

IMPACT OF PEER INFLUENCE ON BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TOWARDS ACADEMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

EGWUATU Vivian¹ and YAHAYA Mohammed Ndagi²

¹Department of Educational Foundation and Management,
Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Email: vivianabiodun@yahoo.co.uk; Tel. No.: +2348039429275

²Department of Early Child Care Education, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

Email: Tafida750@gmail.com; Tel. No.: +2349165242345

Abstract

Adolescence is a time when peers play an increasingly important role in the lives of youth. The study examined the impact of peer influence on behavior of adolescent students towards academic success in secondary schools in Ilorin South L.G.A in Kwara State. The Study obtained its figures and data from secondary sources. This study discussed adolescent as a concept, the positive and negative influence of peer groups on adolescent in relation to their studies and peer selection and influence processes in classroom. The finding shows that peer groups have positive and negative influence on the academic performance of students at schools. However, parents who are not well behaved can influence their wards/children. In addition teachers who are not responsible and not discipline can influence their students to becoming like them. Furthermore, school managers who are reckless indecision making and taking can influence students' behavior and performance at schools. The study recommends among others that trained counselors should be posted to all the secondary schools so as to help counsel the adolescents with negative influences and also parents should have effective supervision by not allowing other home environmental actors to distract their children.

Keywords: peer, group, adolescent, peer influence, impact, academics

Introduction

The educational foundation of a child starts right from the home in an informal way before the child is sent to school for formal education. At school, the child is exposed to classmates, teachers and peers. They all influence the child in one way or the other Each peer group has its own set of rules for behavior, some of which may not always meet high standards. Peer groups serve as learning and acculturation agencies. Every youngster tends to develop a feeling of self-discipline based on how important their relatives, teachers, peers, and other adults seem to them. A child's self-perception and socialization change as soon as they are away from home. Children start to create attachments when they leave their homes and enter schools and the wider community. As they interact through play, friendship develops. Teachers sometimes use peer groups in the classroom to organize learning activities for groups and to encourage

peer counseling so they can exert some control over the students as peer groups might interact negatively. One instance is when they encourage antisocial behavior, immorality, and drug use.

Volunteering for civic and humanitarian causes, taking part in sports, and other fruitful endeavors can all have positive effects. An adolescent student engages in antisocial behavior as a result of having a negative peer group. Peer influence is not a straightforward procedure in which a child merely accepts influence from others. Peers who become friends actually have a lot of behavioral characteristics. Peer influences are constantly present in the classroom. Influence may come from the way one dresses, drug use, or other antisocial behaviors. Peers who are concerned with academic concerns, however, are more inclined to associate with other students who share their interest. They study together, sharing materials and information with fellow peers who are motivated to learn.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the great effort made by the Kwara state government and other stakeholders in ensuring that students performances are encouraging so as to be self reliant and useful to the societies, students are seen abandoning their academics for other irrelevant activities, which does not support their academic career, basically because of peer groups influence. Many factors contribute to student-behaviour outcomes and academic achievement either directly or indirectly, more especially at secondary boarding schools. Landau(2012) in his findings in 'Child and adolescent development' argued that students' behaviours are not determined by peer, but also the environment and parental factors have significant influence on behavior of students towards academic success in secondary school. However, from the researches carried out by Landau (2012) and Olawuyi (2015) on peer influence on behaviours of students towards academic success were sparingly done, but this present study covers the gap with focus on the impact of peer influence on behaviour of adolescent students towards academics in Secondary schools in Ilorin south local government in Kwara State.

Literature Review

Adolescence as a Concept

Adolescence are a stage of life with unique rights and needs in terms of growth and health. Additionally, it is a period to build knowledge and skills, learn how to manage information and skills, regulate emotions and relationships, and develop qualities and talents that are crucial for enjoying adolescence and adopting adult roles. Adolescents are persons between the ages of 10 and 19 according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The age-based definition of "child" as someone under the age of 18 so includes the vast majority of adolescents. Youth (defined by the United Nations as being between the ages of 10 and 24) and young people (10 to 24), which are also used interchangeably in this report, are additional overlapping words. Adolescence, according to Olawuyi (2015), is a crucial time in social development because young people are easily influenced by the people they form intimate bonds with. This is a delicate time since it is the first time that people can fully make their own decisions. Relationships are essential to an

adolescent's social development because of how much power peers may wield over a person.

These connections become important as the teenager starts to comprehend the idea of personalities, how they develop, and why someone has a particular sort of personality. Adolescents' social development is significantly influenced by the connections they make with their family, friends, and peers. Adolescents frequently build strong emotional bonds with their pals since their social circles quickly expand and they learn to distinguish between friends and acquaintances (Barenboim, 2018). Peers become more significant in young people's life during the adolescent years. Teenagers start to form friendships that are more lasting, exclusive, and consistent than those from previous years. These friendships have a significant role in growth in many ways. They offer youth secure settings where they can explore their identities, feel accepted, and find a feeling of belonging. Youth can develop and practice the social skills they will need for future success through friendships (De Guzman, 2017).

Peer Influence

The capacity to shape members of a group's conduct based on group norms, a shared understanding of what is good or proper behavior, and the desire to be respected and accepted by the group. Both negative and positive peer influence is possible. Contrary to popular belief, peer pressure can actually encourage young people to engage in healthy and safe behaviors. (De Guzman, 2017). Youth do not simply sit back and accept other people's influence; peer influence is a complex process. In truth, friends between peers often start off with a lot in common. Peers who share comparable hobbies, academic standing, and interests are more likely to get along with one another (De Guzman, 2017).

Positive Peer influence

In recent years, the research and practice around peer-based recovery support services have become more structured and evidence-based. Many of the conclusions from research with adults can be applied to teenage peer-based services, even if not all study is specifically focused on adolescents. A list of prerequisites for providing effective peer recovery support services was

published by Landau (2012). Although the conclusions in this research are particular to one kind of peer assistance, the advice can be beneficial for anyone putting peer-based recovery support for teenagers into practice. For instance, the paper stresses that peer support should be integrated into a larger recovery support system and should not be confused with therapeutic or treatment services. Mutual aid organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are frequently used by those recovering from addiction as a form of peer support.

Young people also turn to AA and NA for support, despite the fact that attendance is more widespread among adults than among adolescents (Sussman, 2010). Sussman (2010) reports on a review of literature on the results of therapy for adolescents who attended AA or NA programs. According to Sussman (2010), teenagers who finish treatment but do not attend AA or NA meetings often have comparable to slightly better abstinence-related outcomes.

Negative Peer Influence

Peers frequently have significant influence on one another by persuading them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs for the first time or to continue abusing them (Aliu, 2012). Peers who are seen as having a higher status or being more "popular" might be particularly powerful. Data from these research lend credence to the widely held belief that peers frequently persuade one another to use drugs. Numerous theories, including the social bonding hypothesis (Hirschi, 1969) and the neurochemical mechanisms behind social influence (Raywid, 1994), have expounded on the mechanics underlying this influence. The use of alcohol and other drugs may unintentionally increase as a result of peer-based programs intended to minimize drug use, according to academics.

According to Aliu (2012), grouping peers who have a history of engaging in a particular dangerous activity, such substance abuse, can occasionally serve to encourage the targeted risky behavior. They contend that "deviancy training" occurs when peers respond favorably to one another when discussing breaking the law or abusing drugs, so reinforcing the bad behavior being discussed. When adolescents are forced to

participate in treatments like those examined by Aliu and his colleagues, as opposed to having to self-select into an intervention aimed to provide support, this kind of negative influence may be especially likely to happen.

Factors affecting Adolescents

Peer group is one of the social forces that influences teenagers' behaviors, attitudes and beliefs, according to studies. Ryan (2012), for instance, noted that peers frequently exchange online content like watching movies and porn. They frequently interact with one another online. Peer groups have grown in importance as a setting for teenage interaction in modern culture.. Modernization has led more and more to age segregation in schools, workplace, and in the community. How much time one spends with friends will play a great part in the development of the adolescent into the mature adult (Barenboim,2018).Among all social contexts school show the greatest variability in different countries. It had been shown that the transition from small neighborhood elementary school to bigger, anonymous secondary schools may hinder the adolescent behavior (Ryan, 2012). The school success decrease with each transfer in comparison to peers without such changes; the negative effect is stronger with earlier and multiples transfer. The research shows that such transfer include the restriction of choice, less participation in decision making, less positive contacts with teachers and more evaluation (Ryan, 2012). Several studies have identifies the practices and conditions that ensure better school outcomes in adolescent: unperturbed social environment, high interest in learning and inclusion, great emphasis on school work, lower differences between students.

While children grow up the family, it has to undergo changes, gradually loosening the control over the young person while with holding the right to forbid excessive or dangerous behavior. Landau (2012) maintains that many of adolescent's difficulties for which they ask professional help are due to the failure of their environment, marital conflicts as an essential, of not a critical external fact or that affects adolescents. In families with mutually reliable and gratifying parents adolescents are healthier, even if possible adolescents are healthier, even if

parents show some psychopathological signs (Barenboim, 2010). Healthy parents respond to the adolescent with untouched self-respect. Their own suppressed narcissism is reflected in their feeling of competency which they perceive both themselves and their adolescent child.

Peer Selection and Influence Processes in Classroom

At the beginning of the school year, students forge relationships and find their social role in the complex and multi-faceted peer ecologies within classrooms and schools (Barenboim, 2018). Students' decisions regarding how to act and who to interact with in class have an impact on the development of friendships. In classrooms, social connections and friendship negotiations are continual and dynamic processes (Castrogiovanni, 2015). Students often develop friendships with their peers who share their interests or values as a result of these exchanges and conversations. Homophily, the phenomenon of similarities between friends, can be evident in a range of traits, including academic ones. Both selection—the degree to which peers with similar attitudes and behaviors seek one another out—and influence—the degree to which affiliates develop more similar attitudes and behavioral inclinations as a result of their frequent interaction—contribute to homophily (Ryan, 2018). As it may satisfy their aims and be consistent with their past behavioral inclinations, students may choose companions who exhibit similar behaviors in the classroom. The majority of theories and studies on peer relationships have made the assumption that students choose peers who are like them (Ryan, 2018). Conclusion Peer groups have an impact on adolescent adolescents' academic performance in school, both positively and negatively.

Conclusion

Peer groups have both positive and negative influence on the academic performance of adolescent students at schools. Reckless in decision making/taking can influence students' behavior and performance at schools. Therefore, parents who don't behave well can have a negative impact on their kids, and unreliable, uncontrollable teachers can have a negative impact on their students by making them want to

behave the same way. Additionally, rash decision-makers and administrators in schools can have an impact on the conduct and performance of students. The following suggestions are made in light of the study's findings: All secondary schools should have trained counselors assigned to them in order to assist in counseling any young people who are exposed to harmful influences; Parents should set a good example for their children to follow, and they should exercise effective parental control by preventing other distractions in the home environment; In order to improve the effectiveness of their time management and since they serve as the students' role models, teachers must exert more control and regulation over school-aged children; The managers/administrators of the school must manage, monitor, regulate, and oversee the students in order to keep tabs on their behavior inside the school.

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