

Peer Pressure and its Impact on Academic and Social Behaviour among Adolescent Girls in Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala

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Abstract: Peer pressure is an unavoidable phenomenon during adolescent age that profoundly shapes students' academic and social experiences. The present study titled *Peer Pressure and Its Impact on Academic and Social Behaviour among Adolescent Girls in Thiruvananthapuram District; Kerala* was undertaken to explore how peer influence affects learning outcomes and interpersonal behaviour. A total of fifty adolescent girls aged between thirteen and nineteen years were chosen by random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed through Google Forms. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including percentage distribution and the Chi-square test, were employed for analysis. Results indicated that fifty-two per cent of the students reported improved academic performance through positive peer motivation, while forty-two per cent maintained average performance. Nevertheless, thirty-four per cent confessed to altered academic goals owing to peer pressure, and half admitted procrastination tendencies. The Chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 8.12$) confirmed a significant association between peer influence and academic performance. The study concludes that although peers foster cooperation, leadership and confidence, unregulated competition or conformity may lead to stress and distraction. Strengthening peer-mentoring and counselling programmes for adolescents can channel peer interactions towards constructive personal and academic development.

Keywords: Peer pressure; academic performance; social behaviour; adolescents; Chi-square analysis

1. Introduction

Adolescent life represents a transitional phase marked by increasing independence and exposure to diverse social environments. During this stage, peers become an essential reference group influencing lifestyle choices, study habits and self-concept. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by individuals of similar age, status or background that prompts one to conform to group norms, values or expectations. This pressure may be explicit, such as direct persuasion, or implicit, where students voluntarily imitate peers to gain acceptance.

In the context of Indian higher education, peer interactions shape not only academic engagement but also emotional resilience and social identity. Kerala, recognised for its high literacy rate and competitive educational atmosphere, provides a unique setting to observe these dynamics. Positive peer groups can enhance cooperation, responsibility and goal orientation, whereas negative pressure may result in anxiety, academic disengagement or risky behaviour. Recent studies have highlighted that balanced peer relationships contribute to better time-management, confidence and teamwork (Rani & Joseph, 2022). Social comparison within peer circles can create stress and reduced self-esteem (Thomas & Pillai, 2023).

With rapid digitalisation, social media platforms have extended the sphere of peer influence beyond classrooms. Online peer groups now play a significant role in shaping opinions and study patterns. Understanding these interactions is crucial for educators and parents seeking to promote healthy development. Hence, this study was conducted to examine the multifaceted impact of peer pressure on both

academic and social behaviour among adolescent girls in Thiruvananthapuram District.

2. Objectives

- 1) To analyse the extent of peer influence on academic and social behaviour.
- 2) To examine the relationship between peer influence and academic performance.
- 3) To identify positive and negative effects of peer interactions on study habits and lifestyle.

3. Methodology

Locale of the Study: The study was carried out in Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala, representing urban, semi-urban and rural populations. The district provides an appropriate setting because of its educational diversity and active youth population.

Selection of Sample: A total of fifty adolescent girls aged thirteen to nineteen years participated. Random sampling ensured equal opportunity for selection and reduced sampling bias. The group represented both genders and various socio-economic backgrounds.

Development of Research Instrument: A structured questionnaire was developed using Google Forms. It consisted of fifty-one close-ended questions grouped under socio-demographic details, friendship patterns, academic habits and peer-related behaviour. Content validity was ensured by expert review.

Collection of Data: Data were collected online after explaining the purpose of the study and assuring anonymity. The electronic format allowed easy participation and automatic compilation of responses.

Analysis of Data: Responses were coded and tabulated. Percentages and means were computed to describe distributions, while the Chi-square test (χ^2) was applied to determine the association between peer influence and academic performance at a 0.05 significance level.

Statistical Analysis: Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) summarised demographic and behavioural patterns. The Chi-square test examined the relationship between peer influence and academic performance.

4. Results and Discussion

The collected data were systematically analysed to understand how peer influence affects both the academic and social behaviour of the respondents. The results are presented in tabular form for clarity and ease of interpretation.

1) Socio-demographic details

Socio-demographic variables such as age and family type were first examined to provide background information about the study participants, followed by an assessment of their academic performance and patterns of peer interaction. The detailed distribution of respondents according to their demographic characteristics is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	13 – 14	17	34
	15 – 17	31	62
	18 – 19	2	4
Family type	Nuclear	38	76
	Joint	10	20
	Extended	2	4

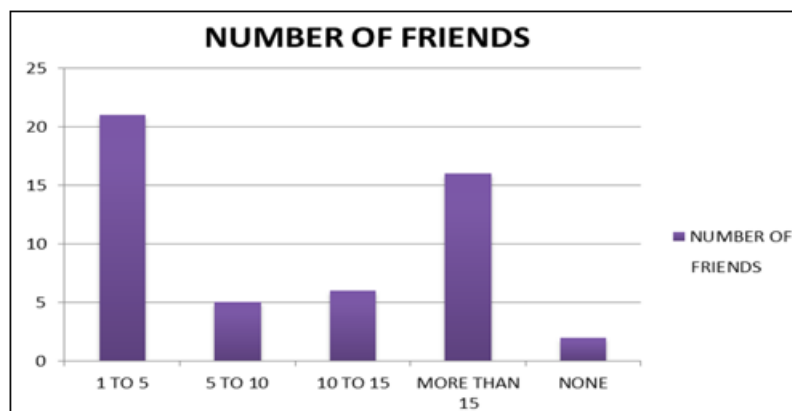


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents based on number of friends

The data in Figure 1 show wide variation in students' friendship networks. About 42 per cent of the respondents had one to five close friends, indicating that small, close-knit groups are the most common pattern among adolescents. Nearly one-third (32 per cent) maintained more than fifteen friends, suggesting that some students are highly sociable and interact widely both within and outside the classroom. Only 4 per cent reported having no friends, showing that isolation is

Only a few students (4 per cent) were in the 18–19 age group, indicating that older adolescents were less represented in the study. About one-fifth of the respondents belonged to joint families, while very few lived in extended families. This shows that most students grow up in small family environments with limited peer exposure at home.

2) Peer Influence and Academic Behaviour

To understand how peers affect students' studies and classroom habits, their academic performance was analysed in relation to peer influence. The results, presented in Table 2, highlight the extent to which friends and classmates play a role in improving or reducing students' academic achievement and motivation levels.

Table 2: Peer influence and academic performance

Academic Performance	Number	Percentage (%)
Better	26	52
Average	21	42
Below average	3	6
Chi-square (χ^2)	8.12	
p-value	< 0.05	

More than half (fifty-two per cent) reported better academic results through encouragement from peers, whereas six per cent indicated decline. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 8.12$) confirmed a significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance. This suggests that peer support acts as a motivating factor that enhances concentration and persistence in learning.

3) Social Behaviour and Friendship Patterns

This section explores the social dynamics of the respondents, focusing on the number of friends they have

rare among the participants. The size of friendship groups may reflect personality differences—smaller circles provide emotional security and mutual trust, while larger ones encourage sharing of ideas and broader interaction. Healthy peer relationships were often linked to improved cooperation, motivation and confidence in studies, consistent with the findings of Menon and Pillai (2023).

4) Negative Peer Pressure

While peers can encourage excellence, adverse effects were evident. About thirty-four per cent admitted changing academic goals because of peers, and half displayed procrastination. Forty-two per cent experienced pressure to perform academically better than friends, leading to stress. Similar trends were reported by Varma and Nair (2021), who observed that social comparison may cause anxiety among adolescents. Where, sixty-two per cent maintained academic discipline, never skipping classes, and sixty-six per cent reported no negative goal changes, revealing resilience among most participants.

5) Parental and Institutional Role

Sixty-four per cent of parents viewed their children's friendships positively. This confidence indicates trust in the peer environment but also highlights the necessity of continued supervision. Teachers can serve as facilitators by integrating peer learning into classroom strategies such as collaborative projects and mentoring circles.

5. Conclusion

The present study established that peer influence plays a decisive role in shaping academic and social behaviour among adolescent girls in Thiruvananthapuram District. A significant relationship between peer pressure and academic performance was confirmed statistically. Supportive peers foster discipline, self-confidence and improved learning, while negative influence results in procrastination and stress.

Peer influence is neither entirely beneficial nor harmful; its impact depends on context and individual coping skills. Positive interactions enhance motivation, while negative pressures may lead to dependency and distraction. School and college administrators should therefore create structured peer-mentoring systems that promote leadership and academic cooperation. Educational institutions must recognise peer dynamics as a crucial component of student development. Programmes such as counselling sessions, peer-mentoring, and skill-building workshops can guide students towards balanced interpersonal relationships. Parental awareness and constructive teacher engagement will further ensure that peer interactions become a source of strength rather than stress.

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