



A STUDY ON STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS TO HANDLE PEER PRESSURE AND ROLE OF TEACHERS

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Abstract

Peer pressure is something that all adolescents have in common and is difficult to escape. Peer pressure generally applies to youth, especially teenage children. People are social animals, so peer pressure is a part of human nature; some teenagers are more likely to get influenced and change under pressure, whereas others are better able to resist and stand on their ground. This Research will focus on various factors influencing the behaviour of teenagers encountering peer pressure. The outcome of the Research will benefit the students, the school administrators, the teachers, and especially the parents concerned about their children's behaviour. This study will also help the school administrators or a few psychiatrists to decide the Action-plan for adopting the measures to be taken to recover the deteriorating moral values and academic performance of the students.

Keywords: adolescents, Peer, Pressure, Impact, school administrators, Action-plan

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important means for the acquisition of skills and knowledge which helps one to not only lead a life of happiness, contentment and success, but to contribute towards the development of an open and just society, also. It is a process of enlightenment and empowerment by attaining both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities resulting in a better and higher quality of life. These aims of education can rightly and only be fulfilled if knowledge imparted and knowledge gained is done in the right sense. As it is the adolescents of today are swept away by the tide of struggle, anxiety, fear, competition, pressure etc. They have been engulfed by tense, unstable and confusing situations. They have become the victim of societal demands for conformity and unfulfilled desires.

Another aspect in the process of socialization which has an important role in shaping attitudes and perceptions of high school students is the peer pressure. Peer group includes people of approximately same age, status and interests of an individual. Peers are those people who possess similar maturity level to form attitudes towards one's school, achievement in school and also educational plans (Santrock, 2005). At the point when a child enters his high school, peers start to assume the role of his extended family. Peers or companions have an impact on behaviour modification. Studies show that the impact of peers starts to develop at a very early age and continues through childhood and adolescence, leaving an impact on attitudes and perceptions of the child (Eckerman & Didow, 2008).

Peer relations need to be studied mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because nature of interaction among same age group significantly affects the social, moral and cognitive development. Secondly, there is a relationship between troubled peer relationships and adjustment problems at some or the other development stage of the child (Dunn & Mc Gurie, 2012). Peers do not only effect the child's decision making in general but also has an influence on educational choices and attainment (Carbonaro, 2016; Rosenqvist, 2018).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Elizabeth (2012) conducted a study, "Friendship Quality and Peer Attachment as Predictors of Adolescents' Subsequent Academic Achievement", This study investigated the hypothesis that peer influences in adolescence, specifically friendship quality and peer attachment, predict improved academic achievement over time.

Tope (2016) investigated the influence of peer group on adolescent's academic performance. The sample of the study was 150 randomly selected students from four secondary schools. The findings were the peer group could either positively or negatively influence the academic performance in school. Tope recommended that parents and teachers may provide adequate guidance to adolescents to help them understand how the friends can positively or negatively influence their academic performance.

Sacerdote (2015) studied peer effects among college age roommates. Freshman year roommates and dorm mates are randomly assigned at Dartmouth College. It was felt that peer effects are very important in determining levels of academic effort and in decisions to join social groups such as fraternities. Residential peer effects are markedly absent in other major life decisions such as choice of college major. Several forms of peer effects are considered. The data support a model in which peer effects are driven by roommate behaviour after the freshmen arrive. Social learning based on a roommate's observable pre Dartmouth information or skills appears to be less important. Peer effects in GPA occur at the individual room level whereas peer effects in fraternity membership occur both at the room level and the entire dorm level. It was also found that a freshman with high social ability is likely to remain with his or her roommates in sophomore year, but high academic ability actually decreases roommate retention.

Ryan (2016) tried to find out the positive impacts of peer relations, especially finding the effect of peer groups in increasing the self-confidence of adolescents. As the children grow, they go to school and then college and spend most of their time with their friends who strengthen their bond and their relationships grow at much faster rates. Their decisions and views are influenced by each other; they also get motivated by one another which affect their academic achievement also. Ryan tried to analyze this by noting the academic performance of the children in the beginning and ends of the high school and identified the nature of the peers in the group. As a result of his study he found that peer groups had great impacts on the academic performances and these relations also increased the importance of the school in children's mind.

Borwin et al. (2017) concluded that youngsters are influenced more by the closest friends than others in a variety of ways and generally start the use of cigarette and alcohol on their advice. Borwin et al. also stated that indulging into criminal activities and other bad habits is more common than academic achievements due to peer friendships. Thus, it is very necessary to examine the effects of these friendships or peer groups. Groups should be such which enhance academic success rather than destroying the person and society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the paper is:

- To explain the strategies for handling peer pressure.
- To understand the role of teachers in addressing peer pressure.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS TO HANDLE PEER PRESSURE

Developing Self-Confidence

Encouraging students to build strong self-esteem and confidence helps them trust their own judgment and resist negative influences. Engaging in activities where they excel can boost their confidence and reinforce their sense of self-worth.

Practicing Assertiveness

Teaching students to express their thoughts and feelings confidently can help them say no to peer pressure. Learning to say no and express personal boundaries clearly. Role-playing scenarios can prepare them for real-life situations where they might need to assert themselves.

Choosing Positive Friendships

Encouraging students to form friendships with peers who share similar values and positive attitudes can provide a supportive environment. Associating with peers who share similar values and support positive behaviors. Promoting involvement in positive group activities can help them find like-minded friends.

Seeking Guidance and Support

Students should be encouraged to talk to trusted adults, such as parents, teachers, or school counselors, when facing peer pressure. Turning to trusted adults, mentors, or counselors for advice and support. Schools can provide resources and programs that teach coping skills and resilience.

Critical Thinking and Decision-Making

Helping students develop critical thinking skills enables them to evaluate the potential consequences of their actions. Encouraging them to think ahead about the long-term impact of their choices can help them make more informed decisions. Understanding peer pressure



and its effects can help individuals make more informed choices and develop strategies to cope with and resist unwanted influence.

PEER PRESSURE AND ROLE OF TEACHERS

Teachers play a crucial role in helping students navigate peer pressure. Their influence can shape students' experiences and responses to peer pressure, guiding them towards positive behaviors and decision-making.

Role of Teachers in Addressing Peer Pressure

Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

Inclusive Atmosphere

Foster an inclusive classroom where every student feels valued and respected, reducing the need for students to conform to peer pressure to fit in.

Encouragement of Diversity

Promote diversity and acceptance of different viewpoints, cultures, and backgrounds to help students appreciate individuality.

Education and Awareness

Informative Lessons

Integrate lessons on peer pressure into the curriculum, educating students about its effects and ways to handle it.

Role-Playing Scenarios

Use role-playing exercises to help students practice responding to peer pressure in a safe environment.

Building Self-Esteem and Confidence

Positive Reinforcement

Provide positive feedback and reinforcement to help build students' self-esteem and confidence, making them less susceptible to negative peer influence.

Individual Strengths

Encourage students to identify and develop their individual strengths and interests, promoting a strong sense of self.

Teaching Assertiveness and Decision-Making Skills



Assertiveness Training

Teach students how to assertively express their opinions and say no to negative peer pressure.

Critical Thinking

Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills so students can evaluate the consequences of their choices and make informed decisions.

Providing Support and Guidance

Open Communication: Maintain open lines of communication, making it clear that students can come to you with their concerns about peer pressure.

Mentorship

Act as a mentor, providing guidance and support to students struggling with peer pressure.

Encouraging Positive Peer Interactions

Group Activities

Facilitate group activities that promote teamwork, cooperation, and positive interactions among students.

Peer Mentorship Programs

Implement peer mentorship programs where older students can positively influence and support younger ones.

Monitoring and Addressing Bullying

Active Supervision

Be vigilant in monitoring student interactions to identify and address any instances of bullying or negative peer pressure.

Anti-Bullying Policies

Enforce anti-bullying policies consistently to create a safe and supportive environment.

Collaborating with Parents and the Community

Parent-Teacher Communication

Keep open lines of communication with parents to share observations and strategies for helping students deal with peer pressure.



Community Resources

Utilize community resources such as counselors, social workers, and local organizations to support students.

CONCLUSION

Peer pressure has a significant impact on students, influencing their behavior, academic performance, and overall well-being. Negative peer pressure is often related to influencing bullying behaviours, drinking alcohol, drug use and negative body image, all of which are harmful to a child or young person's wellbeing. The effects of such behaviours can decrease self-confidence, self-worth and distancing from family members and friends.

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