UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE ON DECISION- MAKING OF

ADOLESCENTS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE ACCRA

METROPOLIS

ELVIS ADU

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METROPOLIS

BY

ELVIS ADU

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award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Educational Psychology

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…………………   Date……………………..

Name: Elvis Adu

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature………………………...Date…………………....

Name: Dr. Henry Owolabi

Co-Supervisor's Signature……………………………..Date…………………...

Name: Prof. George Kankam

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is one of the critical stages in the development of an individual. This is the stage at which a lot of experimentation takes place. The main aim of this study was to find out the impact peer pressure has on the decision-making of adolescents. The design was causal comparative (ex post facto). Questionnaire developed was used to obtain data from senior high school students in the Accra Metropolis. In all, 260 respondents were selected through stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques. The data were analyzed with percentages and one way ANOVA. The independent t- test was used for the testing of hypothesis.

Findings of the study indicated that 55.8% early adolescents and 63.2% late adolescents' possessed the skills in making a competent decision. Results of the analysis showed that early adolescents experienced peer pressure more than late adolescents in their decision making. The nature of peer pressure adolescents' faced was bidirectional because it was positive on their academic achievement (71.9%) but negative on disciplinary issues (51.1%).

Findings also showed that four major specific challenges that affected early and late adolescents in their decision making with regards to peer pressure were misinformation 86.9%, mockery 57.9%, rejection 39.1% and denial 16.1%. Negative effects of peer pressure could reduce if more qualified counsellors were stationed in the senior high schools. The study recommended that school authorities should intensify activities of clubs and societies and encourage all students to join a school club so that good values can be internalized.

DEDICATION

To my mother, Madam Vida A. Asiam

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DMI	Decision Making Inventory
NPC	National Population Council
PLUS	Policies Legal Universal and Self Model
RTB	Risk Taking Behaviours
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SES	Socio- Economic Status
SHS	Senior High School

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

On daily basis, most people take a number of decisions such as where to go, what to wear, which friend to choose, what career to pursue, and what tasks to perform at school, home and at work. Although these decisions differ in terms of their content and importance, they nevertheless share a common structure. Particularly in each case, an individual considers an array of options and tries to decide the best way to produce a desired outcome. In essence, being successful in life depends on knowing the difference between options that are likely to produce favourable and unfavourable outcomes. Hartman (2005) states that in as much as this discrimination ability is central to the notion of competent decision- making, it follows that there should be a close correspondence between competent decision- making and personal success.

Similarly, it would be expected that individuals who have a low level of decision- making skills and succumb to pressure from groups in their decision-making may tend to experience failure and other negative consequences on a regular basis (Hartman, 2005).

Research in the area of judgement and decision- making has focused on individual's ability to select from among choices or to evaluate expected outcomes in determining choices.

Researchers such as (de Bruin, Parker & Fischoff, 2007; Finucane, Mertz, Slovic & Schmidt, 2005) have been very interested in the decision- making skills of adolescents especially because although parents can compensate for their decision- making inadequacies by monitoring and making important decisions for them, at some point in their life as adolescents, they have to be able to make important decisions on their own. But the question is the extent to which adolescents in Ghana are allowed to make important decisions on their own looking at a cultural belief for instance that says a child can only be seen and not be heard. This explains why researchers show interest in adolescents' decision-making because some authors contend that the need for self-regulated decision-making is especially important in the adolescent years.

Indeed, the period of adolescence seems to be a time of great opportunity as it marks the time when adolescents are equipped, with the necessary skills and mind-frame to meet society's expectations for adulthood. This however requires adolescents to learn how to make important decisions as they come face-to- face with pressure from peers and other agents that they come into contact with on daily basis. It is shown in the ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) (cited in Berk, 2000) that adolescents acquire the information that influence their decision- making from the parents, siblings, family members, teachers, religious leaders, traditional authorities, media and friends.

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Though parents, media, religious institutions and academic institutions play a major role in the decision- making of adolescents, peer adolescents' interaction may also have greater influence on their decision- making process. Studies have shown that the family was the only variable responsible for adolescents' behaviour; however, recent research findings indicate that peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents' decision- making (Oswald & Suss, 1998). Again the question that needs to be asked is why do people consider peer pressure a domineering factor in the decision- making process of adolescents in Ghana? Is there a missing variable in the practices of some Ghanaians that account for this? Or is it a failure on the part of school administrators, teachers, counsellors and educational psychologist that adolescents have decided to supervise their own destiny by being each other's keeper and also engaging in some secret occult practices? Is it because of the fewer number of hours working parents spend with their adolescents or the parenting styles adopted by the caregivers or a failure on the part of the religious groups and associations? This is because parents and guardians who adopt the authoritarian parenting style for instance, value control and unquestioning obedience and may try to make adolescents conform to a set standard of conduct. Problematic as this may be to the adolescent, parents of this nature may detach themselves and may be less warm which may make the adolescent distrustful and withdrawn and so finds solace in the peers. This is due to the fact that peer group may provide a context for adolescents to test out decision- making skills in an arena where there are no adults present to monitor and control their choices.

Adolescents' may prefer to spend much time with peer groups they belong than with parents or other adults as adolescent groups function with much less adult supervision and scrutiny.

Additionally, adolescents may wish to define themselves, look for their personal code of morals and ethics, and as Havighurst (1972) puts it, they try to attain emotional autonomy from parents and the acquisition of competencies necessary for adult roles. Some of these roles may include problem solving and decision-making, the acquisition of skills for social interaction with parents, peers, and other members of society and the ability to negotiate between the pressure to achieve and to fit in with peers. In effect, adolescents may become interested in belonging to some group of their age mates who share common interests and attitudes.

To the parents, the adolescent should maintain good social life and customs, be responsible, continue with the family relationships, be upright with their values and morals and perform well at school. They may want to see their adolescents spend all or most of their time studying, instead of being able to socialize with their friends which may result in conflict. There is bound to be a conflict because as the developmental task theory of Havighurst has it which is discussed in detail in the next chapter, adolescents need to achieve a more mature relations with age mates of both sexes. In fulfilling this task, it may be misconstrued by their parents that can trigger a conflict. In effect, some parents have unrealistic achievement expectation of their adolescent children which put a lot of pressure on them to take a decision which may be positive or negative. The

question is, shouldn't the adolescent be able to choose a course of study or friends without parents help? Is the adolescent not mature enough to know the likes and dislikes? Why are adolescents reprimanded if they behave like children or are found to be behaving in a mature way as adults do? Does this double standard not create confusion in the mind of the adolescent? Santrock (2009) expounds that exploration is necessary to develop a healthy identity. Thus, if adolescents select their major courses of study at school or future career based on parental pressure for instance, they can develop a foreclosed identity and foreclosure can lead to dissatisfaction during adulthood.

The media as an agent of information, education and entertainment may have a huge impact on how adolescents see the world in terms of socialisation, development, opinions, values, and knowledge. It is easy to become overwhelmed by information and messages individuals receive through the media. The media can affect adolescents either positively or negatively such that they may not even realize it is happening. The media for instance, influence adolescents' decisions about language, way of dressing (fashion), dance, sexuality, substance abuse, values and beliefs. The forms of media that can impact strongly on adolescent decision- making include the internet, newspapers, magazines, television and radio. The media seem to pave the way for peers to influence each other since they want to be in tune with time.

Though most of the youth groups of religious bodies in Ghana have patrons who are adults, it appears the day -to- day running and meetings of such groups are left in the hands of the youth leaders with little or no supervision from

these patrons. This practice seems to contribute to peer pressure dominating the decision- making process of adolescents which may have positive or negative impact on them.

Religious institutions challenge young people especially adolescents to develop their capacity for moral discernment and informed conscience for responsible decision-making. The pressure to take a decision which peers may have influence comes from the fact that adolescents have had to contend with responding to their biological demands, which is triggered by the secretion of estrogen and testosterone hormones and achieving socially responsible behaviour and moral uprightness.

Kimmel and Weiner (1995) state that socially, adolescents have a strong need to belong to a group, with peer approval becoming more important as adult approval decreases and in their search for self, model behaviour after older esteemed students or non-parent adults. They may also exhibit immature behaviour because their social skills frequently lag behind their mental and physical maturity and would want to experiment with new slang and behaviours as they search for a social position within their group, often discarding these "new identities" at a later date. They are dependent on parental beliefs and values but seek to make their own decisions sometimes in consultation with their peer group members.

Research has shown that during adolescence, there is an increasing capacity for abstract reasoning, counterfactual reasoning, reasoning from premises that are not true, systematic reasoning, and a growing capacity for probabilistic

reasoning, all these are abilities that may be relevant to adolescent decision-making, (Cohn, 1995).

Indeed, according to Steinberg (2002) one of the issues which studies have proven is that, there is strong impact of peer pressure on adolescents which may affect their decision-making positively or negatively. Peer pressure exists for all ages. Peers are the people with whom one identifies and spends time with. In children and adolescents, it may be people of the same age group but in adults, peers may be determined less by age and more by shared interest or profession. Peer pressure can be defined as the mechanism through which peers influence each other to think and act in a certain peer accepted way. It occurs when an individual experiences implied or expressed persuasion to adopt similar values, beliefs and goals and participate in the same activities as those in the peer group. Peer pressure by itself may neither be positive nor negative. Studies of Jacobs and Ganzel (1993) for instance confirm research findings that the values of the peer group with whom the high school student spends most time with are a stronger factor in the student's level of academic success than the values, attitudes and support provided by the family.

Again, regardless of the parenting style, peer pressure can also influence the degree to which adolescents conform to expected gender roles. Researchers have found that susceptibility to peer influence is higher in early adolescents than late adolescents. Thus it is important to understand both the decisions that young people make in selecting friends and the role that those friends play in decisions about attitudes and behaviours of adolescents. Simons-Morton (2007) asserts that

socialisation occurs as a result of overt reactions of group members or through subtle, indirect pressure that is derived from group norms, expectations, social acceptance, and status.

Decision processes can become inherently more complicated when uncertainty is involved. Choices associated with risk can also carry a greater chance of loss compared to choices made with little or no-risk, especially when knowledge of outcomes is uncertain. Without accurate information on an issue, individuals can unknowingly place themselves in dangerous and/or unhealthy situations. Some proposals made by some authors indicate that when people are unsure of the consequences of proposed policy issues, they rely on heuristics when forming judgements and that even when individuals have the benefit of knowing the possible costs, they still appear overly optimistic about the potential consequences of their decisions especially adolescents under peer pressure.

As a result, the developmental stage of adolescence is very relevant for studying decision-making competence. This is because some decisions made during adolescence, such as career choice or the involvement in some addictive behaviours, can have relevant consequences for the whole life of the individual.

In Ghana, young people aged 15-24 years account for 30 percent of the total population as stated by the National Population Council (NPC) (2000). The 2000 population and housing census also reported that 2,749,599 of the population were in the 10-19 age groups and out of this figure 1,654549 forming 60 percent of those people were students in school. With the median age of 17.5 years, the population of Ghana is described as youthful by National Population

Council. As the future leaders of the country, it is therefore, important to help them in their decision- making since decisions are made for life.

Moreover, according to Safyer (1994) youth who live in urban settings are often subject to stressors, such as poverty, exposure to violence, and pressure by friends to engage in gang activities that differ from their peers who live outside of the city. Though not everyone who lives in the city is poor and joins a gang and not every gang member is poor, studies have shown that many gangs exist mainly as a moneymaking enterprise. By joining gangs as a result of peer pressure and committing thefts and dealing in drugs, gang members can make relatively large amounts of money. People who are faced with a lack of money may turn to crime if they can't earn enough with a legitimate job. This partly explains why gangs exist in poor, rundown areas of cities. Again, Authors of articles about gang related issues indicate that gang members tend to be young. This is partly because gangs intentionally recruit adolescents because of the idea that they are very susceptible to peer pressure. For instance, if they live in a gang-dominated area, or go to a school with a strong gang presence, they might find that many of their friends are joining gangs. It can be difficult for an adolescent to understand the harm that joining a gang can bring if the individual is worried about losing all friends. Many adolescents may resist the temptation of gang membership, but for others, it is easier to follow the crowd. Peer pressure can therefore be a driving force behind gang membership in affluent areas also in the cities. All these play together hence the selection of Accra metropolis as the study area for this research.

Statement of the Problem

The critical period of adolescence is marked by several physical, psychological and social changes. One of the important psychological phenomena observed during the period of adolescence is experimentation. This behaviour has been found to lead to the trying out of new experiences with peers that can be positive or negative, sometimes with dire consequences on the adolescent. Most of these behaviours beside biological causes seem to be fuelled by pressure from friends, parents, the media, the society, and schools just to mention but a few. Behaviours that seriously affect them as individuals and touch the society more negatively include adolescent gang related activities such as, substance abuse, crime and violence in general. Adolescents' involvements in these behaviours have been attributed to a number of reasons by various researchers with peer pressure and decision- making being very prominent among the causes.

Decision- making plays important role in adolescents' involvement in any behaviour. Reason (1990) asserts that, decision can be made under peer pressure without giving proper consideration to options and consequences. Even when people have time and information, they may have a poor understanding of the probabilities. Given that adolescents make important decisions of their lives, it has become necessary to find out their decision- making skills in order to understand how they generate options under peer pressure. There is also the need to look at the impact of peer pressure on the adolescent since an individual's ability to competently assess consequences can be compromised in the presence

of pressure. This can be particularly relevant in Senior High School environment, offering numerous opportunities for social interactions.

Decisions made on the basis of social influence have also been found to be less accurate, and require a longer decision-making period because they may have to wait for some peers to approve of it compared with decisions made on the basis of information (Prentice & Miller, 1993).

In addition, group approval or negative sanctions, such as estrangement or alienation, appears to overwhelm an individual's capacity to make proper decisions, negatively affecting their decision-making ability.

Johnson and Sheets (2004) found college students' motives for participating in drinking games related to the social aspects involved and not necessarily as a result of adequate information on perceived outcome. Floyd, Sobell, Velasquez, Ingersoll, Nettleman and Sobell (2007) also found out that providing respondents with accurate information regarding risk for instance resulted in reduced instances of risk-related activities. Fischhoff and Beyth-Marom (1997) assert that most of the research on competent decision- making has been done with adults and also review of literature indicates that very little of this type of research has been done with high school populations in Ghana. It is important that it is done with adolescents' in senior high schools to know the impact peer pressure has on them since the kind of group interactions adolescents engage in may influence their decision- making skills positively or negatively. It is believed that if the adolescent is exposed to how to make good decisions, engaging in risky behaviours with peers will be reduced. It is in this light that this

study seeks empirical data on decision- making skills of adolescents' in senior high schools in Accra metropolis and the extent to which they experience peer pressure.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to explore the skills adolescents' posses for competent decision- making and to specifically examine the extent to which adolescents experience peer pressure in decision- making. It examined the challenges adolescents face in their decision- making and also looked at how the challenges adolescents face in their decision- making can be resolved.

The study also aimed at finding out whether any differences exist between the kind of peer pressure male and female SHS adolescents experience.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do adolescents in Senior High Schools in Accra metropolis possess the skills to make competent decisions?

2. To what extent do adolescents in Senior High Schools in Accra metropolis experience peer pressure in decision- making?

3. What is the nature of the peer pressure that adolescents in SHSs face in the Accra metropolis?

4. What challenges do adolescents face in their decision- making?

5. What ways can the effects of peer pressure on adolescent decision- making be resolved?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis has been formulated to guide the study. It will be tested at an alpha level of 0.05. H_0 represents the null hypothesis while H_1 represents the alternate hypothesis.

H_0: There is no significant difference between the peer pressure experienced by adolescent male and female senior high school students in their decision making.

H_1: There is a significant difference between the peer pressure experienced by adolescent male and female senior high school students in their decision making.

Significance of the Study

The study will among other things highlight how decisions are made under peer pressure among adolescents. It will also help educate adolescents on the appropriate steps to follow to be able to take right decisions even in the midst of pressure from a group they owe allegiance to.

Teachers and school administrators will also find this study very useful because it will bring to light some of the pressures adolescents go through so that the appropriate referrals to experts can be done on time to help concerned adolescents. The study will enable School psychologist and school counsellors to highly appreciate the kind of impact peer pressure has on the decision- making of adolescents so that more developmental, guidance programmes and seminars will be geared towards this direction for the benefit of adolescents.

Parents will find this work useful because it will help them to realize the need to understand their adolescents and maintain a very cordial relationship with them so that issues bothering them could be discussed. By so doing adolescents will be encouraged to have more confidence in their parents as people who care about their feelings and spend much time in the home.

Further, the study will add to knowledge in the area of decision- making of adolescents involving peer pressure in Ghana. Though, a lot of work has been done on decision- making in general, there is not enough literature on adolescents decision- making style in Ghana so I believe the study will contribute to knowledge in this area. This will be made possible through publications and seminars that will be organised by the researcher after the study.

Educational researchers will find this study useful as it is expected that findings of the study will provoke further research into the decision- making process of adolescents in order to understand and help adolescents in their process of development.

Delimitation of the Study

The variables being studied are decision- making skills of adolescents and how peer pressure may impact on them. This focus was chosen because studies have proven that the adolescent enjoys spending much time with peers more than the parents or siblings because of the freedom they enjoy articulating their views. The assumption therefore is that, the group would have impact on most of their decisions and if they do how it will probably affect them in terms of their

behavioural adjustment. The underlining factor of the adolescent behaviour is that he may or may not decide on it before acting.

Accra metropolis was chosen because it is a multi-ethnic area which also has a lot of senior high schools in terms of single sex schools and co- educational schools which are day as well as boarding schools that will give the researcher varieties of opinions on the various questions posed.

Also, the senior high school was selected because per the Ghana education structure, an individual begins SHS averagely at age fourteen (14) and so majority of the adolescents' are presumed to be in the senior high school.

Limitations of the Study

The sample for the study was taken only from the Accra Metropolis; and for that matter it might not be representative of the views of other geographical locations across the country because of the cultural differences in beliefs and practices because the meaning that various cultures give to adolescence differs greatly.

Definition of Terms

Adolescent: An individual who falls within the ages of 11 and 21.

Early Adolescent: Children between the ages of 11 and 15.

Late Adolescent: People between the ages of 18 and 21

Peers: They are people one identifies and spends time with.

Peer Pressure: The mechanism through which peers influence each other to think and act in a certain peer accepted way.

Competent Decision-Making: A process of making choices from options and alternatives.

Organisation of the Rest of the Study

Chapter 2 reviews related literature in two perspectives, the theoretical and empirical reviews. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used. These are, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument used, pilot testing, data collection procedure and the data analysis procedure. Chapter 4 analyzes and discusses the data collected while the last chapter looks at the findings, recommendations made and summary of the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the related literature on the topic. It is in two sections, theoretical review and empirical review. The first part is on some theories related to adolescents and decision- making process and the second part is on empirical studies done in this area of study. The review is organised under the following subheadings:

Havighurst's theory on Developmental Task, the theory of reasoned action, theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Cognitive theory, Behavioural decision theory, models in decision- making. And the empirical review is done under the subheadings; Decision- making Defined, Decision- making Styles of Adolescents, Adolescent and peer influence, Globalisation and Adolescents, Factors that influence decision- making, problems adolescent encounter in their decision- making, and outcomes of adolescents' decision.

Theoretical Perspectives

Havighurst's Developmental Tasks

A developmental task is one that arises predictably and consistently at or about a certain period in the life of the individual (Havighurst, 1976; 1987). The concept of developmental task assumes that human development in modern societies is characterized by a long series of tasks that individuals have to learn

throughout their lives. Some of these tasks are located in childhood and adolescence, whereas others arise during adulthood and old age (Heckhausen, 1999). Successful achievement of a certain task is expected to lead to happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure may result in unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks.

Akimboye (1983) also argues that successful solution of such tasks lead to improved confidence, self concept and satisfaction. However, if the adolescent fails to solve the problems, he may experience some social sanctions, be unhappy or face greater problems later in life

Developmental tasks arise from three different sources according to Havighurst (1976; 1987), (cited in Kimmel & Weiner 1995). One of the sources is mainly based on physical growth and maturation, such as learning to walk. Another source of developmental task also relates to socio-cultural and cultural forces. Such influences are based on, for instance, laws concerning minimum age for marriage and culturally shared expectations of development in terms of age and norms, that is, determining the age range in which specific developmental tasks have to be mastered, (Neugarten, Moore & Lowe, 1965). The third source of developmental tasks involves personal values, aspirations and psychological competence of the individual. These personal factors result from the interaction between ontogenetic and environmental factors, and play an active role in the emergence of specific developmental tasks such as choosing a certain occupational pathway.

In all these, adolescents have to make very important decisions on their lives because per assumption of the developmental task theory, going through one task successfully will lead one into achieving subsequent tasks happily. The peer group however plays a major role in facilitating the achievement of adolescents' developmental tasks by providing a context in which some of these tasks can be accomplished.

Havighusrt (1976) outlined eight major tasks during the adolescence period. They are:

    a. Accepting one's physique and using it effectively

    b. Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes

    c. Achieving a masculine or feminine sex role

    d. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults

    e. Preparing for economic careers

    f. Preparing for marriage and family life

    g. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour

    h. Acquiring a set of values and ethical systems as a guide to behaviour developing an ideology.

These are explained as follows:

Accepting one's physique and using it effectively:

Adolescence period is a time of change. As the adolescents grow up, their bodies also change. In this period, adolescents learn what their bodies will be, but not all bodies are shaped or function as what they desire. There are at least two components to teenage anxiety regarding physical growth. First is the

concern about developing into a satisfactory adult body. The second and more immediate adolescent crises regarding physical growth has to do with the timing of physical changes, particularly the development of adult sexual characteristics. The question adolescents ask in their time of change is am I normal? It is asked by the adolescents as they compare their bodies change with the peers.

Psychologically, a number of changes occur physically during adolescence especially in their pubertal stage which is very important. This pushes the adolescent to make a decision either by himself or with pressure from friends, parents, social clubs or the media being both the print and electronic media. The stage as seen by the obvious changes that take place occur during this stage are the development of the secondary sex characteristics. Breast development for instance is a potential source of concern for many adolescents. The size of the adolescent girl's breast is of much concern to her. It may cause her some embarrassment which demands that a competent decision needs to be made in order to accept her body size and make good use of it. One of the characteristics of adolescents is their emerging often extreme self -consciousness about their physical selves as they reach maturity. This self-consciousness leads them to spend a great deal of time worrying about their rates of development and their physical characteristics and appearance (Havighurst, 1976).

Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes:

Mature relationships are here viewed as adult relationships; girls are looked upon as women and boys as men. They are interested in relation to the opposite sex in social activities and social experimentation. In this case, school is

the main place where the socialisation takes place. More interesting activities such as athletics should be organised for the adolescent in order to create a healthy competition for both sexes. Becoming an adult also means learning social skills and behaviours required in a group's life. It is important that this task is carefully handled so that it does not affect them in their late marriage life. In addition, failing or delaying this developmental task will affect their social adjustment and other developmental tasks.

Achieving masculine or feminine sex roles:

Psychosexual social roles are established by each culture or society. It is the society that plants a cultural meaning into one's biological nature. Therefore who and what people become in terms of roles as girls and boys depend on the culture. In most cultures in Ghana, children are given their roles in terms of sex from infancy. The games adolescents play is also defined in terms of sex. As boys play football and engage in activities that require energy or rigorous, girls are expected to play "ampe" and engage in activities that requires less energy.

In the area of work, people's mentality is no different as to the type of work a boy or man should and that of a girl or woman. Some jobs such as carpentry and masonry were traditionally reserved for boys while hairdressing and sewing were reserved for girls. It is therefore incumbent on the adolescent to accept his sexuality as a male or female and find an acceptable sex role.

There is however a negative side to traditional masculinity especially in adolescents according to (Levant, 1999). Concerns about the ways boys have been brought up in traditional ways have been called a national crisis of boyhood

by (Pollack, 1999). Pollack argues that too often, boys are socialized not to show their feelings and act tough. There is also a special concern about boys who adopt a strong masculine role in adolescence, as this is found to be associated with problem behaviours by (Pleck, 1995). Pleck believes that what defines traditional masculinity in many western cultures include behaviours that do not have social approval but nonetheless validate the adolescent boy's masculinity. That is in the male adolescent culture, they perceive that they will be thought of as more masculine if they engaged in premarital sex, drink alcohol and take drugs and participate in illegal delinquent activities.

Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults:

Naturally, children are expected to rely on their parents for all their needs especially emotional needs. However, one of the major developmental tasks that the adolescent is supposed to achieve is wean himself from his parents and establish as an independent individual. This receives much resistance from the parents and creates a lot of conflict between the adolescent and the parents. The adolescent wants to have his way in terms of friend selection, dress to wear, where to go and when to return home. The adolescent prefers to spend much time with peers which might not be in the interest of the parents. The adolescent is therefore expected to resolve these conflicts with the parents and other adults as he strives to achieve this emotional independence.

Preparing for economic careers:

The choice of career under normal circumstances should be the prerogative of the individual concerned to prepare for that career by way of

education and training. In the Ghanaian context, the task of preparing for economic career in a way is nonexistent since most adolescents will still be in the junior high school or in the senior high school studying. It cannot be however ruled out completely since at the senior high school, the adolescent select or is given courses or subjects that will determine the adolescent's future career.

Preparing for marriage and social life:

Another important task that adolescents' must accomplish or complete successfully is to prepare for marriage and social life. Though adolescents are biologically and sometimes socially mature to be mates and parents, their culture may urge them to postpone the role of becoming mates and parents until the completion of their education. They would also be required to establish their economic competency. To Havighurst (1976) the present patterns of marriage and family living are being readjusted to the economic social and religious characteristics of society. Since man is a social being and marriage is part of social life, adolescents must be given individual guidance and counselling both in the school and at home to propel them for the future in their marriages.

Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour:

Adolescents' have to become participating and responsible members of the social groups that they belong to, such as the community and the larger society. This means that adolescents sacrifice for the greater good and develop an ideology that is consistent with the values of their society, (Kaveri & Smehel, 2008). Every society has its accepted values and norms that the inhabitants are expected to live by. These norms may at times conflict with that of the

adolescents. This is because adolescents have their ideologies and philosophies which are accepted in their own subculture that guide their behaviour. This might be in conflict with what the society expects of them. It is however important for adolescents to find their place or role in the society. It is important again that they spell out clearly their abilities in order to give meaning to their life. This will help them to develop positive attitude towards their society and provide service to their community.

Acquiring a set of values and ethical systems as a guide to behaviour or ideology

The adolescent has to construct a coherent socio-politico-ethical ideology that will consistently orient him/her over time and space, Kaveri and Smehel (2008). Adolescents need to study and analyze societal value systems as well as their own moral ideas in order to acquire a combination of expressive and instrumental values that maintain the positive qualities of their culture and bring beauty and love as well as economic benefit to people's lives (Havighurst, 1987). For adolescents to go through all these developmental tasks successfully means they have to make very important decision at this crucial point in their life. They are pressured by the parents, the society and the peers who provide the fertile ground for them to test their ideas. But the question is whether all these pressure enable the adolescent to make competent decision as they strife to achieve these tasks. Success at each task will encourage them to achieve the subsequent ones, failure will affect them. Competent decision- making is not also taught in the schools which leave adolescents to be influenced by groups who have influence on them. This list of tasks might seem daunting for many adolescents. Some will

find the challenges overwhelming and will feel alienated from society because they are unable to achieve society's expectations.

As adolescents grow, they start to look like young adults and are able to communicate more maturely and effectively than children. Consequently, it is understandable that many adults expect adolescents behaviour ought to reflect the norms of adult behaviour. The expectation that adolescents will be responsible and will conscientiously set out to meet the developmental tasks of adolescence is unrealistic.

The adolescent is in a process of growth and is dealing with new and previously unmet challenges, so is unlikely to stay focused on particular tasks and is sure to make mistakes. Adolescents who are overwhelmed by society's expectations may revert to anti-social behaviour, becoming involved in behaviours ranging from low-level delinquency to serious crime. Some will find ways of satisfying their needs through membership of delinquent gangs. By being in a gang they may experience the feelings of belonging that they need, along with expectations that they can meet. The impact of society's stereotypical expectations for adolescents of both sexes has been clearly identified in the relevant literature (Schrof, 1995).

In spite of the influence of feminism, girls may get messages that their primary role in life is to marry, have children and become good wives and mothers. This may play havoc with their selection of long-term goals and be damaging to some girls' self-esteem. Similarly, the ideas that teenage boys have about being an adult male can be psychologically destructive when they try to live

up to them. For both girls and boys, problems ranging from addiction to violence may often have their roots in the adolescent's inability to cope with the demands of the socialisation process.

Further, most parents do not know what is normal and realistic with regard to their expectations of their adolescent children. As their children grow through adolescence, many parents become worried, and at times distressed, by behaviours which are normal for adolescents.

Rutter (1995) believes that most adolescents are not particularly difficult or troublesome but the problem in western society for instance, is how parents respond to the adolescent phase. She argues that the parents' response may create negative feelings and catapult the adolescent into antisocial behaviour. In her discussion of the issues she draws on research by Steinberg (1990). Steinberg's hypothesis was that when children reach puberty, the combination of the adolescence phase of development and the behaviour and emotions of parents produces tremendous changes in the parents, with parents becoming increasingly distressed.

The Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The theory holds that the decision to engage in a particular behaviour results from a rational process that is goal oriented and follows a logical sequence. Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) find two issues to be central to intentions. These are attitudes toward the relevant behaviour and subjective norms. They see attitudes toward the relevant behaviour to be based on beliefs

regarding the behaviour; a person considers and evaluates a number of behavioural options. In the subjective norms, the reaction of others is critical or crucial. The individual has to find out whether significant others approve or disapprove of the behaviour. It is the outcomes that serve as the basis for him to reach a decision to act or not act. Intention seems to be an important element since it is that which invariably predicts behaviour.

In the matter of behaviour and whether it has to be emitted or not, Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) argued that on any given occasion, attitude may not guide behaviour depending on whether the subjective norm favours or does not favour the behaviour and whether it is the norm or the attitude that is more important to the individual. One of the two key attributes Manstead (1996) offers for this framework is that strong relationships between attitudes and behaviour will only be found where attitudinal measures and behavioural measures are compatible with respect to the action, object, context and time elements of behaviour. With these behavioural intentions, the individual person has the prerogative to make the decision to perform or not to perform the intended behaviour.

The theory of reasoned action is relevant to impact peer pressure has on adolescents decision- making because, adolescents form of friendship is based on interest and those they find compatible and so they tend to sometimes conform to behaviour their peers decide on because of the common beliefs they share. This study will explore reasons why adolescents will conform or reject suggestions by peers.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour proposed by Ajzen (1988) is an extension of the theory of reasoned action discussed earlier on. This theory represents the individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a particular behaviour. It states that if behaviour is easy to perform, it is rated high in perceived behavioural control, but a difficult one is rated low in perceived behavioural control. In this theory therefore, a person with a high perceived behavioural control is more likely to form the intention to perform that behaviour despite apparent obstacles and setbacks. Manstead (1996) explains that the role of perceived behavioural control is 'non-psychological' in that it is not the perception of control that causes the failure to act in accordance with intentions but rather the lack of actual control over the behaviour. Ajzen (1988) notes that behavioural control affects the relationship existing between intentions and behaviour in two different ways: (1) the degree of belief in one's ability to perform a particular behaviour (*perceived* behavioural control) affects intentions regarding that behaviour and (2) the degree of *actual* behavioural control affects one's ability to behave as intended.

This theory can also be related to impact of peer pressure on adolescent decision- making in that, some adolescents lack the actual control on various behaviours they put up because of the massive control other peers have on them and so it affects their ability to behave in a way they intend. Some adolescents may genuinely decide not to engage in a particular behaviour but because of the fact that they do not have that actual control over those behaviours they intend not

to do, they conform to pressure from peers. Also peers encourage themselves to have belief in what they can do and so it affects their intentions regarding certain behaviours.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

In the view of the social cognitive theorists, there are three basic tenets (Woodward, 1982; Jones, 1989; Perry et.al., 1990; Thomas, 1990; Crosbie-Brunett & Lewis, 1993).

Firstly, response consequences (such as rewards or punishments) influence the likelihood that a person will perform a particular behaviour again in a given situation. Second, humans can learn by observing others, in addition to learning by participating in an act personally. Thirdly, individuals are most likely to model behaviour observed by others they identify with. Identification with others is a function of the degree to which a person is perceived to be similar to one's self, in addition to the degree of emotional attachment that is felt toward an individual.

This theory focuses on how children and adults operate cognitively on their social experiences and how these cognitions then influence behaviour and development. His theory was the first to incorporate the notion of modelling, or vicarious learning, as a form of social learning.

The SCT defines human behaviour as a triadic, dynamic, and reciprocal interaction of personal factors, behaviour, and the environment (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1989). According to this theory, an individual's behaviour is uniquely determined by each of these three factors. While the SCT upholds the

behaviourist notion that response consequences mediate behaviour, it contends that behaviour is largely regulated antecedent through cognitive processes. Therefore, response consequences of behaviour are used to form expectations of behavioural outcomes. It is the ability to form these expectations that give humans the capability to predict the outcomes of their behaviour, before the behaviour is performed. In addition, the SCT posits that most behaviour is learned vicariously.

The SCT's strong emphasis on one's cognitions suggests that the mind is an active force that constructs one's reality, selectively encodes information, performs behaviour on the basis of values and expectations, and imposes structure on its own actions (Jones, 1989). Through feedback and reciprocity, a person's own reality is formed by the interaction of the environment and one's cognitions. In addition, cognitions change over time as a function of maturation and experience (i.e. attention span, memory, ability to form symbols, reasoning skills). It is through an understanding of the processes involved in one's construction of reality that enables human behaviour to be understood, predicted, and changed.

The SCT explains behaviour in terms of a triadic, dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the environment, personal factors, and behaviour. However, this reciprocal interaction does not imply that all sources of influence are of equal strength. The SCT recognizes that some sources of influence are stronger than others and that they do not all occur simultaneously. In fact, the interaction between the three factors will differ based on the individual, the particular behaviour being examined, and the specific situation in which the behaviour occurs (Bandura, 1989). Thus, this model of causation as proposed by the SCT is

extremely complex. The person-behaviour interaction involves the bi-directional influences of one's thoughts, emotions, and biological properties and one's actions (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1989). For example, a person's expectations, beliefs, self-perceptions, goals, and intentions give shape and direction to behaviour.

However, the behaviour that is carried out will then affect one's thoughts and emotions. The SCT also accounts for biological personal factors, such as sex, ethnicity, temperament, and genetic predisposition and the influences they have on behaviour.

A bi-directional interaction also occurs between the environment and personal characteristics (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1989). In this process, human expectations, beliefs, and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by social influences and physical structures within the environment. These social influences can convey information and activate emotional reactions through such factors as modelling, instruction, and social persuasion. In addition, humans evoke different reactions from their social environment as a result of their physical characteristics, such as age, size, race, sex, physical attractiveness.

In addition, schools are considered a strong source of self-efficacy. This is an important consideration in today's society where schools are based on the evaluation of students by comparing individual performance to the group's performance. For those students who lag behind or have trouble with academics, this type of evaluation can result in severe deficiencies in self-efficacy (Rosenholtz & Rosenholtz, 1981).

In fact, it has been argued that the greatest contribution of the SCT is its aid in understanding how children are socialized to accept the standards and values of their society, (Stone, 1998).

From the on- going discussion, it could be deduced from the cognitive social theory that, an adolescent may be influenced to behave in a certain way by the environment in which he finds himself. The change could be as a result of pressure from friends, parents, media, religious organisations who form part of the larger environment. These agents could impact negatively or positively on the adolescents since he models after them. It is therefore imperative that, the adolescent is taught how to make competent decision in order not to be influenced negatively by these models or agents.

Behavioural Decision Theory

Early theoretical explanations applied mathematical models to explaining how individuals select between choices that differ in consequence (Fishburn, 1970). Later theories described and explained individuals' actual decision- making processes (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Thus, the distinction between normative and descriptive decision theories were established (Edwards, 1961; Hansson, 2005). An underlying assumption of decision theory is an individual's ability to form rational decisions when making choices. Decisions are portrayed as part of a process based on using the maximum amount of available information when considering all possible outcomes, and carefully weighing the costs and benefits of each possible outcome. Each stage of this process assumes an optimal amount of sound reasoning ability.

The behavioural decision theory was propounded by Edwards and Tversky (1961). It focuses on only some aspects of human activity. In particular, it focuses on how freedom is used. In the situations treated by decision theorists, there are options to choose between, and people choose in a non-random way. People's choices, in these situations, are goal-directed activities. Hence, decision theory is concerned with goal-directed behaviour in the presence of options.

Decision theory is based on the premise that man's capacity to solve life's problems correctly is limited by two factors: in extremely complex situations, he/she is not always capable of mastering all the information, and he/she does not always decide as logic and reason tell him he should, Hanson (1994). Beyond human intuition, Edwards (1961) explains that it lays an individual's personal calculation of the odds in favour or against. This personal factor, which measures the individual's will to win rather than the mathematical probabilities, must be counted into the risk and the odds.

Decision theory recognizes that the ranking produced by using a criterion has to be consistent with the decision maker's objectives and preferences. The theory offers a rich collection of techniques and procedures to reveal preferences and to introduce them into models of decision. It is not concerned with defining objectives, designing the alternatives or assessing the consequences; it usually considers them as given from outside, or previously determined. Given a set of alternatives, a set of consequences, and a correspondence between those sets, decision theory offers conceptually simple procedures for choice. In a decision situation under certainty, the decision maker's preferences are simulated by a

single-attribute or multi attribute value function that introduces ordering on the set of consequences and thus also ranks the alternatives.

Situations involving interdependent decisions arise frequently in all walks of life. All of these situations call for strategic thinking, making use of available information to devise the best plan to achieve one's objectives. As for example the max-min rule, where people choose the alternative such that the worst possible consequence of the chosen alternative is better than or equal to the best possible consequence of any other alternative. The second approach is to reduce the uncertainty case to the case of risk by using subjective probabilities, based on expert assessments or on analysis of previous decisions made in similar circumstances.

Decision theory is important to this study because it provides a common descriptive framework for describing how people actually make decisions, for comparing what people actually do with what they could conceivably do under ideal circumstances, and for uncovering ways to help people improve their decision-making skills, which is what is lacking in the adolescents' decision-making.

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Models in Decision- Making

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The Policies, Legal, Universal and Self Model (PLUS MODEL). PLUS decision model was established by the United States ethics resource centre. (www.ethics.org).The model describes how people intuitively make decisions and makes the steps explicit. The six steps of this natural, insightful decision-making process are:

Step 1: Define the problem: The most significant step in any decision-making process is describing why a decision is called for and identifying the most desired outcome(s) of the decision- making process. One way of deciding if a problem exists is to couch the problem in terms of what one wants or expects and the actual situation. In this way a problem is defined as the difference between expected and/or desired outcomes and actual outcomes. This careful attention to definition in terms of outcomes allows one to clearly state the problem. This is a critical consideration because how one defines a problem determines how one defines causes and where one searches for solutions.

Step 2: Identify available alternative solutions to the problem: The key to this step is not to limit one to obvious alternatives or what has worked in the past but to be opened to new and better alternatives. How many alternatives should one identify, ideally all alternatives should be explored. Realistically, decision maker should consider more than five in most cases, and more than three at the barest minimum. This gets away from the trap of seeing "both sides of the situation" and limiting one's alternatives to two opposing choices; either this or that.

Step 3: Evaluate the identified alternatives: As a decision maker evaluates each alternative, one should be looking at the likely positive and negative ones for each. It is unusual to find one alternative that would completely resolve the problem and is heads and shoulders better than all others. Differences in the "value" of respective alternatives are typically small, relative and a function of the decision maker's personal perceptions, biases and predispositions. As a decision

maker considers positive and negative outcomes, one must be careful to differentiate between what one knows for a fact and what one believes might be the case. The decision maker will only have all the facts in trivial cases. People always supplement what facts they have with assumptions and beliefs. This distinction between fact-based evaluation and non-fact -based evaluation is included to assist the decision maker in developing a "confidence score" for each alternative. The decision maker needs to determine not just what results each alternative could yield, but how probable it is that those results will be realized. The more the evaluation is fact-based, the more confident he/she can be that the expected outcome will occur.

Step 4: Make the decision: When acting alone, this is the natural next step after selecting the best alternative. When the decision maker is working in a team environment, this is where a proposal is made to the team, complete with a clear definition of the problem, a clear list of the alternatives that were considered and a clear rationale for the proposed solution.

Step 5: Implement the decision: While this might seem obvious, it is necessary to make the point that deciding on the best alternative is not the same as doing something. The action itself is the first real, tangible step in changing the situation. It is not enough to think about it or talk about it or even decide to do it, a decision only counts when it is implemented.

Step 6: Evaluate the decision: Every decision is intended to fix a problem. The final test of any decision is whether or not the problem was fixed. Did it go away? Did it change appreciably? Is it better now, or worse, or the same? What

new problems did the solution create? These are the questions a decision maker is expected to ask when evaluating a decision implemented.

General Normative Decision Model

Baron and Brown (1991) outlined a nine (9) step decision model in teaching decision- making to adolescents. In taking decisions, one is expected to go through the following steps in order to arrive at a competent decision according to the authors.

1. Distinguish between decision that calls for different decision   making, which is decision under certainty, risk and uncertainty.

2. Identify and define a decision- making situation.

3. List action alternatives.

4. Identify criteria for comparing the alternatives and the possible consequences of each alternative.

5. Assess the utilities of possible consequences when necessary.

6. Evaluate each alternative in terms of its attractiveness and probability.

7. Assess the value of collecting additional information on the issue.

8. Evaluate the decision- making problems.

Skills for Effective Decision- Making

People make countless decisions each day, from deciding what to eat or wear to figuring out how to spend their free time or disposable income. Many of these decisions require little effort or thought, but at times, people face circumstances that require more consideration. The following steps provide a

framework with which to contemplate such complicated and difficult decisions as outlined by (Jones, 2004).

1. Pinpoint what needs to be decided. People should remember that if they do not have at least two possible options, there is no decision to be made.

2. Identify all possible courses of action. This is purely a brainstorming session, so people should write down every alternative that comes to mind without stopping to consider the feasibility of each option. Consider seeking additional information from family, friends, the Internet, or professionals to expand the number of potential alternatives.

3. List the pros and cons of each alternative, considering your own values and priorities (economic, personal, and social). Cross out options that you do not feel comfortable with, are infeasible, or contradict your values and priorities. This process should help narrow down the list of possibilities.

4. Examine the remaining options. Consider the outcomes of each alternative. Does the option excite you, does the potential outcome makes you uneasy? It is important to feel comfortable with both the alternative and the outcome.

5. Make your choice and take action. It should be kept in mind that the resulting solution should solve the dilemma, be satisfying, and not create more problems and that the individual should also be committed to this solution.

6. Evaluate the outcome. It should be remembered that there is a difference between a good decision and a good outcome. Even if one did not reach

the anticipated outcome, one should quite possibly still make the best decision based on one's values and priorities.

Decision-making is a lifelong process and taking the time to learn from each outcome will provide one with valuable lessons that can be used the next time around.

Common Pitfalls in Decision- Making

1. Identifying the wrong problem**.** Sometimes what really needs to be decided is very obvious, but other times the issue is harder to spot. Figuring out the focus of one's decision can save one from big headaches later on.

2. Listening to only one source**.** This will hurt one's chances of coming up with a broad choice of alternatives and coming up with the best solution. Overestimating how helpful or reliable one person can be is also dangerous, because nobody can completely understand the particular dynamics of one's situation.

3. Listening to too many sources**.** It is important to collect as much information as possible to help one make a decision, but an overload of input may prevent a decision maker from following what is right. Trusting one's intuition is a key component of successful decision-making.

4. Overshooting on the outcome**.** When considering options, one should take care to also assess how probable the outcomes of each option truly are. A

decision that looks attractive but is totally unfeasible will not help one solve the problem.

5. **Bad timing.** Sometimes it is best to hold off on making a decision, but other times delaying a response can make things a lot worse. Taking time will probably result in a higher-quality decision, but expediting the process could also give more time to fix things in the event of an undesirable outcome. Since each choice is often case-specific, consider how the pros and cons of timing will affect decision and the ensuing outcome.

Decision- making is a critical aspect to feeling successful and happy in life and it is at the root of all that people do. It is important to develop effective decision- making skills and strategies. Problem solving strategies include, but are not limited to brain storming, cost benefit analysis, written remediation plans, and an examination of possible choices (Wester, Christianson, Fouad & Santiago-Rivera, 2008). The decision- making process can be complicated and overwhelming. As a result, it is valuable for adolescents to learn or be taught the discussed models to follow, that may be applied to everyday decisions, as well as life changing choices in order to make very good decisions.

From the models discussed above, it can be said that decision- making generally involves defining the problem, generating alternatives; checking risks and consequences of choices, selecting an alternative and evaluating the decision. These are models that decision makers which includes adolescents are expected to follow to be able to make very good decisions. The decision- making styles of

adolescents have become a case of interest to researchers because of their presumed involvement in various unplanned behaviours and an attempt to know whether they actually take their decision with any of the numerous models in mind.

Empirical Review

Decision- making defined: Miller and Byrnes (2001) defined decision-making as the process of choosing between different alternatives while in the midst of pursuing one's goal. Von, Winterfeldt and Edwards (1986) (cited in Fischoff, Beyth-Marom, Quadrel & Furby, 1992) also define decision- making as the process of making choices among courses of action. It can therefore be seen as a process of selecting or choosing what to do from a number of alternatives available.

Decision- Making Styles of Adolescents

Past researches have examined various components of the decision-making Perspective of adolescents and as a result, several decision- making style assessments have been developed. A study by Johnson (1978) to look at adolescents dimensions, he created the Decision- making Inventory which used two aspects (Spontaneous versus systematic, internal versus external) to assess adolescents on two bipolar dimensions, that is; information gathering and analyzing styles. Findings of Johnson's Decision- making Inventory classified adolescents as individuals who have spontaneous-internal, spontaneous-external, systematic-internal, or systematic-external decision- making styles. Adolescents

are individuals who like to take decisions based on what pertains at a particular time.

In a study on the decision- making perspective of adolescents, Rolison and Scherman (2002) assessed adolescents' perceived benefits and costs of certain risk taking behaviours. In their study, 171 older adolescent participants aged 18-21 completed three questionnaires, one of which was the Risk Involvement and Perception Scale (RIPS), designed by (Siegel et al., 1994). The RIPS presented participants with 19 behaviours ranging from low to high risk, such as playing contact sports and taking cocaine. Participants rated their frequency of participation, perceived risk, and perceived benefit of each of the risk taking behaviours (RTBs). Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between risk frequency and perceived risks, while there was a positive correlation between risk frequency and perceived benefits. These findings show that the more risky adolescents perceive behaviour, the less likely they will be able to participate in it. Conversely, the more beneficial they perceive behaviour, the more likely they engage in it.

In addition, a study by Barber (2005) to find out the correlation between risk involvement and decision- making style of adolescents in Ohio State University found that, the higher an adolescent scores on the analytical decision- making scale, the less likely one was to engage in risk taking behaviours. Conversely, the higher adolescents score on the intuitive decision- making scale, the more likely they would be involved in risk taking behaviours and that there was a significant correlation between decision- making styles and risk

involvement for adolescents. It was also realized that, there was a strong, positive correlation between risk involvement and the intuitive decision- making style of adolescents. The intuitive scale and involvement correlation for the "take/use prescribed drugs" behaviour was negative ($r = -.278$, $p <. 05$) suggesting that those participants who scored higher on the intuitive scale were less likely to take or use prescribed drugs. Of particular importance is the fact that the significant correlations between involvement and perceived risk were negative correlations, the strongest for "smoke marijuana" and "drink alcohol" (both r's $= -.461$, $p < .05$). This negative correlation also suggests that the more risky one perceives behaviour to be, the less likely he/she is to engage in it. There was also a significant positive correlation between the intuitive decision- making style and involvement for six of the behaviours. These behaviours were alcohol use, illegal drug use, sexual behaviour, stereotypic male, socially acceptable behaviour, and imprudent behaviours with the strongest correlation for "getting drunk" ($r = .392$, $p < .05$). It can be said that, decision- making styles of adolescents are based on intuition, avoidance, rationality, spontaneous decision- making and depending on someone else for a decision to be made.

In corroboration of the study done by Barber (2005) Nygren (2000) did a study which used the Decision- making Style Inventory (DMI) to determine the decision- making styles of adolescents. This DMI contained three scales that was used to measure separate decision- making styles of analytical (ANA), intuitive (INT), and regret based emotional (REG) decision- making styles to assess the decision- making style of adolescents. It was found that individuals with high

analytical minds were less likely to be risk seeking and that high intuitive decision makers were likely to be more risk seeking. It concluded that there may be some adolescents whose decision- making styles would allow them to be more adaptive than others in certain situations. In spite of all these findings, review done by Rolison and Scherman (2002) point to the fact that although much research exists on adolescent decision- making styles and peer pressure, it appears that results from different perspectives do not offer conclusive insight into adolescent decision- making style and risk taking behaviour. Risk taking behaviours, such as cigarette smoking and unprotected sexual intercourse behaviour of adolescents according to (Beyth-Marom, Austin, Fischhoff, Palmgren & Jacobs-Quadrel, 1993; Siegel, Cousins, Rubovits, Parsons, Lavery & Crowley, 1994) are of higher interest for researchers than other pro-social behaviours. However, this study will focus on the pro social behaviours that adolescents learn from peers and highlight them in the study.

Adolescents and Peer Influence

As adolescents' attempt to navigate their way through the often painful and confusing task of establishing their own identities and defining who they are, both to themselves and to the world, may sometimes depend on their peers. Adolescence brings with it many new challenges in the areas of friendships, autonomy, decision-making, changing family relationships, and the biological chaos of puberty. According to Fadell and Temkow (2004) adolescence is also a time when the peer group often replaces parents as the primary influencing agent with regard to certain behaviours and attitudes. The phenomenon of the peer

group poses several important questions to obtaining a greater understanding of the developmental trajectory of behaviour and attitudes in adolescence.

Carlo, Fabes, Laible and Kupanoff (1999) explain that peer influence is the process by which children shape each other's behaviour and attitudes, leading to conformity within the group. Much of the research on peer influence focuses on adolescence, mainly because adolescents spend increasing amounts of time with peers as they gain independence from their parents. It is during this time that individuals begin to choose their peers based on interest rather than convenience. This is because adolescents are more dependent on their peers compared to younger children as this age-group is particularly susceptible to influence from their friends (Barry & Wentzel, 2006; Cohen & Prinstein, 2006).

Research has shown that adolescents influence each other to engage in risky activities like doing drugs. Lamsaouri (1995) conducted a study on adolescents and drugs in Morocco and found that 55% of teenagers were introduced to drugs by the intermediary of peers. This huge rate indicates the salient and strong influence that peers have on each other, especially in drug abuse.

Further, a longitudinal study by Geary (1993) in the University of Virginia on relationship between adolescent autonomy within the family and susceptibility to peer pressure, autonomy was measured from the teen reports, parent reports, and observed family interaction of 88 adolescents when the teens were 16 years old. Then susceptibility to peer pressure was measured from teen reports when they were 18. The study examined three aspects of family

relationships that affect teens' behavioural or social cognitive autonomy: parental control, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Results indicated that high parental control and decision-making by parents on teens alone was related to high susceptibility to peer pressure. In addition, teens whose mothers undermined their autonomy during conflict resolution were also high in susceptibility to peer influence. However teens who participated in joint decision-making were lower in susceptibility to peer influence. Overall, it was found that autonomy at age 16 could predict low susceptibility to peer pressure at age 18. These findings also show that adolescents may not move from a dependency on parents to a dependency on peers. Instead, autonomy seems to be a consistent trait over time and across different social relationships.

Additionally, adolescents are well aware that they influence each other. Lashbrook (2000) reported on a national Gallup poll release that surveyed 13- to 17-year-olds on the Columbine shooting. It was found that 40 percent of the sample cited peer influence when asked why they thought the Columbine High School shooting happened. The Gallup poll release showed that America's teenagers put the blame for tragedies such as Columbine directly on themselves rather than on parents, gun laws or media violence. The poll also reported that America's youth suggest that one of the best ways to prevent future occurrences was to find ways to foster better communication among students, and to break down the barriers that apparently create hostility between groups in today's American high schools. This research shows that peer influence can be a scary phenomenon for both adolescents and adults in the school setting and so

stakeholders should be concerned about issues of adolescents. The report failed to ask why adolescents conformed to such peer pressure and this study will focus on why so that the reasons for their conformity will be known and that will help explain issues better.

Research has demonstrated that friends' behaviour and attitudes become more similar over time. This was the finding of (Ellis & Zarbatany, 2007; Zalta & Keel, 2006) when their research focused on dyadic friendships. It was revealed that by early adolescence, most peer interaction took place in groups; namely cliques and crowds. Ellis and Zarbatany defined cliques as a group of three or more peers who regularly interact, share a common environment, and have developed a common set of norms. In contrast, crowds are larger than cliques, and are formed based on reputation and membership within a crowd is not dependent on sharing a common environment. Why in a group they are not able to control their behaviour was not explored and this study will again explore the reasons why adolescents are not able to control their behaviours they were introduced by peers.

Group influence on behaviour is not consistent across all groups' however; certain characteristics of a group make it more influential on members' behaviour and attitudes. Group status, visibility, and dominance within the larger environment all contribute to a group's power of influence (Ellis & Zarbatany, 2007). Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) found again in their study that groups that are highly visible are considered high-status, regardless of whether the visibility is due to pro-social or antisocial behaviours. It further noted that membership in a

high-status group offers more benefits than membership in a low-status group, including social attention, access to resources, trendsetting power, and more options for building relationships with peers. The researchers concluded that because of these benefits, high-status group members are highly motivated to preserve their social position. This pressure makes high-status group members more likely to conform to group norms and especially strict in dealing with group members who do not maintain group standards.

Various studies have described the development of susceptibility to peer pressure in adolescence as following an inverted U-shaped curve, increasing during early adolescence, peaking around age 14 and declining thereafter. This pattern, however, is derived mainly from studies that specifically examined peer pressure and antisocial behaviour.

In the study of Steinberg and Kathryn (2007) on age differences in resistance to peer Influence, age differences and developmental change in resistance to peer influence were assessed using a new self-report instrument that separates susceptibility to peer 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. Results indicated that across all demographic groups, resistance to peer influences increased linearly between ages 14 and 18. In contrast, there was little evidence for growth in this capacity between ages 10 and 14 or between 18 and 30. Middle adolescence is noted by the researchers as 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.

(Cohen & Prinstein, 2006;   Steinberg & Kathryn, 2007) observed in their studies that research on negative behaviours influenced by peers includes aggression, risk taking and promiscuity, delinquency, substance use, problematic eating behaviours, vandalism, cheating, stealing, truancy, and trespassing.

While abundance of studies have examined the negative influences of peers on delinquent or antisocial behaviours, fewer studies have focused on the extent adolescents' friends' foster successful outcomes and pro-social behaviours. Some researchers have questioned the narrow perspective of peer influence on adolescents. Brown, Classen and Eicher (1986) found in their study on peer pressure, peer conformity dispositions and self reported behaviour among adolescents that peer influence is not unidirectional. With their sample of 1027 6th- 12th grade students reported that peers both encouraged and discouraged adolescents in five different areas of their lives, namely, academic engagement, participation in antisocial behaviours, family involvement, school involvement and peer group involvement. Peers according to the findings of the authors have an impact on many different areas of adolescents lives and that they do not only affect adolescents decisions to drink, smoke, use drugs or engage in other delinquent behaviours. They also influence adolescents' involvement with their families and their involvement in school.

In a related study, (Brown & Classen, 1985; Eicher, 1986) sought to find out which pressures are encountered by adolescents. The studies revealed five

main types of pressures, namely, pressure for peer involvement such as spending free time with friends and attending social events (1), pressures for participation in academic and extracurricular activities in school (2), pressures for engagement with their families (3), pressures for conformity to peer norms in dressing, grooming, and musical tastes (4), pressures related to misconduct such as drug and alcohol use, sexual laxity and delinquent activities (5). The strongest as concluded by the researchers are expectations of group involvement and the less keenly felt are pressures for school participation, family engagement and peer conformity. The findings therefore suggest that the influences adolescents exert on each other are not necessarily antifamily and misbehaviour alone. Brown et al (1986) examined further the susceptibility of adolescents to various kinds of peer pressure. They found that young people at every age from 12 to 18 were much less disposed to go along with their friends when they were being urged to engage in some antisocial activity than when they were being urged to engage in some neutral activity. The researchers concluded that by late adolescence, pressures to socialize with group members and conform to group norms typically weaken, whereas peer urging to participate in school activities and avoid or engage in misconduct is likely to increase during the early school years. It can be deduced from this study that studies of conformity behaviour bear out the expectation that early and middle adolescents are more likely to be influenced by attitudes of their peer group than either preadolescence or late adolescence.

In terms of pro-social behaviours, researchers like (Bryant & Hansen 1980; Carlo et al., 1999; Ellis & Zarbatany, 2007) have all noted in their studies

that peers influence each other in the areas of academic engagement, sharing, cooperation, participation in extracurricular activities, and sexual abstinence which are all pro social activities.

(Dubow, Lovko & Kausch, 1990, Pearl, Bryan & Herzog, 1990) study on gender and age differences in adolescent conformity noted that girls are somewhat more concerned about peer group belongingness than boys, more inclined to conform to group expectations and are more likely to report being troubled by peer pressure. When presented with hypothetical situations that measure disposition to conform, it was also identified that girls worry more than boys about the consequences of disagreeing or declining to go along with the urgings of friends.

Peer conformity, sometimes referred to as peer pressure, occurs when individuals choose to adopt the attitudes or behaviours of others because of real or imagined pressure. In Western cultures, as the amount of time spent with peers increases, so does the influence and support they provide. Berndt (1979) traced the developmental patterns of family and peer influence in American families and found that in the third grade, the influence of parents and peers are often in opposition to each other. However, these children are influenced more by their parents than their peers. By sixth grade, the influence of peers rises dramatically, but it tends to be found in different situations from those of parents. Consequently, the influence of parents and peers are not in opposition. In ninth grade, conformity to peers peaks and is again in strong opposition to parents. At this time, peers often endorse the adoption of antisocial standards that inevitably

conflict with parental values and standards. American adolescents' movement towards independence the author found peaks around ninth grade and is met with maximal opposition from parents. It concluded that adolescent conformity to peer influence declines through late high school and college-age years.

In summary, peers are more influential in adolescence than at any other time in life. The quality of the relationship between adolescents and their peers, as well as the type of peers they associate with, play important roles in aiding or impeding their current and future functioning. There are aspects of all peer relations that are unique to the culture and environment in which they exist. The relationship parents have with their adolescents influences their children's susceptibility to negative peer influence.

Factors that Influence Decision- Making

Every day people are inundated with decision- making being it big or small. Understanding how people arrive at their choices is an area of cognitive psychology that has received attention. Theories have being generated to explain how people make decisions, and studies have being done to identify what type of factors influence decision- making of adolescents in the present and the future.

According to Akers (2010) there are several important factors that influence decision- making in general and adolescents in particular. Significant among them include emotions, maturity of judgement, past experiences, a variety of cognitive biases, an escalation of commitment and sunk outcomes, individual differences, including age and socioeconomic status, and a belief in personal

relevance. These things all impact the decision- making process and the decisions made by people.

Larson (1980) conducted a study on how decisions are taken by adolescents and found that emotions played a role in adolescent decision- making. It was explained that, emotions affect how people think and behave and it also influences the information people attend to. When people are experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, they are likely to underestimate the likelihood of negative consequences to their actions. Consequently, when they are experiencing negative emotions, they are likely to focus on the near term and lose sight of the bigger picture. The report continued that both adolescents' and adults' decision-making abilities are influenced by emotions. Larson's research again found that adolescents experience more emotions in general, than do adults. In a similar study to ascertain findings by Larson, Asmussen and Larson (1991) identified that, about one-quarter (1/4) to one-third (1/3) of adolescents' strong emotions exhibited during decision- making both positive and negative, were tied in some way to real or fantasized romantic emotions.

Another factor that may influence decisions adolescents make, according to Cauffman (1996) is their level of maturity of judgement. In her study on psychosocial factors in adolescent decision- making, she found that maturity of judgement was a factor that influenced adolescent decision- making. Maturity of judgement according to the researcher encompassed three dimensions namely; responsibility, which was explained as being self-reliant and having a healthy sense of autonomy; perspective, also meant taking the long-term view and

showing concern for others; and temperance explained as being able to limit impulsivity and exercise self-control. In general, Cauffman's research found that maturity was curvilinearly related to age. It was explained that, maturity level was high among 6th graders, but dropped to its lowest level among 10th and 11th graders, and then began increasing into young adulthood, when it plateau. The researcher also found that girls generally were more mature than boys at a given age in early adolescence in terms of taking good decisions. The researcher stated however that, the level of maturity of judgement was a better predictor of choosing a "responsible" option than was age. For example, a mature 15-year-old was more likely to make a "responsible" decision such as not smoking marijuana, or not shoplifting when peers influence them to than an immature 24-year-old. The researcher concluded that, the less mature a young person was rated in the study, the more likely he or she was to choose a less "responsible" option, (Cauffman, 1996).

Further, past experiences can impact future decision- making. Juliusson, Karlsson and Garling (2005) indicated in the conclusion of their study on factors that influence decision- making that past decisions influenced the decisions people make in the future. It is explained that when something positive came from a decision people made, people were more likely to decide in a similar way next time round given a similar situation. On the other hand, people tend to avoid repeating past mistakes. This is significant because future decisions made based on past experiences cannot necessarily be the best decisions. In financial decision-making for instance, highly successful people do not make investment decisions

based on past sunk outcomes, rather by examining choices with no regard for past experiences, (Juliusson, et al.). In addition to past experiences, decision- making as found by Juliusson, et al. may be influenced by an escalation of commitment and sunk outcomes which are unrecoverable costs. Juliusson, Karlsson and Garling concluded in their study that apart from past experiences, people make decisions based on an irrational escalation of commitment, that is, individuals investing larger amounts of time, money, and effort into a decision to which they feel committed; and that people will tend to continue to make risky decisions when they feel responsible for the sunk costs, time, money, and effort spent on a project. As a result, decision- making may at times be influenced by 'how far in the hole' the individual feels he or she is, (Juliusson, et al.).

Research has shown that some individual differences may also influence decision- making. Studies done by (de Bruin, Parker & Fischoff, 2007; Finucane, Mertz, Slovic & Schmidt, 2005) indicated that differences in age, socioeconomic status (SES), and cognitive abilities influence decision- making. Finucane, et al, established a significant difference in decision- making across age in their study that, as cognitive functions decline as a result of age, decision- making performance may also decline as well. Findings of Finucane, et al's study was corroborated by Mikels, Reed and Simon (2008) in their research which also showed that with respect to age, older adults preferred fewer choices than young adolescents in their decision- making. In addition, de Bruin et al. also established in their study that older people may be overconfident regarding their ability to make decisions, which inhibits their ability to apply strategies. According to the

findings of the study of de Bruin et al., apart from the age difference, people in lower socio-economic status (SES) groups may have less access to education and resources, which may make them more susceptible to experiencing negative life events, often beyond their control, as a result, low SES individuals may make poorer decisions, based on past decisions.

Aside past experiences, cognitive biases, and individual differences; another influence on decision- making is the belief in personal relevance. Presumably, when people believe what they decide matters; they are more likely to make a decision. Acevedo and Krueger (2004) examined individuals' voting patterns in United States of America, and concluded that people will vote more readily when they believe their opinion is indicative of the attitudes of the general population and that People will vote only when they believe their vote counts. Acevedo and Krueger questioned this notion and said, this voting phenomenon is ironic because when more people vote, the individual vote counts less in electoral mathematics and yet if individuals know their decision will count they will vote.

Globalisation and Adolescents

Globalisation has existed for many centuries as a process by which cultures influence one another and become more alike through trade, immigration, and the exchange of information and ideas. However, in recent decades, the degree and intensity of the connections among different cultures and different world regions have accelerated dramatically because of advances in telecommunications and a rapid increase in economic and financial interdependence worldwide. Consequently, in recent years, globalisation has

become one of the most widely used terms to describe the current state of the world. Globalisation encompasses a wide range of issues and phenomena which adolescents and peer pressure form part.

A study by Booth (2002) on Arab adolescents facing the future: Enduring ideals and pressures for change revealed that adolescents in Arab countries who are of the middle and upper classes in urban areas are similar in many ways to young people in the West. Access to extended education and a variety of leisure opportunities, including dating, playing electronic games, and surfing the Internet makes no difference. In contrast, young people in rural areas typically leave school early to help with the family land or herds. Among some of the urban people who are experiencing the influence of globalisation directly, a backlash against globalisation has begun with Western influences blamed for a decline in moral standards. According to Esposito (1997) calls have grown for a reassertion of Islamic identity and for resistance to what is believed to be the corrupting influence of the Western dominated global culture on the adolescent.

Nsamenang (2002) in his study on Adolescence in Sub-Saharan Africa: An image constructed from Africa's triple inheritance, found that in sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous cultures are increasingly linked to the global culture and that rates of adolescents' and the effect of peer pressure are rising as traditional systems of control lose their relevance in the eyes of the young. This problem as the study noted is sometimes blamed on the introduction of Western media, with their relentless stimulation. The influence of globalisation on adolescents has been

high because in the words of Moore (1993) "The global political economy is in sight even from the food gardens of the most peripheral settlements" (p.4).

Nsamenang (2002) observed that the process of acculturation and globalisation has bestowed on contemporary Africa a dual politico-economic and cultural system of old indigenous traditions and imported legacies. This has produced a marginal population whose adolescents are groping desperately to reconcile within individual and collective psyches, the ambivalences and contradictions of a confusing cultural braid he concluded. These findings show that the people of Africa are facing the challenge of maintaining their traditions while adopting many of the ways of the global culture. Globalisation has broken down the family traditions and so adolescents do not stay at home for them to be taught the traditional way of upbringing because of schooling or migrating in search of work.

Assessing adolescents and role they play in modern society, (Dasen, 2000; Schlegel, 2001) all found that adolescents have a pivotal role in the process of globalisation. According to the authors, unlike children, adolescents have enough maturity and autonomy to pursue information and experiences outside the confines of their families. Unlike adults, adolescents are not yet committed to a definite way of life and have not yet developed ingrained habits of belief and behaviour therefore, they are more open to what is new and unusual. They tend to have more interest than either children or adults in global media—recorded music, movies, television, the Internet and, to a considerable extent, global media are the

leading edge of globalisation the foot in the door that opens the way for other changes in beliefs and behaviour.

Huntemann and Morgan (2001) observed in their study that, the massive flow of popular images, representations, and symbolic models disseminated by the media profoundly shapes what adolescents think about the world and how they perceive themselves in relation to it.

Allyson (2010) also corroborated this when she found that adolescents are vulnerable to the media's influence and that advertisers use techniques such as the mere exposure effect just to influence adolescents. With the global media consistently displaying different ideals for "the perfect body" or expectations about different ways of life, adolescents have a lot of pressure in their lives.

According to a 1998 United Nations Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 1998) market researchers now try to sell to "global teens" because urban adolescents worldwide follow similar consumption patterns and have similar preferences for "global brands" of music, videos, T-shirts, soft drinks, and so on. Adolescents are also viewed by adults in some cultures as being especially vulnerable to the allurements of the global culture, and adolescent problems such as substance use and premarital pregnancy are sometimes blamed by adults on the intrusion of Western values through globalisation

Although globalisation has intensified dramatically in recent years, the world is a long way from being one homogeneous global culture. In many ways, the gaps in technology and lifestyle between rich and poor countries and between

rural and urban areas within countries have persisted and this has had tremendous influence on cultures in general and the people within which the adolescent is hugely influenced.

Problems Adolescents Encounter in Decision- Making

Beyth-Marom and Fischhoff (1997) contend that people cannot decide to follow a course of action if they have not considered that action as an option, and that many programmes for adolescents are designed to expand their range of options, yet very few researchers have studied how adolescents generate options and the problems they encounter in their decision- making. Rogel, Zuehlke, Petersen, Tobin-Richards and Shelton (1980) study of adolescent girls' contraceptive practices found that adolescent girls equated birth control with the pill and therefore did not consider other forms of birth control as options. Following this study, Beyth-Marom and Fischhoff (1997) conducted in-depth interviews with adolescent girls in groups about tough decisions they had made with the involvement of peer pressure and concluded that one of the problems adolescents go through in their decision- making is that they often see only one either-or choice rather than a series of options. They do not have the capacity to look at other alternatives and therefore see what they know as the only option opened to them. In sharp contrast, the study of Mann, Harmoni and Power (1989) to find out whether adolescents can make competent decision and whether young adolescents are incapable of creating options that foresee the consequences of alternatives, the findings showed that by the age of 15 years, many adolescents show a reliable level of competence in decision- making.

According to Cohn (1995) there may be other differences between adolescents' and adults that may influence the way they make decisions. Cohn found in her study that adolescents misperceive independent risks as cumulative, that is, they think that one must be exposed to a hazard a number of times before experiencing negative consequences. An example of this reasoning according to Cohn (1995) is the pregnant adolescent who did not think she could get pregnant the first time. Cohn observed that adolescents may also overestimate their ability to recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

Fischhoff (2008) after assessing adolescence competence in making decision drew the conclusion that adolescents may lack the experience, knowledge or feeling of control over their lives to come up with alternative choices and may be influenced by their parents, peers, media and the society as a whole in their decision- making. Adolescents depend only on what they presume they know without necessarily assessing the potential outcomes of the decisions they make. Studies by some authors also reveal that adolescents may favour their own experience over probabilistic evidence when determining the likelihood of the consequences of their actions.

Further, conclusions drawn from the studies of Beyth-Marom, Austin, Fischhoff, Palmgren and Jacobs-Quadrel (1993) on adolescent decision- making was that adolescents focus more on the social reactions of their peers when deciding to engage in or avoid risky behaviours. That is adolescents mostly wait for the approval or otherwise of their decision by peers before embarking on whatever they want to do. This studies finding is corroborated by other

researchers such as (Capone, Wood, Bosari & Laird 2007; Simons-Morton 2007) who also found in their studies that socialisation effects in group settings of adolescents are very strong determinants of their behaviour. Adolescents may not be able to accurately estimate the probability of negative consequences because of the socializing effects. They may have a hard time interpreting the meaning or credibility of information when making decisions and finally, they may be influenced by their emotions and fail to use decision-making processes which has become important in this present times of globalisation.

In this rapidly changing world, despite the problems adolescents encounter `in their decision- making, they need to be equipped with skills to guide them as they make decisions. Young people make lifestyle and career choices that impact their future and the future of society. Life skills of personal finance and consumerism are grounded in the ability to make sound decisions. In their interview with some adolescents on the influence of peers, Jumpstart Coalition (2002) drew the conclusion that adolescents who make decisions to engage in risky behaviour can negatively affect themselves and society in general. It went on to state that making sound decisions not only assist adolescents in resisting pressure by peers to engage in risky behaviours, but also fosters social skills and social awareness, and encourage them to think about consequences, decide on goals, and understand their own and others' feelings. Jacobs (1998) found in his study on adolescent decision- making that 7th and 8th graders who made snap decisions were more likely to be involved in risky behaviours than those youth who carefully thought about options, evaluated potential consequences and made

competent decisions. Competent decision-making is defined as an intellectual process leading to a response to circumstances through selection among alternatives (Nelson, 1984). McMorris (1999) examined the effects of cognitive development on the acquisition of decision-making skills in sports. He concluded that information on the optimal time for teaching and the critical period for learning decision-making skills was lacking, but that practice did increase performance in decision-making.

Board of Children, Youth and Families (2002) did a brain research and found that from infancy to early adolescence, there is a period of exuberant synapse growth followed by a period of synaptic "pruning" and with puberty, there is a second "pruning" of cells. According to the research, the cells and connections that are used survive while those that are not used perish. Given this brain research, it may be that adolescents who practice decision-making skills may increase the likelihood that the brain cells related to that process remain and are not pruned away and those who do not practice decision- making may have their cells pruned away. It is in this regard that some adolescents do not consistently apply sound decision-making skills to all decisions, especially when dealing with a stressful or conflict-laden situation.

Jacobs and Ganzel (1993) assessed adolescents' decision- making ability compared with adults. The authors identified that even when adolescents were equipped with information-processing decision-making skills, motivation to make decisions differed from adults, as the social, emotional, and developmental differences affected adolescents' decision-making ability. One of the problems

adolescents encounter in their decision- making is allowing their emotions to control their decision-making. This was observed by Fischoff, Crowell and Kipke (1999) in their study of adolescents' decision- making. Adolescents who often experience strong emotions that can affect decision-making can be taught how to recognize the effects of their emotions. Thus, adolescents who understand the decision-making process and think through a decision may rely less on emotion.

Outcomes of Adolescents' Decisions

After a decision is made, people experience a variety of reactions which may be social or psychological. In addition, present decisions may influence future decision- making. Several of the outcomes that may result from a decision are regret or satisfaction; both of which may influence upcoming decisions.

Regret, feelings of disappointment or dissatisfaction with a choice made is one potential outcome of decision- making. Interestingly, regret may shape the decision- making process. According to Abraham and Sheeran (2003) anticipated regret is the belief that the decision will be a result of inaction. Anticipated regret may prompt behaviour; that is, when an individual indicates he will do something such as exercise, he may follow through with the intended decision to avoid regret. Once the decision is made, the impact of the decision, if regret is experienced, will impact future decisions. Sagi and Friedland (2007) noted that People can often get consumed with examining the other options that were available; that is the path not taken.

Sagi and Friedland (2007) observed in their study that people felt regret in accordance with how the decision was made. Regret may be dependent on the

number of options that are available during the decision- making process; and how varied the options are may impact how regret is experienced after the decision is made. Through a series of experiments, Sagi and Friedland concluded that people feel remorse because they feel they are able to make a better choice by looking at more information previously disregarded, and carefully weighing the pros and cons of each choice. In addition, regret is magnified when individuals revisit the other available options and considering what satisfaction the other option would have brought them may feel regret. Interestingly, (Botti & Iyengar, 2004; Gilbert & Ebert, 2002) also noted that people who are dissatisfied with their decision feel obligated to embrace the decision, as a means to reducing anxiety regarding the quality of the decision. For example, when a job applicant does not get hired, he may restructure the experience, and find many reasons that explain why he did not want to work for the company.

In addition to regret, individuals may also experience satisfaction with their decisions. Satisfaction refers to how pleased the decision maker is with the outcome of the decision. There are many things that impact levels of satisfaction. Botti and Iyengar (2004) observed in their study that individuals prefer to make their own decisions and believe they will be more satisfied with their choices; however, when people are given only undesirable options, decision makers are less satisfied than those who have had the choice made for them. Botti and Iyengar concluded that the explanation for this phenomenon is that the decision maker assumes responsibility for the decision made. As a result, if the available

choices are bad, they may feel as though they are responsible for making poor choices.

Gilbert and Ebert (2002) examined in one of their studies if people prefer making decisions that are reversible. They concluded that people do prefer to have the option to change their minds; although people's ability to change their minds actually inhibits their ability to be satisfied with their choice.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

From the fore going review of literature, it has been understood that, adolescents' ways of taking decisions are not the best judging from the fact that they mostly look at one side of an issue and find it difficult exploring alternatives.

To begin with, the theory for reasoned action has pointed out that beliefs and attitudes affect people's behaviour. It again showed how a person's behaviour is influenced by a rational process and intention and that attitude are dependent on intentions, therefore, there must be goals for what people do. This will help the researcher to find out whether adolescents' decisions are based on goals and beliefs or on just conforming to peers for social acceptability.

Behavioural Decision theory provides the framework for describing how people actually make decisions, for comparing what people actually do with what they could conceivably do under ideal circumstances, and for uncovering ways to help people improve their decision-making skills. Decision theory builds the capacity to solve life's problems correctly.

The axioms of the models in decision- making are related to research question 1 which sought to find out the skills adolescents possess in making

competent decision**.** This will enable the researcher to examine whether adolescents use the skills for competent decision- making in their decisions.

On the extent adolescence experience peer pressure in their decision- making forming the research question 2, theoretically, Bandura (1986) explains that the influence of behaviour are the environment and personal characteristics and that beliefs and competencies are modified by social influences in the environment. These spark emotional reactions through modelling, instruction and social persuasion. Havighurst (1972) on the other hand asserts that, adolescence have to achieve the developmental task of emotional independence from parents and other adults. They should also achieve masculine and femine sex- roles, achieve new and mature relations with age mates of both sexes and these influence the decision- making of adolescents. Social pressure, personal efforts and physical maturation are required of one to be able to achieve these tasks. These however put enormous pressure on the adolescent to decide. A study by Larson (1994) proved that adolescents consider their emotions when taking decisions. The review brought to the fore that there is peer influence in adolescence which is based on all sorts of reasons.

It was also clear that adolescents had problems in their decision- making which falls in line with research question 3 which sought to elicit knowledge in problems adolescent face in their decision- making. It became clear from the study of Beyth-Maron and Fischhoff (2007) that, adolescents often saw only either or choice rather than a series of options. Cohn (1995) also mentioned that, adolescents misperceived independent risks as cumulative and Fischhoff (2008)

found that adolescents lacked the knowledge, experience, feeling of control over their lives to come up with alternative choices and may be influenced by their parents, peers, media and society as a whole.

The models on decision- making such as identifying the problem, looking for alternative solutions to the problem, evaluating the alternatives, taking decision and evaluating the decision is a way of helping the adolescent to improve on the decision- making.

Though, there seem to be some problems with the way adolescents make decision, not all adolescents take decision intuitively, some are meticulous in their decision- making, and that group influence in behaviour is not consistent across all groups.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the design of the research, the population, sampling techniques, research instrument, pre-testing, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

Research design is seen as the blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed. It provides the procedural outcome for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992) remarks that research design indicates the structure of a study, the nature of hypothesis, and the variables involved in the study. The research design chosen for the study was causal comparative.

Causal comparative research is aimed at determining the cause of differences for an existing condition among groups or individuals. It involves the collection of data on one independent variable for two or more groups. It is also called an ex post facto study because both the effect and the alleged cause have already occurred and must be studied in retrospect.

Additionally, Borg and Gall (1996) explain that causal comparative method is the simplest approach to exploring cause and effect relationships between phenomena. It involves a particular method of analyzing data to detect

relationship between variables. Gay and Airasian (2000) argue that, it provides better evidence of cause and effect relationships. Frankel and Wallen (2000) also indicate that causal comparative research allows the researcher to investigate the possibility of causal relationship among variables that cannot be manipulated.

These advantages notwithstanding, causal comparative research has its weakness as well. Frankel and Wallen (2000) remarked that one weakness of causal comparative research is its lack of randomization. This was resolved with the use of the simple random sampling technique to select respondents. Causal comparative design was considered appropriate for the use of this study because the phenomenon of peer pressure is an existing condition, and the study was designed to compare and know why it may be positive on some adolescents but negative on others and the cause of differences it has on the thinking of early and late adolescents.

Population

The population for this study comprised all public Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Accra Metropolis. This consisted of 11,244 males and 8316 females. The total population of senior high schools in the Accra metropolis as at April 2010 according to the statistics provided by the Greater Accra region of the Ghana Education Service was 19560. The target Population from which the sample was drawn comprised all students from six senior high schools in the Accra metropolis. Males numbered 4441 and females 2885 and these totalled 7326. From the target population of 7326, the sample for the study was drawn. SHS 1 and 3 were chosen for the study because the researcher wanted to group

the students into early adolescents and late adolescents. This helped the researcher to see across board how peer pressure impacted on the decision- making of adolescents in general. It was realized that early adolescents could be found in SHS1 while late adolescents could also be found in the SHS 3.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

In order to get select sample from the population of Senior High School students in the six selected schools in the metropolis, the Fisher, Laing, Stoekel and Townsend (1998) formula for determining sample size was employed. (See appendix A)

Stratified, purposive, simple random and proportional sampling techniques were used for the study. Gender was the basis for the stratification, that is single sex or mixed (co-educational) and the type of school that is day or boarding. With gender as a basis for stratification, single sex schools which comprised two girls' schools and two boys only, day or boarding, and thirteen mixed schools were obtained. Three strata were derived from the stratification procedure that is girls only day or boarding, boys only day or boarding and mixed day or boarding. In each of the three strata, two schools were selected for the study. The single sex strata were purposively selected since there are only two boys' schools and two girls' schools in the Accra metropolis. For the mixed schools, names of the schools in each stratum were written on pieces of paper which were put in a box and mixed. After this process, the researcher picked two schools randomly from the remaining stratum making six schools in all. (Refer to Appendix C for selected schools)

Again, students from forms one and three were purposively selected in order to have access to early and late adolescents for comparison. Form twos was not part of the study because results from the pre-testing of this study showed that the ages 15 for early adolescents and 18 for late adolescents' were mostly found in forms one and three respectively. Programmes offered by these students were also used for the sampling. Programmes were given codes, put in a box and again the lottery method of sampling was used to select two programmes from each school for the study. The proportional sampling procedure was used to obtain the sample size for each school. The total population of each school was divided by the total population of the six sampled schools which was multiplied by the sample size of 260.

Research Instrument

The instrument was developed after a thorough review of literature. The main instrument for the study was questionnaire. Questionnaire as identified by Kerlinger (1973) is widely used for collecting data in educational research because if it is developed to answer research question, it is very effective for securing factual information about practices and conditions of which the respondents are presumed to have knowledge. It is also used for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of subjects.

This study was a quantitative work and required the use of a quantitative instrument. Questionnaire was considered to be the most appropriate instrument for data collection because it provided equal level of items that brought about responses for comparing early and late adolescents.

Questionnaire has as part of its merits a high response rate particularly when the questionnaire design is good and appropriate follow up mechanisms are used. It simplifies data analysis when properly understood and implemented.

This notwithstanding, questionnaire has some weaknesses in the sense that it is expensive in terms of time especially if respondents are scattered over a large area. This was resolved when selected respondents in each school were put in one classroom to respond to the items on the questionnaire. There is also the possibility of respondents not providing the appropriate responses as the method involves structured questions. The other weakness is that there is the likelihood of respondents trying to compare answers given. This, the researcher resolved by making sure that respondents did individual work when they were filling the questionnaire. A 5-point Likert scale was used in eliciting responses from respondents. The questionnaire was made up of 47 items which included both open and close ended questions. The open ended questions were to give the respondents an opportunity to give reasons why certain decisions were made.

Validity

Content validity of the instrument was established by submitting the instrument to lecturers of the Department of Educational Foundations who had expert knowledge in research. The instrument was shaped and modified while ambiguous items which could not provide appropriate responses were cancelled. The supervisors for the study vetted and approved for content and face validity before the instrument was pre tested. The pre-testing was done at Ghana National College.

Reliability

The Cronbach's co-efficient alpha measure of internal consistency was used in determining the reliability of the questionnaire used for the study. Since majority of items were multiply scored especially on the likert scale, the Cronbach's co-efficient alpha was deemed appropriate. The choice of Cronbach's alpha was made on the merit of Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) view that the Cronbach's alpha is used when measures have multiple scored items.

The instrument was pretested in order to check how consistent the results will be during the actual work. It was tested for its reliability. The Cronbach alpha for the instrument was .81 which meant the instrument was reliable.

Pre- Testing

Donald (1990) stresses the need for a pretesting because it helps the researcher to decide whether the study is feasible and worthwhile to continue. It provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness and practicality of the data collection instrument. Gay (1992) in agreement added that a pilot testing could be used to revise questions in the guide that are apparently unclear or produce negative reactions in subjects. Frankel and Wallen (2000) supported it with the view that pre test of questionnaire or interview could reveal all ambiguities, poorly worded questions that are not understood and could also indicate whether the instruction to the respondents are clear.

The pre-testing was done at Ghana National College with 25 students representing 12 females and 13 males drawn randomly. On the basis of the pretest

results, some of the items that recorded lower reliability were modified while other items were completely taken off because they recorded negative score.

Data Collection Procedure

Introductory letters were given to the various heads of institutions I visited for the study. Further discussions were made with regards to what the study was about and the number of respondents needed for the study. Arrangements were made with the heads as to how and when the data could be collected that was going to be convenient for me, respondents and the school in general. Programmes of study that were going to be one of the bases for the data collection had already been selected for the various schools. To be able to get the two groups that is, early adolescents and late adolescents for the study, first years (SHS 1) from the selected programmes of study that were fifteen (15) years or below who formed part of the early adolescents were purposively selected and randomly chosen in order to obtain the required number. Third years (SHS 3) that were also in the selected programmes were randomly chosen to form part of the study as late adolescents.

In all the schools of Accra Academy, St. Thomas Acquinas senior high, Accra Girls', St. Mary's senior high, Labone Senior high and Kaneshie Secondary Technical school, the selected respondents were put in a different empty classroom for me to brief them about what the study was about and what was expected of them and from them. Peer pressure was defined for respondents as "when people of your own age encourage or urge you to do something or to keep you from doing something else, no matter if you personally want to or do not

want to. Questions bothering the minds of the respondents were asked and I explained to clear any doubts. Consent was sought from respondents verbally. I asked if there was any respondent who did not want to be part of the study. At Labone senior high and Accra Academy senior high, students who did not want to be part of the study asked for permission to leave and were replaced accordingly. I moved round the classrooms to explain any misunderstanding to the respondents. In each of the schools, I recruited and trained two teachers who helped in the collection of the data. All completed questionnaires were collected back the same day to ensure a hundred percent return rate. After collecting the data, respondents were debriefed and school authorities thanked. The exercise was quite smooth for me because around the time, most of the schools visited were in their revision week preparing for the end of term exams and students were readily available. Two weeks was used to collect the data.

Data Analysis

The data gathered for the study were scored and analysed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 16.0 Respondents were given a five point Likert scale to respond to. The scoring was based on the Likert five point scale of measurement of Always (A) Often (O), Sometimes (S), Not Often (NO) and Never (N). The options of the items were weighted in the Likert format with A = 5, O = 4, S = 3, NO = 2 and N = 1.

Percentages and cross tabulations were used to analyze the research questions and responses presented. Some results were also presented using the one way ANOVA.

The independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The t-test is used when there are only two groups such as male and female (Pallant, 2004). The strength of this tool is that, it helps to know whether there are any differences between the groups, thus males and females.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study looked at the impact of peer pressure on adolescent decision making in some Senior high schools in the Accra Metropolis. This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected. The analysis was done in the context of the research questions and hypothesis that guided the study.

Biographic Data of Respondents

Table 1:   Sex Distribution of Respondents

	No.	%
Male	143	55
Female	117	45
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 1 indicates that in all 143 (55%) males and 117 (45%) females were sampled for the study. The percentage ratio of males and females was 55:45. The age distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
13-15	71	27.3	58	22.3	129	49.6
18-21	72	27.7	59	22.7	131	50.4
Total	**143**	**55**	**117**	**45**	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

From Table 2, out of the 260 respondents studied, 129 (49.6%) respondents were between the ages of 13-15 while within 131(50.4%) were between the ages of 18-21. Thus slim majority of the respondents were from the 18-21 age brackets.

Table 3 presents data on the class or forms of respondents.

Table 3: Class/ Form of Respondents

Class/Form	No.	%
SHS 1	129	49.6
SHS 3	131	50.4
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 3 reports that 129(49.6%) out of the total respondents came from the SHS1 class while 131(50.4%) were from the SHS 3. Thus majority of the respondents were from SHS 3.

Table 4: Religious Denomination of Respondents

Religion	No.	%
Christianity	231	88.8
Islam	29	11.2
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 4 shows that out of the 260 respondents, 231 (88.8%) were Christians while 29 (11.2%) were Moslems. Thus majority of the respondents were Christians.

Table 5: School Type

School Type	No.	%
Single Sexed Male	99	38.1
Mixed School	97	37.3
Single Sex Female	64	24.6
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

The type of schools attended by respondents is presented in table 5. They were sampled from single sexed and mixed schools. Out of the 260 respondents, 99(38.1%) were from the single sexed male schools, while 64(24.6%) were from the single sexed female schools. However, 97(24.6%) sampled were from the mixed schools.

Table 6: Programme of Study of Respondents

Programme	No.	%
Business	111	42.7
General Arts	64	24.6
Gen. Science	54	20.8
Home Economics	18	6.9
Visual Arts	13	5.0
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 6 indicates that out of the 260 respondents, 111(42.7%) were from the Business programme while 64(24.6%) from the Gen. Arts programmer, whiles 13(5.0%) came from the Visual Arts class. Thus majority of the respondents were from the Business programme.

Table 7: Residential Status of Respondents

Status	No.	%
Day Students	194	74.6
Boarding Students	67	25.4
Total	**260**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 7 shows that 194(74.6%) out of the 260 respondents were day students while 67(25.4%) were boarding students. This indicates that majority of the respondents were day students.

This section presents the research questions raised for the study

Research Question 1

To what extent do adolescents in SHS possess the skills to take a good decision?

In taking a competent decision, this research question sought to find out whether adolescents possess the requisite skills of defining a decision making situation, identifying all possible courses of action, listing the pros and cons of each alternative, examining the other options, making a choice and evaluating the outcome after taking a decision. Respondents were given a five point Likert scale to respond to. The scoring was based on the Likert five point scale of measurement of Always (A) Often (O), Sometimes (S), Not Often (NO) and Never (N). The options of the items were weighted in the Likert format with A = 5, O = 4, S = 3, NO = 2 and N = 1. The maximum score a respondent could obtain was 50. Scores were grouped for easy computation. The mean mark was 38.3. Respondents' who scored 38 and above, (where the asterisk is) were considered to have the requisite skill in making competent decision.

The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Skills Needed to Take a Good Decision

	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
Score	No.	%	No.	%
50-52	2	1.5	2	1.5
47-49	10	7.8	13	9.9
44-46	20	15.5	19	14.5
41-43	18	14	18	13.7
38-40 *	22	17	31	23.7
35-37	21	16.3	20	15.3
32-34	19	14.7	12	9.2
29-31	10	7.8	9	6.9
26-28	4	3.1	5	3.8
23-25	3	2.3	2	1.5
Total	**129**	**100**	**131**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011 ﹨   Mean Score ($\bar{X}$=38.3)

From table 8, 72(55.8%) of the respondents in early adolescents were above the mean mark of 38, while 57(44.2%) were below the mean mark. However, 83(63.4%) of the respondents in their late adolescents were above the mean mark of 38, while 48(36.6%) fell below the mean mark.

The data in Table 8 indicates that majority of respondents possessed the skills of defining a decision making situation, identifying all possible courses of action, listing the pros and cons of each alternative, examining the other options, making a choice and evaluating the outcome of a decision taken. These are the

skills needed to take a good decision. This may probably be due to the fact that 111(42.7%) who formed majority of the respondents studied Business as a course in school. Management as a subject which is an elective for the Business students teaches these skills needed to make a good decision and so it may have been a contributing factor. It could be also due to the widespread of technology especially the internet which can easily be found on the mobile phones of adolescents, as such searching for information on how to make a good decision would not be difficult. To conclude on this, if one is able to pinpoint what needs to be decided, identify possible course of action, know the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, examine the remaining options, take action and evaluate the outcome, the individual may be seen to be having the skill needed to take a good decision.

The data in Table 8 shows that there seem to be a difference in the extent early and late adolescents' possesses the skill to make a good decision, the one way ANOVA between groups test was used to determine the extent of the difference. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: ANOVA on the Influence of Ages on Decision -Making Skills

Ages	No. of cases	Mean (M)	SD
13-15	129	38.32	5.381
18-21	131	38.44	5.322

F=.978   p= 0.0005 (sig.)   (N=260)   Scale 1= Never   5= Always

Table 9A: ANOVA Summary Table

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	.894	3	.894	.031
Within Groups	7388.167	258	28.636	
Total	**7390.061**			

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and respondents constituted four different age groups from early and late adolescents. The early adolescents constituted group 1=13-15, late adolescents constituted group 2=18-21. There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at p< .05 level in the skills scores for the two groups [F (3,258=.31, p=.40) the actual difference in the mean scores between the groups was very small. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for group 1(M = 38.32 SD =5.38 was not statistically significant from group 2(M =38.44 SD = 5.32. In effect there was no significant difference between the scores for

early adolescents and late adolescents on the skills to make a good decision. They all possess some skills to make some decisions on their own.

<center>**Research Question 2**</center>

To what extent do adolescents in SHS in Accra metropolis experience peer pressure in decision making?

This research question sought to find out from respondents how they experience peer pressure and the impact it has on their decision making. Items 29-39 and 40-43 were use to answer this research question.

Table 10: Experiences of Peer Pressure by Adolescents

	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
Score	No.	%	No.	%
30-32	3	2.3	3	2.3
27-29	29	22.5	6	4.6
24-26	37	28.7	32	24.4
21-23 *	42	32.6	47	35.9
18-20	1	.7	3	2.3
15-17	7	5.4	15	11.5
12-14	10	7.8	25	19
Total	**129**	**100**	**131**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011   Mean score $\bar{x}$ =23.6

Table 10 shows that 18(14.0%) early adolescents were below the total mean score of 23.6 which indicates that out of the 129 respondents, 18 may not be experiencing peer pressure as compared to 43(32.8%) late adolescents who

indicated that they could not be easily influenced by peers to accept their suggestions. On the contrary, 111(86.0%) early adolescents were above the total mean score of 23.6 while 88(67.2%) late adolescents were above the mean of 23.6. This indicates that 111 out of the 129 early adolescent respondents may be experiencing some form of peer pressure while 88 out of 131 late adolescent respondents may also be experiencing some of peer pressure.

Respondents were given the opportunity to state the reasons why they would not accept and go by their friends' suggestions. The reasons were put under three themes; health, immorality, and anti-social. On engaging in sexual intercourse with or without condoms, and drinking alcohol 37(28.7%) early adolescents compared to 20(15.3%) late adolescents reported health grounds as the reason for not engaging in any of those suggestions from peers. The low proportion of adolescents who would not engage themselves in sexual intercourse could be due to the fact that they may be afraid of contracting sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea or getting pregnant and becoming school dropout.

Similarly, the issue of destroying school property, cheating in examinations and stealing from a school mate were lumped together as anti-social behaviours and on this, 45(17.3%) early adolescents and 65(25.0%) late adolescents' described these as anti social activities that are frowned upon by their parents, school, community and to a larger extent the entire society.

Respondents were asked to comment on attending functions at night without permission. Again, 47(18.1%) of early adolescents and 46(17.1%) late

adolescents described this act as immoral. This could probably be so because of the reported cases such as rape, dismissal or suspension from school.

Respondents gave reasons why they would conform to friends' suggestion to behave in a certain way. The responses were put under three themes: health, education, and social. The results shows that 15(11.6%) early adolescents and 18(13.7%) late adolescents explained that they would conform to friend's suggestion to abstain from sex because they could contract STI's or other health related problems. Also, 43(33.3%) early adolescents and 26(19.8%) late adolescents said they would conform because it will help them in their education when friends' suggest they should learn hard for good grades so that they could further their education. About 71(55.0%) early adolescents and 87(66.4%) late adolescents gave social reason such as giving in to grooming and dressing for conforming to their peers' suggestions.

Analysis done so far indicates that adolescents at their age though get influenced, majority of them are able to differentiate between good and bad suggestions. They may have been able to apply their skills in making good decision by weighing options and analyzing probable outcomes of situations.

Respondents showed much dislike on engaging in behaviours seen as anti –social that would not end them anywhere. However comparing the extent early adolescents and late adolescents experienced peer pressure, it could be seen from the figures that late adolescents were less likely to be influenced by peers than that of early adolescents. The reasons that may have accounted for this slight difference are that, early adolescents may have lacked the knowledge and

experience to do fair assessment of situations to be able to come out with good decisions. It could also be based on the low level of maturity on the side of the early adolescents to enable them handle pressure effectively from peers. These findings corroborate the studies of Bixenstine (1976), Berndt (1979) and Cohen and Prinstein (2006) whose findings confirm the idea that susceptibility to peer influence is higher in early adolescents in their decision making than in late or older adolescents.

A cross tabulation was done to find out the gender dimension in responds to situations or suggestions from friends and the results is presented in Table 11. All the respondents were given a hypothetical situation to react to in order to find out how adolescent males and females experience and deal with peer pressure.

Table 11: Cross Tabulation of Gender (early and late adolescents) and Peer Pressure

	Reject		Conform	
Statement	Males	Females	Males	Females
What would you do when peers suggest to you to:				
Go to a function at night without permission	122	113	21	4
Work hard for good grades.	2	1	141	116
Destroy school property	135	112	8	5
Have good and cordial relationship with parents	10	11	133	106
Steal from a school mate.	134	114	9	3
Practice sexual abstinence.	29	37	115	80
Engage in sex with or without condoms.	112	98	31	19
Drink alcohol.	133	113	10	4
Give in to dressing and grooming styles.	82	56	41	81
Cheat during examinations.	123	108	20	9
Listen to their type of music.	71	70	72	47

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Evidence from Table 11 shows that majority of the respondents' rejected the suggestions which adolescents considered risky and anti-social while suggestions they considered good were accepted. With respect to going to a function at night, there were 122 male adolescents and 113 female adolescents who rejected that suggestion; however there were 21 males and 4 females who stated they will conform. Males were more likely to follow peers to engage in risky activities than females. 82 Males rejected giving in to peers dressing and

90

grooming styles as against 56 Females while 81 females conformed as against 41 males. This also indicates that females were more likely to be influenced by peers than males when it comes to following peers on fashion. 133 males and 106 females will conform to peers suggestion to have good and cordial relationship with parents. Comparatively, 10 males and 11 females will reject it. Thus out of 260 respondents' 21 will not want to have any cordial relationship with parents because they do not care for their needs.

Research Question 3

What is the nature of peer pressure that adolescents in SHS face in the Accra metropolis?

Table 12 is a combination of different items put together that sought to respond to the nature of peer pressure experienced by adolescents and its effects on their academic achievement. Results of the analyses are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Nature of Peer Pressure by Adolescents

	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
	No.	%	No.	%
Behaviour very much influenced by peers				
Name calling	40	31.1	32	24.4
Values	35	27.1	30	22.9
Playing and watching of sporting activities	16	12.4	15	11.5
Bullying	12	9.3	20	15.3
Truancy	10	7.7	12	9.1
Participation of school's club activities	10	7.7	8	6.1
Smoking	6	4.7	14	10.7
Influence of peers leading to school disciplinary problems				
Yes	74	57.4	59	45.0
No	55	42.6	72	55.0
Influence of peers on relationship with friends				
Positive	60	46.5	79	60.3
Negative	69	53.5	52	39.7
Peer pressure on academic achievement				
Good	91	70.5	96	73.3
Bad	38	29.5	35	26.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 12 reports that on the kind of behaviour adolescents are very much influenced to do by peers, 40(31.1%) early adolescents as against 32(24.4%) late adolescents reported name calling as the behaviour they were very much influenced by peers to do. Also 6 (4.7%) early adolescents reported been influenced by peers to smoke compared to 14(10.7%) late adolescents who have been influenced by friends to smoke. On participation of school's club activities, 10(7.7%) early adolescents reported that they had been influenced compared to 8(6.1%) late adolescents who as a result of peer pressure got into school club activities. With regards to 'name calling', respondents explained that, everybody does it so they have to do it too' because they find them interesting to do.

On whether respondents thought that influence of peers could lead them into school disciplinary problems, 74(57.4%) early adolescents reported YES while 59(45.0%) late adolescents also reported YES. However 55(42.6%) early adolescents compared to 72(55.0%) responded NO. The few proportion that responded NO, might be due to the fact that they are in school basically to learn and so would not allow themselves to be influenced. On the other hand, the majority that responded yes may be as result of entertaining the fears that they could lose their friends.

With regards to how influence of peers affected the relationships with other friends, 69(53.5%) early adolescents compared to 79(60.3%) late adolescents reported Positive while 60(46.5%) early adolescents and 52(39.7%) late adolescents reported Negative. The positive response may be due to the good advice they may get from others as result of their association with them. In

response to how peer pressure affected their academic performance at school, 91(70.5%) early adolescents and 96(73.3%) late adolescents reported that it was Good while 38(29.5%) early adolescents compared to 35(26.7%) late adolescents reported that it was Bad.

From the analysis, it could be seen that adolescents' inclinations to follow peers advice vary among situations. They do not only influence their peers negatively but positively as well. Good influences such as encouraging each other to engage in school's club activities that will take them away from bad companies and influencing each other on Values. Values such as honesty, integrity, reverence, respect and humility and developing a positive relationship with each other were reported by respondents as some of the values they are influenced to learn by peers. This is supported by theoretical evidence of Havighurst (1987) that adolescents have to acquire a set of values and ethical systems as a guide to behaviour or ideology. Some of them also preferred to engage in sporting activities. They claimed that getting into sports as direct participants or indirect participants as spectators took their minds off any unnecessary activities. Mention was made of basketball and football as their favourite and most enjoyed sporting activities.

This notwithstanding, the data showed that there were some negative peer influences as well. These were Smoking, Truancy, Bullying and Name calling. In both early and late adolescents, Name calling emerged as the highest among all negative peer influenced behaviours reported. Evidence from the reasons

respondents' gave show that name calling is seen as a game played among peer groups which they do to 'release stress' as claimed by some of them.

It was clear that peer pressure could lead early adolescents into school disciplinary problems more than late adolescents. Majority of early adolescents 74 (28.4%) reported of been lead into disciplinary problems in school as compared to 59 (22.7%) late adolescents. This supports Lamsouri (1995) study that adolescents influence each other to engage in wide range of negative activities in school especially in the early part of adolescence.

It is evident that peer pressure has both positive and negative effects on how early and late adolescents relate to other friends. A reasonable number of early adolescents felt that it had a negative effect on the way they relate with other people as compared to majority of late adolescents who think that it has a rather positive impact on their relationship with other friends and colleagues. This situation may arise because with the level of maturity of late adolescents, it may be possible for them to reject acts that may be intended to affect their relationship with others negatively. This may not be the case with early adolescents who may not want to offend their peers for fear of rejection.

Although, peer pressure seemed to have negative effects on adolescents' relationship with their friends, same cannot be said about how it affects the academic achievement of adolescents. It appears that adolescents placed much premium on their studies. Both the early and late adolescents reported that peers contributed positively towards decisions concerning their academic achievement. With an overwhelming majority of 91(70.5%) for early

adolescents and 96(73.3%) for late adolescents, academic achievement was very paramount in the face of peer pressure. This corroborates empirical studies of Classen and Brown (1986) and Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) that academic achievement is always high on the agenda of adolescents when it comes to peer conformity. It can be said on this note that peers influence each other positively in the areas of their academic engagement that also suggests to me that they are very much aware of their reasons for being in school.

All these analysis and discussions seem to point to a certain direction that apart from academic achievement that was positive for both early and late adolescents, early adolescents experience peer pressure more than late adolescent. To help answer the research question on the extent to which adolescents (early and late adolescents) experience peer pressure in their decision making, the One Way between groups ANOVA was computed and the results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Comparisons Between Ages and Experience of Peer Pressure

Ages	No. of cases	Mean (M)	SD
13 – 15	129	13.66	1.196
18-21	131	13.69	1.307
P = 0.0005 (sig)	N = 260	Scale 1= Reject 2 = Conform	

Table 13A: ANOVA Summary Table

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F
Between Groups	.051	1	.051	.033
Within Groups	405.160	258	1.570	
Total	405.211			

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

The one way between groups analysis of variance conducted on respondents constituted four different age groups that form early and late adolescents. The early adolescents constituted group 1=13-15, late adolescents constituted group 2=18-21. There was statistically significant difference at the p< .05 level in the experience of peer pressure scores for the two groups. [F(1, 258= 6.1 p= .001). The actual difference in the mean scores between the groups is of medium effect. (Cohen 1988) The effect size calculated using eta squared was .06 post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for group 1 (M = 13.66, SD = 1.19) was significantly different from group 2 (M = 13.69, SD = 1.30).This shows that early adolescents experience more peer pressure than late adolescents. It can be interpreted to mean also that during early

adolescence, they may be very vulnerable in accepting peer suggestions unlike those in their late adolescents who may show greater level of resistance. Also, the desire to belong to a group may make them explore and experiment a lot which may expose them to all sorts of peer pressure.

At age 21, adolescents are reaching their early adulthood and so the rate of experience of peer pressure may weaken.

Research Question 4

What challenges do adolescents' face in their decision- making?

The aim of this research question was to find out from respondents the kind of obstacles they faced when it comes to taking a good decision. The challenges were divided into general and specific. Items 44 and 45 on the instrument were used to answer this research question and details of the responses are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Challenges in Adolescents' Decision- Making

	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
General Challenges that affect adolescent decisions	No.	%	No.	%
Media	83	64.3	87	66.4
Religious Beliefs	19	14.7	27	20.6
Parental Practices	14	10.9	10	7.6
School Rules	10	7.8	5	3.8
Cultural Practices	3	2.3	2	1.5
Specific Challenges Faced in Decision -Making				
Mockery	50	38.8	25	19.1
Misinformation	50	38.8	63	48.1
Rejection	18	13.9	33	25.2
Denial	11	8.5	10	7.6

Source: Fieldwork,2011

Table 14 shows there were 83(64.3%) early adolescents compared to 87(66.4%) who reported that media was the major general challenge that affected their decision making most. Following media was religious beliefs. There were 19(14.7%) early adolescents and 27(20.6%) late adolescents who reported that they depended greatly on their religious beliefs to make decisions. The least reported challenge from both early and late adolescents was cultural practices. On specific challenges that adolescents faced in their decision making, there were

50(38.8%) early adolescents compared to 25(19.1%) late adolescents who reported mockery from peers as a challenge in their decision making. While 50(38.8%) early adolescents compared to 63(48.1%) late adolescents reported that misinformation or inaccurate information from peers is a major challenge in their decision making. The others reported were rejection and denial.

Media happened to be the dominating factor that affects adolescents' decision making. The media had become the basis through which adolescents shared information that influenced their decisions. Respondents gave various reasons such as the access to a lot of information on television and the radio and the relative ease to verify anything they hear from the internet. This finding supports the study of Huntermann and Morgan (2001) that the massive flow of popular images, representations and symbolic models disseminated by the media profoundly shapes what adolescents and young people think about the world and how they perceive themselves in relation to it. Religious beliefs of respondents seemed to be strong in their decision making process judging from the fact that nineteen early adolescents and twenty-seven late adolescents considered their religious beliefs before taking decisions. The least preferred choice among respondents was the cultural practices. This may be due to the fact that many cultural practices have become outmoded in the face of globalisation and modernization and for that matter cultural admonitions that inform the decisions of people are not adhered to presently. This may be due to the fact that certain cultural practices are giving away due to globalisation and modernization.

Touching on the challenges adolescents encounter in their decision making, respondents seemed to clearly know the negative consequences of receiving inaccurate information, that it distorts their thinking and the decisions made on such grounds. Respondents from both the early adolescents and late adolescents all reported misinformation from peers as a challenge they encounter in their decision making. Rejection and denial were reported as other challenges. This is because the fear of rejection from peers could force adolescents to accept or refuse instruction. Peers mocking at decisions been made was another challenge respondents mentioned. This finding supports the study of Frimpong (2004) that one of the major problems adolescents encounter in their decision making is misinformation. This is perhaps so because most of the adolescents do not seek information from the right sources and carry on with a lot of misconceptions about life in general and adolescents in particular.

Research Question 5

In what ways can the effects of peer pressure on adolescent decision making be improved?

This research question sought to find out ways of enhancing decisions adolescents make in spite of peer pressure. Items 44 and 45 on the instrument were used for obtaining information on the agents that help adolescents in their decision making. Details of the responses to these items are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Agents that Help Adolescents in Decision- Making

	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
Agents	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	77	59.7	71	54.2
Friends	18	14.0	30	22.9
Teachers	11	8.5	6	4.5
Counsellors	9	6.9	19	14.6
Other	6	4.7	-	-
Psychologist	5	3.9	2	1.5
Other	3	2.3	3	2.3
Total	**129**	**100**	**131**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 14 shows that, there were 77(59.7%) early adolescents and 71(54.2%) late adolescents who reported that parents were the agents that helped them to make difficult decision. On the other hand, 18(14.0%) and 30(22.9%) mentioned friends as people who helped them in decision making. The least agent that both early and late adolescents reported was the peer educator with 3(2.3%) by both early and late adolescents. Respondents who depend on parents reasoned that parents will not give them any bad advice or suggestion. Again, the adolescents considered that their parents are experienced and knowledgeable enough to guide them in decision making. Majority of both early and late adolescents recognized their parents as people who could help them make a very good decision in times of difficulty. Also, 77 out of 129 early adolescents representing 59.7% will call on parents when they have to make a difficult

decision. Comparatively, 71(54.2%) late adolescents would want to depend on their parents when faced with a difficult decision. Though the margin is not wide between early and late adolescents, the indication is that greater number of early adolescents' prefers to speak to their parents in times of difficulty than late adolescents. On counsellors, it however seems that late adolescents trust counsellors' more than early adolescents. Perhaps, the lack of active counsellors at the Junior high school level could be the reason for this disparity so they may not know the use of counsellors as they are fresh in the SHS.

The use of peer educator does not seem to be popular with the adolescents, judging from the fact that only 3 (2.3%) of early adolescents and 3(2.3%) of late adolescents would want to speak to peer educator when they are faced with difficult decision to make. Putting the percentage of friends and that of peer educator together suggests that adolescents do not trust their peers for quality information. This also confirms earlier studies that though adolescents may spend a lot time with their peers, they may not want rely on them for information, (Samuel-Oppong, 2004)

Suggestions to Help in Decision -Making

Respondents gave suggestions on what can be done to help SHS students make very good decision in the face of peer pressure. For instance, 11(8.5%) of early adolescents suggested that school authorities should add decision making as one of the teaching subjects in the second cycle schools in the country compared with 18(13.7%) late adolescents who confirm that decision making should be part of the school's curriculum. Others on the other hand suggested that seminars and

workshops should be organised for them. 30 (23.2) early adolescents attested to this fact and 23 (17.6%) late adolescent also conformed to that. Again 58 (45.1%) early adolescent and 70 (53.4%) late adolescent suggested that counsellors should be stationed in the various schools.

Table 16: Suggestions to Help in Decision- Making

Suggestion	Early Adolescent		Late Adolescent	
	No.	%	No.	%
Adding decision making to curriculum	11	8.5	18	13.7
Seminars/forums	30	23.2	23	17.6
Cordial relationship with Parents	30	23.2	20	15.3
Locating counsellors in Schools	58	45.1	70	53.4
Total	**129**	**100**	**131**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

Testing of Null Hypothesis

H_0: **There is no significant difference between the peer pressure experienced by adolescent male and female senior high school students**.

The independent sample t-test was used to compare experience of peer pressure reported by sampled male and female SHS students. Results of the analysis are presented on Table 16.

**Table 17: Summary of test of Difference in Peer Pressure Experienced by
            Adolescent Females and Males in SHS**

Sex	N	Mean	Std
Male	143	15.8671	1.31748
Female	117	15.3932	1.32585

t-value =2.878   df = 258   p = .05(sig.)   N = 260

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the experience
of peer pressure scores for males and females. There was significant difference in
scores for males at level p< .05($\underline{M}$ = 15.86., $\underline{SD}$ =1.31) and females ($\underline{M}$ = 15.39.,
$\underline{SD}$ = 1.32; t (2.878, p =.004) The magnitude of the differences of the means
calculated with eta squared is .03. which according to Cohen (1988) is very small.
As the value of .004 is below the required cut off of .05, the researcher can
conclude that there is statistically significant difference in the mean scores for
males and females. What this means is that, the type of peer pressure adolescent
females experience is quite different from that of males. For instance, lot of girls
are influenced by fashion and for that matter, conforming to dressing and
grooming styles will be their priority which may be different from that of
adolescent males.

The study suggests that impact of peer pressure is mostly negative on
early adolescents' decision making than late adolescents. There is also a
difference in the peer pressure experienced by males and that of females.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Overview of the Study

The study examined the impact of peer pressure on decision making of adolescents in senior high schools in the Accra metropolis. The study sought to find out how peer pressure impacts on the decisions adolescents' make. The sample for the study comprised 260 respondents selected from six senior high schools in the Accra metropolis. The schools and sample for the study were obtained through stratified, purposive and simple random sampling procedures. The proportional sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study from the six schools. Data analysis centered on the skills adolescents possess in making competent decisions, the nature of peer pressure, the extent to which adolescents experience peer pressure and the challenges encountered by adolescents in their decision making. The analysis suggested that impact of peer pressure was bidirectional (positive and negative). The impact of peer pressure on the decision making of early adolescents was mostly negative than that of late adolescents.

Key Findings

The research revealed a number of findings concerning the topic under study with regards to skills adolescents possess, adolescents experience of peer pressure, nature of peer pressure and challenges faced when taking decisions. Based on the analysis of the study, the following findings were noted:

First, it was found that, 55.8% early adolescents and 63.2% late adolescents' possessed the skills of defining a decision making situation, identifying all possible courses of action, listing the pros and cons of each alternative, examining the other options, making a choice and evaluating the outcome after taking a decision. These are skills needed to make competent decisions. However, weighing of options and evaluation of outcomes were found to be quite problematic in the decision making of adolescents. This may be the reason for adolescents' experimentation of ideas that is shown in their behaviours.

Second, both early and late adolescents SHSs in the Accra metro did seek additional information from their peers to make their decisions though some of them did go to their parents when they had to make a difficult decision. This is an indication that though adolescents share a lot together when communicating, but in times of difficulty 59.7% early adolescents and 54.2% late adolescents put experience and trust worthiness of parents ahead of friendship.

On experience of peer pressure, 86% of early adolescents indicated they experienced peer pressure compared to 67.2% of late adolescents who experienced peer pressure. Additionally, both early and late adolescents expressed more willingness to accede to peers socializing in pro-social activities than

antisocial pressures from friends. Also, adolescent males were found to be more susceptible to peers influence than females in antisocial and risky situations. Adolescents may experience peer pressure in more specific areas and that subtle gender variations were embedded in teenagers' conformity behaviour.

The impact of peer pressure on the decision making of late adolescents was found to be minimal than that of early adolescents. This study's findings supported earlier studies by (Berndt, 1979; Brittain 1963; Larson 1972; and Classen & Brown, 1986) that adolescent students were more willing to follow peers in and pro-social behaviours than anti-social behaviours.

Adolescents' conformity to peer pressure was also based on reasons for belongingness, social, educational and health reasons. Statistically, adolescents' level of conformity was based on 60.8% social reason, 26.5% educational, 12.7% health reasons.

Adolescents' reasons for rejecting pressures from peers were also based on 21.9% health grounds, 35.2% considering friends' suggestions were immoral and 42.9% also thought that those suggestions from friends were anti-social that were frowned upon by the school administrators, parents and the society.

The study also showed that the impact of peer pressure on early and late adolescents' decisions concerning their academic achievement was very good. It was found that, majority of adolescents peers 70.5 % of early adolescents and 73.3% of late adolescents, always encouraged themselves to learn hard in order to achieve and reach their full potential. It was found that adolescents feared to drop out of school and so were ready to go through school to the tertiary level. This

finding similar to earlier findings of (Ellis & Zarbatany 2007; Carlo et al 1999, and Hansen & Bryant 1980) that peers influenced each other positively in their academic achievement, co-operation and extracurricular activities in school.

Also, 46.5% of early adolescents compared with 60.3% of late adolescents stated that peer pressure was positive on them because peers taught them to be sociable, and helped them to learn values such as respect and fear of God. On the other hand, 53.5% early adolescents and 39.7% late adolescents reported that peer pressure was negative on the way they related to their peers.

Similarly, 57.4% early adolescents and 45.0% of the late adolescents indicated that peer pressure sometimes got them into disciplinary problems in school. However, 42.6% early adolescents and 55.0% late adolescents also indicated that they could not be pressurized into any school disciplinary problems because they were disciplined and principled.

It was found that behaviours very much influenced by peers were name calling 55.5%, learning of values 50%, truancy 16.8%, smoking 15.4%, participation of school's club activities 13.8% and bullying 24.6%. About 57.7% of the respondents' reported that they could not resist these behaviours because it had become a habit which they found difficult to stop.

The general challenges of adolescent decision making were the media, parental practices, religious beliefs, school rules and cultural practices. However, the specific challenges that impacted negatively on both early and late adolescents' decision making as a result of peer pressure were mockery, misinformation, Rejection and denial. Adolescents have had to contend with all

sorts of inaccurate information, isolation, denial and mockeries coming from peers that may have lead them into experimenting, exploring and taking unfavourable and unpopular decisions. This finding supports an earlier one by Frimpong (2004) that misinformation was a major problem adolescents faced when it came to taking decisions bothering their lives.

Apart from peer pressure, both early and late adolescents were found to be highly vulnerable to the influences of the media in their decision making with mixed benefits. (Allyson 2004; Huntermann & Morgan 2001) corroborate this finding that the kind of information put up by media both electronic and print media shaped the thinking of adolescents with regards to how they viewed the world and relate to peers and others. Aside the media, sources like religious beliefs and parental practices also influenced adolescents' decision making.

It was again found that in times of difficult decision making, 59.7% early adolescents and 54.2% late adolescents contacted their parents, 13.9% early adolescents and 22.9% late adolescents depended on their friends for help. While 6.9% early adolescents and 14.5% late adolescents depended on counsellors for help, 3.9% early adolescents and only 1.5% late adolescents depended on psychologist for help in their decision- making.

Contributions from counsellors and educational psychologists were found to be lacking and that, counsellors and educational psychologists were needed in all the senior high schools to run guidance programs and seminars for adolescents to understand their development and pertinent issues concerning them.

Conclusions

Based on the evidence from the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Generally, it was realized from the study that the impact of peer pressure on decision making of adolescents was bidirectional and not unidirectional in the sense that adolescents influenced each other in both positive and negative ways. Positively, adolescents influenced each other to learn hard in order to obtain good grades in school, maintain a very good and cordial relationship with parents, maintain good interpersonal relations with others, taught values like respect, fear of God and being disciplined. Adolescents preferred to be influenced positively than negatively. Parents and school authorities have a role to play in helping adolescents take good decisions. Also, adolescents' made little use of professional school counsellors and psychologists in their decision making.

However, the late adolescents could resist pressure from peers and so the impact of peer pressure on decision making of late adolescents was more of a positive nature than early adolescents who experience the pressure negatively. What the study's findings have indicated is that the issue of peer pressure is not entirely negative as has always been speculated. It can be concluded that the study has helped to better understand the issue of peer pressure and its impact on decision making among adolescents.

Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence derived from the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Decision making forms the basis of people's behaviour. Bad decision making which could be seen from the outcomes of such decisions could be detrimental not only to the decision maker but others who may buy in to such decisions. Peer pressure is a phenomenon that will always be there and will continue to have impact on the way adolescents think. Therefore curriculum planners should introduce and intensify the teaching of decision making as a topic for all programs not only for Business students because according to Baron and Brown (1991) teaching decision making to adolescents should be paramount in the planning of a school curriculum so that adolescents can thoroughly analyze a situation before engaging in it at all.

2. Parents should develop positive attitude to adolescent issues. Positive parenting may reduce adolescent parent conflict and increase the confidence level of adolescents to discuss issues about their lives with parents. When this is done, adolescents may reconsider seeking more information from peers since the little information peers will add may be dangerous. However, if there is cordial relationship between parents and adolescents, they may prefer to seek that additional information from parents.

3. Authorities of senior high schools should intensify activities of clubs and societies in the senior high schools. Every student in the senior high school should be encouraged to join a club so that good values and pro social activities can be internalized. This may help reduce the incidence of

following peers to engage in activities that are frowned upon by both the school and society.

4. The Ministry of Education should employ the services of more qualified and trained Counsellors and Educational Psychologist in all senior high schools to deal with issues such as misinformation and mockery by peers which has become a problem to adolescent decision making. Seminars and forums on developmental issues concerning the lives of adolescents should also be organised more often for adolescents by these experts as it may inform them appropriately.

5. Policy makers must, as a matter of urgency, team up with operators of internet websites to regulate the use of adult sites by adolescents and encourage media practitioners to also engage in more educative programmes that will address developmental issues of adolescents so that good morals can be internalized.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. This study did not cover out of school adolescents though they are equally susceptible to peer influence and are affected by peer pressure that also impact on their decision making. It is therefore suggested that future research be carried out on these out of school adolescents.

2. This study was done in the Greater Accra region of Ghana and more specifically, the Accra Metro. The researcher will therefore recommend that in future, similar studies be done in other rural areas to ascertain whether without the facilities enjoyed by adolescents in the cities, those

rural communities will exhibit positive or negative effects of peer pressure in their decision making.

3. One major revelation was that, apart from peers, adolescents' were greatly influenced by the media and other agents such as religious beliefs and parental practices in their decision making; therefore, it is recommended that a study be done in this direction to find out the impact of media and the other sources on the decision making of adolescents.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Fisher's Formula

This formula is given as:

$$nf = \frac{n}{\frac{n}{N}}$$

Where:

n_f = the desired sample size (when population is less than 10,000)

n = the desired sample size (when population is greater than 10,000)

N = the estimate of the target population size.

In order to get n, Fisher et al (1998) provided another formula which is

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n= the desired sample size (when the population is greater than 10000

z= the standard normal deviation, usually set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95% confidence level

p = the proportion of the target population who have particular characteristics

q = 1.0 – p and

d = the degree of accuracy desired this, this is usually set at 0.05

With (z) statistic being 1.96, degree of accuracy (d) set at 0.05 percent and the proportion of the target population with similar characteristic (p) at 80 percent which is equivalent to 0.80, then 'n' is;

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \ (0.80) \ (0.20)}{0.05^2}$$

A calculated n =246 was obtained. Information obtained from the regional office of the Ghana education service put all the six selected public SHS in the Accra metropolis at 7326. A calculated sample size of 260 was obtained. However, ten percent of the sample size was added to make up for uncompleted responses and wrong responses. This was made up of 117 females and 143 males.

Putting this and the calculated figure into the formula, the sample size for the study was calculated as follows:

$$nf = \frac{246}{\frac{246}{8205} \ 7835}$$

$= 259.609662 = 260$

Appendix B

Accra Metro SHS Enrolment and Staffing as at April 2010

SCHOOL NAME ACCRA METRO	YEAR 1 BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	YEAR 2 BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	YEAR 3 BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
ACCRA ACADEMY	572	0	572	538	0	538	448	0	448	1598
ACCRA GIRLS	0	419	419	0	332	332	0	327	327	1078
ACCRA HIGH	274	209	483	259	166	425	257	200	457	1365
ACHIMOTA SCHOOL	326	154	480	294	233	527	269	215	484	1491
ARMED FORCES SEC/ TECH	164	94	258	215	102	317	206	95	301	876
EBENEZER SEC. SCH.	262	182	444	216	163	379	225	161	386	1209
HOLY TRINITY CATH. SCH.	165	232	397	135	128	263	132	85	217	877
KANESHIE SEC. TECH.	194	116	310	186	95	281	155	72	227	818
KINBU SEC. TECH.	295	120	415	302	115	417	194	80	274	1106
LABONE SEC.	325	275	600	299	243	542	323	231	554	1696
O'REILLY SEC. SCH.	176	179	355	136	167	303	133	143	276	934
PRESBY SEC.- OSU	257	252	509	201	176	377	145	138	283	1169
PRESBY SEC.- LA	173	161	334	102	133	235	101	120	221	790
WESLEY GRAMMAR	280	254	534	217	235	452	261	224	485	1471
ST. MARY'S SEC. SCH.	0	261	261	0	254	254	0	260	260	775
ST. MARGARET MARY SEC. SCH.	148	174	322	150	168	318	133	173	306	946
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SEC. SCH.	494	0	494	424	0	424	443	0	443	1361
TOTAL	4105	3082	7187	3674	2710	6384	3465	2524	5989	19560

Appendix C

School and Sample Population for the Study

SCHOOL NAME	SAMPLE	F 1	F3	PROGRAMMES
ACCRA ACADEMY	(57)	28	29	BUSINESS, GEN. ARTS
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS	(48)	24	24	GEN.SCI, BUSINESS
ACCRA GIRLS	(38)	19	19	BUSINESS, GEN. ARTS
ST. MARYS'	(28)	14	14	HOME ECONS. GEN. ARTS
LABONE SEN. HIGH	(60)	30	30	GEN. SCI., BUSINESS
KANESHIE SEC. TECH.	(29)	14	15	HOME ECONS. VIS ARTS
TOTAL	260			

Appendix D

Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADOLESCENTS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This questionnaire is intended to analyze impact of peer pressure on decision making of adolescents in SHS in the Accra metropolis. Your responses shall be highly appreciated and your confidentiality is well assured.

Please tick (√) where applicable and write briefly where necessary. Thank you.

Please note: Peers are age mates & friends you identify with and spend time with.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Sex   Male [   ]   Female [   ]

2. Age   13- 15[   ]   16-18[   ]   19-21 [   ]   above 21[   ]

3. Class   SHS 1[   ]   SHS 2 [   ]   SHS 3[   ] SHS 4 [   ]

4. Religion: Christianity [   ]   Islam [   ] Traditional [   ] Other specify……..

5. Type of School: Single sex Male [   ]   Single Sex Female [   ] Mixed [   ]

6. Programme of Study:…………………………………………………..

7. Nature of School: Day Sch. [   ] Boarding Sch. [   ] Day and Boarding [   ]

8. Student Residence Status: Day Student [   ]   Boarder [   ]

SECTION B:

SKILLS IN COMPETENT DECISION MAKING

Read each of the following statements describing how decisions are taken and tick (√) how often you do what is described**: (A)=Always, (O)=Often, (S)=Sometimes, (NO)=Not Often or (N)= Never.**

	STATEMENT	A	O	S	NO	N
9	I take decisions based on my goals.					
10	I look at the importance of each goal.					
11	I define a problem whenever I want to make a decision.					
12	I consider alternatives that are available for a particular situation before taking a decision					
13	I identify criteria for comparing the alternatives available to me and their consequences before taking decisions					
14	I look at only the merits of an alternative in my decision making					
15	I monitor the outcomes of decisions implemented by me.					
16	I act on what is uppermost thing in my mind at any moment.					
17	I seek additional information from various sources to help my decision making					
18	I take decisions based on the best alternative					

INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ON DECISION MAKING

Read each of the following statements describing influences of friends on decision making and tick (√) your level of influence: **Very Strongly Influenced** (VSI), **Strongly Influenced** (VI), **Fairly Influenced** (FI), **Weakly Influenced** (WI), **Not at all Influenced** (NI).

	STATEMENT	VSI	SI	FI	WI	NI
19	My decisions are based on goals of my friends					
20	My friends identify a problem before I take decisions.					
21	My decisions depend on the most important outcomes my friends identify.					
22	I depend on my friends to help develop alternatives for a situation.					
23	My friends compare alternatives and their consequences for me before I take decisions					
24	Friends monitor the outcomes of decisions implemented by me.					
25	My actions are determined by what friends consider to be the uppermost thing to do.					
26	I seek additional information from friends to help my decision making					
27	I make decisions based on what friends think is the best alternative.					
28	I conform to friends decisions because of fear of rejection					

IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE ON ADOLESCENT DECISION MAKING

Please answer the questions below on how pressure from friends is felt by you.

Read each of the following statements describing suggestions of friends to behave

in a particular way and tick (√) your level of conformity or compliance.

Highly Conform (HC), Conform (C), Reject (R), and Highly Reject (HR).

What is your reaction (attitude) towards friends' suggestion to;

	Statement	HC	C	R	HR
29	Go to a function at night with or without permission.				
30	Work hard for good grades.				
31	Destroy school property.				
32	Have cordial relationship with your parents				
33	Steal from a school mate.				
34	Practice sexual abstinence.				
35	Engage in sexual intercourse with or without condoms				
36	Drink alcohol and smoke cigarette.				
37	Give in to dressing and grooming styles.				
38	Cheat during examinations.				
39	Listen to their type of music.				

a. Please give reasons why you will conform to these suggestions

………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………….

a. Please give reasons why you will reject these suggestions…………………….…………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………….

SECTION E: NATURE OF PEER PRESSURE

40. Tick all the behaviours (activities) you were very much influenced by peers that you cannot control.

a. Values ( )

b. Name Calling ( )

c. Playing and watching of Sporting activities ( )

d. Truancy ( )

e. Smoking ( )

f. Participation of school's club activities ( )

g. Bullying ( )

c. Please state reasons for you not been able to control those behaviours.

i)…………………………………………………………………………..

41.(a) Does pressure from peers get you into school disciplinary problems?

Yes ( ) No ( )

(b) If yes, how do you feel about it?...

(c) How do you cope with this pressure?...

…………………………………………………………………………………

(d) If no give reason..

42. Does influence of peers affect your relationship with other friends positively or negatively? (a) Positively ( )   (b) Negatively ( )

Please give reason for your response...

....

43. How does pressure from friends affect decisions concerning your academic achievement? Very Good [ ], Good [ ], Bad [   ], Very Bad [   ].

SECTION F

CHALLENGES ADOLESCENTS FACE IN DECISION MAKING

44. What specific challenges do adolescents face in their decision making as far as peer influence is concerned in the following?

i) ………………………………………………………………………………

ii) …………………………………………… ………………..………………………...

(iii)………………….....………………………………………………………………

iv)……………………………………………………………………………………….

45. Apart from your peers, which of the following would you consider as a factor that affects your decision making most? Please tick one **(√)**

a) Media (TV, Radio, Magazines, News Paper and the Internet)   (   )

b) Cultural practices (eg. Puberty rites)   (   )

d) School   rules and regulations   (   )

e) Parental practices   (   )

f) Religious beliefs   (   )

(g) Emotion (eg, Frustration, happiness, annoyance, compassion) (   )

b.   How   does   the   above   chosen   factor   affect   your   decision making?..

…………………………………………………………………………………

c. Please give reason for your response…………………………………………….

SECTION F

IMPROVING ADOLESCENTS CHALLENGES IN DECISION MAKING

46. When faced with a difficult decision making, what are you mostly likely to do?

    a. Decide quickly, without careful thought   ( )

    b. Depend on a friend to help me   ( )

    c. Turn to parents for help   ( )

    d. Turn to teachers for help   ( )

    e Turn to expert (eg. Counsellor, Psychologist, Peer educator) ( )

    f. Other, specify……………………………………………………

Please give reason for your response…………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

47. With regards to peer influence, please suggest what can be done to help SHS students in decision making.

i)……………………………………………………………………………………

(ii)…………………………………………………………………………………...

(iii)…………..……...