

## FAMILY INFLUENCE AND PEER PRESSURE ON ADOLESCENT LIFE

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### Abstract

Based on research that aims to measure the impact of parents and peers on the attitudes of adolescents 17-19 years towards school, we thought that the most appropriate method would be surveying methods, but not limited to this method. We have also reviewed the literature and other similar research for the purpose of theoretical analysis of this issue and also comparison of the results obtained with the results of other research. The survey was conducted in two secondary schools in Pristina, respectively "Xhevdet Doda" and electro-technician school "Gjin Gazulli", which have selected students enrolled in different branches. The total number of students who participated in the survey was 95, of whom 49.4% male and 50.6% female. All teens participating in the survey were aged 17-19 years almost completing the high school.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Family, Students, School.

### Introduction

In all cultures the family is the main factor of socialization of the child, but in later stages of life there are other factors that influence its development. As family systems vary, children experience different types of social contacts. Usually mother is the most important person in the child's early life. The nature of the relationship between mother and children is affected by the shape and contacts between them. Through the process of identification, children adopt values, attitude and behaviour by their parents. This period is the age of four or five years, where boys act as the "father" and girls as "mother" (Pettijohn, 1996). Since the period of 6-10 years, in social development of the child besides family there are many other factors, such as; schools, religious institutions, clubs, news, etc. Children of this age tend to show signs of independence, and even inappropriate behaviour in relationships with parents, teachers and other adults. However, during this period, children experience the strong impact and even pressure to other children of their age. They become susceptible to behaviour that peers demonstrate toward them and observe carefully how these peers judge their behaviour (Pettijohn 1996). Piaget emphasizes the fact that peer relationships are more "democratic" than those of between parents and their children. Piaget also shows that because of the power that they possess, parents are able to impose codes of conduct to their children. Rather, within the peers group, the child reveals a different environment, a relationship within which rules of conduct can be tested or explored. (Giddens, 2000). Most psychologists believe that adolescence at males is close to the age of 13 years, while for women around the age of 11 years. It is not known exactly when adolescence ends and increasing with age begins, but this period is usually somewhere between the ages of 18-21 years.

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Adolescence in the real meaning is a transition from dependence to independence, and ends when the individual reaches adult status (Pettijohn, 1996).

**Problems of adolescence**

In all cultures are similar, problems that are related to awareness, sex, parental controls, moral codes or conformism to social norms. Teenagers need to start thinking about adulthood, about who they are, and there is a need to decide for them for the future. Hall rightly called this as a period of disturbance and stress (S.Hall 1916). Parental control should aim to provide as much independence, especially in environments where adolescent peers establish morality. Studies show that adolescent moral development is faster in males than in girls, because boys are more independent from their parents; have more freedom to gain social experience outside their home. While independent little girl has a higher level of respect for others, helps them, is more attentive, more cautious and more sensitive to the needs of others. Therefore they are more mature morally, because they are oriented toward others (Gilligan, 1977). It is obvious that the main environments where these relationships are built are family and school as two basic institutions where teenagers' formation is realized (Dragoti, 2005).

Hypothesis of the study are: Hypothesis 1: The formation of attitudes towards school, 17-19 years teenager peer influence is greater than the influence of parents and family in general. Hypothesis 2: Attitudes of women towards school are more influenced by their parents compared to those of men.

**Research**

This research is quantitative empirical type. Data collection survey was used. This method has proven value in this research. It was the only method by which it is penetrated to the research of many cases.

**Method**

Based on research that aims to make the measurement of the impact of parents and peers on the attitudes of adolescents 17-19 years to school, we thought that the most appropriate method would be surveying methods, but not limited to this method. We have also reviewed the literature and other similar research with the aim of pointing out the theoretical side of this issue and also compare the results obtained with the results of other research.

**Subject**

The survey was conducted in two secondary schools in Pristina, respectively "Xhevdet Doda" and school of electro-technician "Gjin Gazulli", which have selected students enrolled in different branches. The total number of students who participated in the survey was 95, of whom 49.4% male and 50.6% female. All teens participating in the survey were aged 17-19 years almost completing the high school. Participation in the survey was voluntary and in each class the students were able to choose whether they want to participate in the research or not.

**Instrument**

To collect the necessary data for this research, it was used a questionnaire consisting of a total of 20 questions. Questions were divided into several groups, and some of the answers were based on the degree of liqueurs. Students were able to choose some of the options that have been proposed. In addition to the definitions for one of the options, from the correspondents were taken demographic data: gender, age, family, school, education of parents. Questions were divided into several groups in order to measure different characteristics. Following the

demographic questions there were other listed questions that aimed to measure the importance that teenagers give to school, dedicated time and what reports they have with their parents and peers. The last part of the questions is supposed to enable understanding the extent of the influence of parents and peers in adolescent attitudes towards school.

### **Procedure**

Once we have defined the topic of research and ensured the survey that we will use in our research, we made an application of the questionnaire to a group of 10 students who were not part of the sample. Then we applied the questionnaire to the subjects. The research was conducted in two secondary schools in Pristina. In each school two classes were selected in research with a random method. Questionnaire for each class were held in the classroom when students were present in class. The survey procedures and purpose related to measuring the impact of parental and peer attitudes about school were explained.

### **Results**

Participants involved in the survey were aged 17-19 years, with 49,4% male and 50.6% female. Although the sample selection was random from to classes in to secondary schools, we have managed to make a balance between men and women. Most of the cases were residents of Pristina, where 46.7% were from the secondary school "Xhevdet Doda", 53% of secondary school "Gjin Gazulli", and it has not been observed any significant difference in their views regarding the change of direction. On the question on living in narrow or extended families, 89.2% stated that they live narrow families and 10.9% stated that they live in extended families, while 37.2% stated that their mother is employed and 1.1% stated that they expect to be employed. In contrast to mothers, fathers dominate in the percentage of employment, where 87% were employed, 8.6 were not employed, 1.1% were employed and 3.2% are expected to start to work. In the second group of questions I was more focused on school and relations of adolescents with their parents and peers (friends). In question, to go to school for you is a pleasure, duty, waste of time, 47.3% stated that it is a pleasure, 48.4% stated that it is the obligation and 4.3% see it as a waste of time. Next question, how do you describe relationships with parents, teenagers gave us these results 32.6%, qualify as good, 60.1% as not good and 7.3% neither good nor bad. While relations with friends, 77.5% describe as good, 5% as bad and 17.5% neither good nor bad. The next question, which also shows the closest relations with friends compared to parents was that, whom do you talk freely about your secrets, 23.2% stated that they talk to family, friends 53.7%, 1.1% with professors, 4.2% therapists and 17.9% with other people. The results presented in the graphs show the degree of adolescents' selection between parents and peers for some circumstances that are frequently encountered by adolescents. Also, for the same circumstances are presented graphics that show separate results for men and women, in order to make a comparison between them. If your close friends lately don't pay attention to studying, but considers more going out, internet, MSN, television, and after that they make comments on these activities, these activities will occupy almost all the time outside of school and will become part of your everyday life.

This situation disturbs your parents and they start to rebuke and give you instruction on school schedule and ask to respect it. How would you act?

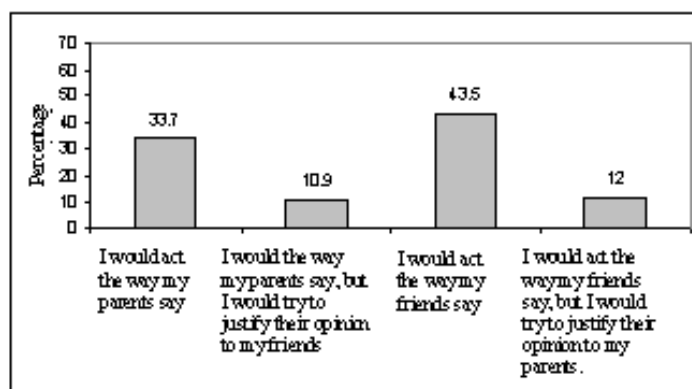


Chart 1.  $X=2.33$  and  $DS=1.07$  MIN=1 MAX=4  
(X-arithmetic average, Ds-standard deviation)

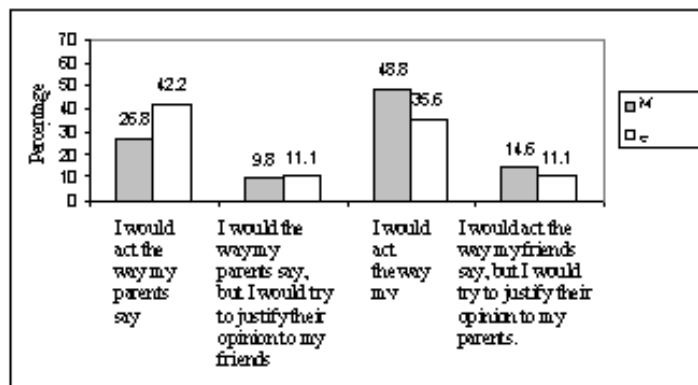


Chart 2.

Male:  $X=2.51$  and  $DS=1.05$  MIN=1 MAX=4  
Female:  $X=2.15$  and  $DS=1.10$  MIN=1 MAX=4

Last month the most commented topic in the school and media has been Rihanna & Justin Timberlake concert, which will take place in Pristina. This concert is tonight, and tomorrow you will undergo a test in mathematics. Parents require you to stay at home and get ready for the test, bur friends call you to go to the concert. How would you act?

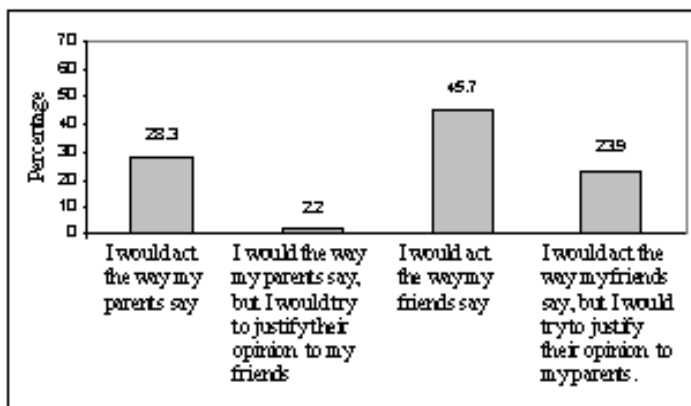


Chart 3.

X=2.65 and DS=1.13 MIN=1 MAX=4

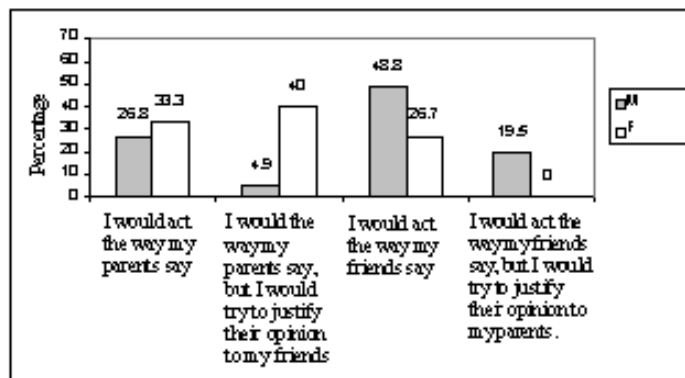


Chart 4.

Male : X=2.60 and DS=1.09 MIN=1 MAX=4

Female: X=2.60 and DS=1.21 MIN=1 MAX=4

After the lessons all your friend together off for coffee, but your parents ask you to go back home on time. You are confused weather you should join your friends or listen to your parents. How would you act?

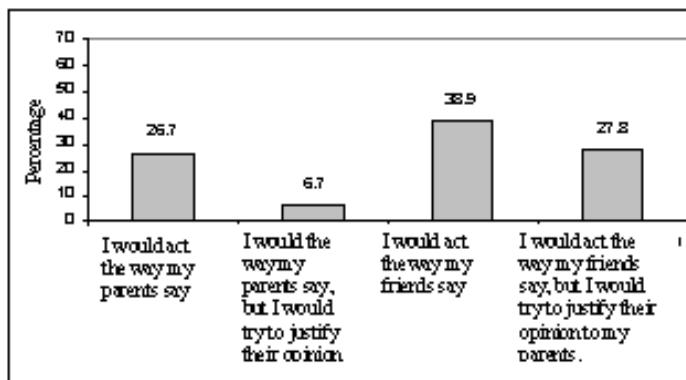


Chart 5.

X=2.67 and D=1.14 MIN=1 MAX=4

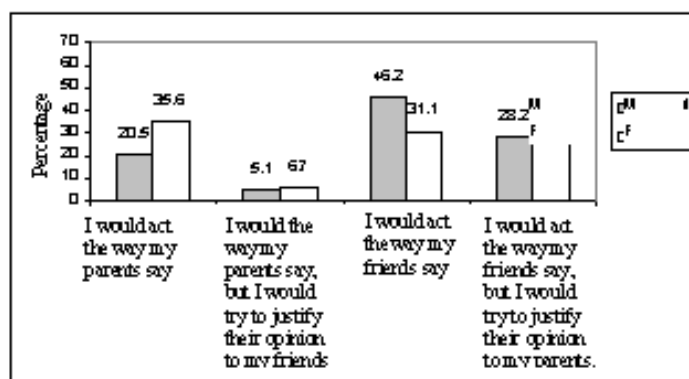


Chart 6.

Male: X=2.82 and DS=1.07 MIN=1 MAX=4

Female: X=2.48 and DS=1.23 MIN=1 MAX=4

While making decision for your future profession, your parents ask you to choose the same profession as they have, but your friends decide to choose another profession where they say is better. How would you act?

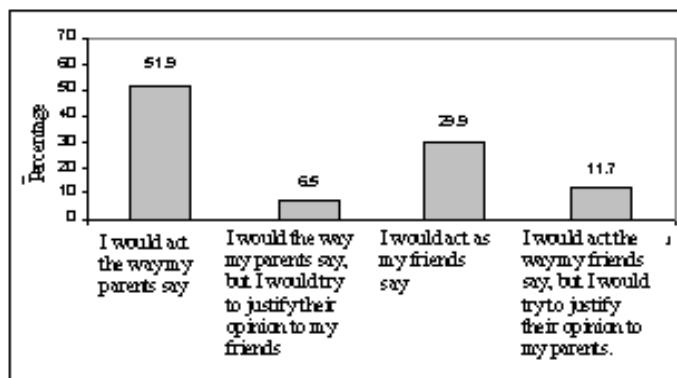


Chart 7.

X=2.01 and DS=1.14 MIN=1 MAX=4

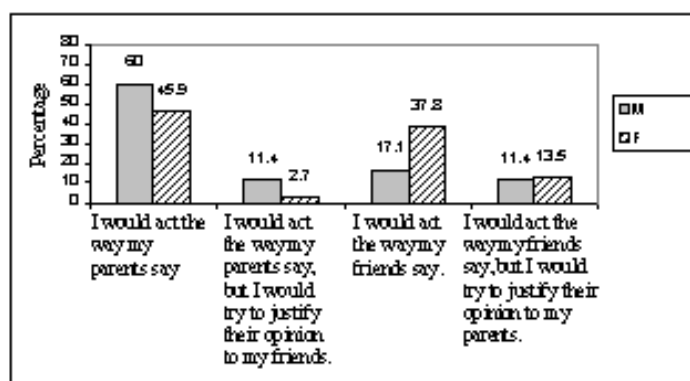


Chart 8.

Male: X=1.80 and DS=1.10 MIN=1 MAX=4

Female: X=2.18 and DS=1.17 MIN=1 MAX=4

**Conclusion**

Our first hypothesis was that in creation of the teenagers (17-19 years old) attitude towards school, peer influence is greater than the influence of parents and family, in general. From data gatherings from this research we conclude that our hypothesis stands. When teenagers form the feeling of their identity, they try to gain more independence. Based on the results given by subjects we noticed that 32.6% have good relationships with their parents, 60.1% have a bad relationship, while 7.3% described as neither good nor bad. While the results obtained to the question of how you describe peer relations we received high positive response comparing to those negative ones where 77.5% had good relations with friends, 5% not good, and 17.5% neither good nor bad. From the results we have seen that teenagers tend to discuss more with friends for secret things, where 53.7% speak freely with their friends, 23.2% with family, 1.1% with professors, 4.2% with therapists and 17.9% with others. These results indicate closer relationships with friends than with parents. Respondents reported that 44.6% would do as parents say and 55.5% say they would do as they say friends. These percentages show a greater influence of friends (peers) when they have to choose between learning, going out, internet, messenger, television even though parents may decri them. The second hypothesis is partially supported where according to the data women will be affected by their parents if they ask them to rank schools in the first place rather than going out, the Internet, television, where 53.3% of women stated that they would act as parents say compared to men with only 36.6% of men stated that they would do as parents say. The next question which also supports our hypothesis was if they should decide between test preparation or joining friends in concert. 73.3% of women stated that they would do as parents say while the percentage of men was lower with only 31.7% who stated that they would do as parents say. Our research results show that teenagers are often more influenced by their peers, but there are also cases when they would take into consideration their parents' advice, in particular when dealing with religious issues and future professional orientation.

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