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## GENERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFORMITY AND PEERS PRESSURE AMONG FORM 3 STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN JOHOR BAHRU

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### Abstract

As adolescence phase is a potentially critical period for an easy origination of risk and problem behavior. So, they often influenced by peers pressure which leads to conformity. Besides, the past studies are limited to show the relationship between peers pressure and conformity among adolescence. The main objective of this study the main objective of the research was to identify the general relationship between the conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru who are also categorized as adolescents. Apart from that, this research also aims to find the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru. Instrument used in this study is online survey form. The respondents were 103 secondary school secondary students. From 103 respondents 58 students are female and 45 students were male. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. The findings of the study indicate that Conformity scores lower than their scores in the Peers Pressure. None of the students have scores in the Conformity scores greater than their scores in the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores equal to their scores in the Peers Pressure. Based on the study, The Peers Pressure gave a mean score of 9.29 with a standard deviation of 1.035. The Conformity gave a mean score of 1.63 with a standard deviation of 0.840. The mean for the Peers Pressure is higher than the Conformity. Findings showed that there is significant influence between Peers Pressure and conformity.

Keywords: Conformity, Peers pressure, Adolescence, Sampling technique

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**Introduction:**

Conformity is the most general concept and refers to any change in behavior caused by another person or group; the individual acted in some way because of influence from others (Breckler, Olson, & Wiggins, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. Conformity is limited to changes in behavior caused by other people. It does not refer to effects of other people on internal concepts like attitudes or beliefs.

A peer group is a social group whose members have interests, social positions, and age in common. This is where children can escape supervision and learn to form relationships on their own (Boundless Sociology). The influence of the peer group typically peaks during adolescence. However, peer groups generally only affect short term interests unlike the family, which has long term influence. Teenagers encouraging their friends to smoke, drink, or engage in other risky behavior is an example of peer pressure. Peer pressure can also work in positive ways by encouraging teenagers to practice, study, or engage in other positive behaviors. Among peers, children learn to form relationships on their own.

The term "peer pressure" is often used to describe instances where an individual feels indirectly pressured into changing their behavior to match that of their peers (Clasen & Brown, 1987)<sup>2</sup>. In spite of the often negative connotations of the term, peer pressure can be used positively.

Conformity in adolescence illustrates the shaping of actions and beliefs to align with the opinions and behaviors of others. Kathleen M. Cauley & Donna Jovanovich (2010)<sup>3</sup> stated that typically students in middle school, feel pressure to conform during the middle-adolescent years. Teens unable to develop a sense of autonomy to deal with peer pressures in middle school often continue with the struggle to create self-esteem and confidence in high school. Adults can help teenagers deal with the challenges by talking with teens and discussing the alternatives to conforming. Thus, in this research we had studied the general relationship between peer pressure and conformity among secondary school students.

**Background Problem**

The origination of conformist behavior is supported by a number of personality and social factors. One of them is the size of the group. According to Richard J. Pech (2001)<sup>4</sup>, the bigger the group, the stronger the group pressure on an individual; this results in an increase in conformist behavior. The common characteristic of the different conceptions of conformity is that to these process precedents a conflict among the inner strengths of the personality who induce the individual to act according his own opinion and the strengths of the group who force the person to act according to the expectation of the group.

Moreover, "peers pressure" seems to be widely acknowledged as a highly influential component of contemporary adolescence. The term is bandied about by textbook authors,

journalists, parents, educators, and even adolescence themselves. Yet social scientific research into just how and how much, peers pressure impinges upon teenagers is sparse. (Bradford, 1982). The present study attempted to appraise how peers pressure affects individuals' behavior during the secondary school years.

As adolescence phase is a potentially critical period for an easy origination of risk and problem behavior. The goal of adolescent development is to move toward a more mature sense of self and purpose. This statement even has similar justification from Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2000), adolescence often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, studies, and worldviews. Adolescents learn how to establish and maintain healthy relationships, share intimacy comfortably and to understand abstract ideas and develop their own moral viewpoints. Therefore, they said to be will often influenced by peer's pressure which leads to conformity.

Subsequently, this research is specifically analyses conformity and peers pressure among both females and males of form 3 students who categorized as adolescents. The main objective of this research was to take close look on the general relationship between conformity and peers pressure and to analyses how this conformity takes place due to peer's pressure. This is due to the researchers had identified that most of the form 3 students had experienced this conformity and they more influenced by the peer's pressure and follow whatever they were exposed to.

### **Objective and Research Question**

The main objective of the research was to identify the general relationship between the conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru who are also categorized as adolescents. Apart from that, this research also aims to find the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru.

Thus, the research question is what is the relationship between conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru? Even what is the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru is another research question which involves in this study indirectly.

### **Litrature Review**

Conformity among teenagers may take a back seat to peers pressure. It is often overlooked and may be deemed unimportant. However, this aspect of behavior speaks volumes. It is found that a complexity in adolescent conformity that bears elaboration in future research as seen in Brown et al (1986)<sup>5</sup> research study. The perceptions of peer's pressure, peer's conformity dispositions, and self-reported behavior among adolescents. Two samples, consisting of a total of 1,027 6th–12th graders from separate communities, were given measures of peer's conformity dispositions,

perceptions of peer's pressure, and self-reported frequency of behavior concerning 2 major aspects of early adolescent life: peer's involvement (degree of socializing with friends) and misconduct (drug/alcohol use, sexual intercourse, and minor delinquent behavior). Results indicate that Ss perceived less peers pressure toward misconduct than peer's involvement and also were comparatively less willing to follow peers in misconduct.

Middle adolescence is an especially significant period for the development of the capacity to stand up for what one believes and resist the pressures of one's peers to do otherwise. Likewise, Steinberg et al. (2007)<sup>6</sup> found that age differences and developmental differences in resistance to peers influence. Children is actually entering middle adolescent in life become aware for the first time of the other people around them and realize the importance of perception in their interactions. Peer conformity in young people is most pronounced with respect to style, taste, appearance, ideology, and values.(West.T, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Peer pressure is commonly associated with episodes of adolescent risk taking because these activities commonly occur in the company of peers.

Thus, the study was assessed using a new self-report instrument that separates susceptibility to peers pressure from willingness to engage in antisocial activity. Data from four ethnically and socioeconomically diverse samples comprising more than 3,600 males and females between the ages of 10 and 30 were pooled from one longitudinal and two cross-sectional studies. And the results show that across all demographic groups, resistance to peers influences increases linearly between ages 14 and 18. In contrast, there is little evidence for growth in this capacity between ages 10 and 14 or between 18 and 30 in which it states that middle adolescence is remarkable period which urge to influence by peers.

However, Kornieko et al. (2016) had studied the peers influence on gender identity development in adolescence. For instance, one person might tell another person that a particular activity is appropriate for one gender or the other such as "Dolls are for girls" or "No boys allowed in our fort". Or, it can happen indirectly. For example, the more time children spend time with peers the more similar they become to one another in interests, behaviours, and interactional styles. Similarly in the study, they explains about gender identity (GI) in which develops through a dialectic process of personal reflection and with input from the social environment during adolescents.

They also illustrated that peers play an important role in the socialization of gendered behavior. Thus, the goal of the study was to examine peer's influences on four aspects of adolescents' GI in racially and ethnically diverse 7th- and 8th-grade students (N = 670; 49.5% boys, M age = 12.64) using a longitudinal social network modeling approach. The study then hypothesized stronger peers influence effects on between-gender dimensions of GI (intergroup bias and felt pressure for gender conformity) than on within-gender dimensions of GI (typicality and contentedness).It was found significant peers influence on between-gender components of GI– intergroup bias as well as felt pressure for gender conformity among adolescents. In contrast, within-gender components of GI showed no evidence of peers influence.

Likewise, as found on a study entitled ‘Adolescents’ Conformity to Their Peers’ Pro-Alcohol and Anti-Alcohol Norms: The Power of Popularity’ by Hanneka et al (2012)<sup>8</sup> adolescents adapted their willingness to drink substantially to the pro-alcohol as well as anti-alcohol (norms of these peers. Here in the study about adolescents, Hanneka et al explains that adolescents are more influenced by high-status than low-status peers. Interestingly, the anti-alcohol norms of the popular peers seemed most influential in that adolescents were less willing to drink when they were confronted with the anti-alcohol norms of popular peers. Additionally, the adolescents internalized these anti-alcohol norms.

This even supported by Janette B. Benson (2019)<sup>9</sup>. Peer influence has predominantly negative connotations and received most attention in the context of problem behaviors during adolescence. Indeed, extant research has shown that hanging out with the wrong crowd may increase deviant behaviors through processes of social reinforcement or “peer contagion” (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011)<sup>10</sup>. For example, in videotaped interactions between delinquent adolescent males, rule-breaking behaviors were socially reinforced through laughter, and this was predictive of greater delinquent behavior 2 years later (Dishion, Spracklen, Andrews, & Patterson, 2000)<sup>11</sup>.

Importantly however, the very same social learning process reinforced normative and prosocial talk such as nonrule-breaking topics such as school, money, family, and peer-related issues in non delinquent adolescent dyads. This highlights the benefits of hanging out with the right crowd and shows that imitation and social reinforcement in the peer context can also shape positive development. This section provides an overview of behavioral research that has examined peer socialization of prosocial behaviors during adolescence, as well as the application of peer processes in interventions to promote positive adjustment outcomes.

Furthermore, identity-related processes and interactional conformity pressures are important mechanisms reinforcing the gendering of cultural tastes. This was examined by Susan Lagaert, Mieke & Henk (2017)<sup>12</sup> by indicating that women are more interested in highbrow culture than men are. Current explanations for women’s higher involvement in highbrow cultural activities primarily focus on adults; overemphasize class-, work- and cultural capital-related explanations; and do not uncover the identity-related and interactional mechanisms behind the gendering of taste during socialization. In this paper the researchers explains gender identity theory and a “doing gender” perspective to understand cultural taste differences between male and female adolescents. Using multilevel analyses on a random sample of 5227 Flemish 7th graders (M age = 12.18) who completed a survey in their classrooms, this study found that higher gender typicality (i.e., identification as a typical male or female) and higher pressure to conform to gender stereotypes are associated with slightly higher interests in arts-, theatre-, and literature-related activities for young women, but with much lower highbrow interests for young men.

Preschool children are subject to peers pressure, indicating sensitivity to peers as a primary social reference group already during the preschool years. As demonstrated Daniel and Michael

(2011)<sup>13</sup> study, children often made their judgments conform to those of 3 peers, who had made obviously erroneous but unanimous public judgments right before them. This study had revealed that, children did not change their “real” judgment of the situation, but only their public expression of it. Santee & Maslach (1982)<sup>14</sup> had found that, the relationship of self-concept to dissent and conformity is stronger when peers opinion was unanimous than when it was divided. These researchers were involved 118 undergraduates to express their opinions about 20 scenarios that described problems in human relations. From a self-presentational perspective, private self-consciousness, individuation, and self-esteem were predicted to be directly related to dissent and inversely related to conformity. Public self-consciousness, social anxiety, shyness, and self-monitoring were predicted to be directly related to conformity and inversely related to dissent. And the results were support the findings with the exception of the self-monitoring variable.

### Conceptual Framework

In this study, we are trying to find the general relationship between the conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru. The conceptual framework is shown in below (Figure 1).

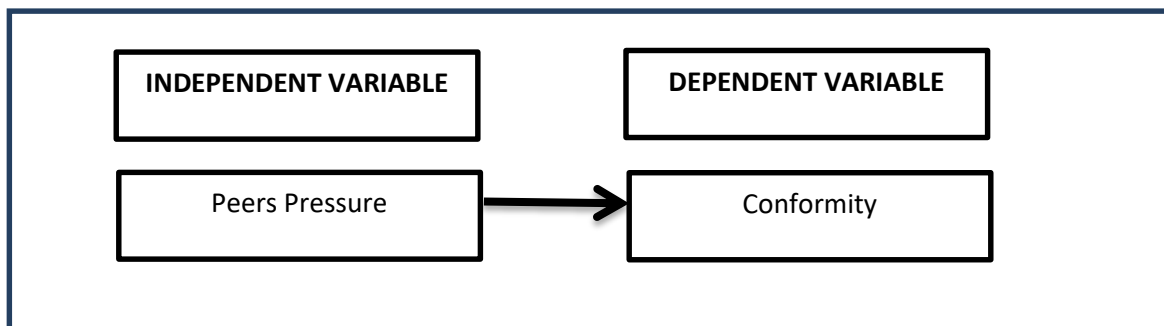


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

### Research design

The research design applied in this study is quantitative in correlate by using online survey form. Only cross-sectional design was used in this survey form. This cross sectional design was used to identify the conformity and peers pressure among form 3 students. It has the advantage of collecting information in a shorter time frame. In the order to achieve aim of the study a quantitative approach using questionnaire will be taken to gather the data. In order to collect data to analyses peers pressure and conformity among adolescent, online survey forms are given.



## **Research sampling**

The population of respondent consist of adolescent who studying in secondary School. Out of huge amount of school in Johor Bahru district secondary school selected. 103 secondary school secondary students were selected as sample in this study. From 103 respondents 58 students are female and 45 students were male and they are all in their 15 years old. The reason to choose Form 3 students as respondents is because this aged is the average aged in secondary school Malaysia.

There are several strategies for probability-based sampling which include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and multistage sampling. In this study, simple random sampling is used since it draws randomly from the wider population whereby each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected.

## **Instrument Research**

This survey form consists of 11 items. Each item consists of two options to choose by respondent. 11 item describe the example of peer pressure and conformity among form 3 students. and each item have 2 possible answer choices. This survey form divided into 2 parts. First part of it consists of background information of respondent such as age and gender. The second part measures the main two construct such as peers pressure and conformity.

This instrument was adopt from the journal of Measuring Peer Pressure, Popularity, and Conformity in Adolescent Boys and Girls: Predicting School Performance, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Abuse. This research done by Darcy A. Santor, Deanna Messervey, and Vivek Kusumakar showed that all measures constructed for the study were internally consistent.

## **Proposed data analysis**

In this study, primary data was collected from the questionnaire distributed via online to the secondary school students. The data were analyzed to fulfill the objectives of the study. The statistical analysis is performed by using the SPSS Program. Mean and standard deviation for each item is also calculated to determine the average mean and is distribution between variables. The Shapiro-Wilk Test is used to identify the significant differences between the peer pressure and conformity scores.

## **Findings and Dicussion**

There have two research question was answering as below. The first research question is : What is the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor

Bahru? And the second is: What is the relationship between conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru?

### Research Question 1: Level of Conformity and Peers Pressure among Form 3 Students

This section will address the first part of the Research Question, which is: What is the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru?

This question requires analysis of the questionnaire that students' answering based on their opinion and experiences. Therefore, the questionnaire used to measure their peers pressure and conformity based on the situation given.

The statistical analysis is performed by using the SPSS Program with alpha 0.05 towards the dependent variables – the scores in the Peers Pressure and Conformity. The Peers Pressure and Conformity both contain ratio data. Therefore, it is advised to perform the parametric test in analyzing the significance of these two variables. However, the first requirement of the parametric test is that the data from both variables must be normal. Thus, the normality of the mean of the Peers Pressure and Conformity is tested using the Shapiro-Wilk Test. This test was run with the following hypotheses:

- a. Null hypothesis: The population is normally distributed
- b. Alternative hypothesis: The population is not normally distributed

Table 1 shows that the significance of the Peers Pressure and Conformity is 0.000. This means that both the Peers Pressure and Conformity are non-normally distributed (significance is lower than 0.05). For that reason, the non-parametric test of the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test is used to investigate whether there is a significance difference between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores.

Table 1

*The Shapiro-Wilk Test of the Peers Pressure and Conformity*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Peers Pressure	.799	103	.000
Conformity	.848	103	.000

The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test (Wilcoxon Test) is a non-parametric alternative to the Paired Sample T-Test, which compares the scores of two groups. This test was run with the following hypotheses:



- a. Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the Peers Pressure scores and Conformity scores.
- b. Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference between the Peers Pressure scores and Conformity scores.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistic for the Peers Pressure and Conformity. There were 103 students (N) in each condition. The Peers Pressure gave a mean score of 9.29 with a standard deviation of 1.035. The Conformity gave a mean score of 1.63 with a standard deviation of 0.840. The mean for the Peers Pressure is higher than the Conformity. It means, on average, that the scores in the Peers Pressure is higher than the scores in the Conformity. The standard deviation of Conformity is smaller than Peers Pressure. This means that the scores of Conformity are scattered nearer from the mean than the scores of Peers Pressure. Furthermore, the median for the Peers Pressure was 10% while it was 1% for the Conformity.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of the Peers Pressure and Conformity*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Peers Pressure	103	9.29	1.035	5	11	9.00	10.00	10.00
Conformity	103	1.63	.840	0	4	1.00	1.00	2.00

Based on the table 2, the total score for each respondent was computed by adding the responses of each item. This will give the minimum and maximum total score of 1 (chosen a x11) and 11 (chosen bx11) respectively or otherwise. Total score was then divided into three levels namely, high, medium and low as the basic categories. Converting the data to a single number makes it easy to draw comparisons and contrast across of the different groups. At the same time, the total number of respondents in each group was reported. The table 3 shows as the total score of item was recode into three levels as follow.

Table 3

*The total score of item was recode into three levels*

Total score	Levels of conformity / peers pressure
1-4	Low
5-8	Medium
9-11	High

Based on the table 2 and 3, we can conclude that the data shows the high level of peer pressures which is 9.29 and low conformity which is 1.63 among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru.

Next, Table 4 shows the ranks for Wilcoxon Test, where “a” refers to the number of observations or number of students (N) with Conformity scores lower than their scores in the Peers Pressure. “b” refers to the N with Conformity scores greater than their scores in the Peers Pressure and “c” refers to the N with Conformity scores equal to their scores in the Peers Pressure. This means that 103 students have scores in Conformity scores lower than their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Negative Ranks row). None of the students have scores in the Conformity scores greater than their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Positive Ranks row) and Conformity scores equal to their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Ties row). This means that all of the students scored higher in their Post Test (Negative Ranks).

Table 4

*Ranks for the Pre Test and Post Test*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Conformity - Peers Pressure	Negative Ranks	103 <sup>a</sup>	52.00	5356.00
	Positive Ranks	0 <sup>b</sup>	.00	.00
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	103		

Finally, Table 5 gives the values of the Wilcoxon Test, where “b” refers the value based on the positive ranks. The asymptotic significant value, 0.000, is lower than the value of alpha, 0.05. Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis. This means that the Conformity scores have a significant

difference from the Peers Pressure scores ( $z = -8.963$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These results suggest that there is significant difference in students Peers Pressure scores and Conformity scores.

Table 5

*Test Statistics*

	Conformity - Peers Pressure
Z	-8.963 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

### Research Question 2: Relationship Between Conformity And Peers Pressure Among Form 3 Students

This section will address the second part of Research Question, which is: What is the relationship between conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru?

Table 1 shows that the significance of the Peers Pressure and Conformity is 0.000. This means that both the Peers Pressure and Conformity are non-normally distributed (significance is lower than 0.05). For that reason, the Spearman's Test is a non-parametric alternative to the Pearman's Test, which correlation between the scores of two group are non-normally distributed (significance is lower than 0.05). This test was run with the following hypothesis:

- a. Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores.
- b. Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores.

Next, Table 6 shows the correlation for Spearman's Test, where "\*\*\*" refers to the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). There were 103 students (N) in each condition. There have correlation between the Peers Pressure and Conformity ( $r = -0.986$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) which is higher than significant value 0.005. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores. Besides that,  $r = -0.986$ , it shows that there is negatively strong relationship between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores.

Table 6

*Correlation of the Peers Pressure and Conformity*

			Peers Pressure	Conformity
Spearman's rho	Peers Pressure	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.986**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
		N	103	103
	Conformity	Correlation Coefficient	-.986**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
		N	103	103

## Conclusions

In conclusion, this study emphasized on the peer pressure and conformity among form 3 students. Base on the finding of the study, there is a significant difference between the Peers Pressure scores and Conformity scores. It's had identified that most of the form 3 students had experienced this conformity and they more influenced by the peers pressure. This research can conclude that the data shows the high level of peer pressures and low conformity among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru. The peer pressure and peer conformity can be reliably measured in young adolescent boys and girls and that adequate reliability can be obtained with substantially fewer items than contained in existing measures (Brown et al., 1986)<sup>15</sup>. This study identified that those 103 students have scores in Conformity scores lower than their scores in the Peers Pressure. This is because peers pressure seems to be widely acknowledged as a highly influential component of contemporary adolescence. The goal of adolescent development is to move toward a more mature sense of self and purpose. None of the students have scores in the Conformity scores greater than their scores in the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores equal to their scores in the Peers Pressure. The peer pressure and peer conformity measures constructed for the present study were related to a variety of risk behaviors and psychosocial difficulties, including substance use, risk-taking behavior, delinquency, dating attitudes, and sexual behavior, which is consistent with what other studies have found (Brown et al., 1986)<sup>15</sup>

Findings from this study show the level of conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru. that 103 students have scores in Conformity scores lower than their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Negative Ranks row). None of the students have scores in the Conformity scores greater than their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Positive Ranks row) and Conformity scores equal to their scores in the Peers Pressure (the Ties row). This means that all of the students scored higher in their Post Test (Negative Ranks). The relationship between conformity and peers pressure among Form 3 students of secondary School in Johor Bahru shows that there is a significant relationship between the Peers Pressure and Conformity scores.

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