

**INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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Keywords

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ABSTRACT

This study examined peer group and academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun State Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of public secondary school students in Ogun state, 304 students were sampled for the study. Two research questions were raised and answered, four hypotheses were tested. Two separate instruments were used for the study, the first one is Peer Groups Questionnaire (PGQ), second one was titled English and Mathematics Achievement Test (EMAT). The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to answer research question 1 and 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test research hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The result revealed the following: that Student academic performance in both English language and Mathematic were low, there is significant relationship between peer group and students' academic performance $r = .168$ $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that parents and teachers should monitor the kind of group students join in school and the activities undertaken in such groups in other to improve the academic performance of students.



INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

Introduction

Academic performance of students is a key feature in achieving educational goals and objectives. It is considered to be the Centre around which the whole education system revolves as the academic performance of students determines the success or failure of any academic institution. According to Ward, Stocker and Murray-Ward (2006) academic performance refers to the outcome of education; the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals.

The academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun state has not been encouraging as the student performed below expectation in the external examination such in senior secondary examination organized by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). It was observed that majority of the registered students performed bellow national average as shown in the Table

Year	Total candidates	Number of candidates with 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics	Percentage	Yearly Position
2014	70,474	18,974	26.92	18
2015	75,994	25,006	32.89	20
2016	84,886	44,848	52.80	19
2017	92,526	50,095	54.14	19
2018	91,754	47,432	51.69	19

(2014-2018 waec statistics: Ministry of education; Ogun state, 2018)

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

From the table above, the percentages of students who passed during the years were reported to be 26.92, 32.98, 52.8, 54.14 and 51.69 percent respectively. That is, on the average (43.68 percent) of the students that sat for the May/June West African senior secondary school certificate examinations obtained credits in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics. For the period of five years (2014-2018), the state was not found within 1-15 position in WAEC ranking. The percentage numbers of the students that obtained five credits passes including English Language and Mathematics was far below expectation. Many factors could be responsible for the poor academic performance of students in the state. Researchers have worked on variables like students factors, resource availability and teachers' quality as factors that could influence academic performance of student but the problem still persist. There seems to be dearth of research on the influence of peer group on students' academic performance and this is the gap the researcher is filling by investigating influence of peer group on academic performance of secondary school students.

Peer group play a significant role on the academic performance of students, Allen (2005). Their influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years, it is natural, healthy and important for secondary school students to have and rely on friends as they grow and mature. A peer could be any one you look up to in behaviour or someone who you would think is equal to your age or ability (Hardcastle, 2002). On the other hand, the term "influence" implies the processes that persuade people to do something that they might not otherwise choose to do. Peer group influence is a kind of control that peers can have on each other. Influence of peer group is emotional or mental forces from people belonging to the same social group (such as age, grade or status) to act or behave in a manner similar to themselves (Weinfied 2010). Jones, (2010) described peer influence as the ability of people from the same social rank or age to influence another of same age bracket. Influence of peer group is usually associated with teens although its influence is not confined to teenagers alone. Peer group influence may be present in the workplace, at school or within the society; it can affect people of all ages. It may affect people in different ways but here, the focus is on peer group influence as it affects academic performance of secondary school students. Peer group influence may be positive and help to challenge or motivate one to do best. Peer group influence may also result in one doing things that may not fit with one's sense of what is right or wrong. In other words, when influence of peer group makes one do things that people frown at, it is a negative peer influence. Operationally peer influence is a force exert by people that is pressured by ideas, values and behaviour either positively or negatively and always associated with students.

Mature adults, teens, young adults and children can be seen doing things in order to be accepted by their peers. Peer group influence is commonly associated with events of secondary school students' risk taking (such as delinquency, drug abuse, sexual behaviours), because these behaviours commonly occur in the company of peers. It can also have positive effects when youth are influenced by their peers towards positive behaviour. Such as volunteering for charity or excelling in academics (Kellie, 2013). Peer group can pressure each other to skip classes, steal, cheat, use of drugs or alcohol, or become involved in other

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

risky behaviours. Majority of secondary school students with substance abuse problems began using drug or alcohol as a result of peer influence. Negative peer group influence may manifest in various ways like joining group who drink alcohol, smoke cigarette and Indian hemp among others. It may also steer the decision to have a boy/girlfriend; peer group influence indulges youth into loitering about in the streets, watching films, attending parties during school hours and “taping” as alternative to stealing which may eventually graduate into armed robbery.

Omotere (2011) find out that peer group could positively influence the academic performance of secondary school students. In line with present studies, parents and teachers are required provide adequate guidance to secondary school students to help them understand how the friends they keep can either positively or negatively influence their academic performance in school.

Ikwuji (2005) carried out a study on influence of age, gender, and value orientation on secondary school students’ moral judgments in conflict situations. It was found out that majority of the students based their moral judgment in conflict situations on peer-approved values; this shows that the peer group has enormous influence on how the students think and act. There are researches of factors such as teachers’ quality, resource factors students factors as variables that could influence academic performance of students but there seems to be little informations on peer group influence on students academic performance which is the gap this study intends to fill by investigating influence of peer group on student academic performance in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is persistence increase in dwindling academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun state. Over the years, parents, teachers, curriculum experts have also expressed considerable concern about seeming poor performance of students in external examinations such as West African Examination Council, (WAEC). It was observed that larger percentage of students that registered for SSCE performed below expectation as reported by WAEC. These abysmal performances could be disastrous to the future of the state if adequate measure is not taking. Researchers have worked on variables such as resource availability; student factors and teacher quality as variable that could influence students’ academic performance but the problem still persist. The influence of peer group seems underrated as variable that could have significant influence on students’ academic performance Peer group is suspected as variable luring students into engagement in negative habits such as excessive drinking of alcohol, smoking of Indian hemp, engagement in unhealthy sexual behaviour, cultism activities and other maladjustment behaviours that distract them from academic pursuit. These unhealthy behaviours of students which in turn could impact poor academic performance of students makes the researcher to ask why is Ogun state

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

secondary school students not very concerned about the current trend on their academic performance in examinations. Could it be that they are insensitive to the possible negative influence of peer group on their academic performance? researchers have worked on factors such as school, home and teachers commitment as variables that have greater impact on student academic performance but there seems that there is dearth of information on variable like peer group as variable that can significantly influence student academic performance in secondary schools. The researcher therefore deems it fit to investigate peer group and academic performance of public secondary schools in Ogun state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to determine the Influence of peer group and academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Establish the level of students' academic performance in Ogun state Nigeria.
2. Investigate the common peer groups students joins in public secondary schools in Ogun state Nigeria.
3. Determine the relationship between peer group and academic performance of public secondary school students in Ogun state Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What is the level of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state?
2. What are the common peer groups students join in secondary schools in Ogun state?

1.5. HYPOTHESIS

The null hypothesis postulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between peer group influence and academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun state

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of this study consisted of 80, 234 students in all the 20 Local Government Areas in Ogun State.

A sample of 304 respondents was used for the study. This sample size represented about 5% of the entire population as recommended by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) for a large population. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for this study. The first stage involved the selection of Local Government

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

Areas. Four (4) local government areas, making up twenty percent (20%) of the twenty local government areas in Ogun state were selected. Simple random sampling technique was used in order to give every local government equal chance of selection for the study. Second stage, twenty percent (20%) of schools was drawn from the total number of schools in each LGA to be sampled, (refer to appendices for name of schools). In stage three, proportionate to size technique was used to select SS II students from the selected schools. 5% was sampled to make total number of 304 as shown in the table below.

Table 1.1: sample size of the study

S/N	Local Govt. Areas (20% of total number)	Number of secondary schools	Total population (students)	School sample (20% of total)	Sample population (5% of population)
1	Ifo LGA	11	2015	3	101
2	Ado Odo Ota LGA	18	2103	4	106
3	Ewekoro LGA	8	1019	2	51
4	Odeda LGA	10	920	2	46
	Total	47	6057	11	304

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instrument for this study was two self-structured questionnaires developed by the researcher. The first is titled Influence of Peer Group Questionnaire (PGQ) and English Language and Mathematics Achievement Test (EMAT). The test was obtained from the school curriculum and developed by the researcher. The choice of Mathematics and English language was based on the fact that they are two major and compulsory subjects to all students in senior secondary school level. The first instrument (IPGSFQ) consisted of section A and B. Section A elicited information on the personal data of the student such as name of the school, gender, and class. Section B contained twenty (24) items put in two scales. Scale one contained 10 items that elicited information on the level of Influence of peer group among the students. All the items in section B were placed on a four-point rating scale of 4, 3, 2 and 1 that is; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. Face and content validity was ensured, the reliability of the instrument was ascertained and Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Result of the data analysis gave reliability coefficient value of 0.78 and 0.79 respectively for scales one and two of section B of the instrument. Simple percentage and frequent count was used to answer research a question one and two while Hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Questions 1: What is the level of student’ academic performance in public secondary school in Ogun State?

Subject	Very High (>70)		High (60-69)		Moderate (50-59)		Low (40-49)		Very low (<40)	
Maths	27	8.9%	33	10.9	61	20.1%	106	34.9%	77	25.3%
English	5	1.6%	9	3.0%	75	24.7%	134	44.1%	81	26.6%

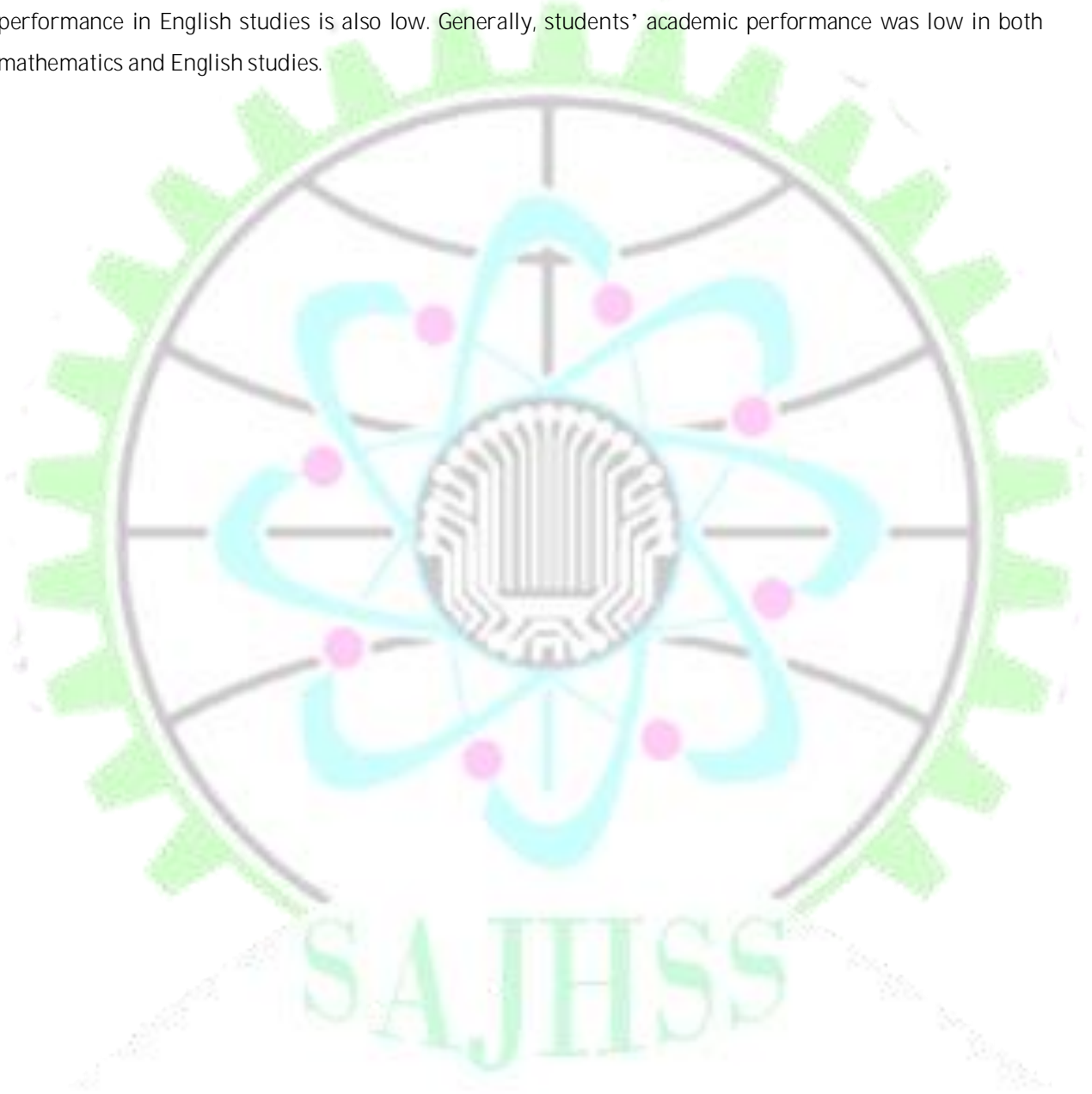
TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON LEVEL OF STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The table 2 shows the level of student’s academic performance in public secondary schools in Ogun State. The result revealed that 106(34.9%) of the respondents have low performance in mathematics, 77(25.3)

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

of the respondents have very low performance. It could be depicted that academic performance of public senior secondary school students is averagely low in Mathematics. Also, in English study, 134 (44.1%) of the respondents perform low in English study, 81(26.6%) of the respondents performed very low while 75(24.07%) respondents performed moderately in English studies which is an indication that student performance in English studies is also low. Generally, students' academic performance was low in both mathematics and English studies.



INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

Research question 2: What are the common peer group students join in secondary schools in Ogun State

TABLE 3 COMMON PEER GROUP STUDENT JOIN IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

	Very common	Common	Not common	Not available
Social group	142 (46.7%)	83 (27.3%)	79 (25.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Literary and debating group	89 (29.3%)	105 (34.5%)	35 (11.5%)	75 (24.7%)
Cultural group	32 (10.5%)	43 (14.1%)	76 (25%)	153 (50.3%)
Reading group	41 (13.5%)	32 (10.5%)	89 (29.3%)	142 (46.7%)

Table 3 revealed that the common peer group students join in their respective schools. it was depicted that 142 (46.7%) of the respondent shows that social group is a very common peer group students join in public secondary schools, also, 105 (34.5%) of the respondent shows that library and debating programme is a common group student join in school but 153 (50.3%) and 142 (46.7%) of the respondents revealed that cultural group and reading group are not available in the public secondary schools. This implies that literary and debating programme is a common group student join in school but social group is very common in public secondary schools in Ogun State.

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TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between peer group and students' academic performance

TABLE 4 PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL PEER GROUP AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	R	P	Remark
Peer group	304	12.2061	3.09753			
Student's Academic Performance	304	7.9836	3.49205	-.168	<0.05	Significant

From table 4 that shows the relationship between peer group and student academic performance. There is significant relationship between peer group and students academic performance $r = -.168$ $p < 0.05$. It was depicted that there is negative significant relationship between peer group and student academic performance of students in the study area. This implies that an increase in influence of peer group will brings a negative increase in student's academic performance. The hypothesis which say there is no significant relationship between peer group and student academic performance is hereby rejected at 0.05 level of significant

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

On research question one which says what is the level of students' academic performance of senior secondary school students? It was found out from the study that generally, student academic performance was low in both mathematics and English studies. The result is in line with the findings of Uche (2010) who found out those children of literate and high income parents perform better in school than those from poor and uneducated parents. Student from high socio economic homes eat balanced diet, enjoy good health and facilities that stimulates their intellectual activities and make them perform better academically than their counterparts who indulge in alcohol drinking and smoking cigarette, India hemp and so on; which alter their judgments of rightful behaviour and may result to poor performance.

On hypothesis one which says; there is no significant relationship between pressure group and students' academic performance in public secondary school. It was depicted that there is negative significant relationship between peer group and student academic performance of students in the study area. This implies that an increase in influence of peer group will bring a negative increase in student's academic performance. The result of the findings corroborates the findings of Omotere (2011), revealed that peer group could positively influence the academic performance of secondary school students. In line with present studies, parents and teachers should provide adequate

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

guidance to secondary school students to help them understand how the friends they keep can either positively or negatively influence their academic performance in school. Also, Ikwuji (2005) found out that majority of the students based their moral judgment in conflict situations on peer-approved values; this shows that the peer group has enormous influence on how the students think and act.

CONCLUSION

Learning does not occur in isolation but through interaction with certain factors, one of which is the peer group. It can therefore be said that the peer group, which a child interact with will definitely affect learning. Since social group was found to be the major common group students join in school and academic performance was low, hence, the study concluded that peer group significantly affected academic performance.

Succinctly, based on the findings, the study concluded that peer group contributed significantly to academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun state, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ The study made the following recommendations:
- ❖ Since social group was seen to be the most joined peer group and academic performance is low. There is therefore the need for both parents and teachers to checkmate the kind of peer groups their children/wards join and the activities they undertake in such groups.
- ❖ All school resources (human and material) should be properly maintained and improved on by all stakeholders involved so as to improve the academic performance of students.

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INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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