

Gender Differences and Peer Pressure as Correlates of Psychological Wellbeing of Senior Secondary School Adolescents in North-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined gender differences and peer pressure as correlate of psychological well of senior secondary school adolescents in north-west, Nigeria. The study employs correlational research design. Six Schools were randomly selected from the target population of three hundred and seven thousand, one hundred and eight (307,108) Students, 384 students were selected to make the sample for the study. The study adapted Peer Pressure Scale (PPS) by Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar, (2000). and Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS) by Carol D. Ryff (2007) at 0.82, and 0.88 reliability co-efficient respectively. The statistics used for data analysis was the PPMC. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance, Result showed that: H01: reveals positive correlation (r -value of .658) which is significant at 0.05 alpha levels of significance ($r = .658, p < 0.05$), null hypothesis 2 presents t -value of -.027, df 382, $p = .979$. Thus, that the null hypothesis is accepted. While null hypothesis 3 result showed that $t = 1.439$; $df = 382, p > 0.05$ and the hypothesis is retained, it is therefore recommended that trained counselor should be sent to each secondary school to assist in the counseling of a few teenagers who are subjected to negative peer pressure. Parents should also provide adequate monitoring and not allow other factors in the home environment to distract their children. Furthermore, Parents are encouraged to provide the right education they can afford for their children irrespective of gender.*

Keywords: Adolescent, Gender, Peer Pressure, Psychological well-being.

Introduction

The blame for poor academic performance among adolescent secondary school students could be attributed to a variety of factors which include peer influence, substance abuse, self-efficacy, test anxiety and psychological-wellbeing among other prominent contemporary issues among Adolescents at various levels of Education. Various factors have served as barriers to

success at learning and consequently leading to poor academic performance among students in North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria for the betterment of the society in the 21st century. (Schneider, 2010).

Academic activities are directed towards ensuring that students gain mastery of educational objectives. In schools, the extent to which these objectives have been met is determined greatly by the peers which could possibly reflect in student's academic performance (Okorie, 2020). Allen (2015) maintained that peer group influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years. Thus, understanding the prospects and challenges of peer pressure is crucial for the productivity of educational processes and the organizational design of school systems in order to improve student's academic performance.

Peers plays a significant role in the educational, social and emotional development of students, It is natural, healthy and important for adolescent to have and rely on friends as they grow and mature (Okorie, 2020). A peer could be any one you look up to in behaviour or someone who an individual would think is equal to your age or ability. On the other hand, the term "pressure" is described as the process that influences people to do something that they might not otherwise choose to do (Okorie, 2020). Peer pressure is emotional or mental force from people belonging to the same social group (such as same age grade or status) to act or behave in a manner similar to themselves. Peer pressure has a great influence on adolescent behaviour and reflects young people's desire to fit in and be accepted by others (Bern & Farrell, 2010). Peer pressure (sometimes also referred to as social pressure) is the effect on individuals whose attitudes, beliefs or values are changed by their peers in order to conform to those of the influencing group. (Jones, 2010).

Psychological well-being refers to positive mental health (Edwards, 2015). Research has shown that psychological well-being is a diverse multidimensional concept which develops through a combination of emotional regulation, personality characteristics, identity and life experience (Helson, 2011). Psychological well-being can increase with age, education, extraversion and consciousness and decreases with neuroticism (Keyes et al., 2012), Psychological well-being dimensions are as follows: "Self-Acceptance", which is defined as having a positive attitude towards him/herself and his/her past; "Positive Relations with Others" defined as warm, reliable and positive relationships with others; "Autonomy" defined as the sense of making own decisions, freedom, the focus of internal control; "Environmental Domination" defined as the

capacity of creating a suitable environment according to the personal and spiritual conditions of the person; “Individual Development” defined as having the feeling that the person is constantly developing and growing as an individual and “Aim of Life” defined as having a sense of finding meaningful life.

Moreover, Psychological health is defined as a “state of being in which a student is balanced both emotionally and intellectually” (Zulkefly & Baharudin, 2020). A psychologically sound student will have the capacity to think clearly, develop socially and to learn new skills without any difficulty. The psychological well-being can also be considered as an indicator of the positive mental health discussed in the psychology literature. Sustainable well-being does not always require individuals to feel good, the experience of painful emotions (such as frustration, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. However, psychological well-being is endangered when negative emotions are excessive or too long and the individual's ability to work in daily life is hindered (Huppert, 2019).

Gender plays a significant role in exposing adolescent students to peer pressure and development of psychological well-being (McMillan et-al, 2018). However, it is unclear whether these variations are the result of analyzing different samples or the gendered context surrounding the specific behavior in psychological well-being. The current study further explores this issue by rigorously testing for gender differences in peer pressure across three separate behaviors in a large, constant sample of adolescents. Moreover, Fatima (2015) investigated peer pressure and Psychological well-being of adolescents in relation to gender, locality and academic achievement. She found that male are more prone to peers pressure in comparison to females. More also, the study founded no significant difference between the psychological well-being of both male and female students.

Peer pressure is important in the development of social skills, psychological well-being, and academic performance in adolescents (Klarin, 2016). Adolescent female students are more prone to peer pressure subsequently leading to negative psychological well-being when compared with their male counterpart (McMillan et-al, 2018). Adolescents develop their identities through interactions with significant peers. Because they desire to be accepted by their peers, adolescent students may willingly discard many of the norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors taught

previously by their parents, instructors, school, and other influential figures. Adolescents may perform activities or crimes that they would not have committed otherwise. This may lead to unfavorable school attitudes such as substance abuse, truancy, exam malpractice, and negative psychological wellbeing. this study will critically studies and generate proper recommendation that will promote positive peer pressure and psychological well-being among adolescent secondary school adolescent in North-west, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The main objectives of the study is to:

1. find out the relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.
2. determine the difference between male and female, Senior Secondary School adolescents' level of peer pressure in North-west.
3. determine the difference between male and female Senior Secondary School adolescent' psychological well-being in North-west.

Research Hypotheses

Null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.
- H₀₂. There is no significant difference between male and female Senior Secondary School level of peer pressure in North-west, Nigeria.
- H₀₃. There is no significant difference between male and female Senior Secondary School psychological well-being in North-west.

Methodology

A correlational research design was used in this investigation. Hypotheses were tested using PPMC and independent t-test. This study's population was three hundred and seven thousand, one hundred and eight (307,108) SS II Adolescent Students (both male and female) from Nigeria's North-West. The Zone is made up of seven (7) states: Jigawa, Katsina, Kaduna, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. Sample was selected using research advisor (2006), which was represented

by three hundred and eighty-four (384). The reliability coefficient of pilot testing result for peer pressure scale (PPS) was 0.82, and Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWS) was established at 0.88, All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 1: PPMC Showing the Relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being

| Variable | Correlation, Sig. & N. | Peer Press. | Psychological well-being |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Peer pressure | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .658** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 384 | 384 |
| Psychological-being | Pearson Correlation | .658** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 384 | 384 |

Note: means significant at 0.05 alpha level of Significance

Table 1, reveals positive correlation (r-value of .658*) which is significant at 0.05 alpha levels of significance ($r = .658, p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which assumes no significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west Nigeria was rejected. Thus, result revealed a significant relationship between the independent variable (Peer pressure) and dependent variables (psychological well-being) among adolescents' students of north-west Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between male and female students' level of peer pressure among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 2: t-Test Summary Table Showing the difference in the peer pressure of male and female adolescent secondary schools students (N=384)

| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t-val. | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------|--------|-----|---------|---------|-----|--------|-----------------|
| Peer pressure | Male | 214 | 45.8178 | 12.9458 | 382 | -.027 | .979 |
| | Female | 170 | 45.8529 | 12.8457 | | | |

The analysis on table 2 presents t-value of $-.027$, $df\ 382$, $P=.979$. This is represented in mean scores with 45.8178 for males and 45.8529 for females. In this case, the computed p-value is greater than 0.05 , signifying that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, there is no significant difference between male and female students' level of peer pressure among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west.

Table 3: t-Test Summary Table Showing the Difference in the psychological well-being of Male and Female adolescent Secondary Schools students

| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t-Cal. | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|--------|-----|---------|---------|-----|--------|-----------------|
| Academic performance | Male | 214 | 19.2570 | 7.9873 | 382 | 1.439 | .151 |
| | Female | 170 | 18.0941 | 7.71477 | | | |

From the t-test analysis in table 3 reveals no significant difference between male and female students' level of academic performance among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria. ($t=1.439$; $df=382$, $p>0.05$). This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted. This means, there is no significant difference between male and female students' level of academic performance among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

Hypothesis One reveals positive correlation (r-value of $.658^*$) which is significant at 0.05 alpha levels of significance ($r = .658$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis three which stated no significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west Nigeria is rejected. Thus, result revealed a There is significant relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being of Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria. The findings of this study agreed with studies of Filade et-al, (2019), and Subhash, (2022). Filade et-al (2019) conducted a study on influence of Peer pressure, substance abuse on psychological well-being of undergraduate students in Babcock University, Ogun State. The study revealed that, Peer group played large role in the social, emotional and psychological development of students. In a similar analysis Subhash, (2022) on influence of Peer Pressure, self-efficacy on academic psychological well-being of Students of

Secondary Schools, the study indicated that the maximum number of students has average level of peer pressure and very few numbers of student fell under extremely low self-efficacy. When compared with the dependent variables (academic achievement and psychological well-being) the researchers concluded that peer pressure and self-efficacy is a good determinant of psychological well-being of students.

Hypothesis Two revealed that, the t-value of $-.027$, $df\ 382$, $P=.979$. This is represented in mean scores with 45.8178 for males and 45.8529 for females. In this case, the computed P-value is greater than 0.05 , signifying that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, there is no significant difference between male and female students' level of peer pressure among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria. This findings in agreement with the findings of Adewole et-al, (2018) in their research titled gender difference and peer pressure in conformity of a sample of adolescents in senior secondary school. This study examined the effect of gender and peer pressure on psychological well-being in randomly selected adolescents of senior secondary schools in Nigeria. Results revealed that no gender difference in psychological wellbeing, $F(1, 36) = 3.675$, $p > .05$. Similarly, peer pressure had no significant effect on male and female students $F(1, 36) = 0.800$, $p > .05$, the study concluded that gender and peer pressure are not important determinants of psychological well-being among adolescents of senior secondary school. In a similar study, Bansal & Bansal (2022) in their research titled Peer Pressure of Adolescents In relation to psychological well-being. The present study focuses on the relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being. The results of the statistical analysis show that the peer pressure in adolescents is significantly and negatively correlated to their psychological well-being. The results of gender analysis show that peer pressure level is higher in boys in comparison to girls.

Hypothesis three reveals no significant difference between male and female students' level of academic performance among Senior Secondary School adolescents in North-west, Nigeria. ($t=1.439$; $df=382$, $p> 0.05$). This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted. Above finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Akhter (2015), the main objective of the study was to correlate the influence of psychological well-being among male and female students. The result shows that 't' value is 5.68 that is significant at 0.01 level. So Results showed significant gender differences in the levels on psychological well-being. It means male and female students are

difference in psychological well-being. in it statistical ‘t’ method Waield Results discussions of present study is as under. The result obtained on the psychology well –being reveals no significant difference of girls and boy students. Salleh & Mustaffa (2016) in a study titled gender difference in psychological well-being among flood victims. The results showed that there was no significant difference between male and female in psychological well-being ($t = 1.194, P > 0.05$). Besides that, no gender differences were found in term of all the dimensions in psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, self-acceptance, and personal growth) among flood victims. It implies that there was no dissimilarity in term of perception toward psychological well-being for those male and female respondents. Above claim is supported by Matud, (2019) and Khan et-al (2020) who studied gender differences in predicting the impact of psychological wellbeing on academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that:

- i. Trained counselor should be sent to each secondary school to assist in the counseling of a few teenagers who are subjected to negative peer pressure.
- ii. Parents should also provide adequate monitoring and not allow other factors in the home environment to distract their children. Furthermore, there is a need for teachers to have more oversight and rules on in-school teenagers in order to improve the effectiveness of peer impact.
- iii. Parents are encouraged to provide the right education they can afford for their children irrespective of gender.

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