

**THE PEER GROUP PRESSURE AS CORRELATE TO THE ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CAREER CHOICE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS FROM ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study was on the peer group as a correlate to career choice and academic achievement of public secondary school students from Anambra State, Nigeria. The correlation survey design was used. The population of the study was 12,460 students from public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size was 1000 students drawn through simple random sampling technique. The instrument was a researcher developed questionnaire with two clusters measuring peer group pressure as correlate to career choice and academic achievement of public secondary school students from Anambra state Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was established using split half method and which was found to be 0.74. The questionnaire was administered using three research assistants. The data collected from the administered questionnaire were analysed using parsons' product moment of correlations. The analyses revealed that a positive correlation exist between peer pressure, academic achievement and career choice of students from public secondary schools in Anambra state. The following recommendations among other were made and they include; parents are to monitor their children's peer group because of its strong influences. Stakeholders and institutions are to create proper awareness of the implications of peer influence among parents, teachers and family counsellors.

Keywords: Peer group pressure, Academic achievements, Career choice, Students, Public secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Man as a social animal has the tendency to relate to each other and to one another. This tendency could lead to clustering which eventually could result to formation of groups. Very often groups are formed based on certain shared characteristics one of which is age and interest. When age is the determinant factor, the group is seen as peer. Obi and Okoye (2019) viewed peer group as comprising people of the same age and ability knitted together by feelings derived by a common concern as seekers of what is desirable for the group. With respect to their concern which often constitute the motive, Omotere (2011), Obi and Okoye (2018) remarked the following as what constitute their concern and they include, the peer group provides wide range of experience, provides considerable degree of emotional security, provides opportunities for development of royalties, provides opportunity for inter personal relationships, provides standard for behaviour, helps establish attitude opinions and idea which they are to adopt among others.

The academic achievement and career choice are factors which fell under this category. Through the ability to provide opportunity for development, the academic achievement of the student could be influenced positively or negatively. Equally, through the peer influence which helps establish attitudes, opinions and idea, the career choice of the students could also be influenced.

Career choice according to Kolo (2019) is the selection or choosing of a career which the individual has the potential to enter. Career choice is made cognisant of the following three factors namely; there must be choice, incentive and freedom to choose. The choice entails the availability of more than one course of action, incentive deals with the benefit or motivation and thirdly, there must be no restriction. It is amidst this three factors that peer group influence the career choice of the individual members. The common goal pursuit which characterises the stage acts on the adolescent and the individual will follow the crowd despite competency, proficiency etc. Bankole and Ogunsanya (2015) noted that people who found themselves so close in the adolescent years often trace the same career trajectory. This view was supported by Alika (2010) and Kibor (2016) who noted peer influence as a significant factor in students' career choice

Bet (2013) further revealed that peer interaction influences students in making career choice. This view is in line with the Bandura's socio-cognitive theory which states that realistic encouragement leads to greater effort and eventually to greater success. In a similar manner Mustapha and Selvaraju (2015) opined that peers encourage students to choose entrepreneurship and its related career. This view was supported by Hashim and Embong (2015) who noted peer group as a very powerful potent source on career choice of students. Apart from the above Kiuru (2008) also noted that peer group members resembled each other, not only in their educational expectations but also their subsequent educational trajectories, academic achievement inclusive.

According to Emeagwa (2011) academic achievement is defined as the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset or known standard of accuracy. This view was collaborated by Engel et.al (2013), Ward, et al (2014) who maintained that academic achievement represent the outcome indicating the extent of accomplishment of specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environment. Such specific goals could include

academic self worth, academic self concept, intellectual abilities, academic behaviours, academic performances etc. According to Kuru, the peer influence strongly affects all ramifications of students' academic achievement. Hashim and Embong (2015) noted that the students' peer group is one of the most single potent sources of influence on adolescents' development. It is so strong because according to Chireshe (2013) adolescents very often depend on their friends to provide validation of choices that they made. It often constitutes obstacles to proper training and cognitive restructuring against counsellors especially in situations of mal adaptation. It is based on the above that the researcher sets out to investigate how peer group correlates to career choice and academic achievement of public secondary school students from Anambra state of Nigeria

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The underachievement and lack of motivation/unsatisfactory output towards academic goals and labour output in recent time is becoming too common. Underachievement is when an individual is not performing as expected after being subjected to a period of learning exercise and was tested to determine the outcome through tests. Where the performance is poor, an under achievement is said to have occurred. On the other hand poor motivation and unsatisfactory out put to work occurs when the individual seem not to give the best to an assigned function. Both under achievement and unsatisfactory attitude towards labour output has been traced to a lot of factors, one among which is the peer group pressure. The peer group pressure when it has a negative effect can hinder a child from optimal performances, making the child an under achiever. In a similar manner the peer group can cause an individual to float within the spirit of the group thereby falling victim of the group. These could be seen in instances individuals choose career because of the prevalence of ideology within the peer group. And because the individual did not respond appropriately based on the individuals' competency, capability and potentials, such a person end up losing satisfaction and consequently not properly motivated. The end goal of the entire miscalculations is that it leads to under achievement, poor productivity and dissatisfaction. Therefore the main problem of this study was to investigate how peer group correlates to students' academic achievement and career choice.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of study was to investigate how peer group correlates to academic achievement and career choice among public secondary school students from Anambra State Nigeria. The study sought to specifically investigate:

1. What level of relationship exists between peer group and academic achievement of students from Anambra State?
2. What level of relationship exists between peer group and career choice of students from Anambra State?

METHOD OF STUDY

The correlation survey design was used. The area of study was Anambra State Nigeria. The population of study was all the public senior secondary school students (SS1) in Anambra State during the 2023/23 academic year. The total population was 12,460 students the sample size consist of 1000 students drawn through simple random sampling technique. Two research questions guided the study and the reliability of the study was established using spilt half method and data collected was analyzed using parson (r) which yielded a reliability co

efficient of 0.64. The study was guided by two research questions. The questionnaire was a researcher developed instrument and was administered through the help of three assistants. All the questionnaires were returned. The data collected was analyzed using parson product moment of correlation (P P M C) to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

The results collected were analyzed and summarily presented in the tables as follows:

Research question one: what is the relationship existing between peer group and the academic achievement of students from Anambra State Nigeria?

Table one: Pearson on the relationship existing between peer group and academic achievement

Source of variation	N	Peer group pressure	academic achievement	Decision
Peer group pressure	1000	1.00	0.69	S
Academic achievement		0.69	1.00	

The data above revealed that a significant relationship of 0.69 exist between the student rating of their peer pressure and academic achievement.

Research question two: what is the relationship existing between peer group and the career choice of students from Anambra State Nigeria?

Table two: parson on the relationship existing between peer group and career choice

Source of variation	N	Peer group pressure	career choice	Decision
Peer group pressure	1000	1.00	0.71	S
Career choice		0.71	1.00	

The data from table two above revealed that a significant relationship of 0.71 exist between the student rating of their peer pressure and career choice.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study were discussed along line the purpose of study which sought to determine how peer influence correlated to academic achievement and career choice of secondary school students from Anambra state of Nigeria.

Concerning the relationship between academic achievement and peer group, the students in rating how peer groups relates to their academic achievement looked at the following fifteen items, which were all rated above the 2.50 mean mark of acceptance. They include; my friends help me to easily comprehend class work (2.74), assist me to memorize easily (2.69), ability to develop good study habit (2.83), helps me develop good verbal expression and ability (2.90), ability to develop intellectual skills (2.74), competes among ourselves academically (2.90), encourages paying attention in class (2.69), encouraging punctuality to school (2.92), insist we go to school regularly (2.69), doing assignment together (2.89) reading ahead of teacher (2.79) participating in group discussion/studies (2.72) asking questions in the class (2.89). The data above revealed that all the rated items have a mean score above 2.50 and hence are factors. Chireshe (2013) on this note stated that adolescents as peers seek for validation from one

another. In examining the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement, research question one and table one indicated that a significant relationship of 0.69 exists between the students rating of their peer group pressure and academic achievement. This view was supported by Hamshim and Embong (2015), Chiresche (2013), Kiuru (2008) who all noted that peer group is a potent force in the life adjustment of adolescents and they provide validation for their actions.

Concerning the relationship between peer group and career choice, the research question two and table two revealed that a significant positive relationship of 0.71 exist between peer influence and career choice of secondary school children from Anambra State Nigeria. This was established using the following items which the adolescents rated above the mean mark of 2.50 and they include: discusses career choice among peers (2.72), helps me choose job (2.69), influences my decision on subject choice (2.92), influences my interest (2.72), influences my career preference (2.92) encourages me in my career development pursuit (2.78), influences my educational status (3.01), looks at each other for affirmation (3.32), seeks approval of career choice from friends (3.38), encourages me to a particular discipline (2.98), always agrees on certain values (3.04), found together doing the same thing (2.95) motivated by group interest (3.49). Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) noted that people who found themselves together trace the same career trajectory. This view was supported by Alika (2010), Kibor (2016), Bet (2013), Mustapha and Embong (2015). All noted that peer influence is a significant factor in career choice of adolescents. Bound together these children to a very significant degree have strong influences on adolescent adaptations.

CONCLUSION

The study was on the peer group influence as a correlate to adolescent academic and career choice. Academic achievement is an individuals' cognitive output after being subjected to a period of learning. Career choice on the other hand is an individuals' preference of job or occupation. The peer groups are persons bound together by certain characteristics majorly the age. The peer group is an important aspect of socialization and contributes in determining the personality appearance of adolescents. It is also found to impart highly on the life adaptations of these growing children among which is their career choice and academic achievement. Based on the above, it was found that the peer group pressure correlates highly (0.69 and 0.71) with the academic achievement and career choice of these secondary school children respectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Awareness of peer pressure to be encourage among parents, teachers, institutions and stakeholders
2. Parents are to monitor their children's peer group since good and bad are leant from them
3. Students should be made aware of the enormous role played by peer influence in their life adjustment
4. Counsellors should be properly equipped and knowledgeable about peer influence in order to counter its negative implications.

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