

PDF - PEER GROUP INFLUENCE AND THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT A Case Study
on the Academic Performance of Students from Selected Secondary Schools in Mainland Local
Government Area of Lagos State. - researchcub.infoABSTRACT

This study examined the peer group influence and the teaching and learning environment (A case study of the academic performance of students in selected secondary schools in Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State). In this study, relevant and extensive literatures were reviewed under some sub-headings. The descriptive research survey was used in this study for the assessment of respondents' opinions using the questionnaire and the sampling techniques. One hundred and sixty (160) respondents were used as samples for this study to represent the entire population of the study.

A total of five null hypotheses were formulated in this study and analysed, using the independent t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of insignificance. At the end of the analyses, the following results were obtained:

A significant relationship exists between teaching and learning environment and academic performance of students in school.

A significant relationship exists between peer influence and academic performance of students.

A significant relationship exists between students' study habit/skill and their academic performance in secondary schools.

It was found also, that there is significant difference between male and female students' performance in schools.

Finally, it was revealed in hypothesis five that a significant relationship exists between examination malpractice and academic performance of students in school.

Based on the conclusions and summary of the study, the following recommendations were forwarded:

Adolescent should endeavour to make sure that they do not follow peers or friends who have negative attitudes or bad influence.

Parents should ensure that their children and wards are reared towards the right direction. They should therefore, ensure that they learn good behaviour and character needed in their youthful development.

Teachers should indicate in the children how best to identify and avoid keeping bad friends by adolescents and youths in our schools.

The society should ensure that it does not encourage the adolescents to act in bad ways, by way of showing bad example or bad role model.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

6.0

Background to the Study

As children enter adolescence, changes in the nature of friendships also take place. In general, the amount of time spent with friends increases dramatically, adolescents/students spend more time with their peers than they do with family members or by themselves (Larson, 1994).

At early stage, adolescents strive to establish personal identities that are independent of those of their parents, they also look increasingly to their peers for security and social support (Furman and Buhrmester, 1992).

Eriskon (1968), from his life-crisis perceptive, points out that friends offer constructive feedback and information on self-definitions and perceived commitment.

Social-cognition theorists, such as McCandless (1990), are inclined to see groups as important because of their reinforcing nature. While other scholars viewed peer-group formation from either an intergenerational-conflict perspective (Davis, 1990) or a dest continuity perspective (Benedict, 1998).

Although students are peer-centered, their interactions with their peers may be egocentric. In a naturalistic-observation study of group discussions by male adolescents (Newmann, 1996), notes that most of the subjects comments reflected joking, exaggeration, elaborations of truth or perceived invulnerability.

However, when these adolescents were interacting with an adult leader, many of their comments showed discouragement. Indicating discontent with the adult world, boys remarked that adult leaders were unable to take them seriously. East (1989), elaborates on this point in a study of several hundred students who asked to identify socially supportive adults. These young people identified social support (affection, nurturance, and instrumental help) coming most from their mothers significantly less from their fathers, and uniformly withheld by their teachers.

The nature of peer relationships in students/adolescence has been characterized in terms of social status and peer crowds.

Popular and well accepted adolescents tend to display positive conflict resolution and academic skills, prosocial behaviour and leadership qualities, whereas rejected and low-accepted adolescents tend to display aggressive and antisocial behaviour and low level of academic performance (Parkhurst and Asher, 1992; Wentzel, 1991, Wentzel & Erdley, 1993).

Adams (1996), contends that adolescence is a period of increasing influence of one’s peers and peer values and a diminishing role of one’s parents as a primary reference group.

The main values of peer group is social participation, group-loyalty and individual achievement and

responsibility.

However, the extent of peer group influence is better appreciated when viewed against the seven essential functions the peer services as postulated by Ausubel (1994) but modified by Adams (1996);

- A replacement for family to some extent.

- A stabilizing influence.

- A source of self esteem.

- Opportunities for modelling.

- Opportunities for practice by doing.

- A source of behavioural standards.

- There is security in numbers.

Therefore, peer acceptance is very crucial during adolescence or among students. It is far more crucial and important for us not to see this intense need to be accepted as a negative characteristic because students who are liked or accepted by their peers are more likely to be psychologically healthier and self-confident than those rejected by their peers.

When a student is rejected, he feels isolated, withdraws or acts in a hostile manner. This reaction may even deepen his rejection. At this point an older adult, preferably an understanding elder, parent, counsellor or teacher to intervene. The intervention may lead to the beginning of a more constructive interpersonal relationship for a rejected student. (Achuzie, 2000)

In relation to peer group influence, an understanding of the relationship between the students and the school environment will take cognizance of the fact that the student is not a passive recipient of whatever the school offers. He is an active participant in the actual social situation who may or may not decide that he wishes to co-operate at the level required.

The heart of Skinner's message, is that we are all at the mercy of environmental controls. What we do, who we are, what we become – all result from the particular set of environmental stimuli that has impinged on us and that will impinge on us. (Adamson, 1990)

It has been established that good sitting arrangement, good ventilation and un-crowded classroom situation positively encourage and enhance learning. Whereas uncondusive environment like over crowdedness, non availability of seat and the likes adversely affect or hinder learning. (Uzor, 1998)

However, Onwuka (1981), remarks that methodology is the study and practice of various methods of teaching. Those include the mastering and application of different principles of learning.

This is to say that the teaching and learning environment should be planned and organised in such a way that it will enhance positive performance.

All these problems may cumulatively lead to educational deficiencies such as poor study habit, academic underachievement, poor self concept, low self esteem and lack of motivation to learn. (Main, 1990)

Thus, this study is undertaken to examine how peer group influence the teaching and learning process and how environment can determine the academic performance of students in secondary school.

7.0 Statement of the Problem

The adolescents have peculiarity with their attitudes and behaviour from the agelong. The peer group influence is one of the factors of these peculiarity associated to adolescents. Similarly, the teaching and learning environment could be an influence militating against academic performance of adolescents. (Edet, 2000)

In the Nigerian society, the problem of young school leavers that could not gain entrance into higher school could be as a result of inadequate preparations, and poor infrastructure.

The influence of poor on the adolescents engaging in examination malpractices which may include cheating, impersonation, sourcing for examination questions etc and other indiscipline.

8.0 Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this work is to examine; “Peer group influence and the teaching and learning environment”.

Other possible factors influencing the performance of adolescents will be examined which include study habit and various forms of indiscipline.

The study would also find out the relationship between teaching and learning environment on students’ academic performance.

9.0 Research Questions

The following questions were proffered to enable the researcher gather data for the study.

Is there any significant relationship between peer group influence and academic performance?

Will there be any significant difference between male and female students academic performance?

Will there be any significant relationship between teaching/learning environment and academic performance of students?

Will there be any significant relationship between students’ study skill and academic performance?

Will there be any significant relationship between examination malpractice and academic performance.

5.0 Research Hypotheses

There will be no significant relationship between peer group influence and academic performance.

There will be no significant difference between male and female students’ academic performance.

There will be no significant relationship between teaching/learning environment and academic performance.

There will be no significant relationship between students’ study skill and academic performance.

There will be no significant relationship between examination malpractice and academic performance.

6.0 Significance of the Study

This study is essential when we consider the power of peer group influence on the students and the need for guidance to enable the students understand and adjust well within the school environment.

The work would be a contribution to knowledge and literature in the area that the study covered.

It will help to check some re-occurring problems which may hinder the attainment of well planned curriculum.

9.0 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study will be restricted to students in senior secondary classes two and three of three selected secondary schools in Apapa Local Educational District of Lagos State.

Moreover, the study is limited both in scope and sample size. It is also limited to the variation in time, location and definition of terms and other extraneous variables that may be encountered during the course of this study.

10.0 Definition of Terms

Peer group: A social group consisting of people who are equal in such respect as age, education or social class.

Influence: The ability of someone or something to affect the course of event or somebody’s thinking or

actions by means of argument, example, or force of personality.

Environment: Surroundings, natural world or all the external factors influencing the life and activities of people within the environment.

Performance: The outcome of an event or action.

Student: A person studying in order to qualify himself for some occupation or devoting himself to some branch of learning at the university or other place of higher education.

School: The second social institution circle (after home) of influence to which a child is subjected. It is a miniature of the society.

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