

The Influence of Peer Pressure on Adolescents' Social Behaviour

M A Adeniyi *

*Department of Psychology / Guidance & Counselling,
School of Education
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education
Nigeria
E-mail: lekeadeniyi@yahoo.com*

V A Kolawole

*Department of Psychology / Guidance & Counselling,
School of Education
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education
Nigeria*

Paper accepted on 20 February 2015

Abstract

This paper discusses the influence of peer pressure on adolescent social behavior. A sample size of 100 participants was randomly selected from five secondary schools in Amuwo-Odofin Local Education District of Lagos State. A twenty-item Peer Pressure on Adolescents Behaviour Questionnaire (PPABQ) was administered on the sample. It was hypothesized that there will be no significant influence of peer pressure on social behaviour, self-concept, gender and parental rearing pattern. This hypothesis was accepted. It was found out that peer pressure has no significant impact on the variables studied.

Keywords: *peer pressure, adolescents, gender, social behaviour.*

**For correspondences and reprints*

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the transitory period the individual passes through in his /her growth from childhood to Adulthood. Studies have shown that the period consists of pressure which may be either internal or external to the young adult (Adams, 2006 & Schneider, 2010). Besides being a transitory period, they posited that it is a time of self-definition for the young individual.

In contemporary society, peer group influences have become increasingly pronounced and studies have shown that adolescents were more likely to increase behaviour that receives peer group approval (Arnett, 1992; De Vries et al., 1995; Allen et al., 2005; Clark & Loheac, 2007). Adolescents spend far more time in the exclusive company of their peers than their counter parts did in the past. Changes in the family roles that forced women into paid jobs have greatly reduced the quality time families spend together thus making peer groups a viable alternative for the young individuals (Clark & Loheac, 2007). Peer groups appear to answer adolescents concerns about many things including their changing bodies. According to Schneider (2010) becoming a peer group member meets many adolescents concerns about social expectations such as developing independence from their parents, learning decision-making skills and acting on their own. However, these young teenagers find social expectations confusing and the ways of achieving them even more challenging. Peer influence on adolescents has been reported as being shrouded in myths and fear by parents. Parents perceive peer influence as a clog in the wheel of socializing their children desirably (Schneider, 2010).

According to You (2011) perceived support from peers gives adolescent students a sense of motivation which enables them to see the importance of pursuing academic success This is because adolescents who are accepted by their peers are more likely to be psychologically healthier and self-confident than those rejected by their peers (Allen et al., 2005). However, Kiran-Esen (2012) reported significantly negative relationship between peer pressure and self-efficacy expectation (social and moral) in adolescents and that academic self-efficacy was

higher in adolescents who were experiencing low level of peer pressure. As such, this study seeks to investigate how peer pressure influences adolescents' social behavior in secondary school students.

2. METHOD

Participants

A sample of 100 participants (50 male and 50 female) was randomly selected from five co-educational secondary schools in Amuwo-Odofin Local Education District of Lagos State. They were aged between 12 and 18 years with a mean age of 15 years. They were drawn from senior secondary school 1 and 2. In choosing the participants, the stratified random sampling technique was used. Stratification was by sex and location/area. Stratification enables equitable representation of the participants in different strata.

Instrument

The instrument, Peer Pressure on Adolescents' Behavior Questionnaire (PPABQ) is an instrument that elicits responses from adolescents on peer pressure. The instrument was a 20-item questionnaire on a four point Likert-type scale. The researcher subjected the instrument to both face and content validity, which was scrutinized and finally refined for use. The test retest reliability was used on the instrument. This was done on 2 co-educational schools with 40 adolescent students from same local Education district but not part of the school used for the sample in the study. The Alpha co-efficient was 0.72.

Procedure

The schools' hall was used in administering the instrument with the assistance of the school counselors and principal. The students were comfortably seated in distraction-free halls during the administration of the instrument. The researchers established rapport with the participants, explained the purpose of the study and assured them of confidentiality. The researcher performed a group administration

of the instrument. The items on the instrument were read out to them and the subjects followed the instructions in completing the questionnaire.

It was hypothesized that peer pressure will have no significant influence on social behaviour, self-concept, gender and the parental rearing pattern of adolescents. The question was also posed regarding how peer pressure affects adolescents' social behaviour, self-concept, gender and parental rearing pattern?

Ethical Clearance

The schools used are under the Amuwo-Odofin Local Education District (LED) of Lagos State Ministry of Education, Lagos, Nigeria. Clearance was sought and obtained.

3. RESULTS

Table1 reflects the breakdown of the summary of responses of the participants and table 2 shows the statistical analysis of variance of participants' responses.

Table 1 Summary of Responses of Participants

	Social behavior	Self-concept	Gender	Parental rearing pattern
SA	96	504	668	504
A	336	483	324	249
D	304	266	190	234
SD	212	80	130	174

Note:

1. *Likert scale is rated at given value of 4:3:2:1 for SA, A, D, SD respectively*
2. *SA, strongly agreed; A, agreed; D, disagreed; SD, strongly disagreed*

Table 2 Statistical Analysis of Variance

Source of variation	SS	Df	Mean square (variance)	F
Between samples	23682.25	3	7894.08	0.24ns
Within samples	392967.5	12	32747.29	
Total	416649.75			

Note: $F_{critical}$ 3.49

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study confirm the hypothesis that there will be no significant influence of peer pressure on social behavior, self-concept, gender and the parental rearing pattern of adolescents. This presupposes that no relationships were found between the variables in this study. This finding agrees with an earlier study on peer influence relationships in adolescents reported by Kiran-Esen (2012). It was reported that the adolescents recorded low levels of peer pressure in self-efficacy which is an indication that peer pressure has no significant effect on the self-efficacy indices used. Other studies (Arnett, 1992; De Vries et al., 1995; Gifford-Smith et al., 2005; Allen et al., 2005; Clark & Loheac, 2007 and You, 2011) have revealed that peer pressure has significant influence on adolescents' behaviour. It is however, worthy of note that in those studies, the variables: social behavior, self-concept, gender and parental rearing pattern were considered separately rather than as a composite picture presented in this study. The essence of composite approach used in this study is to ascertain the interrelated roles of each of the variables in peer pressure relationships.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledged with thanks the School Principals and Counsellors for helpful advice and assistance. We are very grateful to the participants for their cooperation.

5. REFERENCES

- ADAMS, A. (2006). Developmental changes in conformity to peers and parents. *Developmental Psychology*, 15 (6), 608-616.
- ALLEN, J.P., PORTER, M.R., MCFARLAND, F.C., MARSH, P. & MCELHANEY, K.B. (2005). The two faces of adolescents' success with peers: adolescents popularity, social adaptation and deviant behaviour. *Child Development* 76 (3), 747-760.
- ARNETT, J. (1992). Reckless behavior in adolescence: adaptive perspective. *Developmental Review* 12 (4), 339-373.
- CLARK, A.E. & LOHEAC, Y. (2007). "It wasn't me, it was them!" social influence in risky behavior by adolescents. *Journal of Health Economics* 26 (4), 763-784.
- DE VRIES, H., BACKBIER, E., KOK, G. & DIJKSTRA, M. (1995). The impact of social influences in the context of attitude, self-efficacy, intention and previous behavior as predictors of smoking onset. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 25 (3), 237-257.
- GIFFORD-SMITH, M., DODGE, K.A. DISHION, T.J. & MCCORD, J. (2005). Peer influence in children and adolescents: crossing the bridge from development to intervention science. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 33 (3), 225-265.
- KIRAN-ESEN, B. (2012). Analyzing peer pressure and self-efficacy expectation among adolescents. *Social Behavior and Personality: an International Journal* 40 (8), 1301-1309.
- OJO, M. (2006). Family functioning and adolescent career development. *Career Development Quarterly*, 40 (4), 20-32.

ONYEJIAKU, W.M. (2001). The company they keep: friendship and their development significance. *Child Development* 67 (1), 1-15.

SCHNEIDER, B.H. (2010). Review of understanding peer influence in children and adolescents. *Canadian Psychology/ Psychologie Canadienne* 51 (1), 72-73.

SPIHRAL, K. (1999). Peer relations and chinese-canadian delinquency. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 27 (5), 641-659.

STEINBERG, L. (2006). *Adolescence*. McGraw Hill Inc., New York.

YOU, S. (2011). Peer influence and adolescents' school engagement. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 29, 829-835.