

Influence of Peer Group on Academic Performance of Students with Hearing Impairment in Special Schools within Kwara State

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Abstract: *The study examined the influence of peer group on academic performance of students with hearing impairment in special schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised. The sample size of this study was 50 students with hearing impairment in special schools. Instrument was titled "Peer Group Influence on the Academic Performance on Students with Hearing Impairment Questionnaire" (PGAPSHIQ). One research question and two research hypotheses guided the study. The instrument was validated and reliably tested as ($r=.77$). From the findings, it was revealed that, the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment is positive, it can be concluded that peer group can positively influence academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment. Recommendations made among which were: Male and female pupils with hearing impairment should be encouraged to learn the positive aspect from peers and move with responsible peers in and outside the school*

Keywords: *Peer Group, Academic Performance and Hearing Impairment*

Introduction

Students with hearing impairment have been in school and communities since time memorial. At school, regular teachers are not aware about them and if they are, they lack skills and techniques to help them. Therefore, the academic performance of those learners keeps on deteriorating year after year. Now education for learners with hearing impairments has become a major area of special education. The education of student with hearing impairment has over the years generated a lot of interest to experts in the field of special education. The concern is on several factors that influence the academic performance of students with hearing impairment all over the world.

The mainstream era of students with hearing impairment began after the passing of public law 94-142 in 1975. Before the inclusion, 80% of students who were hearing impaired were kept and taught in special schools (Cohen, 2015). This inclusion was an act that ensured all students were being educated in the "least restrictive environment" which meant some or all of their day was spent in a regular education class. Although the law permitted the students with hearing impairment with regular students in regular classroom. Some hearing impaired learners were put in resource classrooms within the regular education school. Hearing impairment is the inability of the ear to receive and give meaningful interpretation to a message or sound. According to Okuoyibo (2016), hearing impairment is an umbrella term used to describe all aspects of disorder affecting the auditory system. Paul and Quigley (2010) see it as any hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. According to Obi (2016), the Conference of the Executive of the American School for the Deaf described hearing impairment as a generic term indicating a hearing impairment that may range in severity from mild to profound. According to them, a deaf person is one who cannot process linguistic information through audition with or without hearing aids. On the other hand, the hard of hearing can with the use of hearing aids process linguist information. They have residual hearing sufficient to enable them process linguistic information through audition.

Academic activities are directed towards ensuring that students gain mastery of educational objectives. In schools, the extent to which these objectives have been met is determined greatly by the interaction of peer groups which could possibly reflect in student's academic performance. Peer group play a large role in the social, emotional and academic development of students. Steinberg (2015) maintains 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 systems in order to improve student's academic performance.

Lavy and Schlosser (2017) argued that, "for many students, friendships are critical interpersonal vehicle that move them towards psychological growth and maturity, allowing social compassion which influences the development of self-evaluation". The above statement suggests strongly, the unprecedented effect of peer group in almost all facet of adolescent's growth. Such effect could be seen in social and emotional lives of young people, which does not end at the above mentioned, but could also manifest in their attitude towards educational activities and careful consideration of these elements has shown that they reflect in the academic performance of students.

However, Castrogiovanni (2012) defined peer group as a small group of similar age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In its most acceptable form, peer group is a healthy coming-of age intermediary, by which youth grasp negotiating skills and learn to deal with challenges and to solve problems in a social context. Peer group can also act as positive role model, for example, if one is involved with a group of people that are ambitious and working hard to attain high academic goals, one might feel pressured to follow suit to avoid feeling excluded from the group.

A negative peer influence could be seen as one of the militating forces why most student record poorly in academic performance, the reason for this is not farfetched: they spend large amount of time in extra curriculum. More often than none, academic priorities are neglected and thus academic performance grossly affected. Academic performance refers to excellence in all academic discipline. Steinberg (2015) posits that academic performance encompasses students' ability and performance; it is multi-dimensional; it is intricately associated to human growth and cognitive, emotional and social physical development.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that students with hearing impairment have not been performing very well in schools due to influence from the environment. Poor performance of pupils with hearing impairment has been declining and stakeholders in education has been striving to improve academic performance of students with hearing impairment using several factors, yet this problem still persist. Studies showed that the poor performance might be caused by factors such as lack of self-esteem, lack of motivation, family influence, school influence etc. Like any other learner, a child with hearing impairment should go to school to get quality education and male friends. This may not be achieved if there is no conducive environment under which appropriate learning takes place or positive friends who can in one way or the other influence their academic prowess. Learners with hearing impairment at times have general poor performances in all subjects. The problems were identified within Kwara State. The researcher attempted to find out the influence of peer group on academic performance of students with hearing impairment. The research had a notion that, if these problems are identified and given attention early enough, academic performance of learners with hearing impairment may improve within Kwara State.

Research Question One: What is the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho1: There is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment

Ho2: There is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment based on gender

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all students with hearing impairment in special schools. There are seven special schools in Kwara State. The sampling technique adopted was simple random sampling technique. The sample size of this study was fifty (50) students with hearing impairment in special schools. The questionnaire was titled "Peer Group Influence on the Academic Performance on Students with Hearing Impairment Questionnaire" (PGAPSHIQ). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by giving it to the experts, their comment and suggestions were used to produce the final copy of the instrument which was used for administration. Reliability is the consistency of measurement of instruments over time or stability of measurement of instruments over a variety of equipment. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, test-retest method was used through the administration of 20 copies of the questionnaires respondents who are not part of the samples to be used but are among the general population with coefficient of ($r=.77$). Descriptive statistics of mean and percentages was used to answer the research question while linear regression and t-test was used to test for the research hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question One: What is the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment?

Table 1: Table showing the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	In the past and present, I had done better than my peer academically.	16(32.0)	25(50.0)	6(12.0)	3(6.0)	3.1

2	I spend much time with my peer group.	25(50.0)	20(40.0)	1(2.0)	4(8.0)	3.3
3	I and my friends always revise together for test or examination.	15(30.0)	8(16.0)	14(28.0)	13(26.0)	2.5
4	My friends and I always compete for grade.	18(36.0)	15(30.0)	5(10.0)	12(24.0)	2.8
5	My friends have assisted me improve my grades.	24(48.0)	16(32.0)	4(8.0)	6(12.0)	3.2
6	My friends and I always solve assignment together.	24(48.0)	18(36.0)	6(12.0)	2(4.0)	3.3
7	The subjects my friends take motivate me too.	11(22.0)	15(30.0)	19(38.0)	5(10.0)	2.6
8	My friends and I support one another in school work.	15(30.0)	15(30.0)	8(16.0)	12(24.0)	2.7
9	I often skip classes to spend time because of my friend.	6(12.0)	22(44.0)	11(22.0)	11(22.0)	2.5
10	I usually feel my peers had done better than me in the past, and I need to sit up to be at their level.	16(32.0)	18(36.0)	12(24.0)	4(8.0)	2.9
11	My peer and I usually discuss academic issues together	21(42.0)	23(46.0)	4(8.0)	2(4.0)	3.3
12	I tend to do anything my peer do in order to belong	11(22.0)	15(30.0)	16(32.0)	8(16.0)	2.6
13	I feel my peers are much better than me academically	4(8.0)	26(52.0)	18(36.0)	2(4.0)	2.6
14	I feel I need to work harder to be academically better than my peers	6(12.0)	22(44.0)	19(38.0)	3(6.0)	2.6
15	I feel greatly motivated whenever my peers perform better than me in most school subjects	29(58.0)	20(40.0)	1(2.0)	-	3.6

Weighted Average

2.91

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 21 above showed the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment. It was revealed that in the past and present, they had done better than my peer academically (3.1), they agree that they spend much time with my peer group (3.3). I and my friends always revise together for test or examination (2.5), furthermore, my friends and I always compete for grade (2.8), their friends have assisted me improve my grades. (3.2) and my friends and I always solve assignment together (3.3). The subjects their friends take motivate them too. (2.6). More so, my friends and I support one another in school work (2.7), they often skip classes to spend time because of my friend (2.5), they agreed that they usually feel their peers had done better than me in the past, and they need to sit up to be at their level (2.9), my peer and I usually discuss academic issues together (3.3), I tend to do anything my peer do in order to belong (2.6), I feel my peers are much better than me academically (2.6), I feel I need to work harder to be academically better than my peers (2.6) and I feel greatly motivated whenever my peers perform better than me in most school subjects (3.6). The overall weighted average mean was 2.91 which indicated that the calculated mean (2.91) is greater than the fixed mean (2.50). This showed that peer group influences the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment positively.

HQ 1: there is no significant influence of peer groups on academic performance of pupils' hearing impairment.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis showing influence of peer groups on academic performance of pupils' hearing impairment

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R _{cal}	R ²	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig	Decision
Peer Group	50	26.78	2.91						
Academic performance	50	27.72	3.35	0.21	0.00	0.02	0.22	0.04	Not Sig

Table 2 showed the summary of regression analysis of significant influence of peer groups on academic performance of pupils' hearing impairment, it was revealed that peer group had mean score of 26.78 and standard deviation of 2.91 while academic

performance had mean score of 27.72 and standard deviation of 3.34, r_{cal} was 0.21, R^2 was 0.00, adjusted $R^2 = 0.02$, F was 0.22 and significant 0.04 ($r_{cal} = 0.21$, $R^2 = 0.00$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.00$, $F = 0.22$, $P < 0.05$). The observed p-value is greater than the fixed p-value. This implies that peer group had significant influence on academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of peer group on academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment was rejected.

Ho3: There is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender.

Table 3: Summary of T-test result showing the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	F	df	Sig	Decision
Peer Group	Male	24	27.83	3.38	2.61	4.21	48	0.05	Not Sig
	Female	26	25.81	2.00					

Table 3 showed summary of t-test result showing the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender. It was revealed that male respondents had mean score 27.83 with standard deviation 3.38 while female respondents had mean score 25.81 with standard deviation 2.00, the T_{cal} was 2.61, degree of freedom 48, F was 4.21 and significant level of 0.05 ($P = 0.05$). This implies that there is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender was not rejected.

Summary of findings

- The influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment is positive.
- Peer group had significant influence on academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment
- there is no significant difference on the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment based on gender

Discussion of findings

The finding of the study revealed that the influence of peer group on the academic performance of pupils' with hearing impairment is positive. This implies that, hearing impaired students' academic performance is influenced with peer group. This finding supports that of, this finding also supports Olalekan (2016) who showed that the nature of a peer group determines the impact on the motivation of and achievements of students with hearing impairment.

the study showed that, Peer group had significant influence on academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment. This implies that, peer groups in schools, home or community can significantly influence either positive or negatively on pupils with hearing impairment. This finding is in line with Bello (2019) peer group positively had significant influence on pupils with hearing impairment academic achievement. This finding negates the finding of Yusuf (2015) who revealed that students with disability are not significantly influenced by peer groups.

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