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CORRELATES OF SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS ON PEER PRESSURE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE

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Abstract

Young people's decisions, actions and relationships with others are greatly influenced by peer pressure as it has a significant impact on university students' social and academic lives. One effective way to help students navigate peer pressure could be group counselling. This study examined the influence of socio-cultural factors on peer pressure among undergraduates at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). A descriptive survey design was utilized for the study, the population comprised of all undergraduates of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) and data was collected from 291 students across ten colleges using a structured questionnaire adapted from peer pressure scale by Palani and Mani (2016) and Ward and Kennedy's (1999) socio-cultural adaptation scale (SCAS) with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .73$ and $.79$, respectively. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics (for socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents), while correlation, and regression analyses answered research questions one and two respectively. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between socio-cultural factors (family structure, religious beliefs, community values, cultural expectations) and peer pressure. Regression analysis showed that all the sociocultural factors jointly accounted for 51.8% of the variance in peer pressure, with religious beliefs ($\beta = -0.113$) emerging as the most potent predictor.

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The study recommended among others that institutions should facilitate peer mentorship and support groups that provide alternative positive social influences, reducing the dominance of negative peer pressure.

Keywords: Peer Pressure, Family structure, Religious beliefs, Community values and Cultural expectations.

Introduction

University life is a time of growth, learning, and self-discovery, but it also comes with its fair share of challenges, one of the most significant being peer pressure. Peer pressure is a powerful force in the lives of young people, shaping their choices, behaviours, and interactions with others. For university students, it plays a crucial role in their academic and social experiences. While peer influence can be positive motivating students to work harder, take on leadership roles, or engage in healthy activities it can also push individuals toward risky behaviours like substance abuse, academic dishonesty, or negative social habits (Aluko, Daramola & Omodehin, 2024).

Peer plays a very important role in the development of an individual's life (Scholte & Van Aken, 2020). Managing peer pressure effectively requires strategic interventions, including sociocultural factors and group counselling approaches. Peer pressure is influenced by factors such as social media, school, culture, and family expectations, making it challenging for students to balance academic and social responsibilities (Abbasi, 2025). The struggle between social acceptance and academic success can lead to anxiety, stress, and declining performance (Kedia & Kumar, 2025). Guidance counsellors must not only address peer influence but also help students manage the emotional and psychological impact of these pressures (Cobbina, 2025).

Beyond academics and behaviour, guidance counsellors shape students' personal development by fostering self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and decision-making skills (Ayeni et al., 2024). These skills empower students to resist negative influences, which is especially important in diverse school settings. Tailoring interventions to students' unique needs ensures counselling services remain inclusive and effective (Sakız & Jencius, 2024). The success of guidance counselling in addressing peer pressure depends on collaboration between students, parents, teachers and counsellors. Schools must provide a supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking help without fear of judgment. This study will examine the impact of some socio cultural factors like family structure, religious beliefs, community values, cultural expectations on peer pressure among undergraduates at FUNAAB, offering recommendations to strengthen partnerships between school staff, families and counsellors.

Family structure plays a critical role in shaping adolescents' and young adults' behaviour and their susceptibility to peer influence. A stable and supportive family provides emotional security, guidance and value orientation, which reduces the tendency to succumb to negative peer pressure.

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Conversely, students from disrupted or less cohesive family structures (e.g., single-parent or divorced homes) may lack adequate parental supervision and are more likely to seek acceptance from peers, making them vulnerable to risky behaviours (Mahardika & Abisano, 2024). Research shows that family cohesion, communication, and parental monitoring act as protective factors against deviant peer influence (Booth & Shaw, 2023). Religious beliefs often serve as a moral compass that influences decision-making and behaviour. Students with strong religious values are

less likely to engage in behaviours promoted by negative peer groups, as their actions are guided by internalized doctrines and ethical standards (Estrada et al., 2019). Religious affiliation and participation in faith-based communities provide social support and accountability, which reduces the likelihood of yielding to peer pressure (Brock, 2022). However, weak or conflicting religious beliefs may increase vulnerability to external influences.

The community environment, including neighbourhood norms and collective values, significantly affects how students respond to peer influence. Communities that uphold pro-social values, discipline and collective responsibility help reduce susceptibility to negative peer pressure by reinforcing acceptable behaviours (Hibbin, 2024). Conversely, communities characterized by weak social norms, high crime rates, or permissiveness tend to expose youths to risky peer behaviours (Wang et al., 2019). Peer conformity often reflects the dominant values of the surrounding community. Cultural expectations dictate roles, behaviours and social standards, which influence how individuals interact with peers. In collectivist cultures, where group harmony is prioritized, students may experience pressure to conform to cultural norms or peer group standards, even if they conflict with personal values (Okunola & Ifyess, 2025). At the same time, strong cultural expectations emphasizing respect, responsibility and self-control can buffer against negative peer influence (Koekkoek, 2024). Therefore, cultural norms can both protect or amplify peer pressure depending on the nature of the expectations.

Despite growing scholarly attention to peer pressure among undergraduates, most existing studies have focused primarily on individual-level determinants such as personality traits, self-esteem, and emotional competence, with limited empirical attention to sociocultural correlates. Where socio-cultural factors have been examined, they are often treated broadly without disaggregating specific dimensions such as family structure, religious beliefs, community values, and cultural expectations. Moreover, few studies have contextualized these variables within public universities in Southwest Nigeria, particularly among undergraduates of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. This creates a contextual and conceptual gap in understanding how distinct socio-cultural factors uniquely and collectively influence peer pressure experiences in this population. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining the correlates of selected socio-cultural factors on peer pressure among undergraduates in this setting.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between socio-cultural factors and peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates?

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2. What is the joint and relative contributions of socio-cultural factors to the prediction of peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates?

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate as it enables the researcher to collect data on socio-cultural factors, group counselling, and peer pressure

among students at FUNAAB. The survey method allows for the collection of primary data from respondents, providing a detailed understanding of their experiences and perspectives regarding peer pressure and the effectiveness of group counselling interventions. The population of this study consists of 21,255 undergraduates at the Federal University of, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). The study focuses on students across various faculties, departments and academic levels to ensure abroad representation not experiences with peer pressure and counselling interventions. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents from all the 10 colleges/faculties within the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) to ensure equal representation across board. In all, a total of 300 respondents responded to the survey, but only 291 questionnaires were successfully completed. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire and it comprise do effuse sections.

Section A consists of the socio economic characteristic of the respondent (age, gender, faculty, etc). Section B consists of 12 items Socio-cultural Factors and Peer Pressure (questions on family background, cultural expectations, religious beliefs, and social media influence) scale adapted from a 25-item peer pressure questionnaire by Palani and Mani (2016) while section C is the Challenges and limitations of sociocultural approaches and counselling adapted directly from Ward and Kennedy's (1999) socio-cultural adaptation scale (SCAS). The above scales were pilot tested with 20 respondents from University of Ilorin to ensure its psychometric integrity with careful consideration of respondents of the same demography i.e Undergraduates. The reliability coefficients are as follows: $\alpha = .73$ and $.79$ for sections B and C respectively.

For the study's data collection, the questionnaire was administered to the students of FUNAAB electronically (Google form) for wider accessibility. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analyses include: Descriptive statistics was used to summarize demographic characteristics of the respondents while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis were also used to answer the two research questions.

Result

Socio demographic Characteristics

Table1: *Socio economic Characteristics of Respondents (N=291)*

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
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Age Range	15–20	148	50.86%
	21–25	114	39.18%
	26–30	29	9.96%
Gender	Male	146	50.2%
	Female	145	49.8%
Marital Status	Single	273	93.8%
	Married	15	5.2%
	Divorced	3	1.0%
Academic Level	100L	64	22.0%
	200L	60	20.6%
	300L	53	18.2%
	400L	82	28.1%
	500L	38	13.1%
College	COLFHEC	30	10.3%
	COLBIOS	29	10.0%
	COLERM	29	10.0%
	COLPHYS	29	10.0%
	COLAMRUD	29	10.0%
	COLANIM	29	10.0%
	COLENG	29	10.0%
	COLVET	29	10.0%
	COLPLANT	29	10.0%
	COLEND	29	10.0%
Religion	Christianity	144	49.5%
	Islam	146	50.2%
	Traditional	1	0.3%
Family Background	Nuclear	154	52.8%
	Extended	73	25.1%
	Single Parent	65	22.3%
Parental Education	No Formal Education	3	1.0%
	Primary	11	3.8%
	Secondary	108	37.1%
	Tertiary	170	58.4%
Household Income Level	Low	11	3.8%
	Middle	258	88.7%
	High	22	7.6%

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The majority of respondents (50.86%) fall within the 15–20 age bracket, followed by 39.18% in the 21–25 age group, and only 9.96% are between 26–30 years. This indicates a relatively youthful and homogeneous undergraduate population. This aligns with typical university demographics, where most students are in their late teens or early twenties. The gender distribution is nearly equal, with males constituting 50.2% and females 49.8% of the sample. This balance suggests a gender-inclusive educational environment, minimizing gender bias in the interpretation of

findings.

An overwhelming 93.8% of the respondents are single, with 5.2% married and a minimal 1.0% divorced. This reflects the dominant status of undergraduates being young and largely unmarried, which is expected in a university setting. Marital status can influence time use, financial responsibilities, and mental health, which may affect study behaviour or wellness practices. Respondents are fairly distributed across academic levels, with the highest representation from 400 level (28.1%), followed by 100 level (22.0%) and 200 level (20.6%). The lowest representation is from 500 level (13.1%), likely due to program structures that end in four years or a smaller cohort in final year specializations. This distribution allows for the analysis of trends across different stages of academic progression.

The respondents for this study were drawn from ten academic colleges at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), ensuring a broad representation of disciplinary perspectives. As shown in the demographic data, each college contributed nearly equally to the total sample size of 291 students. Specifically, COLFHE had the highest number of respondents at 30 students (10.3%), while all other colleges COLBIOS, COLERM, COLPHYS, COLAMRUD, COLANIM, COLENG, COLVET, COLPLANT, and COLENDIS each had 29 respondents, accounting for 10.0% of the sample respectively.

More than half of the respondents (52.8%) come from nuclear families, while 25.1% are from extended families and 22.3% from single-parent homes. This suggests that while nuclear family structures dominate, a significant portion experiences diverse household dynamics, which may affect emotional support, financial capacity, and educational focus. A significant majority of fathers (58.4%) and mothers (42.3%) attained tertiary education, while 37.1% of fathers and 49.8% of mothers stopped at secondary education. Very few parents had no formal education (fathers: 1.0%; mothers: 1.7%). This suggests a generally well-educated parental background, which could correlate with the academic performance and aspirations of the respondents.

Most respondents (88.7%) come from middle-income households, while 7.6% belong to high-income and only 3.8% to low-income brackets. This middle-class dominance may reflect broader economic trends among urban or semi-urban Nigerian undergraduates and could influence access to resources, academic tools, and health care services.

Research Question One: What is the relationship between socio-cultural factors and peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates?

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Table 2: PPMC summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between socio-cultural factors, group counselling and peer pressure.

Variables	N	Mean x	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Peer Pressure	291	45.05	3.92	1.00				
Family Structure		10.71	1.89	-.157*	1.00			

Religious Belief	3.40	.88	-.277**	.283**	1.00		
Community Values	10.00	1.89	-.315**	.541**	.278**	1.00	
Cultural Expectations	8.82	2.01	-.210**	.437**	.184**	.460*	1.00

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 2 revealed the pattern of relationship between socio-cultural factors (family structure, religious beliefs, community values, and cultural expectations) and peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates; peer pressure reveals a significant negative relationship with family structure $r(289) = -0.157$, $p < 0.05$, religious beliefs $r(289) = -0.277$, $p < 0.05$, community values $r(289) = -0.315$, $p < 0.05$ and cultural expectations $r(289) = -0.210$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, this indicates that there is a significant negative relationship between socio-cultural factors and peer pressure which is an indication that as socio-cultural factors increases peer pressure.

Research Question Two: What is the joint and relative contributions of socio-cultural factors and group counselling to the prediction of peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates?

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Table 3: *Summary of regression for the joint and relative contributions of sociocultural factors and group counselling to the prediction of peer pressure.*

R =.725^a

R Square =.526

Adjusted R square =.518

Std. Error =2.72122

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2349.285	4	587.25	79.305	.000 ^b
	Residual	2117.838	286	7.405		
	Total	4467.123	290			
Models		Unstandardized Coefficients	standardized	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.	(Constant)	61.392	1.204		51.011	.000
	Family Structure	.188	.105	.091	1.790	.075
	Religious Belief	-.506	.194	-.113	-2.607	.010
	Community Values	-.182	.109	-.087	-1.668	.096
	Cultural Expectations	-.127	.092	-.065	-1.380	.169

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4 revealed significant joint and relative contributions of socio cultural factors (family structure, religious beliefs, community values, and cultural expectations) to the prediction of peer pressure. When combined, the outcome produced multiple R-square values of 0.526 and multiple regressions coefficient of $R = 0.725$. The adjusted R square ($\text{Adj.}R^2=.518$) value indicates that the combined effect of socio cultural factors (family structure, religious beliefs, community values, and cultural expectations) explained 51.8% variation in the prediction of peer pressure. The additional elements that contribute to the residual variation are outside the purview of this investigation. The ANOVA result of the regression analysis indicates that socio cultural factors had a significant impact on the peer pressure of University undergraduates, $F_{(4,286)} = 79.305$, $P<0.05$.

Regarding the relative contribution, table 7 also revealed that two (family structure and group counselling) factors are potent predictors of peer pressure. The most potent factor was religious

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beliefs ($\beta = -.113$, $t = -2.607$, $P<0.05$). This implies that religious beliefs decreases the potency of peer pressure among undergraduates by 11.3%.

Discussion of findings

Research question one examined the relationship between socio-cultural factors and peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates. It was found that there is a significant negative relationship between socio-cultural factors and peer pressure. The negative correlations with family structure, religious beliefs, and community values suggest that strong socio-cultural foundations act as protective factors against peer pressure. This supports the Protective Factor Model of Resilience (Avci, 2025), which posits that cultural and family-based values buffer individuals from risky behaviours. Therefore, students who uphold cultural values and have family support are less likely to succumb to negative peer influence.

Research question two examined the joint and relative contributions of socio-cultural factors to the prediction of peer pressure among FUNAAB undergraduates. The regression analyses in table 4 revealed that socio-cultural factors jointly explained 51.8% of the variance in peer pressure (Adjusted $R^2 = .518$). This is a substantial proportion, indicating that these factors are major determinants of peer pressure management. Among the predictors, religious beliefs ($\beta = -.113$, $p < 0.05$) emerged as the strongest contributor. These findings corroborate studies by Oduaran and Agberotimi (2021) and Protogerou et al., (2020), who found that counselling interventions significantly reduce risk-taking behaviours among undergraduates. Interestingly, family structure, community values, and cultural expectations were not statistically significant predictors when all variables were considered together. This may be due to overlapping influences or the dominant effect of group counselling in shaping behavioural outcomes. Nevertheless, their negative correlation with peer pressure indicates that they still play a protective role.

Conclusion

The study concluded that both socio-cultural factors significantly contribute to managing peer pressure among undergraduates. While family structure, cultural values, and religious beliefs provide a strong foundation for positive behavioural choices, religious factors emerged as the most influential factor in reducing susceptibility to peer pressure. Culturally sensitive counselling sessions were particularly effective in promoting self-esteem, improving interpersonal skills, and fostering resilience against negative influences. These findings affirm the importance of integrating counselling interventions with students' socio-cultural realities to enhance their overall well-being and academic success.

Recommendations

Based on there search findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Counsellors should undergo continuous training on cultural and religious sensitivity to ensure that interventions respect students' values and beliefs, thereby increasing

participation and effectiveness.

2. Higher institutions should develop initiatives that encourage parental involvement and community support to reinforce positive values that protect students against negative peer influences.

3. Elements of peer pressure management and emotional intelligence development should be incorporated into general studies or life skills courses to reach a wider student population.
4. Universities should establish systems to periodically assess the effectiveness of counselling interventions, using both qualitative and quantitative measures, to ensure continuous improvement and also facilitate peer mentorship and support groups that provide alternative positive social influences, reducing the dominance of negative peer pressure.

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HARNESSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN COUNSELING: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS