

Role of Peer Pressure towards Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency among Male and Female Adolescents

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Abstract

The present research aims to study the role of peer pressure towards the tendency of juvenile delinquency among male and female adolescent. It was completed in three phases, Phase-I involved the construction of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale. As a result, Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was developed comprising of 15 items. Phase II aimed at determining the Psychometric analysis of the measure. For this purpose, sample consisting of 400 adolescents (200 male students, 200 female students) with age ranging between 13 to 18 years was taken from different schools and colleges of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Factor analysis determined two factors namely peer pressure in academic setting and peer pressure in social setting. Results showed that peer pressure in academic setting was positively correlated with peer pressure in social setting. Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was validated in Phase III by applying on large number of individuals. Sample consisted of 600 adolescents with equal number of male and female students. Results indicated significant gender differences on peer pressure in academic setting and peer pressure in social setting, as male adolescents reflected more peer pressure in academic and social setting as compared to female students. It was also specified that students in early adolescence phase have more peer pressure in academic and social setting as compared to students in late adolescence phase.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquency, Peer Pressure, Adolescence

Introduction

Peer group is a social group of people having the same interest, activities and age. Adolescents usually spend more time with peers as compared to adults because they feel easy to communicate with each other. Vaquera and Kao (2008) believed that peer influence can be positive and it can be negative. According to Steinberg and Monahan (2007), peer pressure is the force from peers that encourage or motivate other individuals to mold their beliefs and behaviors. The

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pressure from peers mostly affects the adolescent level. At that level an individual's thought pattern can easily be molded and the individuals can easily be involved in delinquent acts. The person feels that he or she may stay alone if they do not follow their peers or peers' interest. The fear of isolation drives them to be a part of a peer group, who might be indulging in negative activities (Brown, 2004).

Low, Sinclair and Shortt (2012) explained that delinquency is a legal term used to describe criminal behavior. It is a type of crime committed by young individuals. Baumeister, Bushman and Campbell (2000) described that delinquency is the byproduct of anti-social behavior and anti-social behavior refers to the behavior that damages inter-personal relationships and are culturally unacceptable. Parents, friends and teachers are all responsible along with the juvenile who commit a crime. According to Siegal and Welsh (2011) juvenile delinquent is a person who commits crime below the age of 18. It is also known as the involvement of an individual in illegal, socially and culturally unacceptable activities. Juvenile crimes initially start with smoking or abusive language.

Nisar, Ullah, Ali and Alam (2014) explored the family, peers and economic factors that play a role in juvenile delinquency. Adolescents conform to different norms, behavior and values due to peer pressure. Peers had an impact on the behavior of an individual. If there is negative influence of peer group then it leads to negative formulation of character as individual spend most of the time with their peers. Zafar (2012) found the causes of juvenile delinquency in teenagers. The cause can be poverty, family problems, negative peer influence, drugs, unemployment etc. A major cause of juvenile delinquency is that adolescents lack behavior control. An adolescent having conduct disorder cannot control his or her criminal or delinquent behavior.

Childs and Sullivan (2013) investigated relationship between emotional and behavioral problems and delinquency. These problems can later lead to delinquent behavior. These identified problems should be treated to prevent delinquency. The earlier they are identified and treated the better it is. Adolescents, who start delinquency at early stage, become serious offenders later in life. Peers play a major role in influencing this antisocial behavior. Jagers et al. (2013) focused on the peer pressure that encourages others to do things. Family bonding or family unity and about how one values his or her own self are the factors that play an important role in delinquent acts. The family bonding is the first step that leads toward gang involvement, if the bonding between families is strong then there is a less chance of getting involved in gang activities.

According to the Theory of Crime (Carrell, Malmstrom, & West, 2011), individual has no self-control or low self-control. In their view low self-control

may develop in early age, when parents do not give attention to their children and they do not punish their child for delinquent behaviors. This may occur in the form of academic dishonesty like deception, cheating, sabotage or professorial misconduct. Be croft (2009) indicated that interaction with delinquent peers enhances the chance of the adolescent to become delinquent. A juvenile considers his group as his family. Ngale (2009) emphasizes that adolescents spend most of their time with delinquent peers and thus themselves become engage in anti-social activities. Payne and Cornwell (2007) concluded that peer pressure leads an adolescent towards criminal activities. Gifford-Smith, Dodge, Dishion and McCord (2005) examined the negative effect of peer relationship on the growth of problem behavior in adolescents and evaluated that unrestricted relations with unusual peers leads to deviant behaviors among youth.

Based on the literature review above it is clear that peer pressure work as an important determinant of juvenile delinquency. The current study focuses on the adolescents to see the influence of peer groups on the individuals. Most of the people affected by juvenile delinquency are the victims of negative influence of peer pressure. When children grown up, they become closer to their peers. They want to fit in with their peer group and this desire to be accepted can cloud good judgment. The interaction and relationship with delinquent peers has a negative influence on adolescents. As a result, there is an increase tendency of the adolescent becoming delinquent.

Method

This study has following three phases:

Phase I: Construction of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

Phase II: Psychometric estimates of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

Phase III: Validation of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

Phase- I: Construction of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

Basic aim of this phase is to construct a scale to measure the role of peer pressure towards juvenile delinquency among male and female adolescents. Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was developed by following the standard procedures and steps described below:

Step 1: Examining previous literature: Previous literature was examined by defining and refining the construct(Ojo, 2012; Matherne & Thomas, 2001; Brendgen, Vitaro, Tremblay, &Wanner, 2002; McGloin & Shermer. 2009;

Laird, Criss, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2008) and consulting Subject Matter Experts (SME) on role of peer pressure towards tendency of juvenile delinquency and various delinquency scales that have been described by various researchers.

Step 2: Item Generation: In developing the Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale, construct-based approach was employed suggested by Jackson (1970), with an aim to produce a scale which should be based on theoretical approach. It was intended that the scale should possess good internal consistency along with least chance of scale overlaps. Previous studies conducted on Peer Pressure and Juvenile Delinquency published in research journals and online research data bases were quite fruitful in generating items for the scale. Initially a pool of 50 items was developed.

Step 3: Committee Approach: Committee consisted of five psychologists in which researcher were also included. Each item was discussed and some of those items were rephrased and slightly modified so that those become more comprehensive.

Step 4: Try Out: To check the issue of language for responding to the answers and any other problem of items, Peer Pressure and Juvenile Delinquency Scale was administered on a small sample ($N=20$) of students, age ranges from 13 to 18 years ($M=15.5$, $SD=1.32$).

After considering the opinions and suggestions from the panel of experts, Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was originated. Purpose of this step was to check whether Peer Pressure and Juvenile Delinquency Scale is understandable and conveys the actual meaning to the target sample or not. It was consisted of 15 statements. It is a five point rating scale possible answers included 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Psychometric properties were determined in phase-II.

Phase II: Psychometric Estimates of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

After construction of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale, its psychometric properties (item-total correlation and alpha coefficient reliability), correlation and factor structure were determined.

Participants. In Phase II, a convenience sample ($N = 400$; male adolescents = 200, female adolescents = 200) was selected from different school and colleges of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Age of participants ranges from 13 to 18 years ($M = 15.75$, $SD = 1.57$). Their education varies from grade VIII to grade XII.

Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale. Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale is a 15 items instrument. It is based on two factors emerged by factor analysis, namely “Peer pressure in academic setting” and “Peer pressure in social setting”. Subscale of “Peer pressure in academic setting” comprised of 7 items, “Peer pressure in social setting” comprised of 8 items. Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was rated on 5-point rating scale ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree.

Procedure. After getting permission from official authorities of schools and colleges, the data was collected from the students by delivering the scale along with consent form. The selected sample was instructed to give response on every item of the scale as honestly as possible. They were allowed to complete the scale on their ease as there was no time limit. After getting the data, scoring and analysis was done.

Phase –III: Validation of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale

Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale was validated by administering on a large sample of adolescents. Main objectives of this study are to examine the impact of demographic variables like age, gender and education on the tendency of juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure.

Participants. Sample comprised of 600 adolescents (Male=300, Female=300). Their ages range from 13 to 18 years ($M = 15.23$, $SD = 1.36$). Their education level varies from grade VII to grade XII. These adolescents are students taken from different schools and colleges of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Procedure. After getting permission from the authorities of schools and colleges, boys and girls were approached. They were asked to fill the questionnaire. Basic purpose and content of questionnaire were explained to them. They were guaranteed that all the data will be used only for the purpose of research and kept confidential. After getting the data, it was analyzed.

Results

Table 1

Item-total Scale Correlation of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale (N = 400)

Item No.	Corrected Item-total Correlation	Item No.	Corrected Item-total Correlation
1	.83	9	.91
2	.84	10	.85
3	.87	11	.88
4	.79	12	.89
5	.81	13	.83
6	.89	14	.87
7	.86	15	.90
8	.84		

Table 1 shows that correlation coefficients range from .79 to .91. All the items are correlating with total score of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale. It is an indicator of construct validity of the instrument.

After computing Item total correlation of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale, factor analysis was computed to sort out the factor structure of the newly developed scale.

Table 2

Factor Loadings of the Items of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale Obtained through Principal Component Factor Analysis (N = 400)

	Peer pressure in academic setting	Peer pressure in social setting
Item No.	(Factor-I)	(Factor-II)
3	.81	.11
4	.78	.12
7	.79	.10
8	.69	.14
11	.75	.19
13	.77	.16
15	.84	.13

1	.17	.77
2	.13	.78
5	.12	.84
6	.17	.82
9	.17	.84
10	.20	.81
12	.13	.75
14	.18	.83
Eigen Values	25.73	21.98
% Variance	35.82	27.43
Cum. %	35.82	63.25

Table 2 shows the emergence of two factors as a result of EFA, namely; peer pressure in academic setting and peer pressure in social setting. There are 7 items in factor I (Peer pressure in academic setting) and 8 items in factor II (Peer pressure in social setting). Factor I explains 35.82% of variance whereas Factor II explains 27.43% of variance.

Inter-scale correlation shows the relationship between factors of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale.

Table 3

Correlation of Subscales of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale (N=400)

		1	2
1	Peer pressure in academic setting	---	.76**
2	Peer pressure in social setting	---	---

**p<.01

Table 3 shows that Peer pressure in academic setting is significantly positively associated with Peer pressure in social setting.

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale (N=400).

Scale	Number of items	Reliability
Peer pressure in academic setting sub-scale	07	.85
Peer pressure in social setting sub-scale	08	.87
Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale	15	.92

Table 4 shows the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Peer Pressure and Tendency of Juvenile Delinquency Scale and its sub-scales. These all are quite satisfactory.

Table 5

Mean, standard deviation and t-value of male and female adolescents on Peer Pressure and Juvenile Delinquency Scale and its sub-scales (N= 600).

	Male (n=300)	Female (n=300)			95% CI		
	M(SD)	M(SD)	t	P	L.L	U.L	Cohen's d
Academic	32.26(5.39)	29.47(6.23)	5.43	.02	.39	2.57	.63
Social	35.37(5.49)	31.23(4.35)	4.62	.01	.27	4.36	.58

Table 5 shows significant differences between male and female adolescents on tendency of juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure. Mean column shows that male adolescents have more tendency of juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure in academic setting (M=32.26, SD=5.39) and also in social setting (M=35.37, SD=5.49) than female students in academic setting (M=29.47, SD=6.23) and social setting (M=31.23, SD=4.35).

Table 6

Mean, standard deviation and *t*-value of early and late adolescents on Peer Pressure and Juvenile Delinquency Scale(N=600).

	Early adolescents	Late adolescents					
	(n=289)	(n=311)			95% CI		
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Academic	43.39(10.39)	42.90(8.23)	.31	.01	2.65	3.63	.73
Social	39.57(6.53)	36.79(5.48)	4.62	.02	2.27	4.12	.88

Table 6 shows significant difference between early and late adolescents on tendency of juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure. Mean column shows that students in early adolescence phase have more tendency of juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure in academic setting ($M=43.39$, $SD=10.39$) and also in social setting ($M=39.57$, $SD=6.53$) than students in late adolescence phase in academic setting ($M=42.90$, $SD=8.23$) and in social setting ($M=36.79$, $SD=5.48$).

Discussion

Peer pressure leads toward juvenile delinquency. Peers lead individuals to indulge in criminal activities. Adolescents usually spend more time with peers as compare to adults. The pressure from peer mostly affects the adolescent level. Present study examined the role of peer pressure towards the tendency of juvenile delinquency among male and female adolescents. It is comprised of three phases, phase-I aimed at construction of peer pressure and tendency of juvenile delinquency. Factor analysis and psychometric estimates were established in phase-II, and the scale was validated by applying it on a large sample in phase-III. There are some already constructed and validated measures like Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) (Brendt, 1979), which was designed to assess the perception of peer pressure in a number of domains, including peer social activities, misconduct, conformity to peer norms, involvement in school, and involvement with family. But the values of Pakistani people are distinct from the values of westerners, so the peer pressure measures have been developed and standardized on sample carrying different cultural setup, educational system, moral values and societal norms. Another important aspect is the language of these measures which is not suitable

for adolescents in Pakistan. Some work are available in Pakistan, as Mahmood, Shujja and Atta (2013) have developed Peer Pressure Assessment Scale (PPAS) for Pakistani adolescents. It has two main factors, Destructive influence of peer pressure and Constructive influence of peer pressure. But it does not measure the role of peer pressure in tendency of juvenile delinquency. For these reasons, the need was realized to develop indigenously valid and reliable self report measure of peer pressure towards tendency of juvenile delinquency for adolescent.

Adolescence is not just a time for the increasing importance of peer relationships, but it is also a time of increased susceptibility to peer pressure. It is clear from previous studies that peers affect adolescents' decisions to engage in risky behaviors (Blakemore & Mills 2014; Miller, Loebe, & Hipwell, 2009). Results of the present research have indicated that there are gender differences on peer pressure and juvenile delinquency, as male adolescents are higher on peer pressure and juvenile delinquency both in academic setting and in other social settings than female adolescents. These findings are in the same direction of existing literature, as Rihtarić and Kamenov (2013) examined that boys are more willing to engage in risky or delinquent behaviors if their peers urge them to do so (Lebedina Manzoni, Lotar, & Ricijaš, 2008; Lotar, & Lebedina Manzoni, 2011; Pardini & Loeber, 2008; Sim & Koh, 2003). Boys are more vulnerable to peer pressure for the behaviors like misconduct; there is also a possibility that in some societies like in Pakistan, boys' misconduct behavior is socially accepted than girls (Lotar, & Lebedina Manzoni, 2011). Chapple, Vaske and Worthen (2014) have also explored gender differences on peer pressure among adolescents. Boys reported significantly higher levels of peer pressure than girls and the predictors of deviant peer pressure are less supervision, low self-control, poor neighborhood organization, a greater number of friends, and less peer rejection.

Some age differences are also explored in the current study, results have shown that students in early adolescence phase are higher on peer pressure and juvenile delinquency both in academic setting and in other social settings than students in late adolescence phase. As it is indicated by the available researches that conformity to peers is higher during early and middle adolescence than during late adolescence (Berndt, 1979; Brown, 2004; Sim & Koh, 2003). The heightened susceptibility to peer pressure of individuals in early adolescence is most consistently seen when the behavior is antisocial, such as cheating, stealing, or trespassing (Erickson, Crosnoe, & Dornbusch, 2000).

Limitations and Suggestions

Present research has many deficiencies and limitations and needs a large scope of improvement.

- First of all the sample size was small due to which results of this research are less generalizable for the population of all schools and colleges. Larger sample should be selected in order to generalize the findings of the study.
- Data was collected from school and colleges of Islamabad and Rawalpindi only. Other schools and colleges of different cities should also be included in private and public sectors.
- Present research was conducted on school going and college going students at that time, some students were having their exams so they were unable to be approached because of their exam schedule.

Implications

This study will help in future researches in this field. It can be used to understand the behavior problems related to the students and how we can point out these problems. Thus it will provide with the most effective ways to deal with these problems. These effective ways may include different programs and vocational training of the students with behavior problems. This will definitely benefit the students who will then be able to live a happy and healthy life and become useful citizens of this nation.

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