

**INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUPS ON STUDENTS' BEHAVIOURAL
PATTERN AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ADULT AND NON FORMAL EDUCATION, FACULTY OF
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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by **IKHELOA Stephanie Omoye** with matriculation number **EDU1802779** of the Department of Adult and Non Formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City and approve of it as adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment for the award of B. A. (Ed) Degree in Adult Education/English and Literature.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty for seeing me through the completion of this project. And also, to my wonderful family for their constant love, support and prayers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and most importantly, I want to express my profound appreciation to God Almighty for his infinite mercies upon my life and for seeing me through the completion of this project. Thank you God.

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I wish to seize this opportunity to appreciate the efforts made by my course mates and friends for their support throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the Influence of peer groups on Students' behavioural pattern and academic performance in the University of Benin. Five research questions were raised and examined. Data was collected from one hundred and eighty (180) respondents from the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and was designed to elicit appropriate information from the respondents. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the analysis of data was done using frequency count and percentages.

The findings of the study shows that peer groups serves as a contributory influence to students behaviour by Inculcating certain traits and characteristics which they pick from one another of the same peer groups. These skills, traits or characteristics helps to build the student positively or negatively in any area of their life, be it social or academic.

Some of the recommendation made include; students should attain a certain level of maturity and sense of independence before making any

intention to join peer groups or associate self with peer groups. Also parents should ensure that their children are well trained and tutored.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

A peer group according to Castrogiovanni (2016), is defined as a small group of similarly aged fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In general, peer groups or cliques have two to twelve members, with an average of five or six. Peer groups provide a sense of security and they help adolescents to build a sense of identity. Adolescents ask questions relating to social identity such as, "Who am I?" and "What do I want out of life?" Feeling part of a group, be it the stereotypical jocks, goths, or punks, allows adolescents to feel like they are on the way to answering some of these questions. Given that adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as with parents or other adults, it is important to study the influence or pressures that peers place on each other.

In ways similar to the community, the peer group becomes an agency of enculturation and learning. Even very young children develop a sense of self from their perceptions of important people in surroundings, relatives and their peers. Socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, and parents' occupations

affect how families view themselves and the process by which they socialize their children (Bornstein, 2013). Later, as children leave the home setting, their self-perception and socializing skills become influenced by how their peers view them. When children move out from family to child-care centers, school, and the community at large, they begin to form attachments, and friendships emerge through their play. These relationships influence behavior. Even infants and toddlers are observed reacting to other infants by touching them, by crying when others cry, and later by offering nurturance or comfort. By about age three, early friendships begin to form and children's peers begin to have a more lasting influence (Parke, 2016). including Peer influence on behavior gradually becomes more dominant.

Harris (2016) and Rowe (2017) maintained that peer groups have an even stronger influence than that of parents, although that extreme position has been refuted by other researchers (Berk, 2017). Gradually, children discover that others can share their feelings or attitudes or have quite different ones. The perspectives of others will affect how children feel about their own families. Children usually have a "family" view of their own and of other cultures. So, when confronted with other perspectives, they often

need to rethink their own viewpoints. It is often difficult for children to adjust to the idea that other families can function radically differently from their own and yet hold many of the same attitudes and beliefs and be equally nurturing and secure

The peer group serves as a barometer for children examining themselves and their feelings about self and family. The peer group also influences development of children's socializing skills. These early friendships help children learn how to negotiate and relate to others, including their siblings and other family members. They learn from peers how to cooperate and socialize according to group norms and group-sanctioned modes of behavior. 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, 2018, Hartup, 2017). Also, while students spend a great part of their time in school, students, choose friends and the major basics for choice tends to be similar in gender, age, ethnicity leisure preferences and participation in violent activities (Sampter 2017). This friends gradually become peer groups that the student uses to

evaluate the perspective of others while developing his or her own values and attitude, styles of dress, hair styles, musical interest, speech and language use. Furthermore, peer groups learn methods of handling social relationships by observing and imitating their peers (Brandenburg 2018). Among these reasons are the different intentions for the formation of peer groups by most students and they feel the need to relate to other people so as not to be alone, they want to be less dependent on adults for physical, psychological and social support and be more dependent on peers for security and encouragement, peer groups provide an individual with wider experience and values of many families and communities apart from his, they feel the need to belong to the group and share its goals, aspirations and behave like a member of the group.

Peer groups have norms and cultures that contribute to the differences that exist between them, which are greatly responsible for positive or negative conformity to peer pressure by students.

Statement of Problem

In contemporary society, peer group influences have become increasingly pronounced and studies have shown that students are more

likely to increase behaviour that receives peer group approval (Allen et al., 2015; Clark & Loheac, 2017). Students are attracted to join peer groups because such groups provide them with sources of information needed to be empowered academically, vocationally, psychologically or otherwise and give the feedback about the appropriateness of their emotions especially when adolescent are highly stressed or under stress (Schachter 2016).

According to Makama Everist (2017) peer group influence is known to have an effect on the life of young people positively or negatively depending on which group one joins. This we can see around in University of Benin. Students in a bid to feel among associate themselves with peers who they admire. These peers on the other hand, expose them to different behaviours such as; substance abuse, developing a good study habit, armed robbery, organising helpful programmes that benefit others, sexual promiscuity, actively involving in school clubs e.t.c.

Although, there are positive benefits peers render to students, the rate at which peer pressure affect students' behaviour is alarming and calls for the serious attention of the educational management, academic and government agencies. This is evidenced in the apparent increase in violence which is

visible among most students' involvement in social activities such as clubbing, partying, destruction of properties, killing including all kinds of indiscipline. Hence, apart from asserting the truthfulness of Everist's notion which is stated above, this study seeks to investigate the extent to which students behaviour are influenced by peer pressure.

Research Questions.

Based on the issues raised in the statement of the problem, the following questions were raised to guide the study;

1. Is the formation of peer relationships based on students interest?
2. Are peer groups to be blamed for students' positive behaviour in the University of Benin?
3. Do peer group affect the lives of student negatively in the University of Benin?
4. Does peer pressure influence the personality development of students in the University of Benin?
5. Are students' poor decisions responsible for their submission to peer pressure in the University of Benin?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of peer pressure on students behavioral pattern in University of Benin. Specifically, the study seeks to find out:

1. If the formation of peer relationships is based on interest of students in the University of Benin.
2. If peer groups are to be blamed for students' positive behaviour in University of Benin.
3. If peer groups are the cause of students' negative behaviour in the University of Benin.
4. If peer group influence the personality development of students in the University of Benin.
5. If students' poor decisions are responsible for their submission to peer pressure in the University of Benin.

Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. First, the findings will help University of Benin student to choose their peers with caution.

Second, it will provide comprehensive information that will enable counselors, educators, and parents involve in various measures on how students can be assisted in dealing with peer pressure.

Third, this research work will lead to further in-depth study on influence of peer pressure on students' behavioral pattern. It will serve as baseline data for researchers who wish to carryout further studies in this area. Also, policy makers in the Ministry of Education and school administrators could use these findings to formulate guidelines and policies to help students become more responsible.

Lastly, it will serve as a contribution to knowledge in areas of study in Nigeria. In this regard, it will be useful for othes researchers who might want to carry out research in related areas.

Scope/Delimitations of the study

This study is on the Influence of peer groups on Students' behavioural pattern and academic performance in the University of Benin

The scope of this study aims to access the Influence of peer groups on Students' behavioural pattern and academic performance in the University of Benin

It is delimited to the perceptions of the students and beneficiaries of the Education sector towards the betterment of the students in different institutions.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to students in various levels in the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin, Benin city Edo State.

Definition of Terms

Behavioural Pattern: is the particular trait or attitude an individual possesses and exhibit

Peers: These are individuals who are about the same age or maturity level

Peer group: These are children or adolescents vwho a re of the same age or maturity, level and have regular contact with each other.

Peer Pressure: Is the persuasive influence your friends have over you which can cause you to associate with certain people, to wear certain clothes, to use certain words and to use certain languages.

Section

Two

A REVIEW OF CONNECTED WORKS

A survey of related literature is presented in this chapter under the following subheadings:

- What Peer and Peer Group Mean
- Peer characteristics
- The Initiation of Peer Groups
- What Peer Pressure Means
- Peer Pressure Types
- Peer Influence in an Academic Setting

- Peer pressure's Effect on Students' Social Behavior
- How Peer Relationships and Groups Affect Personality Development
- Reasons for Adverse Peer Groups in Academic Settings
- Strategies for Handling Adversarial Peer Groups in a University Setting
- Synopsis of Relevant Works

Peer and peer group definitions

Peers are defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2023) as individuals who are the same age. It can also be used to describe individuals who share similar experiences or skills. According to Alexander (2016), a peer is a group of people that a person identifies with, associates with, and looks to for approval or acceptance. In addition, peers are described by the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary as individuals who share a group's age, social standing, or skill set. Peers are defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary

2023 (online dictionary) as those who belong to the same social group, particularly with regard to age, rank, or grade. Empirical studies have shown that peers share a tendency to exhibit similar personal traits. Peers are just those who share the same age and skill level, i.e., those who are connected by a shared experience of being seekers of the desirable. (Ezewu, 2019).

A peer group is defined as a small group of individuals who are fairly close friends and of a similar age who participate in the same activities (Kirchler, 2016). Teens spend a significant amount of time in these organizations. Bradford Brown (2018) reports that university students spend twice as much time with their classmates as they do with their parents or other adult caregivers. A peer can be someone you consider to be on par with you in terms of age or skill level or someone you look up to. A peer could be someone you know well, someone you live with, or even someone you see on TV. Despite the fact that kids frequently have playmates that are either a few years older or younger than them, peers remain equal. Hardcastle (2020). According to Mendoza (2018), peer groups are a contributing component that gives adolescents great motivation to acquire social learning when they start to associate with individuals. However, they are not a formal social

institution with legal standing. Strong bonds are formed between them via their social relationships with the group.

According to Uchem (2016), a teen's peer group plays a significant role in providing strong incentive for social learning when they begin interacting with others. Peer groups are social groups made up of individuals who are similar to one another in terms of socioeconomic status, age, or education. Peer groups are unofficial major groupings made up of individuals with comparable or equal status, who are typically around the same age, and who share similar interests and backgrounds. Peer group social divers are able to transcend social barriers including socioeconomic class, degree of definition, and officially assigned roles.

Features of Fellows

Previous studies (Back & Kenny, 2017, Kenny, 2016) suggested that social settings might be examined at the individual or dyadic levels. As a result, while not totally independent, we distinguish between peer traits (individual level) and peer relationship characteristics (dyadic level). This distinction is especially important since, as the discussion that follows will demonstrate, the significance of basic dyadic peer relationship traits is constant

throughout life, while the value of individual peer attributes is subject to change.

• **Distinctive Peer Features**

Peers are generally defined as "belonging to the same societal group especially based on age, grade, or status" (Merriam-Webster 2023). Similarly, research has shown that peers tend to resemble each other concerning individual characteristics. This phenomenon is known as homophily and is embodied in the idea that "birds of a feather flock together" (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2019). In younger life phases, peer groups tend to be homogeneous concerning individual characteristics like gender, age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. For example, children and adolescents tend to segregate into groups of their own gender and age (Maccoby, 2020). This homogeneity decreases adolescence (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 2019). In adulthood, peer networks become much more gender-integrated than in adolescents.

• **Features of Dyadic Peer Relationships**

Social ties, which constitute the foundation for mutually acceptable interpersonal expectations, are comparatively stable patterns of interaction

between at least two individuals.

Motivations for Forming Peer Groups

Although peer ages, friendship does not take on the significance of intimate relationships until mid- or late-adolescence. These peer groups are defined by trust, loyalty, and self-disclosure. Cookey (2017) states that peer group formation arises through the inborn urge in human beings to realize themselves in society and the basic and potent human need to associate with other people in various social organizations. The nature of peer interaction patterns across different life phases has not yet been thoroughly specified. A general online dictionary defines peer formation. Consequently, with the aforementioned statement, it would be agreed upon that the formation of a peer group is not limited to a particular age that is, it occurs naturally in individuals. Conflict with family members, the need to speak with someone, the need to combat loneliness, the desire to associate with people, and the desire to be a part of an academic group are all examples of situations in which the formation of a peer group may occur. Adult and societal elements are typically made to make up for rejection. Through the formation of a peer group, a child will want freedom from

home in order to be devoted to the group. Adeola (2018) states that the formation of a peer group occurs from each extensive interaction with others and initiate relationship and by these contacts, important attitudes and values are formed.

One major factor at work during adolescent development is that they are showing autonomy, or a sense of being a separate change that enables person. Another factor is the cognitive adolescents' ability to see situations from another person's point of view. As a result of these developments, individuals experience a greater result of intimacy and an increased capacity to enter close relationships or peer groups. These negative aspects of group behavior could be detrimental to students' academic work. Examples of these behaviors include truancy, persistent lateness to school, juvenile delinquency, stealing, absenteeism, disobedience, laziness, disregarding school rules and regulations, etc.

What Peer Pressure Means

Peer groups play a dynamic role in an individual's life, enabling him or her to develop values and attitudes as they watch, imitate, and compare themselves to others in their group. However, membership in a peer group is

not permanent as individuals change their peer group membership as they pass through different Stages of development. The term "peer pressure" is often used to describe instances where an individual feels individually pressured to change their behavior to match that of their peers or the group they belong to (Adesuji, 2019). Peer pressure is defined as when people your own age push or intimidate you to do something, even if you don't personally want to (Ryan, 2023) Peer pressure is a set of group dynamics in which personal habits, individual moral inhibitions, and idiosyncratic desires are overridden by a group in which one feels comfortable in order to impose another behavioral trait. Peer pressure has a significant impact on teenage behavior and reflects young people's desire to fit in and be accepted by others. Peer influence is a more subdued kind of peer pressure, which entails hanging one's behavior to fulfill the expectations of others (Buns and Darling, 2022). Peer pressure means the influences that people of the same rank or age have on each other. Again, peer pressure is emotional or mental force from people belonging to the same group (such as same age, grade or status) to act or socialize or behave in a similar manner or status. Peers have great influence

on themselves, adolescent behaviour and reflects young people's desire to fit in and be accepted by others. One can say that peer pressure is an emotional feeling from people of the same age grade to do things in a manner similar to them. Peer pressure comprises of a set of group dynamics whereby a group in which one feels comfortable may override personal habits, individual moral inhibitions or idiosyncratic desires to impose a group norm of attitudes and (or) behaviours. One may be right to say that peer pressure is the emotional force people of the same social group receive through imposing of the groups norm, attitude or behaviours on others. It can also be defined as the insistence and encouragement of others of the same age group to make or force the individual to do something (Santor, Messervey & Kusumakar 2022).

Peer pressure is the pressure that comes from friends or people your own age pushing you to do something you don't want to do. According to Clasen and Brown (2016), peer pressure is the pressure that an individual feels to fit in with a social group that they want to be accepted into. People are social creatures who spend the majority of their lives interacting and developing close relationships with one another. They are surrounded by people who

influence their lives in various ways, such as parents, siblings, teachers, and friends (Henrich 2017). In essence, these are the social forces that influence an individual in different ways and force him to learn adaptive behavior (Chamis & Sluke, 2022). Research such as Peer cluster theory (Danish, 2016) has shown that peer pressure has a much greater impact on adolescent behaviour than any other factor. A teenager spends more of his/her time with peers than with family members. The interaction of peers is direct, and much powerful than the influence of teachers and other authority figures. Peer pressure tends to have more of an effect on children with low self-esteem. If a child feels compelled to fit in, the teen may do things that go against his/her beliefs simply to be part of the group (Kirk, 2020). Peer pressure can lead to experimentation with drugs and alcohol, sex, skipping school and various high-risk behaviours. If you notice a sudden change in your child's appearance, clothing, and attitude, especially if accompanied by secretive behaviour, he or she may be succumbing to the influences of peers (Kirk, 2020). You should especially be at alert to sudden changes in the friends who make up their core peer group. An unexplained change in the type of

friends your child associates with would indicate that your child is uinerable to new influences that may not be positive.

Peer Pressure Types

Peer pressure falls into two main categories, which are:

1. Peer pressure that is constructive

2. Adverse peer pressure

Encouragement from peers

The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. This factor is consistent with Bowmeister and Leary's "belongingness hypothesis," which holds that people of all ages seek inclusion and avoid exclusion. But, not all peer influence is negative; in fact,

spending more time with peers does not always translate into trouble. Peer influence can, in fact, keep students participating in religious activities and playing on sports teams, even when they are not leaders (Lingren, 2016). Peer groups that provide a lot of positive feedback encourage action to maintain good feelings, which are often reported in peer groups and actions could lead to engaging in risky behaviors to keep the "fun" going. Some of the positive experiences that peer groups provide include: educational attainment, social activities, and whether or not to engage in delinquent activities (Landau, 2022). Fischhoft, Cromwell, and Kipke (2019) cited a systems theory perspective, arguing that students define themselves by the groups with which they affiliate.

- i. A chance to practice interacting with people.
- ii. Assistance in defining one's personality, interests, and skills.
- iii. Independence from parental and adult supervision.
- iv. Chances to see how other people handle comparable issues and gauge how successful their solutions are.
- v. Provided emotional assistance.
- vi. Establishing and keeping friendships.

Adverse

Peer

Influence

Negative peer pressure, on the other hand, is said to have a greater impact on students' social lives and academic performance, according to Nworgu (2022). Daniel (2016) notes that peers may not always be aware of the precise grades their friends receive or the amount of time they spend on homework in a given week, so students may be able to mislead their peers about their academic performance. Mukama (2018) stated that some students frequently view school as another symbol of adult authority, full of rules and restrictions, and they frequently decide to drop out. This can force students to argue with their teachers about minor issues, making it challenging to convince them to refrain from doing certain things.

Peer Influence in an Academic Setting

A university, also referred to as a tertiary institution, is a higher education setting that teaches students to be skilled in aiding the development and growth of the career path they ultimately choose. Unlike secondary schools, where students are observed by teachers and parents and forbidden from engaging in unhealthy behaviors, university students are free to do as they

please because they are considered mature enough to take care of themselves and become responsible for their decisions and actions in higher education. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria discourages younger students from attending universities in order to protect them from being influenced by older adults who have become a nuisance in the school. Nevertheless, the majority of parents have

Because universities are both social and academic institutions, people's personalities and behaviors are greatly influenced to conform to the changing social norms. Olaye (2001) observed that schools are social institutions that reinforce appropriate behavior and interests. The majority of students join peer groups during their first year of college; this number is reduced because these groups would have introduced them to behaviors that they will always be ashamed of. As a result, they spend their later years in school struggling to break free from the habits they learned from peers that were sparked by the pressure of members of their peer groups.

Peer pressure's effect on students' social behavior

The transitional stage between childhood and adulthood known as adolescence is marked by pressures from both internal and external sources (Adams, 2016 & Schneide 2016). In addition to being a period of transition, these studies suggest that adolescence is a period of deep introspection for the young person. Peer group influences have become more prominent in modern society, and research indicates that adolescents are more likely to increase behavior that receives approval from their peers (Clark & Loheac, 2017). Students spend their time alone with their peers as they work toward their academic objectives.

According to Schneider (2017) becoming a peer group member meets many adolescents concerns about social expectations such as developing independence from their parents, learning decision-making skills and acting on their own. However, students have different social expectations and confusing ways of achieving them. Peer influence on students has been reported as being shrouded in myths and fear by parents. According to You (2017) perceived support from peers gives students a sense of motivation which enables them to see the importance of pursuing academic success.

This is because adolescents accepted by their peers are more likely to be psychologically healthier and self-confident than those rejected by their peers (Alleet 2018). Peer pressure may focus negative pressure on antisocial behaviour outside of school rather than on academic achievement. For example, social experimentation with cigarettes, alcohol, and other illicit substances generally begins in junior high school. The attention paid to this kind of peer pressure may supersede pressure regarding grades in class. Thus, the results seen in this model may actually be consistent with other studies of peer pressure.

Peer pressure can also have an adverse effect on students' social behavior, including aggression. According to research, students who hang out with their peers are more likely to become aggressive, harass and bully other students, engage in risky behaviors like drinking, rape, spreading false information, and endangering the lives of both lecturers and students.

Peer Relationships and Groups' Significance in Personality Development

Peers are a ubiquitous part of our social lives; they include a wide variety of individuals who we interact with on a daily basis from early childhood to old

age. Members of the same work or sports team, classroom, community, and other groups constitute significant and highly salient peer group contexts. We also actively seek out and maintain a member of dyadic relationships with peers, including those with a close friend, acquaintance, flatmate, colleague, fellow student, or neighbor. Given the pervasiveness of peers in our lives, it is likely that they have an impact on who we are. This may be especially true in modern society, where people are more likely than not dating and families are dispersed over greater distances. Researchers have long noted an association between the social environment, the behaviors, feelings, and thoughts of individuals (James, 1890). Their dynamic interplay has been considered to play a key role in personality maturation, because identities are not construed by individuals alone but negotiated in social interaction processes between individuals (Hogan & Roberts, 2016; Swann, 2017). Hence, it is essential to account for the social context that we are embedded in to understand personality development (Leary & Baumeister, 2018; Neyer & Lehnart, 2017). Nevertheless, the role of peers in personality development has surprisingly been largely neglected. Group socialization theory 2016. The theory state that with children's

advancing age, outside-the-home socialization should take place in peer, and this is because, it becomes an increasingly important determinant of adolescents' personality development. We contend that this theory makes a contribution to development, but understand personality but we aim to extend this approach in two ways;

First, group socialization theory focuses on the developmental processes in peer influences on childhood and adolescence, whereas it does not provide an insight into the nature and function of peers across the entire lifespan that are, however, likely to play a role beyond adolescence. Second, it focuses on peer group processes to explain developmental differences that occur between different peer groups, whereas it neglects individual differences in development within such groups. Group socialization theory proposes that siblings who grow up in the same family but with different peer groups become different from each other, not only because 50% of their genes differ, but also because they belong to different peer groups (Harris, 2018). The importance of peers beyond adolescence, we contend that peers account for a substantial share of

variance in lifespan personality development. It's safe to assume that the distinction between peer characteristics (individual level) and dyadic relationship perspectives (i.e., relationship-level) is essential for understanding peer effects on personality development. Peer group process of within-group assimilation lead to peer group members personalities becoming more similar over time. Several studies have focused on outcomes associated with the peer effect, in particular, academic achievement. For this reason, isolating the peer effects on academic achievement can make a significant contribution to public debate over education reform. The 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress NAEP database on reading was used to test the influences of peer influence on academic achievement. The NAEP, first administered in 1969, is an examination that measures academic achievement in a variety of fields, such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, geography, civics, and the arts. Currently, the NAEP is administered to fourth, eighth, and 12th grade students with the main subjects of. mathematics and reading, alternating every two years. In 2008, for example, reading was tested, in 2010 and 2012. mathematics was tested. Harris (2018) and Rowe (2016) maintained that

peer groups have an even stronger influence than that of family. This proposition has been refuted by other researchers. Additionally, we can say that peer pressure is what can lead students to unhealthy and unsafe behaviors as well as academic achievements because pressure is linked to wrong decisions, rebellion, and fluctuations in humor. This will result in poor academic performance because adolescents are not cooperative in the process of learning outcomes. Positive models are individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to excellence. On the other hand, negative models are individuals who have experienced disaster and are widely expected to motivate people to take necessary steps to avoid similar unpleasant result (Lockwood and Kunda, 2018). The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and experimentation. Contrary to popular belief, peer influence is not always bad. According to Allen and Mc Elhaney (2016), students who were well-liked by many peers displayed higher levels of ego development and secure attachment, as well as better interactions with their best friends. It was found that associating with friends who have a positive influence enhanced

students' own satisfaction with school - whereas associating with friends who have a negative influence

From the standpoint of social competency, it is likely that students who struggle to establish themselves will also struggle academically in school. Although the differences between peer groups are more noticeable, there may also be students who are neglected or rejected by their peers. Students who experience peer rejection may experience increased anxiety, worry, or being teased or excluded, which can disrupt classroom concentration and hinder children's ability to learn and retain information (Scheidt, 2019). This finding highlights the significance of determining which factors have the greatest influence on students' academic achievements.

How to Handle Adverse Peer Influence in a University

Diminishing negative pressures involves, walking a fine line between taking an authoritative role and stepping back to allow individual freedom. Teachers can increase their personal awareness of adolescent social systems by investing more energy in getting to know their students and the groups to which they belong. In the classroom, teachers should avoid making achievement a game between students. Most importantly, the school system

and community should enhance the status of academic achievement. Schools should recognize academic excellence in areas outside of the Core curriculum by having trade fairs, talent display amongst others. It is important to avoid sending mixed achievement. This involves being aware of the academic messages about the relative worth of academic versus group social structure that operates in a particular school. The normal peer group that operate within each school, the relationship of one group to it's members and another group. Harnessing the power is important to create a school climate supportive of academic excellence (Burns & Darling, 2017). Parents should be involved in their adolescent's life. They should never undervalue the importance of spending quality time with their adolescent. If parents are unable to be physically present due to work or other obligations, they should still communicate with their child(ren) through phone calls, notes, or other means. Black (2002) found that children who have close relationships with their parents are far less likely to become delinquents or suffer from depression than children who feel cut off from their families. An overview of the literature that has been reviewed This subsection presents a synopsis of the reviewed literature regarding the

impact of peer groups on students' behavioral patterns and academic performance at the University of Benin. During the research, the investigator examined the definition and characteristics of peer groups, the reasons behind the formation of peer groups, the nature of peer pressure, the types of peer pressure, peer pressure in an academic setting, the influence of peer groups on students' behavior, the role of peer relationships and peer groups in personality development, and strategies for mitigating the negative influence of peer groups in the university setting. The findings of this study include the fact that adolescents are susceptible to peer pressure, given their developmental stage and propensity to seek validation from their age group. Since humans are social animals and gravitate toward one another based on similar goals, age, gender, career path, or other related factors, the study reports a number of factors that contribute to the formation of peer groups in universities and the individual's need to belong to a particular community. Educators, parents, and other relevant parties must take peer groups seriously because they play a vital role in the development of the individual.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines the procedures and methods the researcher employed in data collection or gathering in the course of this study. It is presented under the following sub-headings

- Research Design
- Population of Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

This study will adopt a descriptive survey involving the use of questionnaires. This approach is considered appropriate because it aims to seek factual information from a large population. Using a representative

sample, it involves seeking the opinions of people about a phenomenon under the study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study is made up of Education Students in the University of Benin. There about 4,200 full time students in the Faculty of Education.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A safe sample of 180 students is used for the study. The sample was randomly selected. The researcher employed the random sampling technique to ensure that all stipulated characteristics of students is duly represented.

Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used in this study for the collection of data was a structured questionnaire which comprises of two sections; section A and section B. The first section, section A of the questionnaire focused on the personal data of the respondents' while section B consisted of Items (questions) which are to provide information or answers raised in this study

Validity of the Instrument

To validate the instrument, the researcher employed the expert judgement approach. This is done by providing an initial draft of the questionnaire by the research and vetted by project supervisors and other expert in the department of Adult and non-formal education, in the university of Benin for their suggestions and criticisms

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the research Instrument, the test re-test reliability method was used. A total number of the thirty (30) respondents were used in the first place, after two weeks interval the instrument was re-administered on the same group of respondents. The response collected were collated and correlated using the Pearson "r" statistics to determine the correlation coefficient. A correlation index of 0.76 was obtained, this shows that the instrument is reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered approved copies of the questionnaires to the various respondents. The questionnaire was thoroughly explained to the respondents by the researcher and various assistant. This was done to aid the

respondents in answering the questions. The answered questionnaires were collected the same day.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, comprising of frequency count and simple percentage.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results obtained from the data gathered and analysed are presented alongside the discussion of the findings

Section A

The section A of the questionnaire focused on the demographic data of the respondents in the four communities that were visited. These information are presented as follows:

Table 4.1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	113	62.8%
Female	67	37.2%
Total	180	100%

The Table above shows the sex distribution of the respondents. The results show that majority of the respondents 113 representing 62.8% are male, while 67 representing 37.2% of the respondents are female. This shows that majority of those involved in the study are male.

Table 4.2: Age distribution of respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
15-20 years	39	21.7%
21-25	76	42.2%
26 and above	65	36.1%
Total	180	100%

The Table above shows that 39 of the respondents representing the age bracket of 15-20 is 21.7%, 76 of the respondents age bracket of 21-25 42.2%, and 65 of respondents representing age bracket 26 and above ist 36.1%. This means that majority of the respondents are between the age grade of 20-25 years.

Table 4.3: Academic Level of the respondents.

Level	Frequency	Percentage
100	31	17.2%
200	50	27.8%
300	73	40.6%
400	26	14.4%

5 Do your peers have similar likes and dislikes? 58 32.2% 122 67.8%

The results in Table 4.4 reveals that 152 respondents representing 84.4% agreed that students initiate the process of forming peer groups. 96 respondents representing 53.3% attend the same church or fellowship with their peers while only 46.7% of respondents of 84 respondents do not attend the same church or fellowship with their peer

The result of item 3 indicates that only 49 respondents representing 27.2% 6 are in the same department with their peers while 131 of the respondents (72.8%) are not in the same department with their peers. Therefore not much have the same choice of environment with their peers.

The result of the next item (item 4) reveals that 123 respondents representing 68.3% are in the same age while, only 67 of themn (31.7%) are not in the same age group. The last item on the table shows that 32,.29% of the respondents (58 respondents) have similar likes and dislikes with their while majority of them 122 respondents representing 67.8% do not have similar likes or dislike with their peers.

Research Question 2: Are peer groups to be blamed for students' positive behaviour in the university of Benin?

Table 4.5: Data on whether peer groups are to be blamed for students' positive behaviour in the University of Benin. Using items 6-10 to answer this question, the result are summarised below;

S/N	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
6	Have your peer group reinforce positive behaviour within members?	68	37.8%	112	62.2%
7	Do you and your peers engage in humanitarian activities?	73	40.6%	107	59.5%
8	Do your peers give you emotional and financial advise?	163	90.6%	17	9.4%
9	Do you and your peers have reading or studying timetable?	146	81.1%	34	18.9%
10	Experienced positive change in attitude as a result of associating with your peers?	32	17.8%	148	82.2%

From the results in this Table 4.5 it can be seen that, a large number of peer the groups have reinforced (62.2%) positive behaviour in their members, while a lower number of respondents (37.8%) do otherwise.

From item 7, (40.6%) a fewer number of respondents agreed that they and their peers are engaged in humanitarian activitiesplaces. While a greater number of students (59.4%) claimed not be.

The responses in item 8, indicates that (90.6%) number of students get emotional and financial support from peers. While, only a scanty number of students (9.4%) do the contrary.

Item 9, (81.1%) of the respondents accepted that they have study schedules with their peers while (18,9%) of the respondents do not

From the result of item 10, the minority (17.8%) of the respondents asserts that they have experienced positive change in behaviour, While, the majority (82.2%) respondents do not.

Research Question 3: Do peer groups affect the lives of students negatively in the University of Benin?

Table 4.6: Data on if peer groups affect the lives of students negatively. The results are presented below

S/N	Question	Yes	%	No	%
11.	Any character of peers that have influenced you negatively?	69	38.3%	111	61.2%
12.	Do you disrespect people because of your peers?	108	60%	72	40%
13.	Do you and your peers often cause trouble?	47	26.1%	133	73.9%
14.	Has your peer group impacted your decision making process negatively?	23	12.8%	157	87.2%
15.	Do your peers encourage you to do mischievous acts?	124	68.9%	56	31.1%

This Table explains that the number of students (38.3%) whose characteristics are influenced by peer are fewer than (61.2%) who did not

108 respondents representing 60% who disrespect people because of their peers, (40%) are having a different perspective.

Only (26.1%) of the respondents cause trouble with their peers trouble. While (73.9%) of the selected students had a different response from what the minority had.

Only 23 respondents agreed that their peer have impacted their decision making process negatively, while 157 respondents gave a contrary response.

68.9 of the respondents made the majority that asserted that their peers encourage them to do mischievous acts, while (31.1%) of respondents did not give such response.

Research Question 4: Does peer pressure influence the personality development of students in the University of Benin?

Table 4.7: Data on the Influence of peer pressure in the personality of the students in the University of Benin. The findings from this research question is summarised below

S/N	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
16.	Are there any notable differences in your personality due to your association with your peers?	87	48.3%	93	51.7%
17.	Has your peer group contributed to the development of your social skills and emotional intelligence?	98	54.4%	82	45.6%
18.	Have your interactions with your peer group influence your self-esteem and self-confidence?	89	49.4%	91	50.6%
19.	Are there any long term effects of peer group influence on your personality?	79	43.9%	101	56.1%
20.	Do you make choices to suit that of your peers?	8	4.4%	172	95.6%

The result from item 17 shows that 48.3% of the respondents said they have notable differences in their personality because of their peer groups.

While 51.7% of the respondents said they do not have

54.4% of respondents said their peer groups have contributed to the development of their social skills and emotional intelligence. While 45.6% said otherwise.

The results also reveal that 49.4% of the respondents' interactions with their peers have influenced their self-esteem and self-confidence. While majority of 56.19% of the respondents claimed they have not.

43.9% of the respondents agreed that they have long term effects of peer group influence in their personality. While 56.1% of the respondent agree otherwise.

4.4% of the respondents said they have made choices to suit that of their peers. While a large population of 95.6% said they have not.

Research question 5: Are students' poor decisions responsible for their submission to peer pressure in the university of Benin?

Table 4.8: Responses on the influence of peer pressure on the decision making of the student in the University of Benin.

S/N	Question	Yes	%	No	%
21	Have you made poor decisions based on age, gender or cultural background?	23	12.8%	157	87.2%
22.	Have your perception on social norms and the desire for social acceptance influenced you to make poor decisions under peer pressure?	98	54.4%	82	45.6%
23.	Have your attitude towards risk taking and experimentation affect your likelihood of succumbing to peer pressure?	172	95.6%	8	4.4%
24.	Have you made poor decisions that contributed to your susceptibility to peer pressure?	32	17.8%	148	82.2%
25.	Have you made wrong choices because of the fear of losing your peer?	96	53.3%	84	46.7%

The result of this Table shows that 12.8% of the respondents have made poor decisions based on age, gender or cultural background. While 87.2% of the population have not

Item 22 shows that 54.4% of the population have made poor decisions under peer pressure due to their perception on social norms. While 45.6% of the respondents have not.

In item 23 it was revealed that 95.6% of respondents have made decisions under peer pressure due to their attitude towards risk taking. While 4.4% of respondent have not.

Item 24 shows that 17.8% of the respondents have made poor decisions that contributed to their susceptibility to peer pressure. While 82.2% of the population have not.

And lastly in item 25, it was reviewed that 53.3% of the population have made wrong decision because of the fear of loosing their peers. While 46.7% of the respondents says otherwise.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have been quite revealing and instructive. One of the findings in relation to research question one shows that the formation of peer groups is based on students interest and knowledge. As revealed by the results of the study, it can be said that peer groups do have some level of influence on the attitude of students. Adeniyi and Kolawole (2016) concluded from the findings of their study that there is significant influence of peer groups on social behaviour, self-concept, gender and the parental rearing pattern of adolescents.

In addition majority of the respondents said that they sometimes make crucial decisions to suit that of their peers. This finding agrees with an earlier study on peer influence relationships in adolescents reported by Kiran- Esen (2017). It was reported that the adolescents recorded average levels of peer pressure in self-efficacy which is an indication that peer pressure has minor significant effect on the self-efficacy indices used.

Other studies (Arnett, 2016, De Vries 2017; Gitford-Smith et al, 2018 Allen et al., 2019 Clark and Loheac, ,2017 and You 2017) have revealed that peer pressure has significant influence on adolescents' behaviour. This is also one reason not to totally neglect the good number of those respondents that agreed to, taking important decisions as they suit their peers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMIMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented alongside the conclusion drawn from the analysis of data collected in the course of the study. The recommendations offered in relation to the findings of the study are also highlighted.

Summary

This study was designed to access the influence of peer groups on students' behavioural pattern using University of Benin as a case study to carry out the survey. To achieve the purpose intended for this study, five (5) research questions were raised to guide the study. They include:

1. Is the formation of peer relationships based on interest?
2. Are peer groups to be blamed for Students' positive behaviour in the University of Benin?
3. Do peer groups affect the lives of students negatively in the University of Benin?
4. Does peer pressure influence the personality development of students in the University of Benin?

5. Are students' poor decisions responsible for their submission to peer pressure in the University of Benin?

One hundred and eighty (180) respondents were selected from the faculty of Education, in the University of Benin. Using a convenience sampling technique which constituted the sample for the study and was used to generate the data needed. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentages and mean score standard. The instrument used for this study was structured questionnaire which comprises of two section, section A and B. The findings obtained from the analysis were quite revealing and instructive. These results are presented below.

- The formation of peer group can be regarded to be based on the interest of the members and the level of contact.
- The membership of peer groups can positively and negatively affect the attitude and behaviour of students.
- Though with some exceptions, students don't really take decisions or make choices to satisfy their peers all the times.

Conclusion

As revealed by the results of the study, peer group formation is based on similarities between individuals. Members of the same peer group share basic similarities, it could be location, gender, age or interests

In addition, peer groups do have some level of influence on the attitude of students. There is significant influence of peer groups on the social behavior of the students, as they influence their decision making.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

- Students should be encouraged to cultivate positive peer relationships that will encourage them to indulge in helpful activities which is beneficial to every individual they meet as well as their immediate environment.
- They should attain a certain level of maturity and sense of independence before making any intention to form or join any peer group so as to avoid relationships that are detrimental to their lives.

- Students should not be afraid to exit peer group once they feel negatively influenced or pressurized.
- In addition, parents should ensure that their children are well trained and tutored to a reasonable level where they can be allowed to make decisions that are sound and also to attain the stipulated age recommended by the government before allowing them go to tertiary institutions.
- Administrators should ensure that students get the right orientation about peer groups. This should be done by the guidance counsellor.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND NON FORMAL EDUCATION FACULTY OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Dear Respondents,

Request to fill Questionnaire

I am an undergraduate student of the University of Benin, Department of Adult and Non Formal Education, Faculty of Education, Benin city, Edo State. I am currently carrying out a research study on the '**Influence of peer groups on students' behavioural pattern and academic performance in the University of Benin**'. Kindly help to complete the questionnaire as frankly as possible. Information gathered is purely for academic purpose and will be treated as confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Ikheloa Stephanie Omoye
Researcher

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Instructions: Answer by ticking the appropriate box [] provided below

Sex: Male [] Female []

Age: 15-20years [] 21-25years [] 26-30years [] 31-35years []

Course of study: _____

Level: _____

Section B:

S/N	QUESTIONS		
RQ1.	Is the formation of peer groups based on students interest?	Yes	No
1.	Do students initiate the process of forming peer groups based on their interests?		
2.	Do your peers attend the same church or fellowship with you?		
3.	Are you in the same department with your peers?		
4.	Do your peers have similar likes or dislikes as you?		
5.	Are you in the same age group with your peers?		
RQ2.	Are peer groups to be blamed for students' positive behaviour in the University of Benin?	Yes	No
6.	Have your peer group reinforce positive behavior within members?		
7.	Do you and your peers engage in humanitarian activities? (helping the poor and old, respecting elders, obeying rules and regulations)		
8.	Do your peers give you emotional and financial support?		
9.	Do you and your peers have reading or studying schedules?		
10.	Have you experienced any positive change in yor attitude as a result of associating with your peers?		
RQ3.	Do peer group affect the lives of student negatively in the University of Benin?	Yes	No
11.	Are there any specific characteristics or traits of peer group members that have influenced you negatively?		
12.	Do you disrespect people because of your peers?		
13.	Do you and your peers often cause trouble in most places you go to?		
14.	Has your peer group impacted your decision-making process negatively		
15.	Do your peers encourage you to do mischievous acts?		

RQ4	Does peer pressure influence the personality development of students in the University of Benin?	Yes	No
16.	Are there any notable differences in your personality due to your association with your peers?		
17.	Has your peer group contributed to the development of your social skills and emotional intelligence?		
18.	Have your interactions with your peer group influence your self-esteem and self-confidence?		
19.	Are there any long-term effects of peer group influence on your personality development?		
20.	Do you make choices to suit that of your peers?		
RQ5.	Are students' poor decisions responsible for their submission to peer pressure in the University of Benin?	Yes	No
21.	Have you made poor decisions based on age, gender, or cultural background?		
22.	Have your perception on social norms and the desire for social acceptance influenced you to make poor decisions under peer pressure?		
23.	Have your attitude towards risk-taking and experimentation affect your likelihood of succumbing to peer pressure?		
24.	Have you made poor decisions that contributed to your susceptibility to peer pressure?		
25.	Have you made wrong choices because of the fear of losing your peers?		