 per cent of boys and girls reported having good friends, whom they trusted, and whom they felt respected their feelings and listen to them.

The inferences drawn from the above table reveals that a large majority (71.8 per cent) of the respondents believed that their failures do not depend upon their peers. Adolescence is a critical period of development of the socially integrated self-concept, during which physical, social and emotional changes occur, and such, negative self-esteem intensify (Harter, 1999). However, in contrast to the above argument, the present study found that most adolescents are self-reliant in decision-making and adolescents are not influenced by any stress or power. Their self-esteem is high enough in life to confront any obstacles or difficulties. Adolescents are strong enough to face any strain in their lives that is either associated with academic stress or social pressure to do excessive things. They do not cause their minds to be harmed by battle. There may also be reasons for the environment in the school in which students maintain a healthy and respectful relationship.

Many researchers have evaluated positive studies that support the present study adolescents dont blame their failure on their friends rather they have a positive approach of peers in their life. Chen (2008), Peer group is important in the social context that plays a vital role in society and to determine the academic achievement that affects relatively with each other. As stated by Gulati (2017), Friendship among youth will allow them to develop their necessary social skills towards others for them foster as an individual and reach future. Recognition and support by peers is an important factor impacting upon an individual's psychological resilience (Cortell, 2007).

Whereas (28.2 per cent) of the respondents said that their failures always depends upon their peers. This demonstrates their instinctual volatility and reliance on mates. Their parents' low self-confidence and lack of encouragement and caring make them vulnerable that makes to feel intense social and peer pressure. Interactions between students with their age mates appeal to enhance their learning capacity under the guidance of an adult educator (Kindermann, 2016). However, (31.2 per cent) of the female respondents were of the view that their failures always depend upon their peers whereas a little more than one fourth (25.2 per cent) compliance to this enquiry. Studies show that both peers are inclined to take risks they do not want to take because they believe the risky behavior will increase their standing in the eyes of their peers and assume their acceptance in the group (Cortell, 2007). This is explained by the results that both genders in fear of acceptance want to be in a group and participate in group activities as well as being a member of the community they blame their peers for being a reason for it. The proportion of women in the group, however, is higher than women in teenagers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present research was conducted in the schools of Chandigarh; a place with a literacy rate of 86.05 per cent. Chandigarh has a higher education institution which includes several schools and colleges in the public and private sectors. The educational, cultural and medical facilities are spread all over the city that includes the major institutions also.

It is a characteristic human trait that we often compliment our self-esteem or achievement, and blame others for shortcomings. The target of the research put forward was:
1) To apperceive the feeling of stress that whether adolescents are pressurized by their friends.
2) To know whether the failure of adolescents depends upon their peers.

Surprisingly, many of academics and authors have been researching or talking about negative stress, and unfortunately, very few who have written about positive stress. Knowingly, peer pressure is the most stress to be found among teenagers. The peer pressure is known as the unwanted or intolerable actions of peers against each other. They want to be part of the group, with both the negative and positive vibrations and energies being adapted. While it gives negative pressure several times, there are many instances where positive pressure helps in adolescent mental development.

The results of findings for teenagers are being pressurized by their peers, where the majority of adolescents (65.4%) do not feel pressure was there were more male adolescents than female adolescents. Likewise, the results of second objective illustrate that whether adolescents blame their failures on their peers came out to be quite significant where total 71.8 per cent of respondents affirmatively agree that they do not blame their friends for their failures. The value of chi-square test of both the objectives has been found significant; therefore, it can be concluded that there is an association between adolescent perceptions about feeling of stress whether adolescents are pressurized by friends and failures do not depend on peer and gender of the respondent.

Also, it elucidate that Chandigarh teenagers have a positive attitude to life where no anxiety or strain is felt especially among male adolescents and female adolescents still set themselves bound in a social circle. To explain the study target, the following reasons may be cited:

1. Role of parents: As statics show, Chandigarh's parents are very educated. The parents' unconditional love and support make them feel no pressure at all. They know very well how to approach their children's mental and social problems. Besides that, they give their children support and independence to make them powerful and wise in making decisions. Adolescents are similarly open to their parents regarding everyday issues and problems that create a healthy relationship that does not change any other incentive to seek guidance or affection.

2. Body language is an important aspect where another person understands the language of the body through interaction with eyes, movements, standing on the ground or the person is either relaxed or talkative. Strong personalities always attract rather and unite people rather than imposing themselves.

3. Respect: In this case, a conscientious person will never let himself down but will make the situation easier for others. Love and compassion and helping others win the heart and never cause a person to be depressed. Lerner (1982) suggests that one way in which youth becomes producers of their development is by helping each other learn how to take feedback from others and react to conflict positively.

4. Freedom in making choices and having friends where everyone is equal and loving each other instead of letting down.

The above are just a few factors that cause teenagers to feel no pressure.

However, the result shows that only 34.8 per cent who accept that teenagers feel the pressure. For individual characteristics, it has been found that children with high anxiety levels report lower levels of social acceptance and global self-esteem, as well as more negative interactions with their peers (Ginsburg, La Greca, & Silverman, 1998). And peers feel pressure on other grounds such as wanting to be accepted by peers, making fun if they don't go along or if they feel pressure to be fit-out of fear.

Similarly, the second goal was just 28.2% to blame their mates for their failures. For teenagers who blame others for their shortcomings may be believed to have the following reasons:

- As this is to believe that people with low self-esteem often blame others for their sufferings or shortcomings but a person with high self-esteem will never blame others for their failings.

- This should take into account whether the phenomena of low self-esteem arises in infancy or a person's age. A large body of research on self-esteem, the evaluation component of the self-concept reveals that both genders self-esteem is relatively high in childhood, drops during adolescence (Marsh & Byrne, 1993; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Robin, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002; Zimmerman, Copeland, & Dielman, 1997).

It is important to note that the ratio of male respondents is higher in both the cases as compared to female respondents whether it is to disagree with the statement that there is any kind of peer pressure on them and their success or failure depends upon their friends. This can be concluded that in the city of Chandigarh, adolescents are emotionally balanced to understand social affairs. As the majority of adolescent respondents are less influenced by their friends and more focused on their academics. Hence, they neither blame their friends for any kind of failures

that is evident through results obtained.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

As stated earlier, several studies are focusing on the higher number of teenagers who are going through peer pressure adversely affecting their lives. However, the present study does not go along with the opinion on the studies focused on negative peer pressure where the findings of the results only indicate a positive attitude towards peers and their friends' conduct is appropriate without any burden on their mind.

Recommendations

The subsequent recommendations can be taken into account who encounters peer pressure:
- Try to Say No: It is necessary to develop a habit of saying no to others instead of appreciating other behavior. There are numerous ways to ignore others like No Thanks, I don't know or Maybe. These may be uncomfortable but clearing up is always important.
- Decision Making: A life-long successful person is decisive. Decision-making could also be seen as a problem-solving activity that ends when satisfactory solutions are reached.
- Evaluate friendship: True friendship requires respect, confidence, understanding one another's choices, but not allowing others to harm or pressure to be within their social circle.
- Guidance from parents and teachers will help teenagers understand how positive friends they keep.

Implications

The current research is confined to the small town of Chandigarh, and for comparable results other areas should be explored. Also, in order to see progressive study outcomes, the target population was limited to just 1000 students from 20 schools.

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