



HOW PEER PRESSURE AFFECTS THE CONFORMITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN CHOOSING THEIR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS IN UZBEKISTAN?

Abdurahmon Nasriddinov

Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	20 th July 2024	The focus of this paper is to examine the peer pressure on adolescents in Uzbekistan, through investigating that specific aspect of their life being the interests and hobbies they choose to take up. An adolescent is an individual who is mostly affected by other people's opinions more so those of their peers. What makes it worse in Uzbekistan where deep-rooted beliefs exist but change is being courted, the issue of peer pressure is further enhanced by cultural norms. The research included 108 adolescents, and employed the modified Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire-Revised (PPSQ-r) in the collection of such data. The data reveals that a sizable proportion of the adolescents under study were peer-pressurized in areas affecting their performance in academics, social behavior and even in their choice of leisure activities.
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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the significant developmental phases throughout a person's life in which young people experience meaning-making and are aware of the tension between self and others' expectations. This challenge is getting even stronger in a country like Uzbekistan where it has a deeply traditional background and is now affected by the process of globalization. Societal as well as peer pressure can really create confusion to adolescents when choosing hobbies or interests. Conformity orientation of adolescents of the world nowadays may be greatly intensified in cultures that are collective like Uzbekistan. Considering the fact that Uzbekistan prioritizes and tries to deeply instill Uzbek values to the young generation, it may drastically affect the generation's choice of hobbies and interests. The current study will establish how peer pressure affects the tendencies of the adolescent tendency to conform when it comes to hobbies and interests in Uzbekistan as defined within the society's Uzbeks' societal expectations, the youths' peers, and deep Uzbek culture. This topic derives ideas from the variety of psychological and sociological theories concerning adolescent behavior, peer pressure, and social compliance. In fact, the role of peers in decision making of the adolescent has been confirmed in the context of both the Western and the Eastern societies [1], but in Uzbekistan where Collectivist and Social Conforming Factors are highly significant the pressure may be even stronger. There was no research conducted on the

effect of peer pressure on choosing the hobbies and interests of late adolescents and middle adolescents in Uzbekistan, also emphasizing its strong cultural and social environment. This research will try to fill this gap via online surveys among different age categories and the analysis of the gained data. Before going to the survey, we will discuss existing research into this theme and collect valuable information regarding peer pressure, social influence, adolescent's decision making process, and more.

Adolescents need to be taught decision-making techniques, emotional resilience, and self-confidence in order to resist peer pressure. Many people find it difficult to resist peer pressure, particularly if they don't have good communication or critical thinking abilities. For children to be able to make their own decisions and follow their own interests, they need the support of their parents, teachers, and inclusive settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer pressure is defined as the pressure that the peer group exerts on an individual to compel the latter to adopt their behaviors, attitudes and or interests. This influence is especially dramatic in adolescence due to developmental tasks of gaining acceptance in peer groups and establishing identity [2]. Peer support is valued more during adolescence than family support, and this increased dependency makes adolescents more vulnerable to peer acceptance and rejection [3]. Studies indicate that



teenagers are inclined to take more risks in their lives like taking alcohol, driving recklessly or even stealing from shops while in the company of their peers [4]. This phenomenon of social conformity is as a result of individuals' desire not to be alone or to feel a sense of rejection by fellow members of society.

In Uzbekistan, these pressures are amplified by cultural norms that encourage conformity to societal standards and expectations. The Unicef report on youth in Uzbekistan released in 2020 details how young people in the country have to navigate several social pressures, given that 60% of the population is below thirty years. This demographic factor aggravates the processes that require youth to assimilate into their generation's social networks as they intersect with family and community values [5].

Social influence among adolescents can be broadly categorized into two types. These two types include: "normative and informational" type [6]. Normative influence occurs when individuals conform to be liked or accepted by others, while informational influence involves conforming because one believes the group holds the correct or superior judgment [7]. In the case of Uzbekistan, normative peer pressure is even more influential because of the collectivistic orientation of the culture that prevents the manifestation of non-conformity.

It has also been found out that peer pressure influences an adolescent in choosing his or her hobby and interest. To be more precise, McLeod (2008) notes that youth is likely to be involved in a practice not because of the interest in the practice but because other people in a community do so [8]. In the analyzed material, perspectives of young people in Uzbekistan the influence of peers is illustrated by the examples of gender-related beliefs and preferences regarding hobbies. While boys are trained to take up activities such as football or Karate for instance, girls are trained to cook or so on. These expectations are engraved in traditional culture and beliefs that dominate the majority of Uzbek population as analyzed by the UNICEF overview on youth issues [5].

Uzbekistan presents a unique case study in peer conformity due to its blend of traditionalism and rapid modernization. The country's youth face a complex environment where social media, urbanization, and global cultural trends encounter ancient local customs and expectations. As highlighted by the UNICEF report, 51.8% of youth in Uzbekistan live in rural areas, where traditional

values are more deeply entrenched. This geographical divide creates varying experiences of peer pressure, with rural youth facing more rigid expectations regarding appropriate hobbies and interests [5].

The cultural emphasis on family and community also exacerbates peer pressure. Adolescents in Uzbekistan, especially those from rural areas, are often expected to conform to the hobbies and interests that are mostly suitable and expected from their own communities. This can include sports, crafts, or vocational training that align with the community's economic needs or social norms. According to the same UNICEF report, the pressure to conform is even more pronounced among young women, who face greater restrictions in terms of mobility and participation in activities outside the home [5]. One more bright example of the strong customs and traditions in Uzbek society can be the increasing number of marriages at the age of 17 and under. According to data registered by civil registry offices, the number of women whose marriages at the age of 17 was 4,233 in 2016, 4,853 in 2017, and 5,123 in 2018. Unfortunately, such cases keep increasing each year despite the official law restriction for marriages under 18 [9].

Social pressure especially with peers has negative ramifications result in psychological effects in adolescents. Adolescents can become less creative since they have to do what other people of their age are doing. This concern is even more acute in collectivist societies such as in Uzbekistan where the concern is on the process rather than the product. This study by Sebastian et al. (2011) and Prinstein support that involvement and compliance with peer pressure negatively impact the youths' emotional well-being such as increased anxiety and depression rates [10]. To illustrate, a survey conducted in Uzbekistan for one will find that due to familial and societal pressures, the stress caused by competition takes a toll on the emotions of the youth and the added pressure of disappointing not only fellow students but family as well [5].

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), adolescents need to belong; they will conform when they are threatened by social exclusion. In Uzbekistan, for instance, unfulfilled social requirements for membership in a peer group makes an adolescent easily influenced by his peers. This may lead to behaviors that seek acceptance from the peer group for instance, one may pursue hobbies and interests which are within the peer



groups' norms despite personal preference [5]

It is clear that conformity goes beyond risky activities and circulates into other areas including choices of hobbies and interests. According to Moutoussis et al. (2016), adolescents feel inadvertent when they are faced with new activities; thus, they turn to their peers for direction [12]. This taste uncertainty principle posits that any time an individual is unsure of how to act in front of a new stimulus, the individual is more likely to use the preferences of other members of their community for a guide. In Uzbekistan this is especially important concerning hobbies, in which adolescents might tend to be engaged in activities that are popular among other youths this is instead of exercising their own choice [5].

This dynamic is further compounded by issues of gender roles and expectations of women especially in Uzbekistan. Growing up, boys are allowed and encouraged to play sports, whereas girls are placed more in arts and crafts and other such activity. Societal pressures from peers and families do not allow adolescents to deviate much from these gendered expectations. In his research study conducted by Berger & Rodkin (2011) [13], peer groups are a key influence of human behavior especially in cultures that are most probably influenced by conformations [5].

Social conformity and Peer pressure influence hobbies and interests of adolescents in Uzbekistan due to cultural, gendered, and other expectations. Given that peer pressure cuts across cultures but the extent to which the culture of Uzbekistan enhances or reduces the impact cannot be minimized given the gender-sensitive aspects of the culture and the collectivism inherent in the Uzbek culture. As the country further develops its post-Soviet economy and society, it becomes imperative to learn how these factors impact the growth of the youth and come up with ways to minimize the detrimental effects of conformity to peers.

METHODOLOGY:

This research used a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional study design to examine the effect of peer pressure on adolescents' conformity when selecting hobbies and interests in Uzbekistan. The idea was to obtain findings based on a big number of adolescents throughout Uzbekistan taking into consideration age, gender, and region (urban vs. rural). Self-administered questionnaires were

used as the data collection technique with a standardized peer pressure questionnaire, and conformity self-report measures alongside hobby decisions.

The target population encompassed young people of ages between 14-20 from different parts of Uzbekistan. We divided the ages of the adolescents into two categories: 14-17 middle adolescence and 18-20 late adolescence. Participants were selected from both urban and rural settings, and this was to ensure that participants' cultural and social backgrounds were diverse towards representing the society across the country.

The major data collection instrument to be used in the study is a Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire-Revised (PPSQ-r); This test has been proved to be one of the most reliable tests to measure peer pressure among teenagers, and It was found to have excellent reliability with a Cronbach's α value of 0.932 [14] Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability.

For this specific research paper, we used a shortened version of the Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire-Revised (PPSQ-r), because it contains some questions that could be viewed as immoral by Uzbek adolescents (there were questions related to sensitive topics such as pornography, drugs, and other potentially harmful behaviors). However, we ascertained that this version encapsulated all the context and reliability of the whole version. In addition, we have added some questions regarding Uzbek culture, its societal expectations and norms, family, school and some gender-specific questions to make the research more comprehensible and reliable, which will include as many potential factors that can affect adolescents' conformity in choosing hobbies and interests.

RESULTS:

According to the survey, our results were the following: There was a 100% response rate for the total 108 respondents. The overall mean age of the respondents was 17.30 years, with 46 respondents aged between 13 and 17, and 62 respondents aged between 18 and 20. Out of the total, 68 respondents were male and 40 were female. Additionally, the respondents came from different regions, with 64 (59%) from urban areas and 44 (41%) from rural areas.



Item	Mean Score
1	2.8
2	3.2
3	3.1
4	2.9
5	2.6
6	2.9
7	3.1
8	2.8
9	2.6
10	2.9
11	2.7
12	2.6



We calculated the mean score for each item from the PPSQ-R scale, resulting in an overall average score of 34.2, indicating moderate susceptibility to peer pressure among Uzbek adolescents.

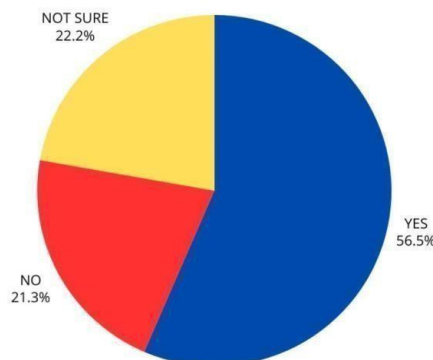
Each item corresponds to a specific question from the PPSQ-R:

1. Sometimes I miss classes because my friends urge me to do so.
2. Sometimes I do things because my friends want me to do so.
3. I often feel like I have to spend a lot of time chatting on the internet.
4. Sometimes I do something wrong just to be good in friends' view.
5. "I cannot say 'NO' to my friends, even if my parents disagree.
6. Sometimes I have to undergo peer pressure to be liked in a group.

7. Many times I put off my homework and other important assignments for friends' parties.
8. Sometimes I have to appease my peers by doing things that I do not want to do.
9. To maintain a status in a peer group, sometimes I pressurize my parents to buy an expensive item.
10. It is difficult to think about the negative consequences of what we do with peers.
11. I find it difficult to escape from peer pressure.
12. Sometimes I do risky and harmful acts to get acceptance in the peer group.

To further investigate how Uzbekistan's strong cultural traditions and social environment influence adolescents' choice of interests and hobbies, we included additional questions.

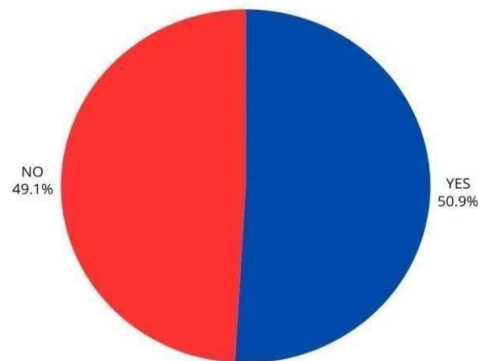
Do you feel that your gender influences your choice of hobbies?



1. The results show that 56.5% (61 participants) feel that their gender affects their choice of hobbies and interests. Meanwhile, 21.3% (23 participants) said their gender does not influence them, and 22.2% (24 participants) were unsure, suggesting some uncertainty about how gender roles shape their interests.

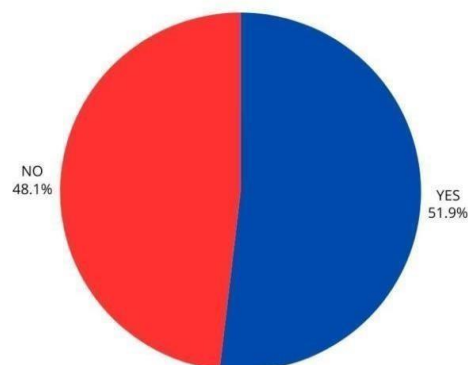


Have you ever felt pressured to change your personal hobbies because they did not align with your peer group's preferences?



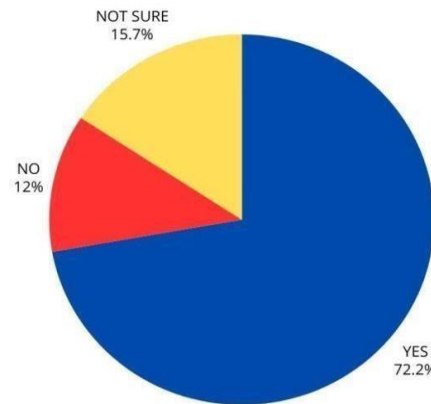
2. While 49.1% of all respondents (53 individuals) indicated that they did not feel obligated to change their hobbies favored by the peer group, 50.9% (55 individuals) reported feeling compelled to change their hobbies due to a misalignment with their peer group's expectations.

Do you choose certain hobbies to feel more accepted or to belong to a particular group of friends?



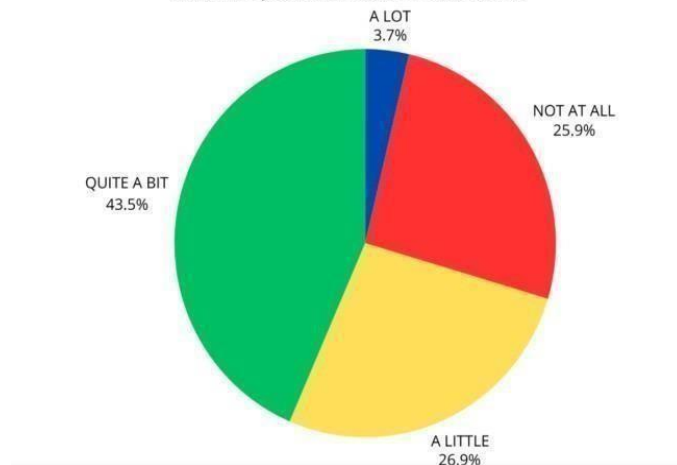
3. 51.9% of respondents (56 adolescents) answered "Yes," indicating they do engage in specific hobbies for social acceptance, while 48.1% (52 adolescents) answered "No," meaning they do not feel the need to choose hobbies based on social acceptance.

Do you think that certain hobbies are more socially acceptable for boys or girls in Uzbekistan?



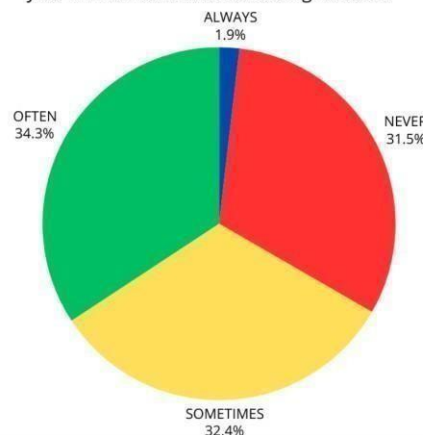
4. 72.2% of respondents (78 votes) believe certain hobbies are more socially acceptable for boys or girls in Uzbekistan, while 12% (13 votes) do not, and 15.7% (17 votes) are unsure.

How much does seeing your friends' hobbies and activities on social media influence your own choices of hobbies?



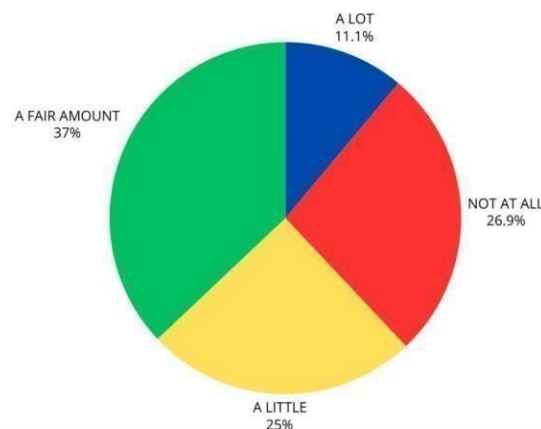
5. 43.5% (47 individuals) of respondents feel their hobbies are influenced "Quite a bit" by seeing their friends' activities online, while 26.9% (29 individuals) experience "A little" influence. Meanwhile, 25.9% (28 individuals) said social media does not influence their choices at all, and only 3.7% (4 individuals) said it has "A lot" of influence.

How often do you feel stuck between what your parents want and what your friends want when choosing hobbies?



6. The survey reveals that most participants frequently feel caught between their parents' and friends' expectations when choosing hobbies, with 34.3% (37 votes) often and 32.4% (35) sometimes experiencing this conflict. Only 1.9% (2 votes) always face this dilemma, while 31.5% (34 votes) never feel stuck in such situations.

How much does your school, including friends and clubs, affect the hobbies you choose?



7. A majority of participants (37%) say their school, clubs, and friends influence their hobby choices a fair amount, while 26.9% report no impact at all, and 11.1% feel a strong influence. 25% feel their school, clubs, and friends have "a little" influence on their choices.

DISCUSSION

The PPSQ-R scale values shed light on Uzbek teenagers' vulnerability to peer pressure. The results show that this group is moderately susceptible to peer influence, with an average total score of 34.2. Items that have higher mean scores, like "I feel like I have to spend a lot of time chatting on the internet" (3.1) and "I do things because my friends want me to do so" (3.2), imply that peer expectations—especially those pertaining to social activities and communication—have a big

influence on how adolescents behave. This illustrates the typical pressures placed on teenagers by their peer groups to blend in and follow social standards. On the other hand, lower ratings, such as "I do risky and harmful acts to get acceptance in the peer group" (2.6), suggest that while susceptibility may exist, for most individuals it might not extend to more extreme or harmful behaviors. This suggests that even if teenagers experience social pressure, they could still be able to resist doing something that would be extremely



harmful. Nevertheless, the overall mean score of 34.2, being close to 35, indicates a high susceptibility to peer pressure among the participants.

According to the study, 56.5% (61 participants) think that their gender has a big impact on their interests and activities. This demonstrates the significant cultural effect of conventional gender norms in Uzbekistan, since more than half of the respondents believe that gender roles significantly influence their personal decisions. On the other hand, 22.2% of participants (24), or 21.3% of participants, are unsure and believe gender has no bearing. The information supports the widely held belief that adolescent hobbies are significantly shaped by a person's gender, especially in Uzbekistan.

50.9% of respondents felt under pressure to modify their activities in order to fit in with the interests of their peer group, indicating that peer pressure is a significant factor among teenagers in Uzbekistan. This implies that during this formative period, social conformity has a significant influence on the development of personal interests. The fact that slightly more than half of the teenagers feel pressured to adjust suggests that peer dynamics have a significant impact on how they make decisions. Even though 49.1% of respondents said they had never encountered this kind of social pressure, the majority's admission of having done so highlights how common outside influence is. Teens may feel pressure to fit in in order to stay accepted by their peers or to preserve their social position, especially in close-knit social settings. This shows how frequently peer pressure may take precedence over individual preferences.

Adolescents in Uzbekistan are greatly impacted by peer pressure; 51.9% of them choose their activities in order to fit in with their social group. This demonstrates how young people's urge to fit in frequently pushes them to put social conformity ahead of their own interests. The narrow margin, with 48.1% rejecting these kinds of pressures, indicates that even if a significant proportion of teenagers still cherish their individuality, many of them nonetheless adjust to societal norms. These results suggest that choosing a pastime has a significant social component, with acceptability seeking taking precedence over personal preferences.

The study's findings reflect a continued gendered perspective on leisure activities, with a sizable majority of respondents (72.2%) believing that

some hobbies are more socially acceptable for boys or girls in Uzbekistan. This is consistent with the firmly ingrained conventional gender roles in Uzbek culture, where ladies are more likely to engage in hobbies like knitting, dancing, or cooking, while boys are more likely to participate in sports, especially soccer. These beliefs are probably widely held because of societal norms that specify different roles and expectations for men and women. However, the 12% of respondents who disagreed may reflect a shift, particularly in urban centers, where exposure to global culture and evolving gender norms challenge traditional boundaries.

Social media friends' activities have a "A little" impact on hobbies, according to 26.9% of respondents, whereas 43.5% feel it has a "Quite a bit" influence. This implies that social media is crucial in forming peer-to-peer social norms and hobby preferences since it gives people a platform to experiment with and take up new interests depending on what they see others doing online. This impact is probably a result of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, where users can share their passions visually and inspire others to join in on popular pastimes, creating a vicious cycle of peer-driven influence. Despite being a big platform, social media's impact is not uniform, as seen by the result that 25.9% of respondents do not feel impacted by it. Only 3.7% report being influenced "A lot," indicating that while social media plays a role, it may not be as overwhelmingly persuasive for most individuals.

When picking a hobby, many people in Uzbekistan commonly feel torn between the expectations of their friends and parents; 34.3% of people report this tension frequently, and 32.4% report it occasionally. This is indicative of a larger cultural phenomena in Uzbekistan, where family is very important in determining values and way of life decisions, including leisure activities. Conventional Uzbek households could support activities that fit in with society norms, like dancing, singing, or sports like wrestling for males; in contrast, more contemporary, peer-influenced activities, such as video games or trends driven by social media, might go against these norms.

The 31.5% of respondents who said they never had these kinds of disagreements might be a sign of either a strong sense of family values or a lower level of peer pressure. The fact that just 1.9% of respondents feel trapped all the time suggests that, although conflict is prevalent, it is not always



overpowering. It can be difficult for younger generations negotiating these cultural dynamics to balance these expectations with peer pressure in Uzbek culture, where collectivist attitudes frequently privilege the family's wishes above individual choices.

According to the research, 37% of participants believe that their friends, groups, and schools have a moderate impact on their hobbies, which reflects how social surroundings in Uzbekistan determine people's interests. While 11.1% claim a major influence, 25% feel these variables have "a little" influence, indicating that schools and peer groups have a substantial influence on almost half of the respondents' interests. Students may, for instance, decide on pastimes that are in line with those encouraged by their peers or educational initiatives; for instance, guys may join wrestling teams, while girls may join music organizations.

The Way Forward - Our research focuses on the influence of peers on adolescents of Uzbekistan in respect of their opinions, in this case, hobbies and interests as well. Our research enriched the database of research in Uzbekistan about peer pressure.

However, given the constraints of our research pertaining to participant numbers, such as sample size or potential bias in online surveys, there are still certain problems that require more thorough investigation. The findings of the survey are more reliable the more participants there are. Our research has showed that Uzbek adolescents are susceptible to peer pressure, and there are also many other factors which affect their choice of interests and hobbies, such as gender, cultural norms, social expectations, and more. Our research can be used for further specifications of those questions and more.

CONCLUSION

This study offers an insightful glimpse into the lives of adolescents in Uzbekistan, highlighting the intricate dance between peer pressure and cultural norms that shape their hobbies and interests. According to our research, Uzbek teenagers receive a moderate amount of peer pressure; the Peer Pressure Susceptibility Questionnaire- Revised (PPSQ-R) yielded an average score of 34.2. This effect is most noticeable in social and recreational settings, where friends' opinions frequently take precedence over personal preferences. It serves as a striking reminder of how customs—such as gender

norms that are still deeply ingrained in Uzbek society— shape the kinds of activities that are deemed appropriate for boys and girls.

The study also emphasizes the conflict between peer group desires and parental expectations, which is indicative of larger socioeconomic dynamics in Uzbekistan. The data enrich our understanding of how peer pressure can sway young people's choices, especially in a culture where community values and cultural norms play a significant role. Not every Uzbek adolescent has the same experience, though. While many people struggle with the pressure to fit in, some decide to break free by engaging in activities that really speak to them. This variation indicates that, despite strong societal rules, Uzbekistan has a diversified cultural landscape with room for uniqueness and personal choice.

This study highlights the significance of investigating the ways in which peer pressure permeates Uzbek culture, taking into account the contributions of cultural features, individual variances, and modernization trends. It can be quite helpful to promote critical thinking, boost self-esteem, and assist teenagers in following their passions in spite of outside influences. In the end, fostering the healthy development and well-being of Uzbek adolescents requires assisting them in navigating their intricate social environments and giving them the freedom to make decisions that are consistent with their unique value.

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