

## The Correlation Between Peer Pressure and Mental Well-Being Among Senior High School Students

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### Abstract

This study is conducted to determine the correlation between peer pressure and the mental well-being of senior high school students. The primary goal of this research is to establish the correlation between the components of peer pressure and the respondents' mental well-being. A descriptive-correlational method was utilized with a total number of two hundred twenty-six (226) senior high school students participated in this study. Thus, the data were gathered through Perceived Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire (PPPS) and Well-being Questionnaire. Based on the statistical analysis, there is a significant correlation between peer pressure and mental well-being of the students ( $r=.363$ ). The study's conclusions were evaluated and discussed, and recommendations for additional research were made.

**Keywords:** Peer Pressure, Mental Well-being, Online Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, Senior High School Students,

### Introduction

The people you interact with every day have a profound effect on each other, and peer pressure is a social dynamic that people have experienced. According to Martin et al. (2017), all children are exposed to somewhat stressful situations. Still, many children are also exposed to severely stressful experiences such as violent victimization (As cited by Sutherland, 2018).

Tripathy (2018) described peer pressure as a factor that influences adolescent behavior. It can produce positive and negative outcomes. Furthermore, the researcher stated that adolescents have a place in one companion group or alternate as a source of character and motivation. They adjust to the associate gathering's opinions, convictions, and judgments, and they invest.

Peer pressure is also known to be synonymous with the teenage years of a person. Peer pressure may also have a positive aspect in such a way that the youth conform to safe and healthy behaviors influencing their academic achievements. On the other hand, it could also be associated with negativity such as related to bullying behaviors, drinking alcohol, illegal drug intake, and negative body image, which is known to be harmful to the well-being of a child or a young person. Such effects of this kind of behavior can decrease the self-confidence, self-worth of a youth which leads them into distancing themselves from their family members and even friends.

A study by Makinde, et al. (2020) states that the rates of young people who tend to get depressed are the highest among all psychological disorders in the age group and these kinds of disorders affect millions of youngsters. The research they have conducted showed that there is a direct and positive correlation between peer pressure and depression among young people. Depression also at its highest peak may lead to suicidal ideation, self-harm, and other negative and harmful behaviors. On the other hand, a study by Anniko, et al. (2019) showed that the presence of peer pressure is a possible predictor for increased stress levels, anxiety, and sleep issues of the youth. Another study by Cleofas (2019) looked at the link between student involvement, mental health, and quality of life among college students, finding that all types of social connections with school entities were linked to quality of life, and mental health was linked to quality of life. These researches presented the possible relationship between peer pressure and well-being but there are still underlying factors that are yet to be discovered on what makes them related to each other.

Peers are the people whom others socialize with and they are often similar in age, interests, or some other factors that bind them together. Peers may include the people you are friends with, work with, go to school with, or just the people you interact with. Well-being, on the other hand, is focused on assets in functioning, including positive emotions and psychological resources as their key components.

The researchers conducted this study to know whether peer pressure could be a positive factor in influencing

a person's well-being. This research is also conducted to know the possible reasons behind both positive and negative kinds of peer pressure that affect a person's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. This research may be a big contributor to the existing body of knowledge. Further recommendations could be given off to help resolve the existing issues and trends concerning the peer pressure and well-being of students, especially those in their teenage years.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis had mandated lockdown and quarantine in a span of a long time period for safety reasons. However, the consequences of peer pressure do not stop there. According to Dhir, et al. (2018), adolescents are experiencing social media fatigue due to their fear of missing out, which would then lead to anxiety and depression. Ruggieri, et al. (2021) stated that individuals had limited opportunities to interact with each other because of the social isolation that the pandemic caused, resulting them to spend more time on social media. On the other hand, peer pressure also takes part among adolescents when their need to socially distance is being prevented by the importance of peer relationships (Knopf, 2021). A study by Wilson, et al. (2020) has identified results of adolescents having a "low perceived severity of disease outcome" and their urge to not wear masks outside or in gatherings out of their desire to not be seen as "weird" or "different."

The active performance of a functioning society has a direct link on human health and well-being (Meo, et al., 2020). Multiple implications that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on individuals' mental well-being are recorded. It has been indicated that the quarantine measures in the pandemic cause severe negative implications in mental health. (Röhr, et al., 2020). A study conducted by Meo, et al. (2020), which included medical students as participants, has shown results that the quarantine brought negative consequences to their psychological health and learning behavior. Another study by Lei, et al. (2020) found an increase in anxiety and depression among their quarantined participants in southwestern China.

As studied by Anthonyraj and Sasikala (2017), peer pressure has no relationship to psychological well-being dimension of autonomy. In contrast with that, the study of Kudek et al. (2021), "Students' Mental Health Risks Regarding Susceptibility to Peer Pressure," resulted that there is a statistically significant difference in the evaluation of some peer pressure susceptibility traits as a prospective concern for mental health between students from the faculty of Pula and students from the faculty of Petrinja.

In this context, it becomes essential to study the impact of peer pressure on the student's mental well-being. Thus, the researchers chose this topic to help each student cope with peer pressure relevant to their lives.

### Research Question

This study aims to investigate the correlation between peer pressure and the well-being of senior high school students. Additionally, this paper sought to provide answer to the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between peer pressure and the mental well-being of senior high school students?

### Literature Review

Anthonyraj and Sasikala (2017) study the relationship of parental involvement and peer pressure with psychological well-being among adolescents. This study gathered 402 adolescent students, 177 male, and 225 female students. The study used the Perceived Parental Involvement Inventory (PPII) (Anthonyraj & Sasikala, 2015) and Peer Pressure Scale (PPS) (Singh & Saini, 2010) and Scales of Psychological Well-being (Ryff, 1989) as instruments. According to Pearson's correlation, there is no substantial association between parental participation and peer pressure. Peer pressure has no association with the psychological well-being feature of autonomy, it can be deduced.

Meanwhile, Chiu, et al. (2021) revealed their study that prospective associations have a significant bidirectional relationship between social anxiety and three aspects of peer functioning was discovered. Psychological prevention and intervention aimed at peer and social functioning are recommended.

However, Huppert (2020) explores the relationship between peer influence and anxiety among college students. The study gathered 41 participants and used self-report questionnaires as their instrument. The findings indicated that there was no statistically significant association between anxiety and peer influence or anxiety and drinking motivations across all subjects.

Kudek Mirošević, J., Radetić-Paić, M., and Prskalo, I. (2021) analyzed in their research studies students' mental health risks regarding susceptibility to peer pressure. The researchers gathered their data from 400 students. The instrument used was peer pressure questionnaire. There is a statistically significant

difference in how students from the faculty of Pula and students from the faculty of Petrinja perceive specific peer pressure susceptibility characteristics as a potential risk for mental health.

The study of Long, et al. (2020) *Mental Health Disorders and Adolescent Peer Relationships* stated that they are connected with the development of mental health issues in adolescents. The study was participated by 602 respondents. They used a diagnostic interview schedule for children and a friendship nomination survey to gather all the information needed.

Correspondingly, the study entitled, *Social Influence and Mental Health Among Senior High School* by Montes et al. (2019) stated there is a statistically significant association between the level of social impact and the overall state of mental health among those 247 senior high school students of Zamboanga del Norte National High School.

According to Nair (2017), The rate of peer victimization among South Asian immigrant students was significantly higher than the national average. For this study, 220 South Asian College Students of The City University of New York participated. (1) a demographic questionnaire; (2) Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire; (3) Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale; (4) Pressure to Acculturate Scale; (5) Social, Attitudinal, Familial and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale; (6) Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Family subscale; (7) Short Depression Happiness Scale; (8) and the Multigroup Multiethnic Identity Measure.

The study of Nakiberu (2019) analyzed the influence of peer pressure, self-esteem, and depression on the second-year undergraduate students at Makerere University. Peer pressure scale (Singh) (PPS), Rosenberg Self Esteem scale (RSE) was the instrument used to gather information. The study's respondents were composed of 100 students on Second Year Undergraduate students in Makerere University. It was concluded through their gathered data that a significant association between peer pressure and depression among Makerere University's second-year students. There is a considerable correlation between self-esteem and peer pressure among Makerere University's second-year students.

In a study conducted by Gao, et al. (2021), the relationship between cyber victimization, peer pressure, and adolescents' depressive symptoms is examined longitudinally. With 2,407 adolescents as participants, they concluded that cybervictimization

had a significant bidirectional relationship with both depressive symptoms and peer pressure.

Furthermore, Barberis, et al. (2021) conducted a study entitled "Healthy and binge eating behaviours: the motivational processes underlying peer pressure" where peer pressure is found to be linked to "Controlled Motivation" and "Autonomous Motivation." Out of 588 young adults with ages ranging from 18 to 24, peer pressure is also identified as a role in binge eating.

Additionally, Gallegos, et al. (2021) found that emotional detachment from parents and peer pressure have an impact on the probability of engaging in activities involving illicit substances throughout high school, especially those who experienced first use of such substances at earlier ages.

Accordingly, a study entitled "The Influence of Mental Health and Peer Pressure on Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Government and Private Schools" by Fatima and Siddiqui (2021) discovered a significant and positive correlation between mental health and academic performance for 285 senior secondary school participants and some sub samples such as 152 male students. Meanwhile, peer pressure is found to have a negative correlation to academic performance.

Arslan (2021) conducted a study entitled "School belongingness, well-being, and mental health among adolescents: exploring the role of loneliness." The study found that social inclusion and exclusion at school had a significant effect on loneliness, mental health problems, and subjective well-being. Loneliness was found to partially mediate the relationship between social inclusion and mental health problems and subjective well-being in mediation analysis. The findings indicated that loneliness is a significant mechanism explaining how school belongingness affects adolescent well-being and mental health.

A study conducted by Vinayak and Arora (2018) entitled "Social Anxiety And Peer Pressure As Predictors Of Materialism Among Adolescents" identified a positive relationship with social anxiety and peer pressure among their 300 adolescent respondents. In addition, both social anxiety and peer pressure are found to be positively related to materialism as well.

## Methodology

## Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design to determine the correlation between peer pressure and mental well-being. This assists the researchers in examining the variables and the relationship between them (Sousa et al., 2007).

## Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were senior high school students. Thus, the study utilized the convenience sampling method to gain participants that are appropriate, who meet the following criteria: (1) Filipino citizenship; (2) Senior High School student who is enrolled in the S.Y. 2021-2022; (3) At least 18 years old; and (4) Those who are interested in participating in the study and signing an informed consent.

Susceptibility to peer pressure is defined by Berndt and Ladd (1989) as the impact that peer groups have over individuals by rewarding those who follow accepted standards and penalizing those who do not (Mistry, 2019). Individuals are prone to “temptations in social context concepts,” according to Bonein and Denant-Boèmont (2013); activities such as sleeping and drinking during classes are used as an example for this statement in accordance to possible outcomes of socializing with people (Bonein & Denant-Boèmont, 2013; As cited by Moldes et al., 2019). Furthermore, peer pressure to engage in alcohol drinking is most frequently associated with teens, and young adults (Morris, et al., 2020). Mascardo, Mauricio, and Espinosa (2013) found that some adolescents yield to peer pressure because they want to be liked, fit in, or are afraid that they will be mocked if they do not comply to their peer groups while others are susceptible to peer pressure out of curiosity about their peers (Mascardo et al., 2013; As cited by Alcantara et al., 2019).

The study has a total of 226 respondents, all of whom are Filipino senior high school students who signed an informed consent to participate.

## Instrument of the Study

The researcher utilized two instruments to assess the correlation between peer pressure and the well-being of senior high school students. The questionnaire used is the Well-being Questionnaire by Bradley (1994) to identify the respondent's mental well-being. Bradley has proposed the Well-being Questionnaire to measure people's happiness. It was used in the study entitled

"Using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to Investigate the Relationship between Organizational Commitment, Happiness and Work Engagement in Service Industry" in 2018 by Azzam A. Abou-Moghli. Moreover, the questionnaire consists of four subscales that were identified and labeled Depression (six items), Anxiety (six items), Positive Well-being (six items), and Energy (four items). The measurement of the subscales can be totaled to the "Total General Well-being" subscale, which includes items 1 to 22.

However, the initial questionnaire had twenty-eight items, including six questions about Depression, six questions about Anxiety, and sixteen questions on Potential Positive Well-being. The depression and anxiety subscales were extracted from a previously published measure on a different population (Warr et al., 1985). While the current author compiled the positive well-being items. Each item is scored on a 0 to 3 Likert scale. With zero, indicating that the item did "not apply to them at all" over the past several weeks. And three indicates that it did apply "all the time." One denotes the midpoint between the two categories. To further deepen the result, subscales are scored a higher score on each subscale indicates more of the mood described by the subscale label, i.e., Depression, Anxiety, Energy, and Positive Well-being.

The reliability of the questionnaire is tested through Cronbach's alpha test ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) and is utilized in a study conducted by Abou-Moghli (2019). This will be a useful tool in investigating the respondent's mental well-being.

On the other hand, for the researcher to assess the peer pressure of the senior high school students, the questionnaire used was the Perceived Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire (PPPS). It was used in the study entitled "A Correlational Analysis of the Relationship between Perceived Peer Pressure and Decision Making in Adolescents" by Bhattacharyya et al. (2020). This instrument was developed by Palani and Mani (2016). Furthermore, the questionnaire consists of 30 questions, rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from five for (Strongly Agree), four (Agree), three (Neutral), two (Disagree), and one (Strongly Disagree). The Cronbach alpha test ( $\alpha = 0.942$ ) of the study is provided by Bhattacharyya et al. (2020) to test its reliability. The instrument will be a useful reference in determining the correlation of peer pressure in senior high school students.

## Ethical Consideration

After the researcher sought permission from their



research advisor, participants were treated with respect and dignity, adhering to the observation of ethical standards during the whole procedure. The same will be implemented strictly to guarantee that the researcher was mindful of the respondents' rights and safety throughout the data gathering process.

Furthermore, the proponent applied the provisions of R.A. No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, during the entirety of answering the instrument until its data collection, the researcher likewise sees that the respondents be kept anonymous for privacy and security purposes.

The researchers arrange a schedule to communicate with the participants to be aware of the essential goal for this study. The participants' course of action will ensure that the respondents shall be free from any external intervention and be exclusive for the two: the researcher and the respondents. The participants, on his part, ensure his willingness to participate and contribute to the study of the researchers.

Additionally, respondents were informed about their rights to refuse participation and their freedom to withdraw from the research at any point, and that their participation was voluntary. Furthermore, the criteria in the implementation of the given instrument are appropriate, and the language used in research tools is understandable both for the researcher and the respondents. Additionally, Throughout the study's data gathering, the respondents' identity and convenience were considered and kept private to guarantee their confidentiality and privacy.

### Data Gathering Procedure

For the researchers to attain the sought-after questions presented in the study on the correlation between peer pressure and the well-being of senior high school, it was required to properly follow the following set of procedures to conduct the study entirely and gather the necessary data that is needed. The survey will contain a series of questions regarding the survey. Upon the approval of the research instrument, the survey shall be validated by the research teacher.

Additionally, the researcher provided proper guidelines on how the selected participants would respond to the given questionnaire for them to have a better idea and understanding of what they would do. Due to the current health crisis caused by COVID-19, the researcher will use Google Forms to conduct the survey instead of the traditional way. After all the survey forms were collected, the researchers organized and tallied the questionnaire. Through this,

the study was performed in total consistency and fairness. The data collected from chosen students will be kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researchers conducting this study.

## Result and Discussion

### Correlation Between Peer Pressure and Mental Well-being

The goal of the study is to determine if there is a significant correlation between peer pressure and the mental well-being of students. Based on the responses of the participants, the Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (PPPS) and the Well-being Questionnaire were used.

The analysis of table 1 will reveal the probability about the respondents resulting low in peer pressure and a mean score of low to high for their mental well-being if the null hypothesis is acceptable.

Results of the statistical analysis in table 1 reveal that peer pressure and mental well-being have a significant correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Montes et al. (2019) conducted a similar study entitled "Social Influence and Mental Health Among Senior High School Students," in which 274 students of Zamboanga del Norte National High School in grades 11 and 12 are randomly chosen to be participants. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the mental health of the respondents and the level of social influence.

Table 1  
*Correlation between Peer Pressure and Mental Well-being*

	<i>Peer Pressure</i>	<i>Well-Being</i>
<i>Peer Pressure</i>	-	.362**
<i>Well-Being</i>	.362**	-

## Conclusion

Peer pressure has both positive and negative sides to it. It is especially prevalent in the lives of adolescents, when they are at an age in which they are impressionable and prone to doing undesirable habits. Along with the negative outcomes of peer pressure, the positive outcomes shall not go unnoticed as well. The findings of the study have noted that the respondents of the study have a low level of yielding to peer pressure, a high level of resistance to peer pressure, and a high level of peers encouragement. Meanwhile, they are also revealed to have a low level of mental well-being. This results to concluding that there is a significant correlation between peer pressure and mental well-being.

According to the study, the presence of peer pressure among the youth must be acknowledged by parents, educators, and academic institutions, whether it is positive or negative. Students' susceptibility to yielding and resisting peer pressure as well as their experiences with the encouragement that they receive from peers must also be recognized. In doing so, it will ultimately involve the state of their mental well-being. It is also critical that they receive guidance from experts in order to strengthen their health that will help students in their future endeavors and the improvement of quality of life. Moreover, students shall also recognize their roles in peer pressure.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are suggested: (1) For students, the researcher recommends promoting positive peer pressure outcomes in your classroom. Being aware and openly addressing what peer pressure is and how it can be used for both positive and negative effects on everyone. Moreover, it is encouraged that students should not rush themselves or yield to peer pressure in order to fit in and belong to a group of peers. Students are recommended to prioritize their mental health and should learn to rest, process things, and establish a sense of routine for them to feel better. (2) For teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators. This study would help the school administrators develop a clear and comprehensive communication strategy that addresses student concerns, most especially the mental health plan. It is advised to prepare an accumulating questionnaire survey on each student to determine solutions that may help students in coping. Furthermore, students rely on teachers as mental health first responders and critical facilitators of the students' sense of belongingness, and if possible, faculty members can be considerate and

implement practices that promote well-being, such as avoiding late-night deadlines and having to require students to pass an assignment within the day. It is also important for them to communicate to their students that during these tough situations, teachers, guidance, and school administrators are on the front lines of assisting the students. (3) For the parents and guardians, it is advised that they encourage their children and educate them about teen peer pressure, how it benefits and hinders them, and how they can build their individuality. Moreover, parents need to communicate to their children that they are open to listening to their perspectives. The researchers recommend to parents, to be able to maintain the parent-child relationship in order to instill in their children the feeling that someone is always there for them, and that their parents support and care for them.

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