Influence of Peer Group on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ekiti State

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Abstract:
This study investigated the influence of peer group on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State.
A total of 225 secondary school students were randomly selected from five mixed (boys and girls) secondary schools for participation in this study. The participants all responded to Peer Group and Adolescent's Academic Performance (PGAAP) questionnaire.
Eight hypotheses were tested in all. Independent t-test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2, while Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient was used to test hypotheses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, respectively. Data collected were analyzed and findings showed that peers age (young and old) does not influence academic performance of secondary school students (t (198) = 7.747, P < .05). Gender (male or female) does not influence academic performance of secondary school students (t (198) = 0.681, P < 05). Peers relationship influence academic performance of secondary school students (R (4) = 0.15, p >. 05). Peers pattern of socialization influence academic performance of secondary school students (R (4) = 0.6, P > .05). Peers location influence their academic performance (R (4) = 0.25, P > .05). Motivation of peers influence their academic performance (R (4) = 0.8, P > .05). Use of drugs among peers influences their academic performance (R (4) = 0.4, P > .05). Finally, peers religion affiliation have no influence on the academic performance of secondary school students (R (4) = 1.00, P > .05).
Above results suggest that age, gender and religion difference does not matter in determining academic performance among secondary school students. The result further suggest that peers relationship, socialization, location, motivation and drug use have a great influence in determining academic performance of secondary school students. However, the comparative influence of peers' parent, home-setting and extra-curricular activities contextual variables that may differently influence academic performance was not taken into account in this study. Thus, future research should address the influence of such factors.

1. Introduction

Adolescent have always been exposed to peer influence, but the kinds of peer influence that they encounter have changed tremendously in the past years. Peer can influence everything from what an adolescent choose to wear to whether or not an adolescent engages in drug related or other delinquent behaviour. This is an important issue to be studied because if society and education related professionals understand the issue surrounding negative peer influence, they are more likely to prevent it and be more adequately prepared to help a teenager facing negative aspects of peer pressure. The influence of the peer educational climate is defined by the amount and the style of help that children receive from the peer group; this is determined by elements of the peer context, like the dynamic of communication and effective relationships, attitude towards value, expectations, etc. Along these same lines, Marchesi and Martin (2002) opined that adolescents' expectations have a notable influence on academic results, even when controlling for initial knowledge and socio-economic context. Castejon and peret (1998) found indirect relationship with performance from the student perception of how much importance his or her peer groups assign to studying at home. Other studies show that the levels of peers cohesion (Caplan 2002) and family relationship (Buota, 2001) prove themselves capable of predicting academic performance.

Adolescence is a time of transformation in many areas of an individual's life. In the midst of these rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, youth begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance. It is also a time for individuals to make important decisions about their commitment to academics, family, and perhaps religion. Young adults begin to ask questions such as, "Is school important to me?" and "How do I want to spend my time?" The choices that adolescents make regarding their motivation, engagement, and achievement in school (and in life) and the satisfaction they obtain from their choices depend, in part, on the context in which they make such choices (Ryan, 2002).

Teachers, parents, and peers all provide adolescents with suggestions and feedback about what they should think and how they should behave in social situations. These models can be a source of motivation or a lack thereof. Modeling refers to individual changes in cognition, behavior, or effects that result from the observation of others (Ryan, 2002). Observing others perform a particular behavior or voice a certain opinion can introduce an individual to new behaviors and viewpoints that may be different from his or her own. Observation also enlightens an individual on the consequences of such behavior and opinions. Depending on these consequences, observation of a model can strengthen or weaken the likelihood the observer will engage in such behavior or adopt such beliefs in the future. The current research focuses on both the positive and negative roles of peer groups in adolescent socialization and academic performance.

According to Castrogiovanni (2002), a peer group is defined as a small group of similarly aged; fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In general, peer groups or cliques have two to twelve members, with an average of five or six. Peer groups provide a sense of security and they help adolescents to build a sense of identity. Adolescents ask questions relating to social identity theory such as, "Who am I?" and "What do I want out of life?" Feeling part of a group, be it the stereotypical jocks, fun, or riddles, allows adolescents to feel like they are on the way to answering some of these questions. Given that adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as with parents or other adults, it is important to study the influence or pressures that peers place on each other.

Peers influence each other in several ways. Not all of them are bad, variable of peer influence in this context include the ethnicity of the student, the socio-economic background of the student, family relationship and group interest, also the positive and negative influence is going to be considered. Many peer groups can exert a positive influence on their friend. It is thought that intelligent student do help their peer bring up their academic performance. Likewise, girls with good friends who are considered intelligent tend to do better in school, all attributable to the fact that they share a common team of similar aspiration (Landau, 2002).

Also there are some peer groups who can exert negative influence on their friends and these groups tend to share low aspiration of going to tertiary institution or pursing certain careers. There may be other value in place, such as taking care of the family or making quick money rather than pursing tertiary education first (Ide 2006). The most debilitating effect of this is gross academic failure among the Nigeria secondary school students in general and Ekiti State students in particular.

Keeping all these in mind, it therefore becomes a research problem to the researcher to empirically explore deep into ways in which variables like; the type of goal pursed by secondary school students, their personality characteristics, class organization, peer group pressure, teacher's personality and style etc, influence the evolution and the repercussion of all the variables mention above on students' academic performance.

So far, it is assumed that peer influence can have both positive and negative effects on an adolescent's academic performance and socialization. It is also assumed that peer groups may not allow an adolescent to be "themselves" in the truest sense of the world. Adolescents sometimes need to put on an act in order to gain acceptance from the specific group with which they would like to be associated. Finally, it is assumed that peers, as well as parents, siblings, and teachers, all play a large role in how adolescents function in everyday living. This study is hereby relevant in looking at this concept and proffer solutions to the negative effect of adolescent's academic performance. Also, this study will serve as a literature review for future researches.

1.1. Research Hypotheses
1. Socialization will have a significant influence on academic performance
2. There will be a significant influence of age on academic performance
3. There will be a significant difference of male and female on academic performance
4. There will be a significant influence of peer's relationship on academic performance
5. There will be significant influence of religion on academic performance
6. Peer location will have a significant effect on academic performance
7. There will be a significant effect of use of drug on academic performance

1.2. Operational Definition of Terms
The key concepts in this study will be defined according to their operational uses.
1. PEER GROUP: - This is a group of person(s) of the same age who share the same status and bond together by common objective and believe in a social context or circumstance.
2. PEER INFLUENCE: - This is the tendency or readiness in people of the same age or social status to behave in a particular way as a mark of conformity to the opinion, interest, standard and norms of their peer.
3. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: This is the standard or principle by which the secondary school students' ability is been assessed.
4. POSITIVE PEER INFLUENCE: A peer influenced is considered to be positive when it is directed towards producing a successful academic performance or result.
5. NEGATIVE PEER INFLUENCE: contrary to positive peer influence, a negative peer influence is directed towards producing failure, poor, bad or harmful academic performance in secondary schools.
6. ADOLESCENT: This is a young person(s) who is in a stage of rapid psycho-biological development from a child into an adult, usually between the ages of 13 and 18 and the crises they face.
7. ACADEMIC FAILURE: This is pertaining to a situation where student does not attain the expected academic achievement according to his/her ability thereby resulting in an altered state of academic pursuit.

8. SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT: This is the interaction of the peers with one another in their dressing, going to parties and in general behaviour.
9. CONFORMITY: It implies adolescent adjustment to an acceptable standard of behaviour, authority instruction and likeness form, shape and manner.

2. Methodology

2.1. Population
The target population used in this study was based on junior secondary class III and senior secondary classes I to III in Ekiti State.

2.2. Sample and Sampling Techniques
The sample used for this study consist of Two hundred and twenty five (225) students from all the five schools that are selected for this study, having ensure that they were mixed (boys & girls) schools. From the students population used, one hundred and twenty five (125) were male and one hundred (100) were female.
The selection procedure adopted for the participants was based on random sampling techniques with 45-student each from the selected secondary schools.
The schools selected are:
1. Ola-oluwa Muslim Grammar School, Ado-Ekiti
2. Eyemote Grammar School, Iyin-Ekiti
3. Omuo Comprehensive High School, Omuo-Ekiti
4. Orin High School, Orin-Ekiti
5. Eleyo High School, Ikere-Ekiti.

2.3. Reliability of the Instrument
The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method. The instrument was administered twice within two weeks on the same group of adolescent. The scale reliability ranges from alpha 0.68 to 0.88.

2.4. Administration of the Instrument
The (PGAAP) questionnaire was administered to two hundred and twenty- five (225) students in Junior Secondary School III, Senior Secondary Schools I, II and III in the five (5) selected schools and was collected instantly.

2.5. Statistical Analysis
The date collected were organized and analyzed using independent t-test for hypotheses 1 and 2 while Spearmen Rank correlation coefficient was used for hypotheses 3 to 8 which is defined as

$$R = \frac{1-6Ed^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

Where; R equals correlation co-efficient
R. A equals Ranking of Agreed
R. D. A equals Ranking of Disagreed
D equals Different in R.A and R.D.A
N equals number of clients

This formula was used in computing the scores derived from the (PGAAP) questionnaire in arriving at the level of the significant of influence of peer group on Adolescents' academic performance in secondary schools.

3. Results and Discussion

S/N	VARIABLE	A	DA
1	Attendance at parties	146	78
2	Dependency on friend	95	85
3	Influential	140	75
4	Joining secret society	121	100

Table 1: Summary table of Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient showing influence of pattern of socialization on the academic performance of secondary school students

S/N	A	DA	RA	RDA	D	D^2
1	146	78	1	3	-2	4
2	95	85	4	2	2	4
3	140	75	2	4	-2	4
4	121	100	3	1	2	4

Table 2: Statistical Representation

$$Ed^2 = 16$$

$$:-R = 1 - \frac{6Ed^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6(16)}{4(4^2 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 16}{4(16 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 16}{4 \times 15}$$

$$1 - \frac{96}{90}$$

$$1 - 1.6$$

$$R = 0.6$$

From table 1 above, the hypotheses which states "the pattern of socialization of peers will not influence their academic performance" was rejected since the R valve computed (i.e. 0.6) is greater than 0.49 listed in the spearman Rank correlation table. R (4) = 0.6, p > .05. This implies that peers' pattern of socialization influence academic performance of secondary school students.

VARIABLE	GENDER	N	X	DE	T-OBS	T-CRT	P
Young peer	Boy	125	96.12	198	7.747	1.652	P > .05
Old peer	Girl	100	79.25				

Table 3: Summary table of independent t-test showing differences in the influence of peers' age (young and old) on the academic performance of secondary school students

From the table 3 above, the hypothesis which states "there will be no significant difference between Young peers and Old peers' influence in the academic performance of secondary school student was confirmed. The hypothesis is supported since the observed value of "t" is greater than the critical value i.e. t (198) = 7.747, p > .05.

This implies that peers' age (Young or Old) has no influence on the academic performance of secondary school students.

VARIABLE	N	X	DE	t-OBS	t-CRT	P
Male	125	93.873	198	0.681	1.652	P < .05
Female	100	78.592				

Table 4: Summary table of independent t-test showing differences in the influence of peers' gender (male or female) on the academic performance of secondary school students

The above table showed that the hypotheses which states that "there is no significant difference between peers of male and female gender influence on academic performance was rejected because the observed value of "t" obtained is less than the critical value of 1.652 i.e. t (198) = 0.681, p < .05.

This implies that there is a significant difference between peers' gender (male or female) influence on academic performance of secondary school students

S/N	VARIABLE	A	DA
1	Information sources	145	80
2	Participation in extra-curricular	115	77
3	Interacting with friend	110	100
4	Peer influencing one's action	120	100

Table 5: Summary table of Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient showing influence of peer's relationship on academic performance of secondary school students

S/N	A	DA	RA	RDA	D	D^2
1	148	80	1	2	-2	4
2	115	77	3	4	-1	1
3	110	100	4	1.5	2.5	6.25
4	120	100	2	1.5	0.5	0.25

Table 6: Statistical Representation

$$Ed^2 = 11.5$$

:- R $=$ $1 - \dfrac{6Ed^2}{n(n^2-1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6(11.5)}{4(4^2 - 1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6 \times 11.5}{4(16 - 1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6 \times 11.5}{4 \times 15}$

$1 - \dfrac{69}{60}$

$1 - 1.15$

R $=$ 0.15

From table 4 above, the hypothesis which states "that peers relationship will have no significant effect on the academic performance was rejected since the R valve computed (i.e.-0.15) is greater than -0.12 listed in the Spearman Rank correlation table R (4) – 0.15, P > .05.

This implies that peers' relationship has influence on the academic performance of secondary school students.

S/N	VARIABLE	A	DA
1	Improved because of rural area	75	150
2	Improved because of urban area	150	75
3	No effect	113	100
4	Prefer to live in rural area	75	135

Table 7: Summary table of Spearman Rank correlation coefficient showing the influence of peers' location on the academic performance of secondary school students

	A	DA	RA	RDA	D	D^2
1	75	150	2.5	1	1.5	2.25
2	150	75	1	4	-3	9
3	113	100	2	3	1	1
4	75	135	2.5	2	0.5	0.25

Table 8: Statistical Representation

$$Ed^2 = 12.5$$

R $=$ $1 - \dfrac{6Ed^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6(12.5)}{4(4^2 - 1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6 \times 12.5}{4(16 - 1)}$

$1 - \dfrac{6 \times 12.5}{4 \times 15}$

$1 - \dfrac{75}{60}$

$1 - 1.25$

R $=$ 0.25

From table 5 above, the hypotheses which states " location of peers will not influence their academic performance" was rejected since the R value computed (i.e. 0.25) is greater than 0.19 listed in the Spearman Rank correlation table R (4) = 0.25, P > .05.
This implies that peers' location influence the academic performance of secondary school students.

S/N	VARIABLE	A	DA
1	Introduced to Alcoholic by friend(s)	110	85
2	Started smoking through friend(s)	115	110
3	Engagement in drug use	130	70
4	Lending by friend	121	100

Table 9: Summary table of Spearman Rank correlation coefficient showing the influence of drug on academic performance of secondary school students

S/N	A	DA	RA	RDA	D	D^2
1	110	85	4	3	1	1
2	115	110	3	1	2	4
3	130	70	1	4	-3	9
4	121	100	2	2	0	0

Table 10: Statistical Representation

$Ed^2 = 14$

$$R = 1 - \frac{6Ed^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6(14)}{4(4^2 - 2)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 14}{4(16 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 14}{4 \times 15}$$

$$1 - \frac{84}{60}$$

$$1 - 1.4$$

R = 0.4

From table 6 above, the hypothesis which state that "the consumption of drug by peers will not influence their academic performance was rejected since the R value computed (i.e. 0.4) is greater than 0.38 listed in the Spearman Rank correlation table R (4) = 0.4, P > .05.
This implies that consumption of drug by peers influence the academic performance of secondary school students.

S/N	VARIABLE	A	DA
1	Associate with Muslim	82	143
2	Associate with Christian	140	72
3	Connected to Muslim	6	210
4	Connected to Christian	27	170

Table 11: Summary table of Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient showing influence of religion of peers on academic performance of secondary school students

S/N	A	DA	RA	RDA	D	D^2
1	82	143	2	3	-1	1
2	140	72	1	4	-3	9
3	6	210	4	1	3	9
4	27	170	3	2	1	1

Table 12: Statistical Representation

$$Ed^2 = 20$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{6Ed^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6(20)}{4(4^2 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 20}{4(16 - 1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6 \times 20}{4 \times 15}$$

$$1 - \frac{120}{60}$$

$$= 1 - 2$$

$$R = 1$$

From table 7 above, the hypothesis which states that "the religion of peers relationship will not influence their academic performance" was accepted since the R value computed (i.e. 1.00) is less than 1.50 listed in the Spearman Rank correlation table R (4) = 1.00, P < .05.

This implies that peers religion affiliation have influence on the academic performance of secondary school students.

4. Discussion

The present study is geared towards examining peer influence in relation to academic performance, socialization and other areas of concern to education-related professionals. It is clear from the result emanating from the research that peers do, in fact, have a relatively strong influence over the daily functioning of adolescent secondary school students.

The first hypothesis predicted that the pattern of socialization of peers will not influence the academic performance. Result from table 4 also negates this assertion as it showed that the pattern of peers socialization influence academic performance or achievement of secondary school students.

The present result on peers' socialization influence on academic performance corroborates Ide (1981) as supported by landau (2002) that students who care about learning are more likely to associate with peers who shares this interest in learning. The personal value that an individual attaches to a characteristic also affects the individual's response to change as applicable to the Nigerian secondary school students. This may explain or evident Ryan (2002) conclusion that value result in resistance to change, and low value result in receptiveness to change.

The second hypothesis which predicted there is no significant difference of age (young peer and old peer) on the academic performance of secondary school students was retained. The confirmation of this hypothesis indicates that age of peers does not determine the academic performance which might be due to difference in age characteristics of the secondary school students. The result corroborates Cohen (1983) suggestion that whether age group result in reinforcement or change depends on initial similarity. That if individual are similar on a particular age characteristics, then the pressure will be to remain the same on that age characteristics.

Hypothesis 3 predicated there is no difference of gender (male or female) on the academic performance of secondary school students. Results from table 2 rejects this hypothesis, they showed that academic performance is highly influenced by gender disposition. These results corroborate Zeiji (2000) posit that male peers, especially those from higher social classes, strongly focused on peer group whereas girls of the same age had a stronger preference for dyadic friendship. Not surprisingly, group norms have been cited as been communicated differently among boys and girls. Ryan, (2000) for example cited gossip, teasing, and humour as the predominant ways of enforcing norms among adolescent girls. In another realm, boys who are high on antisocial behaviour also use humour to encourage antisocial behaviour by laughing when a friend jokes about deviant or illegal activities (Ryan 2000).

The fourth hypothesis predicted peers relationship will not influence academic performance of secondary school students. The results of the present research negate this prediction as evident in table 3. The result shows significant influence of peers' relation on the academic performance of the sampled subjects.

First, it should be noted that peers relationship has both positive and negative effect on the academic performance of the adolescent (Berndt, 1989). The predictive power of peer relationship from the present result is generally indirect; let's consider, for example, the responses that support positive peer relationship. Peers approval in this context leads to a pro-social behaviour in many areas of child's academic life, including career choices and possibility of pursuing their education into tertiary institution. This in turn corroborates the fact that peer relationships in school allow the child to learn a host of skill; group interaction conflict resolution, and trust building, among others.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the location (Rural or Urban) of peers will not influence the academic performance of secondary school students. Contrary to the above expectation, the results on table 5 shows that peers' place of abode exerts influence in his/her academic performance.

The rejection of this hypothesis indicates that the response of the urban sampled subjects falls in the improvement of their education side, while that of rural response falls more in having nothing to do with their academic performance. This result further confirmed that rural students have significantly less satisfactory relationships with peers and are less likely than urban students to spend time with family than with friends.

Hypothesis six predicted that the consumption of drug by peer will not influence the academic performance of secondary school students. The hypothesis was rejected as shown by the results computed on table 7; the result shows that drug use among secondary school peers significantly influences academic performance, though in a negative way.

Drug use like smoking, alcoholism and other odd behaviours were expression of peers' non-conformity to adult value, while value and moral standard of the peer become increasingly moves away from the family, most especially during their secondary school years.

This result corroborates Burkett (1977) conclusion that parents see drinking as a safe influence to the evil of "marijuana" and other drugs. While peers struggle to develop a sense of an identity, a concept of which he/she is, they formulate a standard of conduct for themselves and for evaluating the activities and behaviour of others which usually lead them to poor academic performance.

Hypothesis seven which states that religion of peers will not influence their academic performance was also confirmed. The result from table 8 shows that the religious affiliations of the secondary school students have no influence on their academic performance.

While the majority of sampled Muslim peers response shows that they relate with peers of other religion affiliation and vice-versa, other peers seldom discussing religion issue and as such have no influence on their academic performance.

5. Conclusion

From the results therefore, this conclusion was arrived at:

Firstly, the study revealed that peer group plays an important role in the academic performance of secondary school students. They form a critical part of the environment of school and they create and maintain a culture separate from the home and adult community in which individual peers were raised.

Also, it can be concluded that to achieve effective teaching, Teachers should focus on promoting classrooms of acceptance; they should avoid playing favoritism and abandon negative image of student(s) that they already possessed.

In addition, parents should see to the types of peer their children move with either in the school or outside the home. They should see to it that their children move with peers who can positively influence them and have good impact on their academic performance.

Finally, counselors should play a prominent and leading role in the matter by organizing lectures, seminars, career talk and the like so that the performance of secondary school students will be improved.

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