

The Impact of Peer Pressure on Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem

Sana	BS Student, Department of Psychology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP Email: sanashabir1331@gmail.com
Ali Abdullah	BS Student, Department of Psychology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP Email: aliabdullahsher19@gmail.com
Muhammad Hamza Khan	BS Student, Department of Psychology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP Email: hamzahussain.k001@gmail.com

ISSN: 3006-6549 (ISSN-L)

ISSN: 3006-6557 (Online)

ISSN: 3006-6549 (Print)

Vol. 2, No. 1 (2024)

Pages: 45 – 52

Key Words

University Students, Peer Pressure, Psychological Well-being, Self-esteem

Corresponding Author:

Sana

Email: sanashabir1331@gmail.com

Abstract: Peer pressure and its effect on the self-esteem and psychological well-being are complementary characteristics fundamental for the university life. The study also evaluated the association between peer pressure and psychological health, as well as the relationship between peer pressure and self-esteem. Ultimately, the study seeks to determine the relationship between psychological well-being and self-esteem. The data was collected from 200 students of Abdul Wali Khan University students from both main and garden campus fitting to age group from 18-28 years using convenient sampling method. Participant were asked to complete the peer pressure scale (PP), Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS) by Carol D. Ryff (2007) and self-esteem scale (RSE) to assess their effects on students. IBM SPSS version.26 was used for statistical analysis. The results showed an adverse association among peer pressure and student psychological well-being as well as among peer pressure and self-esteem. Moreover a significant positive relationship among self-esteem and psychological well-being was determined.

Introduction

Throughout life, people socialize through the ongoing process of being influenced by others in their social circle. The adolescent years are perhaps among the most important and are characterized by amazing and quick transformations. During this time, adults mostly communicate with their peers. When it comes to making decisions and forming morals and values, children who are growing into preteens and adolescences frequently depend more on their friends than on their families (Dusek, 1987). The idea of peer-influence at this time is connected to a process of joint influence recognized as peer contagion, when peers gradually become more alike in terms of many attributes. Peer connections become more significant during adolescence and are essential to the development of closeness, societal skills, and personality-concept in adolescents. Adolescents develop their identity and self-concept through their interactions with important persons. Teenagers may choose renounce many of the conventions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors they have previously learnt in order to fit in with their classmates.

People in a peer group are those who have the same age or social standing, peer group is the first setting outside of the family in which a student who is physically or mentally impaired tries to be accepted and acknowledged (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005). An operational definition of peer pressure is that Peer pressure is the psychological impact of peers' expectations on an individual's attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle, (Brown et al., 1986). Adults are subject to peer pressure when they receive the aims, opinions, and actions of their peers (Costello & Hope, 2016). Having

unpleasant interactions with others, including having disagreements in friendships, is linked to a drop in psychological well-being (Holder & Coleman, 2007) kids and teens who have no friends at all often report feeling depressed, alone, rejected by their peers, and low on self-worth. (Kiuru et al., 2008).

According to Rosenberg (in Mr.uk, 2006), a person's attitude towards a certain item known as oneself—the self—can be either positive or negative. According to this definition, self-esteem is well-defined as the mindset or defiance that underpins one's sense of human importance or worth, or one's sense of worth that underpins feelings (Nissen, 2006). The effect of the peer learning climate is well-defined by the quantity and the grace of support that adolescents obtain from the peer group and this is determined by components of the peer environment, like the dynamic of communication and actual connections, assertiveness towards worth, hopes, etc. (Chaw, 2022).

Peer pressure in university setting

There are many different operational definitions of peer pressure. Diverse writers hold varying views about the definition of peer pressure or have highlighted distinct aspects. According to Kiran-Esen in 2012, Ngee Sim & Fen Koh in 2003 peer pressure is actually the same as peer influence in all cases. They define peer pressure as pushing someone to do something they don't want to do and pointing out that pressure can be both direct and indirect, with indirect pressure causing the victim to be unaware that they are being influenced by their peers (Kiran-Esen, 2012). Peer pressure is the effect that a group of peers has on a person, causing them to change their principles and ideas in order to blend in additionally peers can exert direct pressure on other students by requesting that they do something, or they might taunt or gently prod them into adopting the peer's conduct (Liem & Martin, 2011).

A concern shared by many students has been how to acclimatize to college life through many students find that transitioning to a university can be challenging hence, there is evident variation among students in their capacity to manage and adapt to obstacles with certain students encountering far greater difficulties than others similarly evidence suggests, for instance, that students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds frequently struggle more to adjust when it comes to finding purpose in their lives and choosing a future vocation (Zwerling, 1992) Effective social and academic environment adapters have a far higher chance of sticking with their studies and eventually graduating (Tinto., 1994).

Peers effect people in a variety of ways; Peer influences can take three different forms, according to (Vieira & Grantham, 2011). It may be Direct Peer Pressure (which occurs when a student or group of students really advises another student on what to do or what is appropriate. In this kind of peer influences, a student peers confront and give him or her clear instructions on what to do). Or it may be Indirect Peer Pressure (This type of peer pressure is more often visual than verbal. After being exposed to this sort of harmful conduct, a kid who hangs around with other students who smoke or use drugs may come to believe that it is okay). Furthermore the third form is Individual peer pressure (This refers to a student making excessive efforts to blend in and acting in ways that other students are).

Psychological well-being

People who are in good psychological health are better able to assess their life positively (Diener et al, 2000). The notion of psychological well-being is exceedingly broad and intricate, The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines well-being as having all aspects of one's physical, mental, and social health rather than just the absence of disease or impairment. Two aspects of psychological well-being can be measured: good aspects like competence, happiness, and life fulfilment, as well as adverse aspects like depression, nervousness, and stress(Mechanic & Bradburn, 1970).

Adolescents who yield to peer pressure and use drugs or alcohol are more likely to experience anxiety and sadness. The researchers highlighted the cyclical nature of this phenomena, emphasising that hazardous behaviour is sparked by peer pressure and subsequently exacerbates psychological problems, producing a vicious cycle that may be difficult to overcome (Prinstein & La Greca, 2004). According to recent data, behavioral issues, anxiety, and depression are the most

common reasons of psychological disorders, and self-destruction has been identified as a leading cause of mortality for early people worldwide (Guthold et al., 2021).

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is sensitive to peer pressure during adolescence people form an attitude towards anything they are aware of or encounter in life and these attitudes end up being among the most crucial factors in determining a person's feelings, thoughts, and actions similarly Individuals start to form attitudes towards others and towards their own uniqueness (Aktug et al., 2020). self-esteem is the amount to which one feels good about oneself or the degree to which others like or detest oneself, Morris Rosenberg is among the pioneers who first presented the concept of self-esteem in this manner, which subsequently served as the foundation for the advancement of ideas and studies on the subject up to the present day (Rosenberg, Petersen 1965). Victims may integrate negative beliefs into their self-perception, which lowers their self-esteem and causes them to withdraw socially from their friends (Salmivalli et al., 1999). According to studies by Grills and Ollendick (2002), teenagers who have poor self-esteem are more expected to be victims than those who have high self-esteem (Grills & Ollendick, 2002). This predictive relationship may be explained by the fact that adolescents who experience low self-esteem draw attention from their peers negatively, which in turn leads to specific bullying behaviors from others {(Limber et al., 2014); (Overbeek et al., 2010); (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999)}

Adolescents who feel a lot of peer pressure are more expected to show signs of worry and sadness, An individual's self-esteem and general psychological well-being can be seriously harmed by the pressure to live up to peer standards (Santor et al., 2000). Substance use is linked to a number of detrimental mental health consequences, such as elevated stress, anxiety, and depression, and a study by Simons-Morton and Farhat (2010) indicated that peer pressure strongly predicted substance use. The harmful consequences of peer pressure on psychological health are highlighted by this maladaptive coping strategy (Simons-Morton & Farhat, 2010).

People who have trouble with peer pressure as adolescents may continue to deal with similar challenges as adults, which can lead to chronic stress and a advanced risk of mental well-being illnesses. The significance of overcoming peer pressure and cultivating resilience in order to enhance psychological well-being throughout one's life is shown by this persistent effect (Yang et al., 2018). A study conducted by Allen examined how social dynamics and early peer pressure affect later psychological. They discovered that those who were exposed to a lot of harmful peer pressure as teenagers were more likely to encounter psychological problems as adults (ALLEN et al., 2006).

According to a noteworthy study conducted in 2000 by Santor, Messervey, and Kusumakar, teenagers who were subjected to a lot of peer pressure had poorer self-esteem and greater anxiety and depression levels. This study made clear how peer pressure frequently causes people to act in ways that go against their morals and convictions, which causes them to feel less valuable and internally conflicted(Santor et al., 2000). According to the study, teenagers who are subjected to peer pressure may feel inadequate and self-conscious as a result of having to comply to group standards that may not align with their own beliefs and identities (Prinstein et al., 2010).

Teenagers' levels of self-esteem and indirect peer pressure have been, proven to negatively correlate. Lower ranks of self-esteem have been associated in the past to increased vulnerability to peer pressure (Bukowski, 2008) and a higher likelihood of engagement in low-membership gangs (Dmitrieva et al., 2014). As a result, it implies that lower values would be associated with low self-esteem.

Study has shown a link between psychological well-being and a number of significant facets of human functioning, including meaningful living, self-competence, and good relationships. Those who have a strong sense of their own worth exhibit less stress, anxiety, sadness, and depressive symptoms and more positive emotions like optimism and contentment. (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Research has shown a positive association among university students' self-esteem and lifetime satisfaction, highlighting the significance of having a higher self-esteem for improving life satisfaction (Shraddhesh Kumar Tiwari et al., 2016) as well as for adolescents' psychological fitness, well-being, and optimistic functioning (Orth et al., 2012,).

Many people believe that adults actively shape their worldview via experiences throughout life. Peer pressure, which has both good and bad impacts on a person's lifestyle and psychological health, is also recognised to be associated with a person's adolescent years. These detrimental consequences of such behaviour might make a young person feel less confident and valuable, which makes them distance themselves from peers and family. Since peer pressure is a growing issue among college students and has an impact on those students' psychological well-being and self-esteem, it is imperative to determine how it influences students' psychological health and adult self-esteem.

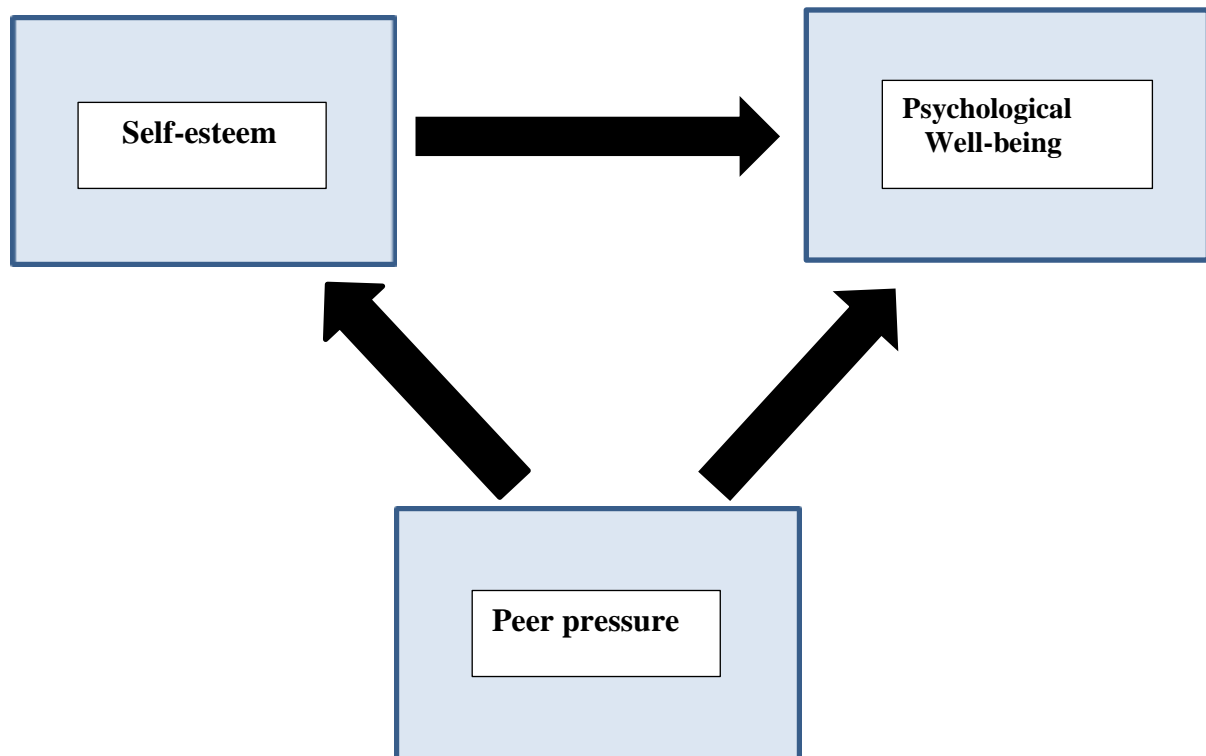
This research will assist youngsters in efficiently designing therapies to assist individuals in handling social pressures; it is critical to understand the effect of peer pressure on psychological health and self-esteem. This study fills a substantial gap in existing research by contributing to a better understanding of the elements that influence psychological well-being and self-esteem. The study's findings will benefit students by identifying support mechanisms that will help them regulate their self-esteem and improve their psychological health. This study will provide light on the specific issue and aid the scholarly community. The study's findings will assist the Department of Education better grasp the issue and put it in the curriculum to teach pupils how to resist peer pressure.

Research Objectives

This study seeks to close the gaps by examining the following.

1. To investigate the connection between university students' psychological well-being and peer pressure.
2. To investigate how peer pressure affects self-esteem of university students'.
3. To research how university students' psychological well-being and self-esteem are related.

Theoretical framework



Hypothesis

1. There will be negative relationship between peer pressure and psychological well-being.
2. There will be negative relationship between peer pressure and self-esteem.
3. There will be positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being.

Methodology

The research adopted a quantitative correlational cross-sectional design, capturing variables at a single moment. A sample of 200 students from Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan was selected through convenience sampling, encompassing both undergraduate and postgraduate students across various departments. While this method facilitated easy participant access, it might lack the representativeness of more rigorous sampling techniques. Data collection utilized multiple instruments, notably a five-point Likert scale. Demographic data, including age, gender, marital status, and education level, were obtained through a comprehensive questionnaire. The Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale, a well-validated tool, measured students' well-being, whereas peer influence was assessed using the Peer Pressure Scale by Sunil Saini and Sandeep Singh. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale evaluated participants' self-esteem. To ensure candid responses, participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Ethical considerations included securing informed consent and permitting participants to withdraw at any stage. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, with reliability assessed through Cronbach's alpha and variable relationships evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results

Demographic Profile of the Students

Data were gathered using a convenient sampling technique, with 200 students participating in the questionnaire. 76 (38%) and 124 (62%) of the respondents' 200 total answers on maturity were from female respondents. In addition, maturity 7 (4% of respondents) were married and 193 (96%) were single; 194 (97%) held a bachelor's degree, 5 (2% of respondents) held a master's degree, and 1 (1% of respondents) held an M.Phil. or over the position of education. The maximum number of respondents, 64 (32%), were between the ages of 18 and 22 years, 128 (64%), and 8 (4%), were age above 27. Additionally, as this study involves evaluating AWKUM students, students from several departments were involved in the assessment.

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	124	62%
Female	76	38%
Age		
18-22	64	32%
23-27	128	64%
28 & above	08	4%
Marital Status		
Married	07	04%
Unmarried	193	96%
Education		
Bachelor	194	97%
Master	05	2%
MPhil	01	1%

N= 200 , n = number of samples ;%=percentage of samples

Table 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3
PP	1		
PW	-.573**	1	
SE	-.318**	.535**	1

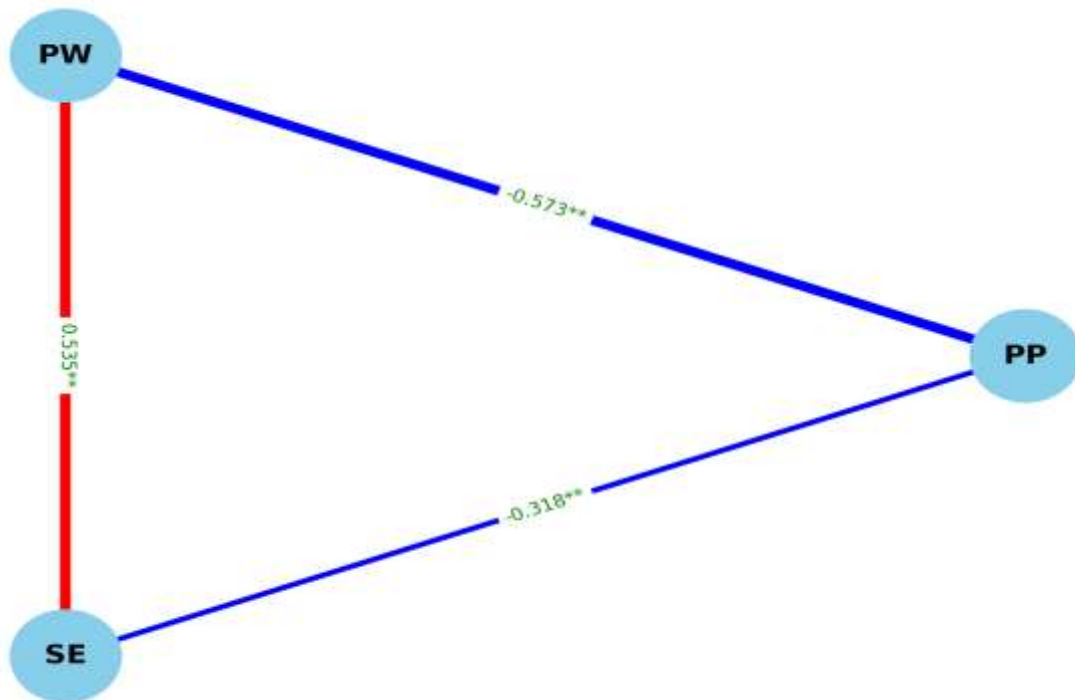
Note. N=200, **P<0.01. (PP) Peer pressure, (PW) Psychological Well-being, (SE) Self-esteem

Matrix Layout: The table is structured as a correlation medium. The diagonal (from top left to bottom right) naturally lists the variables again or is left blank because the correlation of a variable with itself is always 1. Each cell in the matrix displays the correlation coefficient among the variables indicated by the consistent row and column.

Correlation Coefficients:

- The correlation coefficient between PP (Peer Pressure) and PW (Psychological Well-being) is -0.573 . The negative sign indicates an inverse relationship, meaning as peer pressure increases, psychological well-being tends to decrease.
- The correlation between PP (Peer Pressure) and SE (Self-esteem) is -0.318 , which also indicates an inverse relationship.
- The correlation between PW (Psychological Well-being) and SE (Self-esteem) is 0.535 . This positive correlation suggests that higher levels of psychological well-being are connected with advanced ranks of self-esteem.

Network Graph of Variable Correlations



Here is a network graph depicting the correlations between Peer Pressure (PP), Psychological Well-being (PW), and Self-esteem (SE):

- **Nodes** represent the variables, each labeled accordingly.
- **Edges** (the lines connecting the nodes) illustrate the correlations, where:
- The **color** of the edge specifies the direction of the correlation (blue for negative, red for positive).
- The **thickness** of the edge reflects the size of the correlation (thicker lines represent stronger correlations).

Discussion

The Present study was aimed to investigate the impact of peer pressure on psychological well-being and self-Esteem including university students. The study population composed of university students of Abdul Wali Khan University mardan including both main and garden campuses. A total of 2000 students take part in the questionnaire, and data were collected through a convenient sampling method. The likert scale was utilized for this study. The analysis included descriptive statistics for the study variables, correlation analysis to control the command and administration of the connection between the variables. The results indicate several significant findings. The consequences of the study showed strong negative correlation between peer pressure and psychological well-being confirming hypothesis number (H1).The discovery are compatible with the study manage by (Brown & Larson, 2009) their study explore that people who were more vulnerable to peer pressure in their adolescence had poorer psychological adjustment and poorer well-being (Brown & Larson, 2009). Furthermore the findings of this study is also parallel to the study (Santor et al., 2000) suggesting

that Adolescents who feel a lot of peer pressure are more expected to reveal signs of nervousness and sadness, An individual's self-esteem and general psychological well-being can be seriously harmed by the pressure to live up to peer standards. The results also indicate negative relationships between peer pressure and self-Esteem, suggesting that increase in one may lead to decrease in the other confirming hypothesis number (H2), similar to a study conducted by Prinstein (2010) which results found that adolescents who had negative peer effects saw significant decreases in their self-esteem over time. According to the study, teenagers who are subjected to peer pressure may feel inadequate and self-conscious as a result of having to comply to group standards that may not align with their own beliefs and identities (Prinstein et al., 2010). The results reveal a positive correlation between psychological well-being and self-esteem suggesting that increase in one may lead to increase in the other approving hypothesis (H3) , Consistent with earlier research by (Shraddhesh Kumar Tiwari et al., 2016), (Orth et al., 2011), which shows that people who feel good about themselves typically have positive views about their existence and also boldly approach and overcome their issues. Furthermore as those with greater self-esteem typically report happier lives and more favorable emotional states (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Some research has specified that A great level of Self-esteem is commonly linked with Psychological well-being (Rosenberg et al., 1995) and joy (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Conclusion

Throughout adolescence and the early stages of adulthood, peer pressure is a universal social phenomenon that shapes people's attitudes, behaviours, and decisions. Negative impact of peer pressure on psychological well-being and self-esteem is an important concern, mainly during adolescence. From the current study, it is established that one of the main contributing factors to an individual's mental health issues is excessive levels of peer pressure and poor self-esteem. Peer pressure have hostile harmful effect on person's self-esteem as well as psychological wellbeing. According to recent study, those who experience high levels of peer pressure and poor self-esteem are more likely to experience psychological discomfort. Peer pressure affects them and they often have weaker self-esteem. Peer influence results in negative psychological well-being and low self-esteem in the individual. Due to their low self-worth and self-esteem, they engage in deviant behaviours that have an impact on their psychological well-being. The findings show that self-esteem and psychological well-being are positively correlated. The results reveal many elements that impact university students' psychological health and sense of self.

References

- Brown, B. B., Clasen, D. R., & Eicher, S. A. (1986). Perceptions of peer pressure, peer conformity dispositions, and self-reported behavior among adolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(4), 521-530. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.22.4.521>
- Holder, M. D., & Coleman, B. (2007). The contribution of social relationships to children's happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10(3), 329-349. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-007-9083-0>
- Kiuru, N., Aunola, K., Nurmi, J., Leskinen, E., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2008). Peer group influence and selection in adolescents' school burnout: A longitudinal study. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 54(1), 23-55. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mpq.2008.0008>
- Nissen, M. E. (2006). Assessing knowledge-flow performance. *Harnessing Knowledge Dynamics*, 93-123. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59140-773-7.ch006>
- Rosenberg, M., Schooler, C., Schoenbach, C., & Rosenberg, F. (1995). Global self-esteem and specific self-esteem: Different concepts, different outcomes. *American Sociological Review*, 60(1), 141. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096350>
- Zwerling, L. S. (1992). First-generation adult students: In search of safe havens. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 1992(80), 45-54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.36819928006>
- Tinto, V. (1994). Leaving college. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226922461.001.0001>
- Vieira, E. T., & Grantham, S. (2011). University students setting goals in the context of autonomy, self-efficacy and important goal-related task engagement. *Educational Psychology*, 31(2), 141-156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2010.536508>
- Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Arndt, J., & Schimel, J. (2004). Why do people need self-

- esteem? A theoretical and empirical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(3), 435-468. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.3.435>
- Orth, U., Robins, R. W., & Widaman, K. F. (2012). Life-span development of self-esteem and its effects on important life outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1271-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025558>
- Santor, D. A., Messervey, D., & Kusumakar, V. (2000). Measuring peer pressure, popularity, and conformity in adolescent boys and girls: Predicting school performance, sexual attitudes, and substance abuse. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29(2), 163-182. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1005152515264>
- Grills, A. E., & Ollendick, T. H. (2002). Peer victimization, global self-worth, and anxiety in middle school children. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 31(1), 59-68. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15374424jccp3101_08
- Simons-Morton, B. G., & Farhat, T. (2010). Recent findings on peer group influences on adolescent smoking. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 31(4), 191-208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-010-0220-x>
- Limber, S. P., Riese, J., Snyder, M. J., & Olweus, D. (2014). The Olweus bullying prevention program. *Youth Suicide and Bullying*, 203-215. <https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780199950706.003.0017>
- Overbeek, G., Zeevalkink, H., Vermulst, A., & Scholte, R. H. (2010). Peer victimization, self-esteem, and ego resilience types in adolescents: A prospective analysis of person-context interactions. *Social Development*, 19(2), 270-284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00535.x>