



## **Contributions of Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure to Antisocial Behaviour among Undergraduates, Gender as Moderator**

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### *Abstract*

*This study examined the moderating role of gender in the contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates in Ogun State-owned universities. Survey research design was adopted and a sample of 300 students was selected from the two universities through the stratified sampling technique. Instruments used for data collection were Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ), Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ), and Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ). Four hypotheses were formulated and tested by means of multiple regression analysis and Andrew Hayes' process model at the .05 significance level. Results revealed significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure ( $F(2, 270) = 69.287, p < .05$ ) and significant relative contributions of peer pressure ( $Beta = .337, t = 9.709, p < .05$ ) and self-esteem ( $Beta = -.283, t = 7.402, p < .05$ ) to antisocial behaviour, gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour ( $t = .7446, p > .05$ ), and but significantly moderate the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour ( $t = 7.3569, p < .05$ ) among the undergraduates. It was recommended, among others, adequate monitoring of wards by the parents and guardians.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Esteem, Peer Pressure, Antisocial Behaviour, Gender, Undergraduates.*

### **Introduction**

Various types of undesirable behaviour are increasingly being exhibited and portrayed by the youths which make rational people to wonder whether values still exist in the Nigerian societies. Many youths engage in antisocial behaviour and practices which are noticeable even on the streets. They also demonstrated it in form of assault, sexual promiscuity,

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deviance, lack of respect for elders, fraud, abortion, truancy, theft, thuggery, and rebellion. Wachikwu and Ibegbunam (2016) mentioned lying, duplicity, insidiousness, brutality, savagery, indiscrimination, animosity, harassing, disregard for elderly ones, ruthlessness, resistance, arsonist tendencies, falsifying, strife, ravenousness, fabrication, alcohol abuse, and absconding from home as few examples of antisocial behaviour. Remarking on this, Gerry-Eze and Eze (2016) considered antisocial behaviour as acts which are against social norms, degenerate conduct among young people or practices that are in opposition to socially acknowledged good conduct. These include cheating for assessment, vandalism, substance misuse, smoking, hostility, harassing, late coming, truancy among others. Antisocial behaviour among young people is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. It has been there since days of old and various societies have devised various ways of punishing offending youths in order to discourage the behaviour. According to Okobiah (2014), all communities have their own value systems and what is considered normal among them is expected to be practiced by all members of those communities.

Self-esteem is another variable that may influence the exhibition of antisocial behaviour in young adults. Self-esteem is indicated as a very crucial factor responsible for the repetition of aggression in young adults. Self-esteem is the total assessment of persons in either a good or bad way by himself/herself (Nnaebue & Nwakolo, 2017). It can likewise be characterized to be simply the degree to which a person trusts himself/herself to be skillful and deserving of living. Self-esteem connotes the general assessment of oneself in either a right or wrong manner. According to Fareeda and Jahan (2014), persons having low self-esteem set up a more fragile connection with the society and consequently, the individual does not fit in with social standards and norms, thereby increasing social maladjustment and antisocial behaviour.

It has been generally accepted that possessing positive self-esteem is good for well-being (Wing, Christopher, Cheng, Wong & Rochele, 2016). Psychologists for the most part respect having a solid feeling of confidence as an indication of self-understanding and self-acknowledgment which permits people to see themselves as well as other people similarly, accomplishing individual coordination and building up one's potential adequately, just as having a better standard for self-viability (Tabassam & Grainger, 2012). There are ways in which young adults can gain from positive self-esteem. Respect could be earned from loved ones (family, teachers, peers.) which can help young adults develop a good sense of self-worth. This also enables them to face challenges and setbacks head-on. If a healthy self-esteem cannot be derived from generally acceptable methods, then self-worth begins to drop gradually. This may force an individual to begin to derive his or her self-esteem through other methods which are unhealthy such as deviant behaviour. Thus, low sense of self-esteem has been considered as a boost for antisocial behaviour (Becker & Luthar, 2015).

Peer pressure is another variable that may influence the manifestation of antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. A peer can be described as a person of age or one regularly associates with and who is likely to influence one's behaviour (Hardcastle, 2012). Peer groups enable individuals to acquire new attitudes and behaviours accepted in the group

(Aderanti, 2007). According to Hartney (2011), peer pressure is the influence playmates, friends, and age mates have on one another. It is indicated by affective pull of individual members of a peer group towards conforming to the norms of the group (Weinfied, 2010). Jones (2010) states that peer pressure refers to the force exerted by people of similar age bracket or social level on one another. In fact, peer pressure has been blamed for risky behaviours common among youths such as rebelliousness, drug abuse, and sexual risk behaviours. On the other hand, peer pressure may lead to an increase in desirable behaviours and attitudes when youths are influenced to imbibe prosocial behaviours such as fostering a culture of studiousness and consideration for others (Kellie, 2013).

Moreover, peers encourage imitation, influencing others to engage in an act that they ordinarily would not have even imagined. A youth who associates with peers who engage in alcohol abuse, smoking, stealing, cultism, assault, prostitution, and viciousness will likely imitates and assimilates these antisocial behaviours. Monahan, Steinberg and Cauffman (2017) aver that relationship with irresponsible companions and being vulnerable to peer pressure are significant components that influence juvenile wrongdoing or delinquency. These scholars found that partnering or affiliating with perverted friends and peers was significantly related to a person's engagement in wrongdoing. Furthermore, peer pressure may influence a person's behaviour and personality traits. This study therefore observed that peer pressure may be one of the causes of antisocial behavior among the undergraduates.

Apart from peer pressure, gender may also play a significant role in the manifestation of antisocial behaviours among undergraduates. Gender refers to cluster of socially stereotyped functions and responsibilities, character attributes, mentalities, principles, relative power, acts, impact that society credits to both genders on a differential premise (Nnaebue & Nwakolo, 2017). Manifestation of antisocial behaviour traits in line with sex stereotypes can be observed in among the undergraduates. Youth male by their nature may display increasingly physical and verbal animosity such as thuggery and heated exchange of words, while anti-social behaviour in female may be relatively unobtrusive, backhanded and social, including abortion and manipulation of others. In fact, young ladies compared to their male counterpart are also involved in aggressive behaviours such as kidnapping, assault, and brutality (Nwanneka & Akande, 2015). Thus, it becomes necessary to examine the moderating role of gender in the contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviours. Anti-social behaviour may be life threatening and caused some people to lose their lives while some have dropped out of school. Measures taken so far to address this problem seem not to have yielded the desired result. Hence, this study seeks to examine the moderating roles of gender in the contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates in Ogun State campuses.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be no significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates.
2. There will be no significant relative contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates.

3. There will be no significant moderation in the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour by gender among undergraduates.
4. There will be no significant moderation in the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour by gender among undergraduates.

## **Method**

The descriptive survey research design was of the *ex post facto* type was adopted in this study. The study population comprised of all undergraduates in the two Ogun State-owned universities. A sample of 300 undergraduates participated in this study. The participants were selected through the proportional stratified random sampling technique.

### *Instruments*

The instruments used for data collection in this study were developed by the researchers and included Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ), Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ), and Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ).

#### *Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ)*

The Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ) was used to measure the self-esteem of the participants. It contains 13 items structured on a 5-point Likert scale response format ranging from 1 = “hardly ever” to 5 = “almost all of the time”. Sample items on the scale are: *Overall, I feel good about my abilities compared to others; I feel confident in my abilities to achieve the things I set my mind to.* The reliability coefficient of (0.83) was obtained for the instrument.

#### *Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ)*

The Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ) was used to measure the peer group influence of the participants. It contains 17 items structured on a 5 – point Likert scale with response ranging from 1 = “never” to 5 = “nearly all the time”. Items on the scale include; *my friends and I share problems with each other; I like to make new friends.* The reliability coefficient of (0.77) was obtained for the instrument.

#### *Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ)*

The Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ) was used to measure the antisocial behavior of the participants. It is structured on a 5 – point Likert scale with response ranging from 1 = “never” to 5 = “nearly all the time”. Items on the scale include: *I tried to hurt someone’s feelings; Got into fights more than the average person.* The reliability coefficient of (0.74) was obtained for the instrument.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

Three hundred copies of the instruments were administered on the participants after their consents had been sought through the assistance of four trained research assistants.

*Method of Data Analysis*

The data collected were scored, collated, and analyzed using appropriate statistics. Specifically, the first and second hypotheses were tested by means of multiple regression analysis, while the third and fourth hypotheses were analyzed with the aid of Andrew Hayes' process model. All analyses were carried out at the .05 level of significance.

**Results**

*Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates.

Table 1: Model Summary and Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Composite Contribution of Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure to Antisocial Behaviour

R = .519, R Square = .269, Adj R Square = .265, Std. Error = 9.47034

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42688.005	2	21344.003	69.287	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	83174.395	297	308.053		
	Total	125862.400	299			

Table 1 revealed that with all the variables entered into the model at the same time, there was a significant result ( $F_{(2, 297)} = 69.287, p < .05$ ). The hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion of a significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates in Ogun State-owned universities. Table 1 further indicated that the predictor variables (self-esteem and peer pressure) accounted for 26.5% of the variance in antisocial behaviour.

*Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant relative contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates.

Table 2: Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Relative Contribution of Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure to Antisocial Behaviour

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.208	4.662		10.592	.000
	Self-Esteem	-.261	.052	-.283	-7.402	.000
	Peer Pressure	.309	.026	.337	9.709	.000
Dependent Variable: Antisocial Behaviour						

Table 2 revealed there were significant relative contributions of peer pressure (Beta = .337,  $t = 9.709, p < .05$ ) and self-esteem (Beta = -.283,  $t = 7.402, p < .05$ ). These results further indicated that whereas peer pressure was positively associated with antisocial behaviour, self-esteem was negatively related with antisocial behaviour. Table 2 further

revealed that antisocial behaviour could be predicted from peer pressure and self-esteem by means of the regression equation below:

$$\text{Antisocial Behaviour} = (0.309 \times \text{Peer Pressure}) - (0.261 \times \text{Self-Esteem}) + 9.208.$$

*Hypothesis 3:* Gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates.

Table 3: Moderating Role of Gender in the Contribution of Self-Esteem to Antisocial Behaviour

Model	Coeff	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	78.0994	5.4848	14.2393	.0000	67.3009	88.8980
Gender	-2.6190	3.5172	-.7446	.4571	-9.5438	4.3058
Self-Esteem	-.2854	.0911	-3.1323	.0019	-.4649	-.1060
Int_1	.0126	.0588	.2136	.8310	-.1032	.1283

Results in Table 3 were non-significant ( $t = .7446$ ,  $p > .05$ ). The hypothesis is therefore upheld, leading to the conclusion that gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. In other words, the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour for male students is similar to that for female students.

*Hypothesis 4:* Gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates in Ogun State-owned universities.

Table 4: Moderating Role of Gender in the Contribution of Peer Pressure to Antisocial Behaviour

Model	Co-eff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	48.5387	4.8352	20.3822	.0000	54.0538	84.9536
Gender	5.0061	1.1877	7.3569	.0000	7.8453	9.3056
Peer Pressure	3.48620	.1174	4.9037	.0000	-.3375	-.2185
Int_1	.0126	.0458	.2136	.8310	-1.0679	4.9745

Table 4 revealed significant results ( $t = 7.3569$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis is rejected, leading to the conclusion that gender will significantly moderate the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates in Ogun State-owned universities ( $t = 7.3569$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In other words, there is a significant difference between the sexes in the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour.

## Discussion

The examination of the moderating role of gender in the contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates is explorative and was prompted by the need to mitigate antisocial behaviours in the universities. This will equip

teachers, counsellors, and parents with the knowledge needed to assist, guide, and counsel adolescents with behavioural problems. It will also make them to be sensitive to the contribution of gender to the development of antisocial behaviour and foster an environment for healthy development of young adults. Consequently, four hypotheses were formulated to guide this study.

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. This hypothesis was tested for significance and found to be unsupported by data. It was consequently rejected leading to the conclusion of a significant composite contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates, with self-esteem and peer pressure accounting for 27% of the variance in antisocial behaviour. Although the two predictors (self-esteem and peer pressure) have not been combined in previous studies on antisocial behaviours, this finding substantially agreed with Fareeda and Jahan (2014), Wing *et al.* (2016), Becker and Luthar (2015), and Tabassam and Grainger (2012) who found a significant contribution of self-esteem, and Monahan *et al.* (2017) and Kellie (2013) who found significant influence of peer pressure on antisocial behaviour.

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relative contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. This hypothesis was subjected to statistical test of significance and found to be unacceptable. It was subsequently rejected, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant relative contribution of self-esteem and peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. This finding supported Fareeda and Jahan (2014) who found that self-esteem is significantly and negatively related with antisocial behaviour: Low self-esteem is associated with social maladjustment and antisocial behaviour, and conversely that high self-esteem is associated with social adjustment and prosocial behaviour. The finding also corroborated Wing *et al.* (2016) and Tabassam and Grainger (2012) who found that a solid feeling of self-esteem increases self-understanding, self-acknowledgment, and respect from loved ones (family, teachers, peers, etc.) which inhibit people from demonstrating antisocial behaviour. This result was also in line with the finding of Becker and Luthar (2015) that low sense of self-esteem is a boost for antisocial behaviour. This finding also agreed with Monahan *et al.* (2017) who stated that relationship with irresponsible companions and being vulnerable to peer impact are significant predictors of juvenile delinquency. Also supported by this finding was Kellie (2013) who found that positive peer pressure may lead to an increase in desirable behaviours and attitudes, such as studiousness and consideration for others, while negative peer pressure may increase the likelihood of undesirable behaviour.

The third hypothesis stated that gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. An analysis of this hypothesis led to the conclusion that gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of self-esteem to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. In other words, self-esteem influences antisocial behaviour similarly for both male and female undergraduates. This finding could be as a result of no discrimination in antisocial behaviour of physical

aggression which is more common in males and un-obstrusive aggression that is more common in females. The relative scores of participants on both dimensions of antisocial behaviour may cancel each other out, leading to the non-significant gender difference found, and the contribution of self-esteem may strongly override the influence of gender.

The fourth hypothesis stated that gender will not significantly moderate the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. This hypothesis was found to be unsupported by data. It was consequently rejected leading to the conclusion that gender will significantly moderate the contribution of peer pressure to antisocial behaviour among undergraduates. This finding corroborated Nwanneka and Akande (2015) who found that young men are more prone to aggressive behaviour than ladies.

### **Recommendations**

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- a) Parents and guardians should closely monitor and guide their wards at any point in time. To this end, parents should endeavour to know the friends and associates of their children as well as the type of behaviours and values they espouse.
- b) Students are should be enjoined do away with the opinions of their friends that clash with their parents' instructions. In other words, obedience to parents should be paramount.
- c) School counsellors should be motivated to help young adults' to have knowledge of what is right, the benefits of having positive self-esteem and associating with positive peers, as well as the risks involved in low self-esteem and associating with negative peers. In this way, young adults will be guided to make the right decisions.
- d) Parents, teachers, and school administrators should ensure that antisocial behaviours by young adults are not tolerated. Appropriate punishments and sanctions should be used to discourage these behaviours. The display of prosocial behaviours should also be reinforced.
- e) The Federal government should encourage the use of remand homes in which to detain and rehabilitate offending young adults so that they can be useful to themselves and the society.

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