

Influence of Peer Group on Students' Academic Performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated influence of peer group on students' academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District in Rivers State. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive research design was adopted in the study. The population of this study was 29,468 drawn from the eight local government areas of Rivers West Senatorial District. A sample size of 395 respondents was drawn using Taro Yamane's formula and purposive sampling technique which consists 220 males and 175 females. A 25 self-structured Questionnaire was used titled "Influence of Peer Group on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary school students with 25 items to elicit information from the respondents. The validity of the instrument was certified by the expert opinion of the researcher's supervisor and two (2) experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University. The research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using Z-test at 0.05 level of significance with a critical value of ± 1.96 . Results showed high extent of influence of group peer pressure, high extent of influence of peer group decision-making, high extent of influence of peer group social-interaction, high extent of influence of peer group time-management and high extent of influence of peer group interpersonal relationship on the academic performance of Students in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District in Rivers State. Hence, the study made the following recommendations, among others: that government and Ministry of Education should ensure that trained counselors are posted to all schools so as to provide proactive counseling services, and other government agencies should actively participate and get involved in role-modeling of students by introducing informative programs that could educate them about peer group influence and proper time management. Thus, refocusing them meaningfully towards excellent academic performance; this could help the development of the nation's academic future.

Keywords: Peer-group, Academic Performance, Time-management, Social interaction, Interpersonal relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Peer group can simply be said to be people of the same age and ability, that is, people who are knitted together by a feeling derived by a common concern as seekers of what was desirable for the group. The peer group is the child's own friends, and equal members of the group who often have common characteristics or interests. The peer group interests are short range and temporary (Ezewu, 2017). More so, the children change their peer group membership as they go through different stages of development, and can belong to a number of peer groups at the same time (Ezewu, 2017). In some cases, members' roles are less defined because they change frequently; to some, it may not be clear who is a member and who is not. In-group, the child holds a certain position and he or she is expected to think and behave in a certain way. The peer group sets out certain standards for the group; hence, they have norms and values, which they follow. Peer group influences are more pronounced and noted in secondary schools than in primary schools, partly because some of the children go away from home and live in boarding houses where parental

supervision and contact are very limited. The influence of peer group on the child is great both in and out of the school, because there is the tendency for members to be comfortable with the group norms and values. Sometimes peer group influence may lead to aggressive behaviour such as (rioting in school).

Formation of peer group may occur from each extensive interaction with others initiating relationship development and by these contacts important attitudes may influence the child's academic achievement or performance either positively or negatively (Adeola, 2015). The attitudes may influence the child's academic performance either positively or negatively. The negative aspect which could be detrimental to students' academic work are the causes of group behaviours such as truancy, persistent lateness to school, juvenile delinquency, stealing, absenteeism from school, disobedience, laziness, disrespect for school rules and regulations, etc. On the other hand, the influence could be geared towards positive aspect of students' academic performance. For instance, the students could be influenced socially, psychologically, intellectually, etc., and all these

can boost academic performance such as forming reading group, going to the library, anxious to join others in answering questions in the classroom, and making friends with brilliant students especially in the area of Mathematics, English Language, Social Studies, etc. Peer group is an important agent of socialization in the society. It is also the first social group outside the home in which the child attempts to gain acceptance and recognition. Peer group has great influence on one's life but such influence is more critical during the formative years of childhood and adolescence. Peer group is a group of people of the same age or social status (Ekwueme & Livinus in Obika, 2016).

The term peer group usually indicates social interactions of children or young adults with people of similar age, rather than broader 'neighborhood' interactions with superiors, family or teachers. Steinberg in Flade, Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanan and Nwangburuka (2019) maintained that peer group influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years. Thus, understanding the prospects and challenges of peer group is crucial for the productivity of educational processes and the organizational design of school system in order to improve students' academic performance. Peer groups play a large role in the social and emotional development of adolescents such as providing support as teens graduate into adulthood. It is natural, healthy and important for adolescent to have and rely on friends as they grow and mature. A peer could be any one you look up to in behaviours or someone who one would think is equal to one's age or ability (Hardcastle in Okorie, 2014).

According to Olalekan (2016), it is generally observed that peer group has a lot of influence on students. This could be seen from the roles played by the peer group in the life and learning activities 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 have positive effect on a dull member towards learning and stimulate his/her interest in learning. Katz in Olalekan (2016) writes that the nature of a peer group determines the impact of 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. Peer group thrives on social interaction among members. Social interactions are the processes by which we act and react to those around us. A social interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals and is a building block of society. By interacting with one another, people design rules, institutions and systems within which they seek to live. Symbols are used to communicate the expectations of a given society to those new to it (Rummel, 2018).

The peer group can influence what the child values, knows, wears, eats and learns. The extent of this influence, however, depends on other situational constraints, such as the age and personality of children and the nature of the group (Harris in Ubah, 2017).

In schools, the extent to which these objectives have been determined greatly by the interaction of peer groups which could possibly reflect in students' academic performance. These are two main features that seem to distinguish teenagers from adults in their decision making. During early adolescence in particular, teenagers are drawn to the immediate rewards of a potential choice and are less attentive to the possible risks. Secondly, teenagers in general, are still learning to control their impulses, to think ahead, and to resist pressure from others. These skills development gradually as a teen's ability to control his or her behaviour gets better throughout adolescence (Steinberg, 2016). Peer group may have a positive influence and help to challenge or motivate one to do well. Peer group influence may also result in one doing things that may not suit one's sense of what is right or wrong. In other words, when peer group makes one do things that people frown at, it is a negative peer influence. A negative peer influence could be seen as one of the main reasons why most students perform poorly in academic.

Peer pressure is present at school and within the society and it influences academic performance of school adolescents of junior secondary school students. Peer group influence significantly impacts junior secondary school students' academic performance, fostering either positive academic outcomes through motivation, support, and engagement, or negative ones via disengagement, truancy, and involvement in disruptive activities like drug use, depending on the nature of the peer group. A strong, supportive peer network can boost confidence and participation, while negative influences can derail academic progress, making it crucial for parents, teachers, and counselors to understand and guide these relationships. The stakeholders in education, counselors and parents are expressing considerable concern about the poor performance of students in internal and external examination. They tend to place a large percentage of the blame on Negative peer group pressure, inappropriate Decision making, negative social interaction, Poor time management and negative Interpersonal relationship, as being responsible for poor academic performance. These factors are suspected for luring adolescent into engagement in negative habits such late coming to school, loitering around, absence from school, doing risky things or breaking rules, dating or taking part in sexual activities, cultic activities, smoking or using alcohol and other behaviours that distract them from their academic pursuit. Negative peer group influence has been magnified as there seems to

be more research work on the negative peer group influence and some very bold claims made about the potency of peers in child development. For this reason, this research is geared towards providing a balance and proper understanding of the way peer pressure, decision making, social interaction, time management, and interpersonal relationship influence academic performance of students in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District by proffering the following solutions:

Helping teachers to leverage peer group dynamics for beneficial purposes in school settings and avoid unhealthy peer pressure among students.

Assisting school authorities and teachers to promote peer group activities like group discussions to foster positive academic engagement and discourage inappropriate decision making among students.

Sensitizing parents and counselors to understand the patterns of peer influence and help students navigate these relationships and curb negative social interaction.

Helping school authorities to promote cooperative learning, extracurricular activities, and a culture of time consciousness that will foster positive time management.

Advising stakeholders to be aware of students' social circles and intervening when negative peer behavior is observed.

Providing students with counseling services and educational programs about the impacts of peer pressure that will help them build self-esteem and make better choices.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which peer group influence students' academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the extent to which peer group pressure influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State;
2. ascertain the extent which peer group decision making influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State;

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. To what extent does peer group pressure influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does peer group decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

The following null hypotheses guided the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which peer group pressure influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which peer group decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of peer group on students' academic performance. As the name implies, descriptive survey is that survey in which the researcher collects data from a large sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample, which are of interest to the researcher. The descriptive survey utilizes the scientific method and aims at fact-finding. Obadara (2017) in his book titled "Essentials of Research Methodology" noted that descriptive design is not confined to fact gathering alone, but it is also used to predict and identify relationships among and between variables. In this study, a descriptive research design was considered appropriate because the study investigated the extent to which peer groups contribute to the academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

A sample size of 395 students was selected from the study population using the Taro Yamane formula as stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size
N = population
e = level of significance
1 = Constant

The researcher used 5% level of significance to determine the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{29,468}{1 + 29,468(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{29,468}{1 + 73.67}$$
$$n = \frac{29,468}{74.67}$$
$$= 394.6$$

The sample size was ≈ 395

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire Titled: "Influence of Peer Group

on Students' Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School (IPGSAPJSS). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with the demographic data of the respondents, while section B addressed the research questions for the study. Responses to the items were structured on a 4-point modified likert scale of:

- Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points.
- Agreed (A) = 3 points,
- Disagreed (D) = 2 points,
- Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point.

In order to ascertain the content and face validity of the instrument, the expert opinion of the researcher's supervisor and two (2) experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University were sought. Corrections and criticism were presented to the project supervisor whose expert judgment aided the production of the final copies of the questionnaire. Reliability of Instrument means that the instrument consistently reflects the construct that it is measuring by giving the same score if used over time or across multiple administrations (Oral, 2021). In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. The validated instrument was administered to a group of thirty (30) students of Government Girls Secondary School, Rumuokwuta in Obio/Akpor Local

Demographic Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.1: Showing Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaire and Percentages

Questionnaire	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Copies Administered	395	100
Copies Retrieved/Returned	365	92.4
Copies not Retrieved/Returned	30	7.6
Completed but Unusable Copies	65	17.8
Completed and Usable Copies	300	82.2

Three hundred and ninety-five (395) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, out of which a total of three hundred and sixty-five (365) copies were retrieved, representing 92.4%. Thirty (30) copies representing 7.6% were not retrieved. However, 300

Table 4.2: Sex Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	104	34.7	34.7	65.3
Female	196	65.3	65.3	100.0
Total	300	100	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 showed the frequency distribution of respondents based on sex. It showed the number of male participants to be 104 (34.7%) while the number of female participants were 196 (65.3%).

Government Area which was not a part of the geographical location of the study. Two weeks after the administration of the instrument, the same instrument was taken to the group. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and coefficient value of 0.87 was obtained thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the instrument.

To ensure precision in the use of instruments, the researcher employed the services of three research assistants that assisted in the distribution and collection of copies of the questionnaires from the three hundred and ninety five (395) anticipated respondents of the sampled schools in Rivers West Senatorial District.

The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD). The criterion mean of 2.50 is for strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Any item that is 2.5 and above was accepted while any one below 2.50 was rejected. It was obtained by summing up the weighted points and divided by 4, thus: $4+3+2+1/4+2.50$. The null hypotheses was formulated and tested using Z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance which is a test of difference of mean. The decision rule was used to accept the null hypotheses where the calculated Z-value is less than critical Z-critical value of ± 1.96 , but reject the null hypotheses where the calculated Z-value is greater than critical Z-critical value of ± 1.96 .

copies of the returned questionnaire representing 82.2 percent were used for the data analysis while sixty-five (65) copies representing 17.8% were not suitable for analysis. The results collected were analyzed to answer the research questions.

4.2 Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1

To what extent does peer group's pressure influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students' in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 4.3: Mean Analysis of Peer Group’s Pressure Influence on the Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

S/ No.	ITEM	Students				Mean Set	Remark
		Males (N =104)		Females (N = 196)			
		\bar{X}_1	S.D ₁	\bar{X}_2	S.D ₂		
1.	Low self-esteem as a result of peer pressure influences classroom participation of students.	2.86	1.08	3.11	0.95	2.98	Accepted
2.	Intake of drugs and alcohol due to peer pressure makes students perform poorly in their academic.	2.95	1.02	3.14	0.93	3.04	Accepted
3.	Students’ going out with peer do not give them time to do their assignment, which affects academic performance.	2.86	1.04	3.00	1.08	2.93	Accepted
4.	Group discussion with peers motivates students to prepare for examination.	2.98	0.93	3.05	0.91	3.01	Accepted
5.	Peer-approved values shows that the peer-group has enormous influence on how the students think and act in the classroom.	3.00	1.04	3.07	0.97	3.03	Accepted
Grand Mean/SD		2.93	1.02	3.07	0.97	3.00	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.3 showed grand mean rating of 2.93 and 3.07 for male and female respectively with an average mean of 3.00 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicated that there is high of influence of peer group’s pressure on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State

Research Question 2

To what extent does peer group’s decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 4.4: Mean Analysis of Peer Group’s Decision-Making Influence By The Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State

S/ No.	ITEM	Students				Mean Set	Remark
		Males (N =104)		Females (N= 196)			
		\bar{X}_1	S.D ₁	\bar{X}_2	S.D ₂		
6.	The choice to read and decision to read is influence by peers and leads to high academic performance.	2.98	0.97	3.16	0.89	3.07	Accepted
7.	Decision to do better in examination and class activities are made from their peer group.	2.97	1.00	2.97	0.99	2.97	Accepted
8.	Hostile group makes students make negative choices, which influences their academic performance negatively.	3.00	0.97	3.00	0.91	3.00	Accepted
9.	Studying with friends and doing of assignment are influence by their peer group.	2.94	1.01	3.04	0.97	2.99	Accepted
10.	Students’ participation in class activities are influence by their peer group.	2.98	0.91	3.06	0.94	3.02	Accepted
Grand Mean/SD		2.97	0.97	3.05	0.94	3.01	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.4 showed grand mean rating of 2.97 and 3.05 for male and female respectively with an average mean of 3.01 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicated that there is high of influence of peer group’s pressure on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which peer group’s pressure influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Table 4.8: Z-test Analysis the Extent to which peer Group’s pressure influences the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Students	Mean \bar{X}	Std. Dev.	N	Df	Std. Error	α	Z-cal. value	Z-crit. value	Decision
Males	2.93	1.02	104	2988	0.12	0.05	-1.15	1.96	Ho: Accept
Females	3.07	0.97	196						

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The table 4.8 revealed that male students had mean standard deviation of 3.05 and 0.78 respectively, while female students had mean and standard deviation of 3.05 and 0.74 respectively. The Z-cal. value was 0.71 while the Z-critical was 1.96 at 380 degree of freedom and 0.5 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted since the z-cal (0.71) is less than the Z-crit (1.96). This implied that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which peer group’s pressure influences the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial

District of Rivers State. In other words, males and females students are in accord that peer group’s pressure influences academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students to a high extent.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which peer group’s decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Table 4.9: Z-test Analysis the Extent to which peer Group’s Decision-making influences academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Students	Mean \bar{X}	Std. Dev.	N	Df	Std. Error	A	Z-cal. value	Z-tab. value	Decision
Males	2.97	0.97	104	298	0.12	0.05	- 6.8	1.96	Ho: Accept
Females	3.05	0.94	196						

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The table 4.9 revealed that male students had mean standard deviation of 3.07 and 0.79 respectively, while female students had mean and standard deviation of 3.03 and 0.75 respectively. The Z-calculated value was 0.71 while the Z-critical was 1.96 at 380 degree of freedom and 0.5 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted since the Z-cal (0.71) is less than the Z-crit. (1.96). This implied that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which peer group’s decision-making influences the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in

Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State. In other words, males and females students are in accord that peer group’s decision-making influences academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students to a high extent.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were revealed:

1. There is high extent on the influence of peer group’s pressure on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District.

2. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's decision-making on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District.
3. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's social interaction on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District.
4. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's time management on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District.
5. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's interpersonal relationship on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District.
6. There is no significant difference in the responds of male and female students on the extent to which peer group's pressure influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

To what extent does peer group's pressure influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Zimring (2018) observed that peer group influence is the primary contextual factor contributing to student's tendency to make risky decisions. As supported by Landau (2019) that students who care about learning are more likely to associate with peers group who shares similar interest in learning. However, personal interest and value an individual attaches to an issue also affects the individual's responds to change. This may account for Ryan (2020) conclusion that value result in receptiveness to change. Peer group can influence everything about a student from the choice of what to wear, to engaging in drugs related or other behaviour. This finding is similar to those of Temitope and Charity (2015) who found that, there is a relationship that exists between peer group and students' academic performance either in a negative or positive way. However, socialization was among the factors that raised students' self-awareness and cooperation. Additionally, relationships from close friends being girls or boys had been associated with academic performance on one hand, ; and on the other hand; in changing negative behaviours. Mosha (2017) also collaborated with the results of the present study when he noted in his study that factors that influenced peer group relationship and its effects on student's academic

performance. It is important to note, that the nature of the of friendship students keep has the potential influence on their relationships at the schools rather than academic matte.

To what extent does peer group's decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Results from the study showed that peer group had an influence on students' academic performance in two ways; positively or negatively. Landau (2019) stated that students who form positive peer group make more effort during learning, doing social activities, also fear to engage in delinquent activities. In the same vein, the findings is similar to those of Tope (2016) and Mwinsukha (2017) who found out that peer group can influence students in academic performance either in the positive or negative way. However, findings from the study indicated that 72 Students (60%) had a negative influence on adolescent students' academic performance at the schools. This result concurs with that of Howard (2014) that negative peer group influence dos exist and should be an educational related professional issue. The fact that students used friends as coping devices, in this study the influence of peer group to students in academic performance was found to be lower than expected.

From the findings, it can be said that peer groups influence each other in terms of decision making such as using as using drugs. That means, when a student forms a relationship with student who have bad behaviour it is likely to change his behaviour from good to bad. The use of drugs also resulted in student's truancy at the schools. For example, findings showed that 52 students out of 120 (43.3%) skipped normal classes. The fact that some of the students had cellular phones made it easy for them to communicate, share and discuss love stories and watch pornographic pictures. In doing so, they find themselves stimulated and engage themselves in sexual affairs. For example, one teacher from the private school said, "Some of the students use cellular phones during and after school hours. They use the phones for socializing with their boyfriends or girlfriends in love stories rather than learning which end up with sex and leads to unplanned pregnancies". This finding relates to those of Ryan (2020) who stated that students who associates with peer group who are not motivated in learning affects students' academic performance negatively. The fact that they did not attend lessons as planned; their performances were said by the teachers to be low. These students were well known by the class teachers as well as their fellow students at the schools.

Summary of the study

The study investigated the extent to which peer groups contribute to the academic performance of students in Junior Secondary Schools Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State. Five specific objectives and research questions were formulated to guide the study and five hypothesis were tested for the study. The study was anchored on the social learning theory, social control theory, Pickle Jar theory and social development theory. The variables were conceptualized and related literatures were reviewed. Chapter three dealt with the method that was used in executing the research work. The procedure that was adopted for the data collection and analysis are presented under the following sub-headings: design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique

The study was carried out in forty (40) public Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District. Rivers West Senatorial District, has eight Local Government Areas, which are; Abua/Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Bonny, Degema, Asari-Toru, Akuku-Toru, and Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Areas of the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers state. The affect local Government Areas are economically significant as the center of Nigeria's oil industry. The eight Local Government Areas have a population of (Abua/Odual 282, 988, Ahoada East 166, 747, Ahoada West 249,425, Bonny 215,358, Degema 249, 773, Akuku-toru 231,700 and Asari-toru 269, 763 and Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni 284, 010) respectively (National Population Commission, NPC 2006).

The total population for this study was 29,468 which comprised male and female students from each of the eight local government areas of Rivers West Senatorial District (See attached record from Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board 2020 (R/S UBEB).

The sample size for this study was 395 respondents by using the Taro Yamane;s formula on then population. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size in the forty (40) public secondary schools in Abua/Odual local government area, Ahoada East local government area, Ahoada West local government area, Akuku-toru local government area,, Asari-torulocal government area, Degema local government area, Bonny local government area, and Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni local government areas which consist 220 males and 175 females.

The summary of the major findings of the study is presented as follows:

1. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's pressure on the academic performance of Junior

Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District. There is no significant difference in the responds of male and female students on the extent to which peer group's pressure influence academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

2. There is high extent on the influence of peer group's decision-making on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School in Rivers West Senatorial District. There is no significant difference in the responds of male and female students on the extent to which peer group's decision-making influence the academic performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers West Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Conclusion

From the results therefore, this study concludes that, peer group plays an important role in the lives of students. Counselors should play a prominent and leading role in the matter by organizing, career talk and symposiums that can create positive awareness on influence of peer group on academic performance of junior secondary school students. Therefore, Parents/guardians, Teachers and school Administrators have a role to play in monitoring the types of peer their children, students and wards move with both in school and outside the home.

There is a significant relationship between peer group and academic performance. It is clear from the findings, that peer have a relatively strong influence over the daily functioning of students and their academic performance. There the choices those students make regarding their engagement and academic performance in school depends on how they are guided and supported by their parent and teachers at school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The finding revealed that peer group has an influence on student and such influence could be positive or negative, therefore, there is need for teacher to have greater supervision and regulations on students while they are in school this will enhance the type of group the belong to.
2. Government and Ministry of Education should ensure that trained counselors are posted in all schools so as to provide preventive counseling services and modify the behaviors of students who perchance have been negatively influenced by peers.
3. School counselors, teachers, parents, and other government agencies should actively participate and get involved in role - modeling of students by introducing informative programs that could educate

them about peer group influence thus, refocus them meaningfully towards excellent academic performance; this could help the development of the nation's academic future.

4. School counselors should play a prominent and leading role in the matter of peer group influence by organizing lectures, seminars, career talk and symposiums that can create positive awareness on influence of peer group on academic performance of undergraduate students.
5. Students should be properly guided on how to manage their time and must consciously create time for reading towards improving their academic performance.

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