Influence of Perceived Parenting Styles on Peer Pressure Among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of perceived parenting styles on peer pressure among undergraduate students, with three hundred and ninety-four (394) undergraduate students comprising 291 females and 103 males with a mean age of 21.76 and S.D of 5.07 were selected using multi-stage (cluster, simple random: by balloting and purposive) sampling techniques as participants from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Parental care scale and Peer Pressure Scale (PPS) were used for data collection, an ANOVA design was adopted, while ANOVA statistics using SPSS version 27 was used for data analysis. Results revealed that parenting styles (authoritative f= 2.310, authoritarian f= 1.320 and permissiveness f= .788 at p< .05) did not significantly influence peer influence among adolescents. The predictor variables contributed 65.7% variation to peer influence at r2= .657 and a framework of 8.6% at adjusted r2= .086. Therefore, educational institutions should develop effective methodologies to address and mitigate peer pressure within their environments.

Keywords: Perceived, Parenting, Styles, Peer, Pressure, Students, Undergraduate

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Introduction

Peer pressure denotes the phenomenon wherein individuals within the same social circle exert influence on one another, often leading to actions or decisions that the influenced party may not have chosen independently (Hartney, 2022). Peers, in this context, refer to individuals who form part of a shared social group, and peer pressure specifically addresses the impact these individuals can have on one another (Hartney, 2022). Typically, the term "peer pressure" is invoked in discussions pertaining to behaviors that deviate from socially acceptable norms, such as the experimentation with alcohol or drugs. While peer pressure is typically associated with negative behaviours, such as substance abuse or delinquency, it can also yield positive outcomes in certain circumstances. In essence, peer pressure encompasses the influence—either positive or negative—that an individual or a group of peers exerts on others (Hartney, 2022). There are six commonly used terms to delineate the various forms of peer pressure that individuals may encounter.

As indicated by its name, spoken peer pressure involves the verbal influence of one individual on another to engage in a particular behaviour. For example, a teenager may encourage their friend to smoke a cigarette by stating, "Come on, one cigarette won't hurt." On the other hand, unspoken peer pressure occurs when there is no explicit verbal attempt to influence someone, but a group norm implicitly dictates certain behaviours. In the given example, even in the absence of explicit verbal persuasion, the teenager may still feel pressured to partake in smoking because it seems to be the norm among their peers (Graupensperger et al., 2018). Direct peer pressure entails using verbal or nonverbal cues to persuade an individual to engage in a specific behaviour. For example, the situation of one teenager offering another teenager a cigarette also exemplifies direct peer pressure as the recipient must promptly decide how to respond. Conversely, indirect peer pressure does not involve singling out an individual, but rather, stems from the influence of the surrounding environment. For instance, at a party where alcohol consumption is prevalent, an individual may feel compelled to drink, even without explicit requests to do so (Morris et al., 2020). Finally, peer pressure can be categorized as either positive or negative. Positive peer pressure occurs when an individual is influenced by others to engage in beneficial or productive behaviours. Conversely, negative peer pressure involves the influence exerted on an individual to engage in activities they would not typically pursue, or that they may not wish to engage in, in order to conform to a social group. Examples of negative peer pressure include alcohol consumption, drug use, and sexual activity (Clark et al., 2020).

Peer pressure can lead individuals to engage in behaviours they would not typically pursue to gain acceptance or attention. These behaviours may include acting aggressively (particularly common among men) (Stanaland & Gaither, 2021), bullying others (Sabramani et al., 2021), substance abuse, adhering to specific dress codes, alcohol consumption, participation in vandalism or other criminal activities (Kim & Fletcher, 2018), engaging in sexual activity, physical altercations, and exclusively socializing with particular groups (Clark et al., 2020). The National Institute on Drug Abuse for Kids (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023) suggests that peer pressure or the desire to impress peers can supersede a teen or tween's aversion to taking risks. Therefore, it is important to explore whether parenting styles and peer pressure can serve as predictors of substance abuse among psychiatric patients. According to Bansal and Bansal (2022), their research revealed that the level of peer pressure experienced by individuals is contingent upon the parenting styles they are exposed to.

Parenting encompasses purposeful and nurturing activities to ensure individuals' survival and holistic development. It represents a dynamic and interdependent process of interaction between the child and the parent (Rajan & Rema, 2022). It involves the consistent display of specific, warm, and affectionate behaviours towards infants. Moreover, parenting significantly shapes the overall development of children and adolescents and profoundly influences the quality of the parent-child relationship (Rajan & Rema, 2022). The perception of parenting style delves into adults' subjective viewpoints regarding their parents' child-rearing practices, thereby shaping their overall impression of their parents' approach to raising them. Parenting styles have been conceptualized in terms of two fundamental dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness (Rajan & Rema, 2022). While various attempts have been made to conceptualize parenting styles in the past, Baumrind's classification of styles based on the level of control has been the most widely utilized (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Crittenden et al., 2014; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Consequently, parenting styles are perceived as a blend of a certain level of parental control coupled with the level of responsiveness the parent demonstrates towards the child (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Crittenden et al., 2014; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). A parenting style is not solely defined by the parent's behaviours towards the child but also encompasses the attitude the parent adopts while exhibiting these behaviours, thereby shaping the environment in which the child is raised (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Crittenden et al., 2014; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Soňa, 2017). Despite the fact that a child's attitude also influences the parent-child relationship, Baumrind was able to independently assess the behaviours of both the parent and the child, addressing the issue of bi-directionality and effectively operationalizing parenting styles separately (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Soňa, 2017). According to this conceptualization, parenting styles are categorized as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful (Soňa, 2017).

The authoritarian parenting style involves a parent assuming a directive role with strict discipline, often imposing restrictions and rejecting the child's actions (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Soňa, 2017). This approach is characterized by a black-and-white mindset, where the parent may appear to be in complete control and knowledgeable about the situation (Howe, 2011; Soňa, 2017). The authoritarian parent views the child as a responsibility and seeks to exert control over them. Additionally, an authoritarian mother may demonstrate avoidant behaviour and emotional unavailability, leading the child to become more self-reliant (Soňa, 2017). The boundaries between the mother and child are blurred, as the mother lacks the capacity for mind-mindedness, instead dictating what the child should feel rather than allowing them to experience their true emotions (Soňa, 2017). This behaviour can be detrimental to the child's self-esteem and their confidence in their own experiences (Soňa, 2017). An authoritarian parent imposes their own expectations on the child, often as a means of expressing love rather than a lack of affection towards the child (Baumrind, 1971, 1991, 1966, Soňa, 2017).

The authoritarian parenting style emphasizes the importance of perfectionist behaviours, such as strict discipline, maintaining tidiness, and assigning household duties to every family member according to set rules (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017). This approach does not prioritize promoting independence, although self-sufficiency is generally viewed as a positive trait for children. Individual freedom is often restricted and controlled within this parenting style (Soňa, 2017). While this may lead to positive outcomes such as a reduced likelihood of engaging in criminal or risky behaviours (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017), it is important to note that these effects may be attributed to the structured and supervised environment in which the child is raised. In this parenting style, parents serve as authoritative figures who maintain control and

require the child to adhere to rules without questioning them. Research indicates that children raised in this manner often possess a strong sense of right and wrong and exhibit lower levels of delinquent behaviour (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017).

Permissive parents tend to exert minimal control over their children, rarely resorting to punishment and allowing the child to make their own decisions (Baumrind, 1971, 1991, 1966, Soňa, 2017). Despite this approach, it is not entirely detrimental to the child. Permissive parents demonstrate tolerance towards their children and remain responsive, offering emotional care and support (Baumrind, 1971, 1966, Soňa, 2017). They often assume a more friend-like role rather than a position of strict authority (Baumrind, 1971, 1991, 1966, Soňa, 2017). It's important to note that while permissive parents may not enforce strict behavioural standards on their children, they are not neglectful or detached (Baumrind, 1971, 1991, 1966, MacCoby & Martin, 1983; Soňa, 2017). On the other hand, uninvolved parents do not form strong emotional attachments with their children and lack emotional support, which distinguishes them from permissive parenting (MacCoby & Martin, 1983; Soňa, 2017).

An important aspect of permissive parenting is the level of self-control exhibited by the parents. Research has indicated that permissive parents who encounter challenges with their children tend to yield to their child's demands, reflecting issues with parental self-control (Piotrowski et al., 2013). This lack of parental self-control may potentially contribute to the children's own struggles with self-regulation (Piotrowski et al., 2013). Baumrind (1966), as cited in Soňa (2017), highlighted this aspect, emphasizing that permissive parents may feel that they are relinquishing control to the child by allowing them to act without direct intervention. Consequently, this can lead to challenges for the child in understanding established boundaries, discerning what is acceptable within their household, and recognizing differences in expectations in other settings.

Authoritative parenting represents a combination of control and emotional responsiveness towards the child (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Soňa, 2017). These parents serve as positive role models for their children and are typically secure and well-adjusted adults, capable of maintaining discipline while also engaging in playful interaction (Crittenden et al., 2014; Howe, 2011; Soňa, 2017). Authoritative parents encourage independence by engaging in negotiation with the child, striking a balance between safety and exploration (Crittenden et al., 2014; Howe, 2011). They actively participate in their child's activities, providing nurturing and support without being overbearing. Additionally, they are open and transparent, offering explanations for their actions and rules.The authoritative parent serves as a secure base and safe haven, giving the child a person to rely on for regulating their emotions and help build a stable self-image (Crittendenet al., 2014; Howe, 2011). This is possible due to the parent being interested in the child, attuning to the child's needs while promoting self-assurance and a positive internal working model (Soňa, 2017).

It's important to recognize that children can indeed influence their parents, potentially leading to imbalanced reactions. In striving to adopt an authoritative parenting style, perfection is not a requirement. An authoritative parent simply needs to be sufficiently adept at fostering a secure attachment and promoting a healthy internal working model for the child (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Howe, 2011; Soňa, 2017). This approach aims to establish goal-corrected partnerships between the parent and child (Howe, 2011; Soňa, 2017), fostering open discussion and cooperation while acknowledging and respecting each other's needs (Soňa, 2017). It's a

dynamic learning process that teaches both the parent and child to consider and accommodate each other's individual needs within a mutually supportive framework (Soňa, 2017).

Children raised by authoritative parents experience a balanced environment that combines structure with freedom (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017). Effective communication is crucial in interactions between the mother and the child. An authoritative mother fosters an environment where the child is encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions about established rules and expectations, without the need for the mother to assert her position in a strict manner (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017).

Authoritative parents provide explanations for their actions and allow the child to exercise control within reasonable boundaries (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017). This approach creates a democratic household that does not rely on regulating others' actions or strict punishment for the child. Love and affection are consistently demonstrated, even in challenging situations, without being contingent upon discipline and conformity. While the authoritative parenting style emphasizes the importance of discipline, it is implemented in a tolerant manner (Baumrind, 1966; Soňa, 2017). As a result, the authoritative parenting style can be seen as a balanced approach that incorporates elements of both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles.

The issue of encouraging or controlling a child's autonomy is a common concern across the three parenting styles. When parents support their children in exploring their environment, allowing them to make mistakes and learn from them, and gradually take control over their actions while solving problems independently, these children tend to approach achievement with a positive mindset (Pomerantz et al., 2005; Soňa, 2017). Conversely, children who experience constant control from so-called helicopter parents may struggle to work independently and often lack trust in their own abilities. Their lives are so structured that they have limited opportunities to take full control over their actions, potentially leading to inhibited problem-solving abilities (Pomerantz et al., 2005; Soňa, 2017). This can significantly shape a child's self-image and have a lasting impact on their self-esteem throughout their lives (Soňa, 2017).

The theoretical framework of social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) has been adopted due to its proposition that an organization can influence individual behaviours by altering their self-identity or aspects of their self-concept that stem from their knowledge of, and emotional connection to, a particular group. According to social identity theory, an individual's social behaviour is influenced by their group membership. This influence spans a continuum from interpersonal behaviour, which is solely determined by individual characteristics and relationships between two people, to intergroup behaviour, which is determined by social category memberships that apply to more than two individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As a result, the following hypothesis are formulated:

1. Parental styles (authoritarian, permissiveness and authoritative) will significantly influence peer pressure among undergraduate students.

Method

Participants
Three hundred and ninety-four (394) undergraduate students comprising 291 females and 103 males with a mean age of 21.76 and S.D of 5.07 were selected using multi-stage (cluster, simple

random: by balloting and purposive) sampling techniques as participants from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The students were clustered according to their faculties, simple random: balloting was used to pick the faculties, while purposive sampling techniques were used to draw the participants, from the following faculties: Applied natural sciences (67), Agriculture and natural resource management (59), Environmental sciences (64), Engineering (73), Social Sciences and Humanities (69) and Law (62). **Inclusive criterion:** undergraduate students from the selected faculties. **Exclusive criterion:** reverser of the inclusive criterion.

Instrument
Two sets of instruments were used, namely,
- Baumrid (1971) Parental care scale and
- Kiran-Esen (2002) Peer Pressure Scale (PPS)

Baumrind (1971) Parental care scale
Parental care scale (PCS) the 20-item instrument designed to measure styles of parenting. YES or NO response is expected from each statement in the questionnaire. The statement were categorized into 3 groups of parenting styles (Authoritarian style, permissive style and authoritative style), and each participant gets scores in all the styles of parenting, and the style with the highest score became dominant. The scale was administered individually after establishing adequate rapport with the participants. Baumrind (1970) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Tumasi & Ankrah (2002) provided the properties for African samples .The norms are as follows; male authoritarian style=7.87, permissive style= 13.57, and Authoritative style= 7.40, female authoritarian style 7.72, permissive style =12.82 and authoritative authoritative= 7.48, and male and female are authoritative style =7.80, permissive style=7.44.Baumrind (1971) reported an internal consistency alpha coefficient of .86 on the reliability while Omoluabi (2002) obtained a concurrent validity coefficient of .73 by correlating FCS and IFR (Hudson, 1982).The norms scores were the basis for interpretation of the score of the participants, the scores higher than the norms indicate the dominance of the particular parenting style.

Kiran-Esen (2002) Peer Pressure Scale (PPS)
Peer Pressure Scale (PPS). Developed by Kiran-Esen (2002), the Peer Pressure Scale consists of 34 items. It is a five-point Likert scale and uses the ratings of "never" (1 point), "infrequently" (2 points), "sometimes" (3 points), "frequently" (4 points), "always" (5 points). The lowest possible score is 34 and the highest is 170, with higher scores indicating high levels of peer pressure. Factor analysis was applied for the scale's structure validity, and it was found that 19 out of 34 items were combined in the first factor and 15 items were combined in the second factor (Kiran-Esen, 2002). The total variance that was explained by the two factors was 40.527%. For all of the 34 items, the consistency correlation coefficient was 0.90. As a result of the test-retest method, the stability coefficient for the whole test was 0.82. In this study, the total points were used and the internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.93.

Procedures
Undergraduate students were drawn as participants from five faculties in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) using multi-stage sampling (cluster, simple random: by balloting, and availability) techniques for this study. The students were clustered according to their faculties, simple random: by balloting was used to pick the faculties while the purposive sampling technique was used to draw students from the five selected faculties.

The researchers employed a research assistants who are faculty student executives from the selected faculties to help distribute and retrieve the questionnaire. Four hundred and five (405) instruments were distributed; four hundred (400) were returned. Among the returning ones,four (4) bear multiple initials and the other two (2) were not properly responded to, which makes the numbers properly responded to be three hundred and ninety-four (394), which were used for data analysis.

Design and statistics
ANOVA design was adopted based on the researchers is looking for the influence of parental style on peer pressure among undergraduate students. Thus, the statistical test used for data analysis is ANOVA using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 software.

Results

Table I: ANOVA statistics on influence of parenting styles on peer influence

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Peer influence

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Authoritative	1129.910	6	188.318	2.310	.053
Authoritarian	753.210	7	107.601	1.320	.267
Permissiveness	316.261	7	45.180	.554	.788
Age	100.739	1	100.739	1.236	.273
Gender	12.963	1	12.963	.159	.692
authoritative * authoritarian2 * permissiveness	3374.034	43	78.466	.962	.551

a. R Squared = .657 (Adjusted R Squared = .086) at p< .05*

Table I above shows that parenting styles (authoritative f= 2.310, authoritarian f= 1.320 and permissiveness f= .788 at p< .05) did not significantly influence peer influence among adolescents. The demographic variables of age f= 1.236 and gender f= .159 also did not influence peer influence among adolescents. The predictor variables contributed 65.7% variation to peer influence at r^2= .657 and a framework of 8.6% at adjusted r^2= .086

Discussion
The hypothesis tested which stated that parenting styles (authoritarian, permissiveness and authoritative) will significantly influence peer pressure was not found, hence the hypothesis was not accepted. The findings indicate that perceived parenting styles do not have a direct influence on peer pressure among undergraduate students. Instead, it is suggested that other unexplored factors not addressed in this study may have contributed to the lack of significant influence observed. These results imply that students experience peer pressure not solely due to their upbringing, but rather because of their desire to belong and their reluctance to appear vulnerable. It suggests that parenting styles may not be the primary determinant of the peer pressure experienced by students.

The study's outcome suggests that students' need for peer acceptance may have influenced the results, indicating that experiencing peer pressure is not solely a result of developmental background, but rather a choice made by students seeking gratification through their decisions.

Implications of the findings

The findings were in congruity with social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) which was adopted as a theoretical framework due to its proposition that an organization can influence individual behaviours by altering their self-identity or aspects of their self-concept that stem from their knowledge of, and emotional connection to, a particular group. According to social identity theory, an individual's social behaviour is influenced by their group membership. This influence spans a continuum from interpersonal behaviour, which is solely determined by individual characteristics and relationships between two people, to intergroup behaviour, which is determined by social category memberships that apply to more than two individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This shows that peer pressure is more of an institutional activity than parenting style issues.

The result obtained has added to literature that can be cited by future researchers.

The study results indicate that perceived parenting styles do not have a significant influence on peer pressure among undergraduate students. As such, it is recommended that therapists refrain from incorporating parenting styles into their interventions for undergraduate students dealing with peer pressure. Instead, educational institutions should develop effective methodologies to address and mitigate peer pressure within their environments. Furthermore, parents and caregivers should provide their wards with strategies to resist and overcome peer pressure when confronted with such challenges.

Limitations of the study

Some factors militated against this study, one of such is the sampled population. Sampling only one institution during the exam reduces the number of participants, more students would have participated assuming more than one university was sampled.

The sampling techniques also affected the number of participants, the more students would have been sampled assuming a suitable sampling technique was adopted.

Some demographic variables were left unanswered by the participants which led to the researcher, not including the outcome in the study, demographics such as religious affiliation, parental working status et al. These control variables would have helped to give this study direction.

Suggestion for further study

Future researchers should consider sampling populations from different institutions and also consider carrying this study outside the examination period, this will give students the opportunity to participate in the research.

A suitable sampling technique should be considered by future researchers because this will give room for the selection of a larger population.

The future researcher should consider arranging the demographic variables in such a way that the participants will not leave them unattended.

Summary and conclusion

The study investigated the influence of perceived parenting styles on peer pressure among undergraduate students, the findings revealed that perceived parenting styles did not influence peer pressure among undergraduate students, hence educational institutions should develop effective methodologies to address and mitigate peer pressure within their environments.

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