

## Peer Pressure among University Students: A comparative study

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## Abstract

This research work started out with the expectation that peer pressure at university level is complex and multi-layered, and that their influences on academic achievement would be important and perhaps varied as well, partly with different motivational influences from different peer relationships. Peers seem to be a permanent and integral part in university contexts, whose effects on overall development are largely influential. This is evidently seen at large among university students as there is a higher need of social acceptance in them. For the proposed study a sample of 200 students were selected by Stratified Random sampling technique from the different departments in university of Kashmir. To get the data from the target population an instrument measuring peer pressure developed by Singh and Saini (2010) was used. The collected data was analysed by applying ANOVA and Tukey's HSD test. Significant difference among students of diverse subject backgrounds on peer pressure was found. Post Hoc Tukey HSD (beta) results confirmed that behavioural science students significantly differ from Science stream students on peer pressure.

## Introduction

A peer is a fellow of a specific social circle or a person who is attached to another person because of their identical age or interest. Peers can be people who attend the same school, who share mutual groups, co-workers, or people who show up at the same social occasion. Peer pressure is when a person is persuaded to believe or act in a particular manner by another peer or group of peers. Peer

pressure aims to alter a person's viewpoint or perspective in order to persuade them to engage in a particular behaviour. The individual or group applying pressure essentially wants to persuade the target to undertake a task they do not want to do or would not undertake otherwise. These behaviours can take the form of anything, such as using illegal substances or dining at a specific establishment. For example, at a party, a gang of university students can attempt to persuade other student to consume alcohol. In an effort to persuade the person to succumb and consume alcohol, the group may make fun of the individual or attempt to influence them that drinking will make them "cool." Peer influence, also referred to as peer pressure, is to persuade someone to give in to the whims and opinions of those in their social group by making them act in a way they ordinarily wouldn't.

Among youngsters, peer pressure is a common thing. The majority of individuals are indifferent about it. Despite majority of the people believe that it only affects during adolescence but in reality, it affects during all stages of life but with varying intensity. Umashankari, Kiran Babu, and Daspurkayastha (2020) revealed that the term "pressure" implies that the process causes people to do things they would otherwise avoid or resist, even though peer pressure need not be unpleasant. Young people have unique perspectives on the world. Some people are wise enough to avoid problems when under the wrong kind of pressure, while others are unfair enough to be drawn into these situations, often because it is impossible to resist. The foundation of someone's socialisation can be thought of as the social effect of others, which is a lifelong process. Unquestionably one of the most significant stages of life, adolescence is characterised by significant and quick changes. Peer infectivity is a reciprocal influence process that occurs over this period of time in which peers gradually become more similar in terms of various traits (Umashankari, Kiran Babu and Daspurkayastha, 2020). Peer pressure emerges when a peer bestows force on a various member of the group to sustain the rules or aspirations of the group. The concept of peer pressure is "the pressure that a peer group or an individual imposes on other individuals to transform their belief systems, perceptions, or behaviour patterns in order to abide to group norms."

### **Background of the study**

Younger generation seem to be particularly vulnerable to peer pressure because they seek comfort in their peers and keep striving to emulate them without considering whether this will benefit them or harm them. Young people are therefore sensitive to the main tenets of socio-cultural conceptions, for instance engaging with others encourages behavioural patterns like dozing off or drinking during lectures (Bonein & Denont, 2013). Due to their propensity for communicating more with their peers at this age, children's social aspects may have an impact on them. In particular, when it comes to making choices and adopting moral principles, youngsters as they get older rely more on their friends than their relatives (Uslu, 2013). One's development is influenced by how effectively they interact and communicate with others in their social environment. Since it is believed that a student's academic success is correlated with the support they receive from their parents, teachers, and classmates (Chen, 2008). Compared to their peers, adults spend less time with their parents. Peer pressure has been characterised as having both a positive and negative impact on people as well as having no impact because it is an ongoing learning process (Gulati, 2017). Peer pressure appears to have a variety of effects on a student's academic performance. It is how their peers affect them, either positively or negatively. In a university setting, young people need comfort from

others, which they may discover in the company of their peers. However, they frequently are unaware of how their peers' influence on their academic success.

According to (Kadir, Atmowasdojo, and Salija 2018) Students' anxiety is significantly increased by peer groups, specifically when it comes to their academics. While peer influence for youngsters doesn't directly impact them, it differs in terms of the extent to which the students' responses to the groups (Mosha, 2017). Students who are supported and inspired by their friends do well in school and earn excellent grades (Boehnke, 2018). Studies have shown that relationships with family and peers can predict academic success (Caplan, 2002 and De Guzman, 2007). A study was carried out in 2014 by Aditi & Guptain to find out how peer pressure affected brand switching among Indian college students. Study revealed that a brand's use or preference among friends was also associated with positive brand switching. The research results also showed the influence of peer pressure by showing a link between switching brands and expressing all of a brand's thoughts. According to studies on peer groups, although friendships start to develop in childhood, peer influence and importance

start to grow in early adolescence and adulthood (Collins and Steinberg 2006). Peers are crucial for adolescent identity formation, emotional and behavioural growth, as well as for thinking and emotional regulation (Wentzel, 2005). For a person to grow socially and personally, peer groups are crucial. Formative years bring about a rapid increase in peer communication, as well as more intense and significant peer relationships for the young person, which affects both choices and decisions (Swanson, Edwards, and Spencer, 2010). Students' interactions with their peers are likely to have an impact on them and can severely alter both their decision-making abilities and performance (De Giorgi, undated). Students are encouraged to study more by their interactions with classmates while being watched over by an adult educator (Kinderman, 2016). Positive student peer association outcomes are more likely to happen when the environment allows students to engage in their preferred activities and experiences while simultaneously pushing them to strive for the greatest goal (Korr and Kipkemboi, 2014). According to (Olalekan 2016) Peer groups have a big influence on students. Substantial evidence suggests that children feel more at ease and comfortable among their peers, and this can be seen in how a child's peer group affects both his or her life and learning. A gifted child who is surrounded by negative peers loses interest in school. On the other hand, a peer group that places a strong emphasis on studying would motivate a member who was learning slowly to become more enthusiastic about studying. Although a learner might not be boring, they might be interesting. He will imitate them if he is well-supervised and is around intellectual, non-playful kids, which will improve his attitude toward learning. Similarly, Bankole and Ogunsakin (2016) investigated the impact of students' social groups on academic achievement and discovered that Students' academic performance is impacted by peer interactions, Positive peer pressure has an impact, according to Omollo and Yambo (2017), While an environment marked by ignorance, social conflict, and inadequate parental guidance and care urges youngsters to participate in delinquent acts, contributing significantly to a student becoming untrained, socially withdrawn, or fidgety and indifferent.

### **Significance of the study**

Peer pressure, which might result in school dropout, is one of the major issues that developing nations all over the world highlight (UNICEF 2002). In particular with respect to what teachers teach, student interactions with peers' aid in their learning. In fact, many youngsters seem to attend or

enjoy school (more) when their classmates and friends are present. Peers are crucial for social development, interpersonal skill acquisition, striking a balance between personal needs and those of a broader societal structure, receiving help and support, assimilation into the relatively large peer culture, and enduring a challenging year. Multiple studies are on record about peer pressure but most of the studies are conducted on adolescents and college going students but in reality, peer pressure is observed among people of all ages with varying levels of intensity. Peer pressure may be present in the workplace, at school or within the society, it can affect people of all ages (Okorie 2014). The effects of peer pressure on university students must be recognised, as well as how they are influenced and what the students' expectations are when pressed by their peers.

### Objectives

To determine whether there is any statistically significant difference among university students in Peer Pressure on the basis of subject background.

### Hypothesis

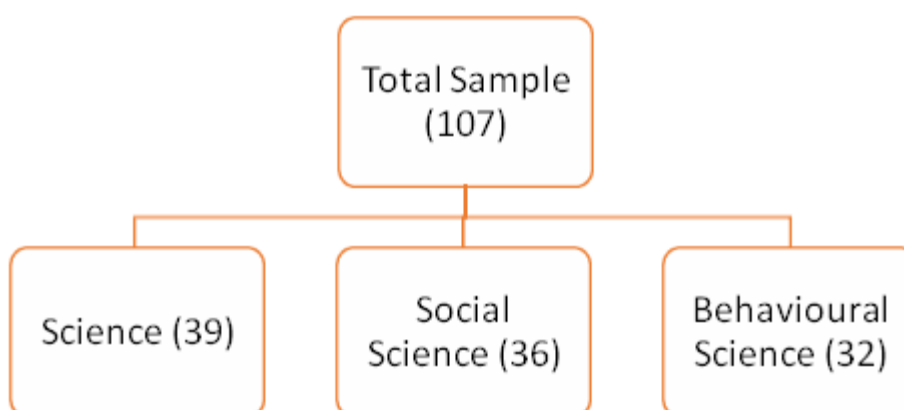
H0: There is no statistically significant difference among university students in peer pressure on basis of subject background.

### Methodology

#### Participants

Statistical population for the current investigation were all the students, perusing their postgraduate degrees from University of Kashmir Srinagar, India. The questionnaire measuring peer pressure was distributed to 180 students from different streams but only 107 questionnaires were returned by the respondents. The final sample of the current investigation included (107) postgraduate university students from multiple subject backgrounds viz science (39) social science (36) and behavioural science (32).

Fig 1. Reflecting the Subject background wise sample breakup.



### Instrument

The instrument that was used to carry out the current investigation was Sandeep Singh and Sunil Saini's peer pressure (2010). The primary purpose of this scale is to quantify peer pressure. Peer pressure is estimated using this one-dimensional scale. The test consists of 25 items, each of which must be graded on a scale of 1 to 5.

## Peer Pressure among University Students: A comparative study

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Can't say
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Positive evaluations were scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 denoting "Strongly Agree" and 5 denoting "Strongly Disagree." Instead, questions Q2, Q7, and Q23 received negative scores, ranging from 5 to 1, with 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" and 5 representing "Strongly Agree."

**Sampling size:** A data of 107 postgraduate university students were collected from different subject backgrounds in the university of Kashmir. Out of 107 students, 39 were from science subject background, 36 from social science background and 32 from behavioural science background.

**Sampling techniques:** The data collection method that was employed was stratified random sampling technique as the sample subjects were firstly divided into strata on the basis of subject background and then sample was taken from each stratum randomly.

**Statistical techniques:** The ANOVA is the statistical test used in this study. It is a statistical test which is used to see if the averages of more than two groups, which might be related in some ways, differ significantly from one another.

### Anova Results

**Table 1: Depicts the descriptive analysis of university students peer pressure by subject background.**

Subject background	Science	Social science	Behavioural science	Total
N	39	36	32	107
$\sum X$	2508	2166	1809	6483
Mean	64.3077	60.1667	56.5313	60.589
$\sum X^2$	167318	132506	110481	410305
S. D	12.6015	7.9012	16.2798	12.8518
Source	SS		Df	
Between-treatments	1072.6301		2	
Within-treatments	16435.2764		104	
Total	17507.9065		106	

**Table 2: Reflecting the ANOVA results of different subject backgrounds between groups.**

Peer Pressure	f-ratio	p-value
Between groups	3.393	.0373

**p<0.05**

Mean score obtained by the sample subjects from different subject backgrounds on peer pressure as presented in table1 are science subject background (Mean=64.3077, SD=12.6015), social Science subject background (Mean=60,1667, SD=7.9012), behavioural sciencesubject background (Mean=56.5313, SD=7).

The ANOVA findings inthe table 2 reflects a significant difference in peer pressure among university students on the basis of subject background (F=3.393, significant at p<0.05). The results of the ANOVA revealed a generally significant difference in the subject-wise analysis of peer pressure among university students. The Tukeys HSD (Honestly significant Difference) test enables us to identify which of the various pairs of means—if any of them—have a significant difference. The "F" statistics reflects whether there is an overall difference between your sample means.

Therefore, Tukeys HSD test was applied to determine which pair of means has a significant difference, however to confirm which of the pair of means

**Table 3: Presents the results of Tukeys HSDtest for Comparisons across Different Subject Backgrounds on peer pressure among university students.**

Pair wise Comparisons		HSD <sub>.05</sub> = 7.1015 HSD <sub>.01</sub> = 8.8962	Q <sub>.05</sub> = 3.3626 Q <sub>.01</sub> = 4.2124
Science: Social Science	M <sub>1</sub> = 64.31 M <sub>2</sub> = 60.17	4.14	Q = 1.96 (p = .35166)
Science: Behavioural Science	M <sub>1</sub> = 64.31 M <sub>3</sub> = 56.53	7.78	Q = 3.68 (p = .02827)
Social Science: Behavioural Science	M <sub>2</sub> = 60.17 M <sub>3</sub> = 56.53	3.64	Q = 1.72 (p = .44574)

**p<0.05**

A post-hoc analysis was also carried out to determine which of the subject backgrounds differed most significantly from the others in terms of peer pressure. In accordance with table 3 there is a no significant difference between the science subject background and social science subject background,Similar to this, there was no discernible difference between the backgrounds in social science and behavioural science.

However, the significant difference was found between the science subject background andbehavioural science subject background in peer pressure of university students.

## Interpretation

The Null Hypothesis is disproved and the Alternative Hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is  $<0.05$ . As reflected in table 2, it is observed that the calculated p value is .0373, which is less than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis formulated that there is no statistically significant difference among university students in peer pressure on basis of subject background was not accepted.

The results of the ANOVA confirmed that there exists an overall significant difference among university students in peer pressure on basis of subject background. However, to determine which pair of means has a significant difference Tukeys HSD test was applied which confirmed that no statistically significant difference was found between university students of science and social science subject backgrounds, similarly no statistically significant difference was found between students of social science and behavioural science backgrounds. But the Tukeys HSD confirmed that there is significant difference between university students of science and behavioural science subjects' backgrounds. The Tukeys HSD also confirmed that university students from science subject background (64.31) experience more peer pressure in comparison to university students from social science background (60.17). The results also reflected that university students from science subject background (64.31) experience more peer pressure in comparison to university students from behavioural science subject backgrounds (56.53). post hoc analysis also confirmed that university students from social science background (60.17) experience more peer pressure in comparison to university students from behavioural science subject background (56.53).

## Discussion

Wentzel et al., 2004; Barry and Wentzel, 2006, Dishion and Tipsord (2011) reflected in their studies that Peers have a significant influence on how people behave. Most studies on peer influence have concentrated on detrimental factors that lead to antisocial behaviours in adolescence, including substance abuse, poor academic performance, sexual promiscuity, delinquency, and violence. (Dishion et al., 2004, 1997, 1996, 1995. Same was reflected by the Ary et al., 1999, Fergusson et al., 2002, Tolan et al., 2003 and Villanti et al., 2011). The theory of deviancy training (Dishion et al., 1996; Dishion and Tipsord, 2011) focused on teenagers' backing of deviant activities by socialising with deviant companions who promote and magnify antisocial inclinations. Indeed, research using multilevel social network analysis, which analyses students' buddy networks at various time points, discovered that deviant peers' influence may be responsible for violence and delinquency (Monahan et al., 2009; Sistema et al., 2010). Overall, research suggests that peer acceptance or friendship with peers has less of an impact on adolescents' pro- and anti-social behaviours than the type of peers and friends they have. Based on peer socialisation theories, we proposed that friend deviancy—having friends with antisocial behaviour problems lead to increased anti-sociality, whereas friend prestige—having peers who are well-adapted at university, especially in academic performance—would lead to greater pro-Sociality. According to Mistry (2019), students from various college years meet erratic amounts of peer pressure. His statistical results were evaluated using the t-test two sample variance approaches. According to the findings, second-year college students face the most peer pressure, while fourth-year college students face the least.

According to the findings of the study, university students are subjected to peer pressure as well so the null hypothesis formulated for the current study, that there is no significant difference in peer pressure among university students based on subject background was rejected. Based on subject background, it was deduced that peer pressure among university students varies significantly. The

study's results strikingly demonstrate that university students experience varying levels of peer pressure depending on their academic background; consequently, more investigation is required to ascertain the causes of the variable concentrations of peer pressure based on academic background. Peer pressure varies among students from the same subject as well as those from diverse subject backgrounds. Students from the same subject as well as those with different subject backgrounds experience different levels of peer pressure. Singh and Saini's scale's many questions gave a comprehensive break - down of how many people are willing to act under peer pressure and what they genuinely think about such behaviours. Although there might be variations in how the study is generalised due to a variety of environmental factors different academic faculties or subject backgrounds. An adult's upbringing and the way they are influenced by their schools and families in the beginning stages of life are significantly influenced by the external environment. In order to monitor students' behaviour and determine whether peer pressure is the cause, lectures on the benefits and drawbacks of peer pressure should be given in both high school and college. This will help students recognise the effects of peer influence on their behaviour at any stage.

In general, students prefer to follow the group because they don't want to feel excluded. Peer pressure also has an impact on a person's personal life. The effects of peer pressure may even stress out students' lives. Feeling alienated can also contribute to despair, as it can lead to peer pressure and doing things that one would not ordinarily do. Hence, for a at any stage especially at university it becomes a difficult situation to choose between whether to get under the influence of peer pressure or not.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The study demonstrates that varied levels of peer pressure exists among university students from a variety of subject backgrounds, but there is no overall statistically significant difference in peer pressure among university students on the basis of subject background. The outcomes of this research will indeed be helpful to teachers in understanding the prevalence and severity of peer pressure among students of the university. The findings of this research will be helpful to parents and teachers in perceiving how youngsters are engaged in risk taking behaviours. So that they are able execute the necessary strategies and appropriately guide the student's actions. Students will benefit from this investigation by learning about the consequences of peer pressure. The features and drawbacks of peer pressure, as well as the way it affects their judgements and, eventually, their lives, can be explained to university students. The study's findings can be applied to develop practical strategies for mitigating adverse effects and fostering beneficial influences.

### **Author contributions**

Mir. M. I. & Dar. M. A. were in command of conceiving the study. Systematic analyses were done, and the first format was composed by Mir M.I. and Dar M.A. The final version was drafted and edited by Aziz S. and Lone S. The article's submission was examined and approved by all authors.

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