

Influence of Peer groups on Academic Performance of Students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri

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Abstract

This study investigated influence of Peer groups on the Academic Performance of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri. Descriptive research survey design was used for this study. One research question and one hypothesis guided this study. The population of this study is 500 which comprised 250 males and 250 females' of 2022/2023 final year students of Alvan Ikoku federal University of Education Owerri. Sample size of this study is 150 obtained by collecting samples of 75 male and 75 female final year students using stratified sampling technique. Researcher developed questionnaire "titled influence of Peer groups on the Academic Performance of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri was used. The instrument was validated by two experts from Madonna University Anambra state. Reliability coefficient of this study was ascertained using Cronbach alpha. Coefficient of reliability indices were 0.87 and 0.97. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data, test statistics were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings from this study revealed that peer groups have helped students to acquire skills and knowledge that helped them to pass their end of semester examinations. The study also revealed that students acquired ready culture and good characters that are recognized in the school and in the society where they students come from. It was recommended from this study that teachers and student counsellors should sensitize students on peer teaching. This would enable students to pass their examinations. It was also recommended from this study that lecturers and university students should counsel students that are performing very poorly in their academics. This would enable slow learners to measure up with their mates during learning and examinations.

Keywords: Peer groups, Positive Influence of Peer Groups on Academic Development of Students, Negative Influence of Peer Groups on Academic Development of Students.

Introduction

Peer group is an informal group or association. Children can form their own peer groups. Adults can also have the same for instilling social, moral cultural and academic cohesion among

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Received 28 Feb. 2025; Accepted 21 March. 2025. Available online: 30 March. 2025.

Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

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themselves. The peer group is defined as a group made up of individuals that are equal in age, class and role. Peer groups have significant impacts on the behaviour of children in their schools. This is because they set standards of conduct that their peers can obey. Peers learn skills that help them associate with their mates and those that are not their mates in society. If one should belong to a peer group, it enables one to socialize and acclimatize with rules and regulations of the group. It helps to pave the way for self-expression. The responsibilities of peer group are not only academic. Peer groups expose their members to extracurricular activities that would help their mates in the future. Peer group is a micro society. Their members are expected to abide by the rules and regulations of their groups. This paves way for their continued existence as help mates. Peer groups expect their members to behave excellently during social interactivities. Daniel (2014) identified that peers mean individuals of the same age, career, academic level. Peer groups ensure together in their membership.

Positive Influence of Peer Groups on Academic Development of Students

Peer groups are another form of child development carried out at schools, homes and at workplaces. Peer groups ensure that their members do not deviate from their norms. They ensure that their members are active in what they do. The cardinal goals or philosophy of peer group include engagement of their peers into different academic role play, workplace training by peers, character training, and development of intellectual and public speaking skills among their mates. They in addition help their new members to acquire specific vocational training. They encourage their members to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour. They inculcate a sense of belonging among themselves. Participation in an election is a civil right encouraging their members to participate in electoral activities of their countries, states, local government and communities where they find themselves. Peer group help their members to develop academically, socially and culturally towards the fulfilment of the deserved needs of their members. Apart from workplace training, group reading, classmates and peer groups show concern to their mates that are sick. They provide money for the treatment of their mates ill health and foot the final bills charged on their mates treatments. They help their members to develop collective opinion, or “we” feel among themselves, as opposed to the development of personal feeling or feeling of one self. Abderrahim (2016) encapsulated that peers in the school have greater influence on character modeling and academic development of their mates. Peer group development is indisputable in child academic and moral development of their members. In both micro and macro societies, good peer groups inculcate right types of values and attitudes, for the survival of their members, enkindle and inculcate appropriate skills, abilities

and competences both mental and physical as panacea for the survival of their members. Peer groups prepare their members for cultural, social, technological and academic excellence. It is an immediate induction and preparation of the young generation of children of school age into good character formation, academic excellence and good conduct. A child is exposed to learning good or bad things in school but necessarily good things if he or she decides to turn to a new leave. In school, the child starts associating with his or her classmates, study mates or colleagues in the school environment to realize the goals of going to school. In the school, the child learns from teachers, non-teaching staff and students but actualize more academic development or make up from his study mates. It is obvious that the child is not alone in the school, he or she mingles, collaborating with other students both inside and outside the classroom. The child associates with study mates that could help him to chisel out learning problems that could not be evaluated by him alone. This goes a long way to help him to develop cognition, effective and personal psychomotor that builds his life. Peer groups students are the second agents of child's socialization in schools.

Peers' collaboration is indispensable in education institutions. Academic achievements are achieved not only by individual single efforts. Efforts put by study mates towards their mate's academic improvement and passes in examinations are endearing and motivating to study with study mates. In both public and private learning institutions, peer groups encourage a spirit of seriousness on their members. They ensure that learning concepts that are encompassing are solved together. Peer groups awaken their study mates from slumber especially during preparation for examinations. A good number of students that are into personalized studies have realized the benefits inherent in associating with class members during learning. A child is exposed to learning good or bad things in school but necessarily good things if he or she has recourse to achieve good learning. The activities of peer groups are both academic and humanitarian service Adeyemi (2018) averred that some peer groups are not necessarily bad groups, the good ones engage their members into different crafts, music, mores, healthy lifestyle and good conscience of reasoning positively. They help to inform and sensitize their colleagues on new tactics of tackling examination questions when they collaborative together to learn. Academic peer groups in secondary schools and universities provide their mates with study timetables.

Academic peer groups in academic institutions are known for their seriousness in academics, they relate with their groups members most especially when they converge together on academic matters. Peers come to school very early and attend lecturers. They make classroom

engagement an inspired and inviting classroom. They help to provide answers to questions when questions on a particular concept are asked by lecturers. Lecturers expect good answers from groups of students, especially those he felt would answer the question no matter how difficult the question may be. They are the first group of students to hear when quizzes and assignments are given by their lecturers. They raise questions on learned concepts they did not understand and seek their solutions from their lecturers in the classroom. This goes a long way, helping them to overcome their learning problems or difficulties. Deep thinking and creative thinking are used by study peer groups to actualize their learning. Brainstorming questions are thrown mostly by their leader during their collaborative studies, old and new suggestions are provided immediately to bring solutions to the group's learning difficulties. Study groups or collaborative learning groups, help to chisel out and concretize facts that brings solutions to different questions raised by the members or colleagues. Activities of peer groups cannot be over emphasized or daunted as far as group learning is concerned. Peers encourage their members to go to the examination hall in good faith of making progress. Peers help to forecast quiz questions and bring solutions to quiz questions. They enable their colleagues to prepare effectively prior to examinations.

The activities of peers are strengthened, awaken and strategies by their members. Study groups pursue good grades with vigor. They desist from being sluggish in academic matters. Activities of study mates in education institutions are very endearing and encouraging when there is better academic achievement by their members.

Negative Influence of Peer Group on Academic Development of Students

Some peers or study mates do not do what they call themselves. It is unfortunate that some group of students hide under the umbrella of being academic peer groups, to foment troubles, infuse bad conduct to students especially, students. When these bad conducts are not properly controlled, they get worsened and result to the training of mediocre, charlatans, cultists, rapists and all manner of criminal minded individuals that constitute nuisance in the school and in the society. Activities of peer groups can be endearing when members of the group pursue ways of academic achievements, social skills, financial and non- financial support of their members. Actions of study groups or mates can be unendearingly especially when it results to smoking, raping, excessive drinking and stealing. In every academic institution, the activities of peers, colleagues, study mates that study in groups and those that are villainous are observed and compared with other groups, which their missions were to study and write examinations and

expect of good results. Some peer groups whose missions are mundane are known by their departmental heads, lecturers and their fellow classmates. Other groups that are unserious to their studies are observed as troublesome groups. Peer groups or study groups as the name implies, ensure examination success of their members by compelling their members into rigorous learnings. They also ensure provision of some of the personal needs of their members ranging from clothes, food, advice and payment of school fees for their members. Peer groups enable the child to get fit in school and in society despite vastitudes of academic journey. According to Nosiri (2007) peer groups are age grades, township school friends, classmates, roommates and study mates. Nosiri averted that in school peer groups engage in peer tutoring to help their erring friends that do not catch up with the teachings or lessons taught by their lecturers in the classroom. Smart & Smart (2000) explained that peer groups are playmates, age grades, colleagues church friends that helps in instilling to the child certain moral rectitude and academic built that perhaps help the students to explore more knowledge, skills and characters that would enable them fit very well in the society. Peer pressure groups are an agent of socialization, enculturation and acculturation. In some cases, study mates go contrary to their missions and visions, they alter school rules and regulations, ask members of their groups to pay monies which their expenditures are not known, they also dress shabbily, change their school uniform styles and make noises in the schools. Study mates extort monies from their parents and care givers and ask their mates to defend them when enquiries are demanded by their parents. Some study mates can also change to course unexpected confusions in the teaching and learning institutions. It is on this premise that many peer groups have turned out to be rapists and gamblers in their various schools. On the other hand, some study groups or mates do not change in their missions and visions. Study mates or Peers groups engage their mates into a vast array of skills and knowledge that are not only taught by teachers or lecturers, but such also as weaving, baking, hair plating, sowing, block laying, building, phone repairs, among others. Most of those knowledge and skills are taught by their study mates or academic grades in secondary schools and universities. The essence is to enkindle the spirit of craft making among their mates. Students learn how to live together with members of their society from their peers. With lots of these associations, students learn how to conduct elections, exercise their civic rights and responsibilities in the micro society (schools) and in the macro society (the lager society where they live). In school, children learn those, more, legislations, dos and don'ts from their teachers and lecturers, most especially from their classmates and play friends in the school. Some peer groups have rules and regulations that guide the behavior of

their members. A child can grow up to adulthood but cannot forget the character and ideals he exhibited in the past at home. In the adolescent age, they feel happy when they sit together to discuss issues that happened among them in the past. or happening in the past. Wintzel (1989) and Lingrel (1995) averred that adults may forget behaviors they portrayed at old age while the childhood character they exhibited in the past remained undetached and indelible in their minds.

In school, peer groups play significant roles in a child's moral and academic development. According to Caltern (1998) most of the societal norms and more students acquire from schools reflected with the culture of various societies. The capacity of friends students mingle or associate with can mal or stabilize the child academically. A maxim says that when a goat that does not know how to eat yam, starts mingling with the goat that eats yam both of them will be eat yam either from the ban or from the ground where the yams are planted. The responsibility of peer groups in the development of the child cannot be over emphasized. There are vagaries of good training, goodwill and bad will peers in the school have for their peers academic upbringing or failures in the school. School registrar student's affairs unit, lecturers should not relent from giving counselling to the deviating students.

Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance of a student in school is observed when such student has started mingling or collaborating with those whom their missions are very far from academics. The worst thing that discourages parents from paying for their academic training and development is observed when those students have continued to make poor grades in examinations. Study mates or study group are strong learning group that help their members to reach the pogrom of academic heights by achieving good grades in examinations. Bad peer groups cause their members to perform very poorly in examinations. These bad groups, foment troubles infuse bad conduct to students especially, students. When these bad conducts are not properly controlled, they get to the training of mediocre, charlatans, cultists, rapists and all manner of criminal minded individuals that constitute nuisance in the school and in the society. In every academic institution, the activities of peers, colleagues, study mates that study in groups and those that are villainous are observed and compared. Peer groups that their missions are mundane are known by their heads of departments, lecturers and their classmates. Other groups that do not emphasize their studies are observed as trouble some groups.

Research Question one:

What is influence of peer groups on the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri?

Table 1: Shows the mean responses and standard deviation on influence of peer groups on the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference on the mean responses of male and female students on influence of peer groups on academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri.

Conceptual Framework

Peer group is one the agents of socialization. Oladele (1966) identified that peer groups are found in schools and tertiary institutions. Oladele further identified that they are known by various names such as work group, play group, and play mates. Peer groups are usually formed according to the desires of the group. Peer groups are age grades, play mate, study group work group religious group that have common bonds which may either be stringent and flexible on the members according to the mode of operation or formation Alvin (1986). In the school a vast array of study mates or study groups have loose structure and flexible laws that guide them together. Academic groups, or collaborative learners are always available in the school to help their colleagues to study. The academic relationship student's forms among themselves remains indelible even in old age, that is why, up to the old age, classmates still maintain old boys' association even when they have graduated.

Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory of Albert Bandura was glued for this study

Social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in (1986).

Social learning theory hinged on social learning and observational learning. Social learning theory explains why human behavior forms a point of reciprocal interaction between cognition, behavioural and environmental influence.

For social learning to take place, there are four factors which must be present. These are observers (learners), teacher (model), learner's attention and proximity or nearness. The process of learning is influenced by the extent of identification and imitation by the leaners facilitated with other three factors. It is obvious that an individual would like to emulate a

model who is perceived to be competent, powerful and attractive as well as someone whose behavior is relevant to the observer. This means that an individual learns by imitating the behaviour of others whom their teachings or behavior would help the individual to achieve a goal or fail apart from achieving the goal.

In social learning theory, reinforcement is not a prerequisite for a learning to occur, but this increases the chance that what has been learnt will definitely be performed. This theory is therefore rested on the fact that an action or behavior can be performed if the model is pleasantly rewarded. It is also believed that there is probability that an observer might drop a behavior if he found out that the model has received a negative reinforcement for practicing such a behaviour.

Methods

This study assessed Influence of Peer groups on the Academic Performance of Students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri. Descriptive research survey design was used for this study. One research question and one hypothesis guided this study. The population of this study is 500 which comprised 250 males and 250 female's students of 2022/2023 Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri. The sample size of this study is 150 obtained by collecting samples of 75 male and 75 female final year students using stratified sampling technique. Researcher constructed questionnaire "titled assessment of Influence of Peer groups on the Academic Performance of Students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri was used. The instrument was validated by two experts from Madonna University Anambra state. Reliability coefficient of this study was ascertained using Cronbach alpha and coefficient of reliability indices were 0.87 and 0.97. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data, t test statistics were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Research Question one:

What are influence of influence of peer groups on the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri?

Table 1: Shows the mean responses and standard deviation on influence of peer groups on the academic performance of students in Alvan Federal University of Education Owerri.

S/No: Item statement	X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1. Students formed reading culture In the school.	3.80	0.10	Agree	3.25	0.75	Agree
2. Reading culture students have formed associate as groups	3.50	0.40	Agree	3.27	0.85	Agree
3. The synergy of studying together enkindles Enkindles unity among the peers	3.50	0.40	Agree	3.26	0.4	Agree
4. Peer learning enables students to communicate important information to themselves	3.30	0.60	Agree	2.75	1.24	Agree
5. Belong to peer groups in the school encourages unity among peers.	2.80	1.10	Agree	3.76	0.34	Agree
6. Past examination questions that helps that help students pass their examinations are discussed.	3.60	0.30	Agree	3.54	0.46	Agree
7. Brain storming questions that makes students to pass their examinations are raised and tackled among the peers in online and study venues.	3.10	0.80	Agree	3.50	0.50	Agree
8. The union instils mutual understanding among peers.	3.60	0.30	Agree	2.26	1.74	Agree
9. It enables each peer to air their individual views on areas of study they did not understand	3.40	0.50	Agree	3.24	0.76	Agree

10. Such collaborative study enables students To express themselves.	3.40	0.50	Agree	3.52	0.48	Agree
11. It helps students to acquire study skills that helps them in the present and future academic endeavours	3.30	0.70	Agree	3.73	0.27	Agree
12. It encourages deep academic thinking Deep thinking among peers.	2.10	1.80	Agree	3.02	0.98	Agree
13. The group encourages peers to learn	3.20	0.70	Agree	2.70	1.30	Agree
14. Study group does not require reqistration protocol for a student t	3.60	0.30	Agree	3.26	0.74	Agree
15. It is flexible type of union	3.80	0.10	Agree	3.48	0.52	Agree
16. New members are welcomed on daily basis	3.70	0.20	Agree	3.48	0.52	Agree
17. Too much population of students can too the group can dis organize the group.	3.60	0.30	Agree	4.00	0.01	Agree
18. It is best practiced by students in the In the same department.	3.60	0.30	Agree	3.70	0.30	Agree
19. Some times it exist even after After students have graduated.	3.60	0.30	Agree	3.33	0.67	Agree
20. instils happiness when peers converge du.	3.00	1.00	Agree	3.52	0.48	Agree
Cluster Mean	3.30	0.10		3.34	0.14	

Test of Hypothesis

Table 2: Shows the responses of male and female students on the influence of peer groups on the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri.

SNO	NO	X	SD	df	t-cal	tcrit	Alpha	Decision
	Males 75	3.3	0.13	148	41.15	1.96	0.05	Reject
	Females 75	3.38	0.14					

The cluster mean and standard deviation above shows that male students have mean of 3.3 with standard deviation of 0.1. In the same vein, female students have mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.14. From the Hypothesis table, t-cal is 4.99 which is greater than the t-crit of **1.96**. These shows that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the influence of peer groups on academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoiku federal University of Education Owerri.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that peers are indispensable in the development of them themselves in school. The findings of this study revealed that those that are serious to their studies are great achievers. Though, they engage themselves in competitive struggles but, enjoys the happiness that comes out of their struggles. Peers associate together to tackle questions, solve assignment given by their lecturers. Adeyemi (2018) averred that some peer groups are not necessarily bad groups, the good ones engage their members into different crafts, music, mores, healthy lifestyle and good conscience of reasoning positively. Adeyemi further identified that peers help in informing and sensitizing their colleagues who combines work and learning as their preoccupation. Information about days scheduled for lectures, quiz (test), assignments and examinations respectively are made known to various students through concerned representatives of this group. Abderrahim (2016) encapsulated that peers in the school have greater influence on character modeling and academic development of their fellows. Abderrahim is further encapsulated that the child is exposed to learning good or bad things in school but necessarily good things if he or she has recourse to good learnings. Abderrahim (2016) encapsulated that peers in the school have greater influence on character modeling and academic development of a child. Abderrahim further encapsulated that the child is exposed to learn good or bad things in the school but necessarily good things if he or she has recourse to good learnings.

Recommendations

The following recommendations guided this paper

1. Principal and school counsellors should carry out period counselling and guidance of students in their academic and bad behavior. This would enable students that are backsliding from their academics to start measuring up with their fellow students in the class quiz and examinations.
2. Students should resort to mingling with peers' groups that are very serious to their studies this would make the students to study with those peers and make good grades in their studies.
3. Parents should observe their children at home to know when they are deviating from academic and societal norm and profession solutions remediate the laxities exhibited by their wards in school learning and extracurricular school activities.

Conclusion

Peers have a strong influence in the development of their peer in the school. They organize peer tutoring to members of their group. Offer financial and oral academic advice to their members. They are strong pillars of child's socialization in school. Their influence on the child can mull or re-invigorate the destiny of any child academically.

School counsellors, principals and teachers should bet up their shorts and trousers to enkindle the reading culture among peer groups in the school. Also, bad training begets immoral behavior. Moral rectitude should be inculcated in the lives of the students. This would make students that are deviating from normal to correct him or herself.

Family helped and peer mates. With peer groups enables the child to adapt by learning the different behavior of her peers in the school and in the macro society. School peers develop in the classroom. The child associates with friends that will teach him or her some knowledge and skills peer groups have various names depending on the social unit they emanate from. They are known as playmates, age mates, course mates and office mates and graders in any human endeavour. In this era, peer groups play significant roles in development of society restoring peace among two disputants. They organize trade ventures and solidarism with their members in any difficulty. Peer groups are agents of human socialization. Peer groups brings solitude to their members in lives difficulties. They empathize with their members with gifts monies and assures members in lives difficulties speedy recovery from sickness or trouble by assuring them

that they are in safe hands. Good peers groups instill good training on their members. They advise and correct their members that are deviating from the societal or group norm to stick to the norm. They rejoice with their peers when they have succeeded and as well, mourn or stays in anguish with any of their suffering colleagues. Peer very obvious that peer groups mediate on every issues affecting their members or colleagues by proffering solutions. They broker peace between their members and nonmembers as the case may be. Some peer groups are friends and well-wishers. Some peer groups does not require registration. In various societies in Nigeria and in diasporas communities, there are various social or peer groups whom their activities are outrageous and vindictive to human lives. They are Cult groups and traditional vampire groups whom their activities are inimical to the human progress. On the other hand, there are peer groups individuals have formed by themselves to foment troubles and involve their members into several promiscuous living. They Commercial sex workers, money and handset snatchers and trouble perpetrators.

In fact, this negative attitude results in poor performances in their academics and their eventual withdrawal from schooling. Good academic Peer groups peer groups inculcate good morals to their mates, teach them intricacies of making good academic awards as good ambassadors of the country and immediate families where they came from. It should not be undaunted that bad conduct and poor academic achievements emanate from peer groups students associates themselves with in academic institutions. Peer groups have led majority of students to drug addiction, prostitution, stealing, single motherhood, cultism and all manner of promiscuity in various teaching and learning institutions in Nigeria. Students immersed themselves into these coarsed associations or groups it sometimes becomes uneasy for that students to exonerate him or herself from that behavior. Bad peer groups frowns from seeing their members turning over a new leave. They can do anything possible to discourage the student from such positive change. Because they are indoctrinated to practice promiscuous lives in the school, they felt un- interested to teaching and learning, and show truancy in any academic activities. They exhibit violence and isolate themselves in classroom activities.

It is obvious that bad groups that students associated themselves with devastates and ruins the students' lives if not properly checkmated or quarantined. Bad conducts developed by students in the school could jeopardize those students' future and expectation of their parents and society in general.

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