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## Influence of media and peer on romantic involvement of young adults

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### Abstract

Emerging and young adulthood is a stressful yet important event with a life-changing experience. Identity formation and forming a romantic relationship is an important developmental task of young adulthood. It is a phase of life which is highly unstructured by social institutions. This study explored the effect of social influence (media, peer) on the romantic involvement of young adults of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand and Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, Punjab. 400 young adults were selected by using snowball sampling method. Social Influence on Romantic Relationship Scale (SIRRS) was used to explore the influence of social media on romantically involved young adults. Findings revealed that under-graduates were significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduate students. The possible reason for differences in peer influence is based on the reaction of the peer group toward behaviours, reflecting the mechanism of social control.

**Keywords:** Social influence, romantic relationships, young adults, media, peer

### Introduction

Emerging and young adulthood is a stressful yet important event with a life-changing experience. Identity formation and forming a romantic relationship is an important developmental task of young adulthood. It is a phase of life which is highly unstructured by social institutions (Arnett, 2006) [1]. Due to globalization, in emerging adulthood, various changes are evident in the urban part of the Indian society (Kapadia *et al.*, 2007; Seiter and Nelson, 2010) [3, 5]. It is also found that attitudes and expectations related to dating and close relationships are affected by cultural context (Hynie *et al.*, 2006; Sprecher *et al.*, 1994; Yan, 2003) [2, 6, 7]. India seems to have a slightly positive attitude towards love, especially in urban societies. Netting (2010) [4] found that upper-class Indian youth creatively overcome the apparent dichotomy by evaluating the 'ideoscapes of individualism and romantic love through the lens of their heritage'. With major strides in the area of education, the increased literacy rate of girls, multi-fold career opportunities, a safer environment for interaction between young adults, the increased legal age of marriage and reduced gender biases, the relationship pattern have also changed. Revolution in the ICT sector (Information and Communication Technology) has also influenced the youth in profound ways. This reflects that the romantic relationship is affected by various factors such as prosperity, education, gender equality, and technological advancement. These factors are providing new life to emerging adulthood and have also made it possible for them to pursue relationships based on egalitarian values. Also, collectivistic cultures prompt young adults to regard love and romantic relationships within the larger context of their familial and societal obligations (Yang, 1968) [8].

### Materials and Methods

#### Data Collection

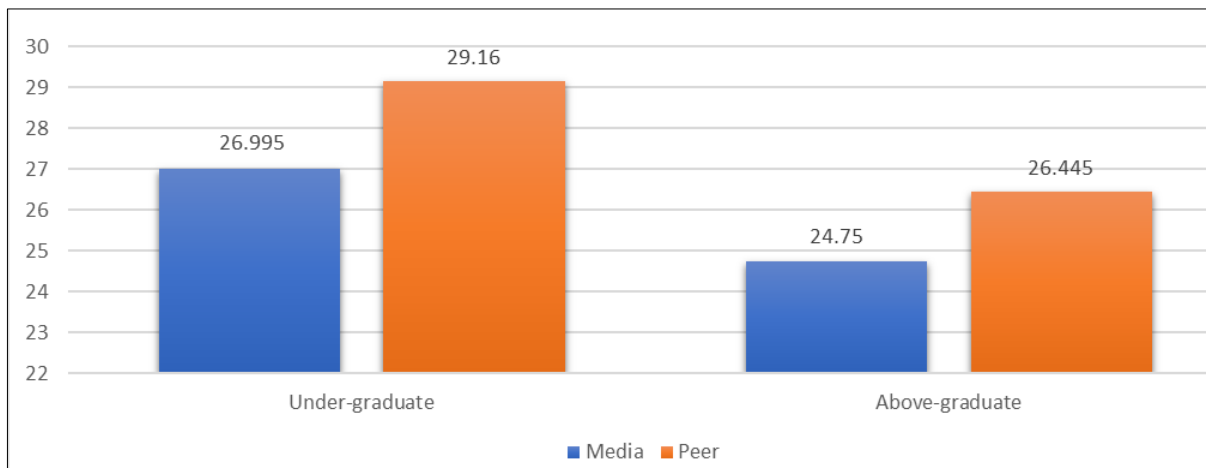
This study is focused on the Social influence i.e. Social media and peer pressure on the romantic involvement of young adults. Snowball sampling was employed to select 400 participants under two populations i.e. GBPUA&T, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana, Universities.

**Research Tools**

Social Influence on Romantic Relationship Scale (SIRRS) was used to explore the influence of social media on romantically involved young adults. It is a self-report measure of media and peer influence on romantic relationship. It consists of 16 items on a five point likert scale with two dimensions namely media influence and peer influence with eight items on each dimension. The scale uses a five-point likert format which is “1”- strongly agree to “5”- strongly disagree.

**Result**

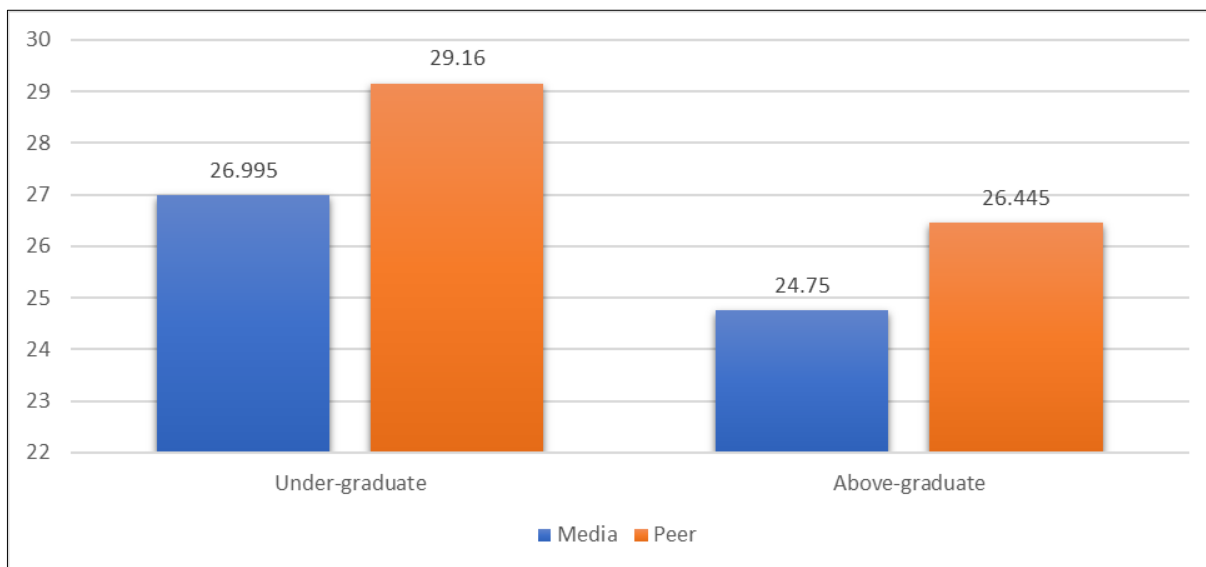
Fig.1 elaborates mean score of Unger-graduates and Above-graduates of GBPUA&T, Pantnagar on Social Influence. In table 1 an independent sample t-test was done to analyze the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in social influence on Graduate and Above Graduate students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar. Findings showed that there are significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in media ( $t=3.832$ ) and peer ( $t=3.807$ ) influence on Graduate and Above Graduate students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar. Graduates were observed to be significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduate students.



**Fig 1:** Mean Score of Under-graduate and Above-graduate of GBPUAT, Pantnagar, on Social Influence (Media and Peer)

Fig.2 elaborates mean score of Unger-graduates and Above-graduates of PAU, Ludhiana on Social Influence. In Table No.3 an independent sample t-test elicits significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in media ( $t=2.531$ ) and peer ( $t=2.933$ )

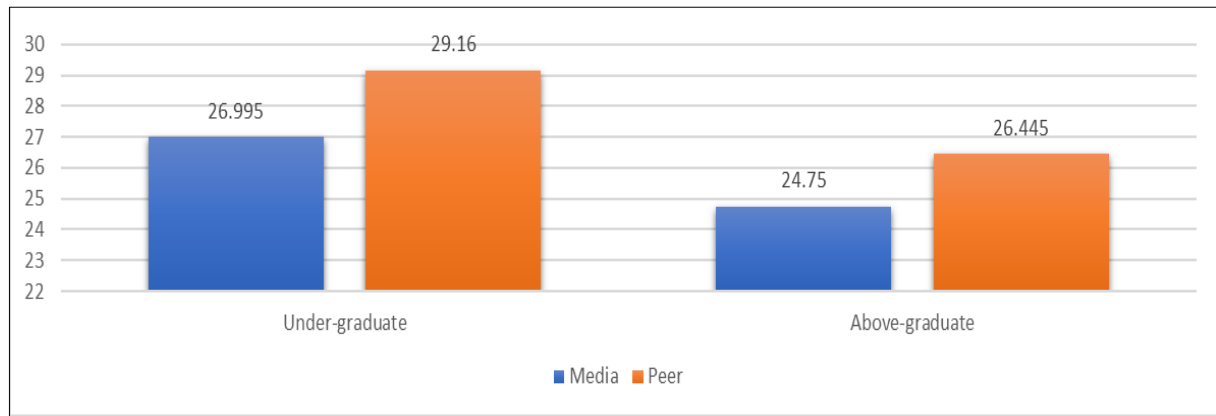
influence on graduate and above graduate students of PAU, Ludhiana. Graduates were observed to be significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduate students.



**Fig 2:** Mean Score of Under-graduate and Above-graduate of PAU, Ludhiana, on Social Influence (Media and Peer)

Fig.3 elaborates mean score of Unger-graduates and Above-graduates of GBPUA&T, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana on Social Influence. In table No. 3 an Independent sample t-test portrays the significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in media ( $t=4.295$ ) and peer ( $t=4.651$ ) influence on graduate and above graduate

students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana. Graduates were observed to be significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduate students.



**Fig 3:** Mean Score of graduate and Above-graduate students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiyana on social influence media and peer

**Table 1:** Independent sample t-test between Graduate and above Graduate students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar on Social Influence

Areas of Social Influence		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Media	Equal variances assumed	.257	.612	3.832	198	.011	2.33000	.60807	1.13088	3.52912
	Equal variances not assumed			3.832	197.498	.011	2.33000	.60807	1.13086	3.52914
Peer	Equal variances assumed	2.856	.093	3.807	198	.003	2.70000	.70915	1.30154	4.09846
	Equal variances not assumed			3.807	193.772	.003	2.70000	.70915	1.30135	4.09865

**Table 2:** Independent sample t-test between Graduate and Above Graduate students of PAU, Ludhiana on Social Influence

Areas of Social Influence		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Media	Equal variances assumed	.119	.730	2.531	198	.012	2.16000	.85343	.47702	3.84298
	Equal variances not assumed			2.531	197.958	.012	2.16000	.85343	.47701	3.84299
Peer	Equal variances assumed	7.980	.005	2.933	198	.004	2.73000	.93085	.89435	4.56565
	Equal variances not assumed			2.933	188.179	.004	2.73000	.93085	.89376	4.56624

**Table 3:** Independent sample t-test between Graduate and Above Graduate students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana on Social Influence

Areas of Social Influence		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Media	Equal variances assumed	.269	.604	4.295	398	.010	2.24500	.52276	1.21728	3.27272
	Equal variances not assumed			4.295	397.726	.010	2.24500	.52276	1.21728	3.27272
Peer	Equal variances assumed	10.341	.001	4.651	398	.005	2.71500	.58370	1.56747	3.86253
	Equal variances not assumed			4.651	382.882	.005	2.71500	.58370	1.56733	3.86267

Significant differences in social influence (media and peer) on romantic attitude of romantically involved under-graduates

and above-graduates were statistically analysed within universities and in overall samples obtained from both

universities. The current study illustrated a significant difference in social influence (media and peer) on romantically involved under-graduates and above-graduate students of GBPUA&T. Result established that under-graduates were observed to be significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduates. Similarly, in PAU, Ludhiana under-graduates were observed to be significantly more influenced by media and peer for entering into romantic relationship than above graduates.

### Conclusion

The possible reason for differences in peer influence is based on the reaction of the peer group toward behaviours, reflecting the mechanism of social control. They use various strategies to reinforce group norms and if emerging adults violate these norms they receive sanctions from peer group members, such as being teased. On the other hand, if they behave alike groups' central tendency they are rewarded by social approval. Graduates do not want to be a social misfit; therefore, they have a strong motivation to act in line with their peer group. As far as media influences are concerned, they can affect the knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and behaviour of individuals. The media act as a reflection of young adults to see where they stand at the moment. It works as a mirror of their real-life experiences and has become their outlet for self-identification. Individuals who are heavily exposed to media begin to adopt and develop unrealistic beliefs and romantic ideals. The vicarious learning ability of youth encourage them in "observational learning" and considering the experiences and responses of others rather than learning through the consequences of their actions. However, the effect of media on individuals decreases as they got older. This reflects that as the older the individual becomes, the less romantic beliefs they develop through media experiences. They acquire a more realistic approach in relationship to make it successful.

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