

Parenting Styles and Peer Pressure in Relation to Academic Performance Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on academic performance among university students. A random sample of 258 students aged 18–26 years was collected from various universities. Participants completed a self-developed demographic sheet, the Perceived Parenting Style Scale (Divya & Manikandan, 2013), and the Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire Revised (Saini & Singh, 2016). Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and regression analyses were conducted. The findings indicated a significant weak negative correlation between academic performance (measured by CGPA) and peer pressure ($r = -.14, p < .05$), while an insignificant negative correlation was observed between academic performance and parenting styles ($r = -.016, p > .05$). A significant strong positive correlation was found between peer pressure and parenting styles ($r = .32, p < .01$). Regression analysis revealed that peer pressure significantly predicted academic performance ($\beta = -.152, p < .05$), whereas parenting styles did not significantly predict academic performance ($\beta = .032, p > .05$). The model explained only 2.1% of the variance in academic performance ($R^2 = .021, F(2, 255) = 2.754, p > .01$). These findings suggest that peer pressure negatively affects academic performance, albeit weakly, while parenting styles exhibit no substantial relationship with academic performance in this sample. However, peer pressure and parenting styles are significantly correlated, indicating a potential interaction worth exploring in future research. This study highlights the need for further investigation into the complex dynamics between external influences and academic outcomes among university students.

Introduction

Academic performance, typically assessed through cumulative grade point average (CGPA) or continuous assessment, reflects the extent to which students, educators, or institutions achieve their educational objectives (Mesfin Tadese et al., 2020). Students' academic success is critical to the social and economic development of a nation, making them invaluable assets for academic institutions (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Academic achievement is pivotal for improving quality of life and developing human capital, and understanding its influencing factors helps identify potential risks to student success (Masud et al., 2018; Afaq et al., 2022).

Performance, a multi-dimensional construct, involves cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal processes facilitated by educational environments. These processes are influenced by external, internal, and environmental factors such as intellectual capacity, personality, study habits, and student-teacher dynamics (Marti, 2003). Divergences in performance occur when academic achievements deviate from expected outcomes, often linked to pedagogical methods. Walberg's theory emphasizes the impact of students' psychological make-up and immediate environments on their academic performance (Reynolds & Walberg, 1992). Peer relationships significantly influence academic outcomes. Positive peer influences enhance motivation and academic engagement, while negative influences can impede performance (Lashbrook, 2000).

Parental practices also play a central role in shaping academic success. Authoritative parenting, characterized by high responsiveness and demands, fosters better outcomes compared to authoritarian or permissive approaches (Baumrind, 1991; Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). However, cultural variations in parenting practices underscore the importance of contextual research, as demonstrated by contrasting findings in Western and collectivist societies like Pakistan (Masud et al., 2015; Khalid et al., 2018; Munir et al., 2022). Students' academic trajectories are thus shaped by a complex interplay of peer dynamics and parenting styles, highlighting the need for culturally nuanced investigations to inform policy and practice.

Literature Review

The current study aims to explore the relationships between authoritative and permissive parenting styles and various types of adolescent peer relationships—such as attachment, victimization, and aggression—and how these relationships influence academic self-efficacy and performance. The study utilized a three-wave longitudinal design with 500 Spanish adolescents, aged 13 to 16 years, from Valencia, Spain. Data were collected using tools such as the Inventory of Child Reports of Parental Behavior and peer attachment and victimization scales. Structural equation modeling and path analysis revealed that parenting styles significantly influence peer relationships and academic outcomes. Specifically, the permissive parenting style positively predicted aggression and negatively predicted peer attachment, with peer relationships and academic self-efficacy mediating the impact of parenting practices on academic achievement (Llorca et al., 2017).

In a related study conducted in Punjab, India, semi-structured interviews with 60 adolescents enrolled in engineering programs highlighted the critical role of parenting styles in adolescent development. Results indicated that peer pressure varies during adolescence based on parenting styles. Adolescents with responsive and controlling parents experienced lower levels of peer pressure, suggesting the importance of balanced parental involvement (Bansal & Bansal, 2022). A unique study in Brazil examined peer effects on academic outcomes using a natural experiment within a federal university's admission process. The study addressed endogeneity bias in peer

group formation using "predicted peers" as an empirical strategy. Findings revealed that low-performing students placed in high-achieving peer groups experienced reduced academic performance, with gender differences observed. Male students were more likely to drop out when outperformed by peers, whereas female students persisted despite underperformance (Rodrigues de Souza et al., 2021).

According to Steinberg (2005), academic performance encompasses multiple dimensions of human development, including cognitive, emotional, and social growth, and is influenced by peer groups. Peer influence can have positive or negative effects depending on the student's self-identity and self-esteem (Lashbrook, 2000). Coleman's Social Capital Theory was applied in a study examining the impact of parenting style and parental support on physics students' academic performance in Nigeria. Using a correlational research design, data from 335 senior secondary students revealed that both parenting style and parental support significantly influenced academic achievement. Poor parenting and lack of support were linked to lower performance in physics (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020).

In Karachi, Pakistan, research with 100 schoolchildren found that the authoritarian parenting style was a strong predictor of academic achievement, explaining 38% of the variance in test scores. Data were collected using the Parental Authority Questionnaire and analyzed via linear regression, showing a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and academic performance (Rauf & Ahmed, 2017). A study at Babcock University in Nigeria highlighted the significant impact of peer groups on undergraduate academic performance. Using a mixed-methods approach, results demonstrated a strong correlation between peer group influence and academic success, with students benefiting from positive peer relationships (Filade et al., 2019).

Research in Ethiopia examined the associations between parenting styles, academic achievement, self-concept, and motivation among 136 high school students. Data analysis revealed that authoritative parenting had a moderate positive correlation with academic performance, while permissive and authoritarian styles showed negative associations (Dagneu, 2018). Baumrind's (1991) framework of four parenting styles—indulgent, authoritarian, authoritative, and uninvolved—emphasizes different levels of responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parenting, characterized by high responsiveness and demandingness, is consistently associated with better academic outcomes compared to permissive or neglectful parenting. In Kumasi, Ghana, research involving 376 senior high school students found that authoritative parenting had the most positive effect on academic performance, followed by authoritarian parenting. Permissive parenting showed no significant impact. The study emphasized the need for parental counseling programs to educate parents about effective parenting strategies (Boateng et al., 2020).

Research in Turkey explored how perceived parenting styles influence high school students' achievement goal orientations. Data from 497 students and their parents indicated that democratic and overprotective parenting styles were most strongly associated with learning-oriented goals, while authoritarian and overprotective styles influenced performance-oriented goals (Kosterelioglu, 2018). These studies underscore the pivotal role of parenting styles and peer relationships in shaping adolescents' academic outcomes. Authoritative parenting emerges as the most effective approach, fostering academic self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement.

Cross-cultural variations are often overlooked, as studies tend to focus on specific cultural contexts, limiting the generalizability of findings. Longitudinal analyses are sparse, with many studies relying on cross-sectional designs that fail to capture developmental changes over time.

Additionally, while mediating factors such as peer relationships and academic self-efficacy are acknowledged, the role of potential moderators like socioeconomic status, parental education, and adolescent temperament is underexplored. Gender-specific findings are also limited, as few studies systematically investigate how gender interacts with parenting styles and peer dynamics. Moreover, neglectful parenting, an often underrepresented style, warrants further investigation regarding its impact on academic self-efficacy and performance.

The integration of emotional and social variables such as stress, anxiety, and peer acceptance into academic performance models remains insufficient. Subject-specific analyses and the influence of technology and social media are underexplored, despite their increasing relevance in adolescents' lives. Furthermore, limited research examines the role of parent-teen communication in mediating the interplay between parenting styles, peer influence, and academic outcomes. Finally, while parental education programs have been suggested, there is a lack of research on their practical implementation and efficacy in diverse contexts. Addressing these gaps can foster a deeper understanding of how parenting and peer relationships shape adolescent academic success and inform the development of culturally sensitive interventions to enhance their well-being and achievement. While existing research underscores the profound influence of parenting styles and peer relationships on adolescent development and academic outcomes, several critical gaps remain unaddressed.

Methodology

Participants

A random sample of 258 university students was recruited through face-to-face interaction using printed questionnaires. The sample consisted of 129 male and 129 female students, with an age range of 17 to 24 years. Participants represented diverse educational, socioeconomic, and vocational backgrounds.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Both male and female students were included in the study.
- Participants aged 18 to 26 years were eligible.
- Individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds and both rural and urban areas were included.
- Undergraduate students of both genders were part of the study.
- Illiterate individuals and postgraduate students were excluded.
- Participants below 18 years or above 26 years of age were also excluded.

Research Design

A Cross-sectional study design was employed to examine the influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on academic performance among university students. Quantitative methods were used to analyze the numerical data collected. For participants who encountered difficulties completing the form, questions and response options were read aloud to ensure inclusivity.

Demographic Sheet

The demographic sheet was designed to collect background information about participants. It included items related to gender, age, semester, CGPA, habitat, family income, study hours, and relationships with parents and peers.

Measures

Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire Revised (PPSQ-r)

Developed by Saini and Singh (2016), the PPSQ-r assesses adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure. This revised version comprises 25 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The total score is calculated by summing the item scores.

Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS)

The PPSS, developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013), measures children's perceptions of their parents' behavior. It consists of 30 positively worded items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Scores are totaled to determine the overall perception of parenting styles.

Procedure

Prior to the conduction of the current research proper permissions were obtained from the institutions from where data was needed to be collected. Permission emails were also sent to the authors of the selected scales to secure approval for their use. Male and female participants from various universities in Sialkot, including both rural and urban areas, were randomly approached. The purpose and nature of the study were explained to participants, and written and verbal consent was obtained. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The data collection tools, including the consent form, demographic sheet, PPSQ-r, and PPSS, were administered to collect data. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, regression analysis, and one-sample t-tests to derive the study's findings.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the first section of the self-report questionnaire. Confidentiality was ensured for sensitive information, such as CGPA, family income, and relationships with parents and peers. The study posed no psychological or physiological risks to participants. Data were collected in a physical setting following proper SOPs, and participants' dignity was fully respected. The information collected was kept private and was not disclosed to any third party. Participation was entirely voluntary, anonymous, and without any obligation, and participants could withdraw at any stage without facing consequences. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from relevant authorities

Results

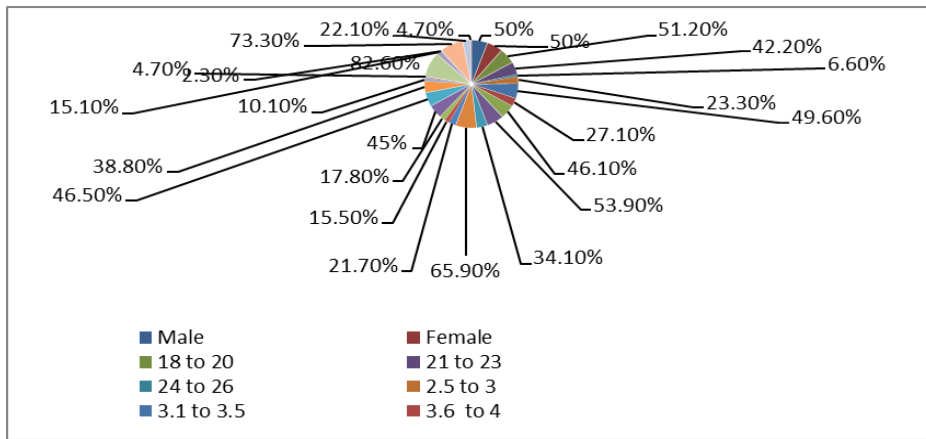


Fig.1: Pie Chart of Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics & correlations for Study Variables

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. CGPA	258	2.0388	.71016	-		
2. Peer Pressure	258	64.3062	17.67902	-.14*	-	
3. Parenting Styles	258	88.6318	14.32530	-.016	.32**	-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics, including means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*), and the correlations among the study variables: CGPA, peer pressure, and parenting styles. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between CGPA and peer pressure ($r = -0.14$, $p < .05$). This indicates that higher levels of peer pressure were associated with slightly lower academic performance. The correlation between CGPA and parenting styles was not significant ($r = -0.016$), indicating no meaningful relationship between these two variables in this sample. A statistically significant positive correlation was observed between peer pressure and parenting styles ($r = 0.32$, $p < .01$). This suggests that participants who perceived their parenting styles positively also reported higher susceptibility to peer pressure.

Table 2
Regression Coefficients of Peer Pressure & Parenting Styles on Academic Performance

Variable	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Constant	2.293		.29
Peer Pressure	-.006	-.152	.003
Parenting Styles	.002	.032	.003
R^2	.021		

Note. $N = 258$.

*** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 2 presents Interpretation of Regression Coefficients of Peer Pressure and Parenting Styles on Academic Performance. The regression analysis table presents the relationship between peer pressure, parenting styles, and academic performance (CGPA). The regression coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (β), and standard errors (SE) for each predictor variable are provided, along with the R^2 value, which reflects the proportion of variance in academic performance explained by the model. The constant value is 2.293, indicating the predicted academic performance (CGPA) when both peer pressure and parenting styles are equal to zero. This is the baseline level of academic performance in the absence of the predictors. The regression coefficient for peer pressure is -0.006, with a standardized coefficient (β) of -0.152. This indicates that for each unit increase in peer pressure, the academic performance (CGPA) is expected to decrease by 0.006 points. The negative β value suggests an inverse relationship between peer pressure and academic performance. The standard error (SE) is 0.003, providing a measure of the accuracy of the coefficient. The regression coefficient for parenting styles is 0.002, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.032. This suggests that for each unit increase in perceived parenting style, the academic performance (CGPA) is expected to increase by 0.002 points. However, the small β value indicates a very weak relationship between parenting styles and academic performance. The standard error (SE) is 0.003, indicating a low degree of error in estimating the coefficient. The R^2 value is 0.021, meaning that the combination of peer pressure and parenting styles explains only 2.1% of the variance in academic performance (CGPA). This indicates that other factors not included in the model likely contribute more significantly to academic performance.

Discussion

The present study examined the influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on academic performance among university students. The findings suggest a complex relationship between these variables, with peer pressure having a small but significant negative impact on academic performance (CGPA), while parenting styles showed no direct relationship with CGPA. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was found between peer pressures and parenting styles, indicating that students who perceive their parenting styles more positively tend to experience higher levels of peer pressure. One of the key findings is the significant negative correlation between peer pressure and CGPA ($r = -0.14$, $p < .05$). This result aligns with previous research indicating that peer pressure can detract from academic performance by diverting students' attention away from their studies and encouraging behaviors that may conflict with academic success (Akhtar & Aziz, 2011).

While the effect observed in this study is relatively small, it highlights that peer pressure, especially in university settings where social influence is prominent, can subtly affect academic outcomes. This finding is consistent with earlier studies that have shown peer pressure to negatively impact academic achievement, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Steinberg, 2005). In contrast, the correlation between parenting styles and CGPA was not statistically significant ($r = -0.016$), suggesting that perceived parenting styles, at least in this sample, do not have a direct impact on academic performance. This finding is somewhat surprising given the substantial body of literature suggesting that parenting styles, particularly authoritative parenting, are associated with positive academic outcomes (Baumrind, 1991). However, it is possible that other unexamined factors, such as individual motivation, study habits, or personality traits, may play a more significant role in academic performance than parenting style alone. Furthermore, the sample used in this study may not fully capture the diversity of parenting styles, which could limit the generalizability of this result.

The positive correlation between peer pressure and parenting styles ($r = 0.32, p < .01$) indicates that students who perceive their parents' behaviors more positively also report higher levels of peer pressure. This finding is in line with the work of Akhtar and Aziz (2011), who noted that a supportive parenting environment may influence how adolescents respond to peer influence. It is possible that students with positive perceptions of their parents may feel more confident in navigating peer pressure, though further research is needed to explore this relationship more thoroughly. The regression analysis showed that peer pressure has a small but significant negative effect on academic performance ($\beta = -0.152, p < .05$), while parenting styles had an almost negligible effect ($\beta = 0.032$). These results suggest that peer pressure, though influential, is not the dominant factor affecting academic performance in this sample. The R^2 value of 0.021 indicates that the combination of peer pressure and parenting styles explains only 2.1% of the variance in academic performance, suggesting that other factors, such as intrinsic motivation, cognitive abilities, and individual coping strategies, may play a more substantial role in shaping academic success (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Overall, these results contribute to the ongoing discussion about the complex interplay of social influences on academic outcomes. While peer pressure appears to have a modest but measurable impact on academic performance, parenting styles seem to have a more indirect role. This study reinforces the importance of considering both individual and environmental factors in understanding academic achievement. Future research should explore additional variables, such as personal resilience and coping mechanisms that may help explain the remaining variance in academic performance. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how these relationships evolve over time and in different academic contexts.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that peer pressure and parenting styles have nuanced relationships with academic performance among university students. While peer pressure has a small but significant negative effect on CGPA, parenting styles do not appear to have a direct impact on academic performance in this sample. The positive correlation between peer pressure and parenting styles implies that students who perceive their parenting environment more favorably are more likely to experience higher levels of peer pressure, which could affect their academic outcomes. Despite the small effect size of the predictors in this study, the results underscore the importance of considering the interplay between social and environmental factors when examining academic achievement. Although parenting styles may not directly influence academic performance, they could indirectly shape how students respond to external pressures, such as peer influence. Furthermore, the relatively low R^2 value indicates that additional variables, such as individual traits and external support systems, may play a more significant role in determining academic success.

Recommendations

Future research should further investigate the complex mechanisms through which peer pressure and parenting styles interact, particularly by exploring other potential mediators or moderators, such as personal resilience, coping strategies, and academic self-concept. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable in tracking how these relationships evolve over time and within different educational contexts, providing deeper insights into how social influences shape long-term academic trajectories.

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