

PEER INFLUENCE AS CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

IBRAHIM SAMAILA, BINTA ADO ALI PHD & MUHAMMAD SHAFIU ADAMU PHD

^{1,2&3}Department of Educational Psychology & Counselling,
Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Abstract

The study investigated peer influences and parental expectations as correlates of academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in Katsina state, Nigeria. Six research objectives, research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The sample consists of three hundred and eight-three (383) Senior Secondary School Students from twelve selected senior secondary school across the state using multi-stage sampling techniques were used to drawn from population of 90,923 students. Three instruments were used for data collection from the respondents with the reliability co-efficient of PIQ=0.87, PEQ=0.82 and ELPT=0.78 respectively. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance, Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were employed using SPSS 23 version to facilitate data analysis. Findings of the study showed the relative importance of each of the correlates variables (peer influences and parental expectations) to the correlation of academic performance in English Language with $R=.626$, which is equivalent to 62.6%. This indicates a good level of prediction. $R^2 = .701$ which is equivalent to 70.1%, indicating the level of shared variance between the dependent variable and the independent variables ($F_{c=382}, .000 < 0.05$). There is significant positive correlation between peer influences and academic performance ($r=.165$, $n=383$, $p<0.05$). There is significant relationship between parental expectations and academic performance in English Language ($r=.235$, $n=383$, $p<0.05$), respectively. Also, there is significant gender difference in peer influences, parental expectations and academic performance in English language. The study concluded that peer influences and parental expectations was significant correlation of students' academic performance in English Language. Based on this finding, it was recommended that parents should have a clearer understanding of their beliefs and expectations concerning their children. Parents and teachers should provide adequate guidance to students to help them understand how the friends they keep can either positively or negatively influence their academic performance in school.

Keywords: Peer Influence, Correlate, Academic Performance,

Introduction

Adolescence marks a crucial developmental phase wherein individuals increasingly shift their emotional and social attachments from family to peers. During this period, peer relationships become a dominant force shaping behavior, attitudes, and aspirations. In educational settings, particularly among senior secondary school students, peer groups play a significant role not only in socialization but also in influencing academic engagement and achievement. Scholars like Santrock (2011) have noted that peers serve as agents of social learning, affecting how adolescents perceive education, formulate goals, and exert effort toward academic tasks.

The relevance of peer influence to academic performance has been widely acknowledged in educational psychology. According to Bandura's social learning theory, individuals learn behaviors and norms through observation and interaction within social contexts (Bandura, 1977). In school environments, students continuously observe their peers, and these interactions can either reinforce positive academic behaviors or encourage distractions and disengagement. For instance, students surrounded by academically focused peers are more likely to adopt diligent study habits, whereas association with deviant peers may lead to truancy, poor academic focus, and underachievement.

In the Nigerian context, particularly in Katsina State, peer influence is often underestimated in discussions on academic performance. Several factors, such as teacher quality, learning materials, parental background, and infrastructural adequacy, are frequently cited in explaining student achievement. However, peer influence, though less overt, is equally potent. A study by Yusuf and Adigun (2010) emphasized that peer group pressure could lead students to adopt behaviors that either support or undermine educational goals. In urban and semi-urban areas of Katsina, the role of peer groups is further magnified due to the diverse backgrounds and social orientations of students.

Moreover, peer groups offer adolescents emotional support, a sense of belonging, and identity. When these peer dynamics are grounded in academic motivation and intellectual curiosity, they can serve as catalysts for achievement. Conversely, when peer bonds are centered on anti-school sentiments or social vices, they tend to derail academic pursuits. Olalekan (2013) posits that peer groups significantly influence students' time management, class attendance, and engagement with learning tasks. Thus, understanding peer influence is essential for designing holistic interventions that foster academic excellence.

In recent years, concerns have grown over declining academic performance in senior secondary schools across Katsina State. While curriculum reforms and teacher capacity building have been emphasized, the subtle yet pervasive role of peer influence has not received commensurate attention. It is within this context that the present study seeks to explore peer influence as a correlate of academic performance among senior secondary school students in the region. The study draws from empirical and theoretical insights to elucidate how peer dynamics intersect with students' academic outcomes and how these relationships can be harnessed or mitigated for better performance.

Furthermore, educational policy in Nigeria, as outlined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), advocates for an all-inclusive approach to student development, incorporating psychosocial, emotional, and academic needs. Understanding peer influence aligns with this holistic vision, enabling educators, parents, and policymakers to develop targeted strategies that consider the social ecosystem of learners. The current study contributes to this discourse by empirically examining the link between peer group associations and academic performance among secondary school students in Katsina State, offering evidence-based recommendations for practice.

Peer refers to a person who belongs to the same social group based on age, sex, occupation or socio-economic background. Peer according to Muhammad and Bulama (2020) referred to as a group of pupils or students that are within the same age range who possess similar interests and are individuals of the same social stratum. A group of peers form a peer group. For example, Youth clubs, Teen clubs, Self-help groups etc. In other words peer is the one who is of equal standing. In day to day term a teenager's friends are referred to as his peers. Adolescents are with their peers most of the time. Peer has significant role in transforming pupils or students in understanding the challenges and prospects in improving their educational pursuits through a well organised schooling system (Filade et al. 2019). This normally

involves process of interactions which is generally achieved through what is commonly referred to as socialisation. The latter is made-up of two phases namely, primary and secondary.

In essence, this study recognizes peer influence as both a risk and a protective factor in academic success. It seeks to provide clarity on the nature and extent of peer influence in the study locale and to inform interventions that can leverage positive peer relationships for academic gains. By investigating this underexplored dimension, the study adds depth to the understanding of factors affecting student performance and provides actionable insights for education stakeholders in Katsina State and beyond.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been growing concern among educators, parents, and policymakers in Katsina State over the persistent decline in the academic performance of senior secondary school students, particularly in English Language. Despite the central role of English as the language of instruction and communication in the Nigerian educational system, students in Katsina State continue to perform poorly in this subject, as evidenced by West African Examination Council (WAEC) results between 2018 and 2022. The percentages of students passing with at least five credits including English Language remain inconsistent and unimpressive, ranging from 27.7% to 55.0% (WAEC, 2023).

This downward trend in performance has raised concerns about the factors responsible for such outcomes. While previous studies have examined infrastructural deficiencies and school environments, insufficient attention has been paid to the psychosocial and interpersonal factors that may also contribute significantly to students' academic outcomes. Notably, peer influence has emerged as a critical factor during adolescence a developmental stage where students are highly susceptible to external pressure and often prioritize peer approval over academic commitment. Students' association with peers engaged in negative behaviors, such as truancy, substance abuse, and general lack of discipline, is suspected to adversely affect their performance in school. Little or no attention has been given to the peer influences to predict academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in English language in Katsina state. It is in the light of this that the researcher will look to bridge the gap in these variables that could bring about improvements among Senior Secondary School Students academic performance in English Language and how these variables can contribute towards an improved educational standard in general. In view of this, the study therefore sought to investigate peer influences as correlates of academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in English language in Katsina state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study investigated peer influences as correlates of academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in English language in Katsina state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. investigate the significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School students in Katsina State, Nigeria.
2. determine the significant gender difference in academic performance in English Language among senior secondary students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study.

1. What is the significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School students in Katsina State, Nigeria?

2. What is the significant gender difference in academic performance in English Language among senior secondary students in Katsina State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant gender difference in academic performance in English Language among senior secondary students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between peer influence and academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School II (SSS II) students in Katsina State. This design enabled the collection of data from a large, geographically dispersed population at a single point in time to analyze existing relationships. A sample of 383 students was drawn from a population of 90,923 using multi-stage sampling techniques. The process involved clustering schools across the three senatorial zones (Katsina, Daura, and Funtua), followed by purposive and random selection of twelve co-educational schools. Students were randomly selected using the lucky dip method to ensure equal representation and fairness.

Data were collected using two main instruments: the Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ) and the English Language Performance Test (ELPT). The PIQ assessed the extent of peer influence using a four-point Likert scale, while the ELPT measured academic performance through standardized multiple-choice questions. Validity was confirmed by expert review, and reliability coefficients of 0.87 (PIQ) and 0.78 (ELPT) demonstrated strong consistency. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 23, with Pearson Product Moment Correlation applied to test the relationship between peer influence and academic performance at a 0.05 significance level.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Peer influence and Academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State, Nigeria

Variables	Number	Mean	Range	Std. Deviation
Peer Influence	383	52.23	50.00	9.75
Academic Performance	383	16.03	15.00	3.77

Table 1: revealed that all respondents questionnaires were retrieved 383 (100%), Students' Peer Influence have a mean of 52.23 (SD = 9.75). This implies that Peer Influence has high mean scores and rank first follow by Parental Expectations among of the variables, while Academic Performance are followed other in the bottom ranking of the variables in the study.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance in English Language among Senior Secondary School students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 2: *r*-value of Peer Influence and Academic performance in English language

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Peer Influence	383	52.23	9.75	382	0.165	0.001	Rejected

Academic Performance 383 16.03 3.77

***Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 indicated relationship analysis between Peer Influence and Academic performance. The finding revealed that the r. value is .165 and the p. value .001 which is less than .05 level of significant with total number of 383 respondents. The above stated null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that, there is significant relationship between Peer Influence and academic performance.

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant gender difference in academic performance in English Language among senior secondary students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 3: t - test on Gender difference in Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Academic Performance	Male	210	16.83	3.91	381	4.692	.000	Sign.
	Female	173	15.06	3.35				

Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result on table 3 shows that there is significant gender difference in academic performance of Senior Secondary School Students in English language in Katsina State, Nigeria; this indicates that the levene's t-test for equality of variance at which t-test value of 4.692 and p-value 0.000 since p-value is less than 0.05 significant alpha level at 381 degree of freedom. Therefore, hypothesis is hereby rejected because there is significant difference in male and female academic performance in English language among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State, Nigeria. This indicates that male mean score of 16.83 is greater than female counterpart of 15.06, this shown that male are performed more in academic performance than female in Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State, Nigeria. Therefore gender was significantly found to have a greater capacity to correlates with Students' academic performance

The study therefore concluded that the level of parental expectation and peer influence among senior secondary school students is moderate and that influenced their academic performance though moderating variables have significant influence on the students' performance in English Language in the study area. The students' interactions influenced their academic performance positively based on gender differences.

Discussion

The hypothesis one states that Peer influence was significantly correlates with academic performance in English Language among senior secondary school students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in supported with the findings of Kit et al. (2020) who result of finding provide support for peer influence as a formative practice and suggest several implications for the implementation of peer influence into the classroom. In addition, the finding of this study is in line with the finding of Inyang (2020) who the result of the finding revealed that peer influence significantly influence the academic performance secondary school students in English Language. In addition, the finding of this study is in support with the finding of Bankole, et al. (2019) who revealed that, peer influence has significant influence on academic performance of students. Also, the finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Moneva and Legaspino (2020) who the results of the finding show that peers can influence students' academic performance. The finding of this study is in support with the finding of Ogunsakin and Bankole (2015) who revealed that, there is a positive and significant relationship between peer influence and

academic achievement of students. Also, the study Olasehinde, and Olatoye, (2014) the result of findings revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance. In contrary, the finding of this study is in contradicts with the finding of Anyanwu (2022) who findings revealed that senior secondary school students exhibit a low level of peer influence.

The hypothesis two states that, the gender difference was significantly correlates with academic performance in English Language among senior secondary school students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in support with the finding of Rahim et al. (2021) who the result of the findings revealed that suggested that a significant difference was observed in academic outcomes between male and female students. In addition, the finding of this study is in line with the finding of Mosha (2017) who the study established that peer had both positive and negative influence on adolescent students' academic performance at the selected schools. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Mapesa, (2013) who revealed that there is positive influence to female student performance in English language. In addition, The finding of this study is in corroborate with the finding of Suman, et al., (2023) who revealed that the female secondary school students were found to have more academic achievement than male secondary school students. In addition, the finding of this study is corroborate with the findings of Kifle and Melese (2017) who revealed the relationship between gender and goal orientation, results of correlation analysis indicated no significant relationship between students' gender and goal orientation, which shown a positively and significantly correlated with female counterpart. In contrary, the finding of this study is in contradicts with the finding of Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) who shows that gender (male or female) does not influence academic performance of secondary school students.

Conclusion

The study concluded that Peer influence has a statistically significant relationship with academic performance in English Language among senior secondary school students in Katsina State. There is a statistically significant gender difference, with male students performing better than female students in English Language.

Recommendations

1. Encourage collaborative learning environments where students support and positively influence one another academically, especially in core subjects like English Language.
2. Address gender disparities by creating equal opportunities for both male and female students to excel, particularly through targeted academic interventions for girls.
3. Schools should provide programs to boost female students' self-confidence and academic engagement, such as female-led discussion groups or mentorship schemes.
4. Regularly engage parents and teachers to monitor how peer relationships and gender dynamics affect students' performance, and guide them to provide balanced support.
5. Strengthen the school guidance and counselling units to address issues related to peer pressure, gender bias, and academic anxiety, ensuring inclusive and equitable learning outcomes

References

- Abubakar, M., Udensi, J. N., & Phillip, A. (2022). Influence of on-line resource accessibility and information seeking behaviour on academic performance of students in college of education in Nigeria. *Al-Hikimah Journal of Education*, 9(9), 218-225
- Aryana, D. R. (2010). Factors influence of Peer influence on Students' academic performance. *Journal of*

Educational Psychology, 80 (2), 32-43.

- Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN). (2013). National Policy on Education (6th ed.). Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Filade, B. A., Bello, A. A., Uwaoma, C., Anwanane, B. B., & Nwangburuka, K. (2019). Peer Group Influence on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria. *African Educational Research Journal*, 7(2), 81-87. DOI: 10.30918/AERJ.72.19.010
- Iroegbu, M. N. (2013). Effect of test anxiety, gender and perceived self-concept on academic performance of Nigerian students. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*. 5(7), 143-146. DOI: 10.5897/IJPC2013.0218 ISSN 2141-2499. <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJEL>
- Muhammad F. H. & Bulama K. (2020). Peer Group Influence on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*. 7(3), 1-8. ISSN 2520-0968 (Online), ISSN 2409-1294.
- Okeke, O. J. (2018). Effect of mind mapping teaching strategy on students' interest, retention and achievement in senior secondary school chemistry. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*. University of Nigeria.
- Olalekan, A. A. (2013). Influence of peer group on academic performance of secondary school students. *Journal of Research in Education and Society*, 4(1), 32-37.
- Onwukwe, E. O. (2013). Linking electrolysis and related topics with analogical thinking processes of students—using Play simulations. *STAN Chemistry Panel Workshop Series 6* Guzau: STAN
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). Adolescence (14th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Scott, K. S. (2012). Enhancing academic achievement in college students through attributional retraining and instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82 (2), 262-271. http://www.ehow.com/about_6398585_meaning-academic
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2021). Toward a Theory of Immigrant Students' Adaptive Navigations of the School-Work Nexus: Empowerment Zones and Intercultural Capital. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(2), 445-478.
- Woolfolk, G. T. (2010). Gender Different among College Students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. *International Journal of innovative Research and Development*, 8(1), 34-52
- World Health Organization. (2022). Report on the strategic response to COVID-19 in the WHO African Region—1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022.
- Yusuf, M. A., & Adigun, J. T. (2010). The influence of school environment on students' academic performance in Ilorin East L.G.A. of Kwara State. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 10(1), 1-6.