

Relationship Between Peer Group Influence, Parental Psychological Support and Students' Academic Performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Jega Educational Zone, Kebbi State

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between peer group influence, parental psychological support and student's academic performance in junior secondary schools in Jega educational zone, Kebbi state. The study used ex post factor design. Cluster and simple random sampling were used to select the sample size. Four junior secondary schools with a total population of 504 and a sample size of 217 students were drawn and used for the study. The study made use of instruments adapted from Azua, (2016). The instrument is known as Peer support inventory and parental support inventory. The academic performance was obtained from the scores in English language and mathematics from the students' end of term examinations. Two hypotheses were formulated for this study and tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of the study show that there is a significant relationship between peer support and academic performance of junior secondary school students ($r=0.731$, $p=0.004$), also a significant relationship exist between parental psychological support and academic performance of junior secondary school students ($r=0.743$, $p=0.002$). It is recommended that parents should actively participate and offer psychological support to their children by way of interacting with their children about peer group influence and thus, repositioning them skillfully towards excellent academic performance.

Keywords: Peer group influence, Parental psychological support, Educational zone and Academic performance.

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/11-15-13

Publication date: May 31st 2020

1. Introduction

The word peer group is often used to refer to people of equal standing. This could mean people who are of the same age, economic class, or grade within a profession. When this peer come together to be friends or spend time together they are refer to as peer group (Azua, 2016). The concept of peer influence is associated with the process of interaction between peers, in which children and young people accept characteristics of those peers for whom they feel sympathy (Dishon & Dodge, 2005). Peer influence is defined as when people within an age range encourage or urge one to do something or to keep from doing something else (Ryan, 2000). There are different mechanisms through which peers influence one other, but one of the most frequently cited mechanisms in literature is peer group. It transfers group norms and maintains loyalty among group members (Vander Zanden, 2000).

Parental psychological support in any form produces measurable gains in students' academic achievement. The concept of parental psychological support is a vital one and can produce great rewards for all concerned. When parent show concern about their children academics by celebrating their success, being patience with them and encouraging them to work hard, this usually go a long way to encourage them to work hard and enjoy school (Bean, Bush Wilson, 2014). Parental psychological support involved many activities. This includes such things as encouraging the student by being sympathetic and understanding. The other includes parental participation, such as doing something that is observable to their children. According to Oxford Royale Academy (2014) one of the easiest ways that parents can offer psychological support is simply by showing concern for how they are going on and to ask them if there are any topics in particular that they are struggling with. Encourage them to read more not only for exams but for pleasure. This can be achieved by buying interesting volumes of books as presents for birthdays or other celebrations. As parent it is important to take a close interest in your child's school. Enforcing a period of quite time in the house at set times of the day when older children can have the pace to concentrate on their private study while younger children are quietly involved.

Peers play a significant role in the social and emotional development of children and adolescents. As children grow older from the age of 12 years onwards, the importance of parents decreases as a reference point and as a model for conformity, and they begin to relate more with their age mates. Although parental support is important for some young people than for others, peer support is a more dominant factor for many teenagers (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005). Peer groups are an important support throughout one's life, but they may be more critical during the developmental years of adolescence. There is often a controversy about peer influence versus parental support, particularly during adolescence. The power of the peer group becomes more important when the family relationships are not close or supportive (Fuligni et al., 2001). If there is no proper communication and good

understanding between parents and their children, then their children may turn to their peer group to get emotional support. According to Olalekan (2016) it is generally observed that peer group has a lot of influence on students. This is seen from the role played by the peer group in the life and learning of a child, evidence abound that students feel more comfortable and relaxed among fellow students. A child who is brilliant and surrounded by dull friends would lose interest in learning. On the other hand, a peer group which is prone to study would have positive effect on a dull member towards learning and stimulate his/her interest to learning. He noted that the nature of a peer group determines the impact on the motivation and achievements of its member. He further suggests that one group may have a negative impact on its members while the other may have positive impact on its members as well.

Generally, people need social belongingness, attachment and the feelings of affiliation for others. This need for affiliation may be based on genetics or experience. Basically people need social contacts that suit them. Sometimes they need parent's help, love, care and guidance and some time they need friend's intimacy, affection and love. Generally speaking, adolescents find their friendships to be enjoyable: together they relax, joke, watch television, and participate in sports activities (Azua, 2016).

Parent attachment and support may be stronger during infancy and childhood, whereas friend's attachment and support seems to be stronger during adolescence. Unfortunately for parents within this period, adolescence prefer to receive compliments and support more from peers than from parents. In most cases, adolescent tends to replace the modeling value of the family context during early childhood with that of their peers. The adolescent in search of social acknowledgement may come under a certain amount of pressure that drives them to abide by the peers convictions or rejections. Haynie (2002) maintained that peer groups have a stronger influence than that of parents because the adolescents in search for acceptance join's a particular peer group and identify with the behaviors and attitudes of that group. Adolescents are often willing to conform to their peers' behaviors in order to be accepted (Newman, 2000).

As a result peers are torn between accepting the support from their parents which is to concentrate on their studies and the pressure from peers to engage in other social activities like spending time chatting on social media, playing football, visiting friends, watching television and many others. It is observed that associating with friends that serve as academic and social resources could have a direct and positive influence on achievement outcomes at school; peers may have a less influential role than parents in influencing adolescents' academic performance (Azua, 2016).

Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university (Anja, 2014). Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important. Individual differences in academic achievement have been likened to so many factors; some of these factors are differences in intelligent and personality, peer influence and parental support. It is multi-dimensional; it is intricately associated to human growth and cognitive, emotional and social physical development.

Academic performance also refers to how well a student is accomplishing his tasks and studies. There should be an interrelated relationship between peer group and academic performance. It was believed that student's academic performance correlates with the group he or she belongs. Peer group Influence can be either positive or negative. If a student is influenced negatively by peer, it affects his or her academic performance. Nevertheless, stronger student do have an impact on their peers and actually help improve their overall academic performance. Conversely, positive peer influence on academic performance depends on person's self-identity, self-esteem and self-reliance. Academic performance as measured in student's CGPA at the end of their third term examination. Therefore, academic performance defines whether the adolescent will be able to continue his or her studies. Besides its relevance for an individual, academic performance is of utmost importance for the wealth of a nation and its prosperity (Anja, 2014). Giving the individual and societal importance of academic performance, it is not important that the knowledge of the factors that influence the outcome of academic performance should be apprehended by the educators, parents, students and the society so that the standard of academic performance could be enhanced. It is on this note that the study wants to find out the relationship of peer group and parental psychological support on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Jega educational zone.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is very important students socialize with the people they associate. Through interaction over many years, acceptable social customs are taught and fostered. Other students as well as adults can have a great impact on a broad range of issues in the students' life including academic performance in schools. Parents are most especially worried when their children do not achieve academically despite all the psychological support been given to their wards.

The study wants to find out whether relationship exists among psychological support by parents, peer group support and the student's academic performance. The problem of this study therefore, is there relationship among peer group and parental psychological support on the academic performance of junior secondary school students

in Jega educational zone.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. Determine the influence of peer group support on the academic performance of junior secondary school students.
2. Determine the influence of parental psychological support on the academic performance of junior secondary school students.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study.

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between Peer group support and academic performance of junior secondary school students.

H₀₂. There is no significant relationship between Parental psychological support and academic performance of junior secondary school students.

1.4 Significance of the study

The current study aims at examining the relationship between peer group and parental psychological support on the academic performance of students. This research findings might help in the design and development of interventions that maximize parental psychological support where it may have the most powerful effect.

Non-Governmental organization dealing with students will find this study useful to bring about better ways of addressing problems of peer group influence and parental psychological support that students face in the society.

The study will be relevant to students in secondary school as this will guide them on how to deal with negative peer group influence. It will also help them to have an in depth knowledge on the need to achieve academically. Lastly, it will serve as a contribution to knowledge on adolescents in Nigeria. In this regard, it will be useful for researchers who might want to carry out research in related area.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants and design

The target population used for this study consists of all JSS2 Students in public secondary schools in Jega educational zone. The research design that was employed for this study is ex-post facto design. The main purpose of this design is to determine the influence of Peer group influence and Parental support which served as the independent variable could not be directly manipulated (Mugende & mugende 2003). This design was also found appropriate because it allowed the investigation of subsequent influences between the independent and the dependent variables Academic performance is taken as the dependent variable.

Table 1. Distribution of Number of Junior Secondary School and Population of Students in Four Local Government Education Areas of Jega Educational Zone

L.G.E.As	No of Schools	Population
Jega	13	1,621
Maiyama	12	806
Aliero	09	1,029
Suru	04	405
Total	38	3,861

Source: Jega Educational Zone, 2019.

2.2 Sample and sampling technique

The sampling technique used in this study is simple random sampling. The thirty eight (38) junior secondary schools in Jega educational zone, one school was randomly picked making a total of four (4) schools. This helped to capture all local government areas under Jega educational zone such that every local government area one school is involved. This is characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples (Mugende & mugende 2003). The sample size of two hundred and seventeen 217 was taken using the Krejee and Morgan's table of sample selection, from the population of 504.

Table 2 below shows the Distribution of Schools selected from each LGEAs, Population, Sample-size and Percentage of Respondents.

Name of Sch.	Population	Sample-size	Percentage %
HAASS. Jega	157	68	31
GDSS. Maiyama	112	48	22
GGCSS. Aliero	100	43	20
GGCSS. Suru	135	58	27
Total	504	217	100

Source: Jega Educational Zone, 2019.

2.3 Instrumentation

The researcher made use of instruments adapted from that of Azua, 2016. The instruments are:

- (1) Inventory of parental support developed by Azua, (2016), to measure parental psychological support.
- (2) Peer support inventory developed by Azua, (2016), to measure peer group influence.
- (3) Academic performance in CGPA end of term examination 2017/2018 session, to measure academic performance

1. Inventory of parental support

Inventory of Parental support developed by Azua, 2016 is a four factor scale that measures children's perceptions of parent-child interactions concerning school issues. The factors include; (a) Parental psychological support, this measures how children perceived parental psychological support (b) Monitoring children behavior regarding homework and study, in this section students report frequency that parents monitor their behavior regarding home work, studying. On the parental attitudes items which tapped parental psychological support, students were asked to rate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point likert scale from 1 to 5 where 1= (strongly disagree) 2 = (disagree) 3 = (uncertain) 4 = (agree) 5 = (strongly agree). The parental practices items which tapped monitoring children attitude towards home work and study are made up of statements that required students to specify how often each practice occurred, from 1 = (never) 2 = (rarely) 3 = (sometimes) 4 = (usually) and 5 (always). On the pressure scale items, high rating suggest that the children perceive their parents as demanding and applying excessive pressure. High rating on the support scale suggest a psychological supportive parenting relationship. High rating on the items from the help scale indicates help doing home work, reading books, and preparing for test.

2. Peer-support inventory

To measure the peer influence, the Peer influence Inventory was developed by Azua, 2016. This is a 15-paired item describing how peers influence one another. Students were to decide whether they were encouraged by their peers to do something. students were asked to rate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five point liker scale from 1 to 5 where 1= (strongly disagree) 2 = (disagree) 3 = (uncertain) 4 = (agree) 5 = (strongly agree).

3. Academic Performance Score

Academic performance was measured in CGPA by their two general and compulsory subjects that is, English language and Mathematics examination scores in their end of term examinations 2017/2018 session in JSS2. The scores were used for the analysis.

2.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The instruments had reliability coefficient of 0.899 and 0.917 respectively. The instruments had face and content validity.

2.5 Procedure for Data Collection

Assistance was by the schools teachers in the administration of the questionnaires. The instructions of each questionnaire was read with the respondents in a group to ensure that each respondent clearly understood what is required and these respondents were requested to fill the questionnaires individually without discussing them. The respondents completed the questionnaires within two weeks, after which they were collected for analysis.

2.6 Procedure for Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was obtained through questionnaire for two variables: peer group influence and parental psychological support and exams scores was used for their academic performance. Mean and standard deviation was used to test the research questions while the test of hypotheses was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). The basis for the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis was 0.05 alpha level of significance.

3. Findings

3.1 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between peer group support and academic performance among junior secondary school students.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics showing relationship between peer group support and academic performance among junior secondary school students

Variables	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>
Peer group	21.1157	5.1328	0.731	215	0.004
Academic performance	6.2171	1.3446			

(Level of significance 0.05) $0.004 < 0.05$

The result of correlation coefficient in Table 3 revealed, $r = 0.731$ and $p = 0.004$, in this result, the p-value is lower than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significance which means that, there is significant relationship between peer group influence and academic performance of the students. This implies that when the peer group influence is high the academic performance of students also increases. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between parental psychological support and academic performance among junior secondary school students.

Table 4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics showing relationship between parental psychological support and academic performance among junior secondary school students

Variables	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>
Parental psychological support	21.3761	4.3326	0.743	215	0.002
Academic performance	6.2171	1.3446			

(Level of significance 0.05) $0.002 < 0.05$

The result of correlation coefficient in Table 4 revealed, $r = 0.743$ and $p = 0.002$, in this result, the p-value is lower than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significance which means that, there is significant relationship between parental psychological support and academic performance of the students. This implies that the higher the parental psychological support, the higher the students' academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

4. Discussions of Findings

From hypothesis one above, the study found that significant relationship exists between peer group influence and academic performance of students in junior secondary school, this is because the calculated p value of 0.004 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index value of 0.731. This means that, the higher the peer group support, the higher the students' academic performance. This finding agrees with that of Korir and Kipkemboi (2014) who established that school environment and peer group influence made significant contribution to the students' academic performance.

Results from the finding in hypothesis two indicated that, significant relationship exist between parental psychological support and academic performance of students in junior secondary schools, this is because the calculated p value of 0.002 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index value of 0.743. This means that the higher the parental psychological support, the higher the students' academic performance. The finding is similar to those of Hills and Tyson (2009) who found that parents communicating with the child about the value/utility of education, fostering educational and career aspiration in the child, the linking of school work to current event, and making plans/preparations for the child's future is more strongly related to academic performance than helping with home work in a sample of post primary school student.

5. Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the study concluded that:

1. Peer group can influence the academic performance of students; finding shows that the higher the peer group influence the higher the academic performance of students.
2. When parent offer psychological support to their children by constantly communicating about the value of school, they tend to achieve academically; finding shows that the higher the parental psychological support the higher the academic performance of students.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that:

1. Parents and teachers should careful of the kind of peers group their students and children belongs to, as this have a great influence towards their academic performance. Positive peer group influence can bring about high academic performance as shown in this study. Therefore, it is possible that negative peer group influence can also

affect students' academic performance negatively.

2. Parents should actively participate and offer psychological support to their children by way of interacting with their children about peer group influence and thus, monitor them closely towards excellent academic performance.

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