

Extent of Peer Influence: It's Relation to the Social Well-being and Mathematics Academic Achievement of the Students

Ann Margaret P. So

Faculty, Capiz State University-Dumarao Campus

Abstract:

This descriptive-correlation study aimed to find out the extent of peer influence and its relation to the social well-being and academic performance of the college students. The study was conducted at Iloilo State College of Fisheries-San Enrique Campus during the first semester of academic year 2018-2019. Probability sampling technique was utilized, specifically the simple random technique in choosing the respondents. Sixty-four (64) students responded to the duly-validated researchers-made instrument. The respondents determined the extent of peer influence in which they are affected and the status of their social well-being. Data gathered were interpreted using the mean and Pearson's r . The findings of the study showed that the extent of peer influence of the students was "high" and the status of their social well-being was "sociable". The level of academic performance of students is described as "good". Furthermore, the result showed that there is a marked or moderate and highly significant relationship between the extent of peer influence and social well-being and a negligible relationship was found between the extent of peer influence and academic performance of the college students.

Keywords: Peer Influence, Social Well-Being, Mathematics Academic Achievement

Introduction:

Peer influence describes the process by which we are shaped by the attitudes and behaviors of those around us. The teenage years mark the stage in life between childhood, where parents and carers are primarily relied upon, and adulthood, where we become largely autonomous.

Adolescence is a time of transformation in many areas of an individual's life. In the midst of these rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, youth begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance. It is also the time for individuals to make important decisions about their commitment to academics, family, and perhaps religion. The choices that adolescents make regarding their motivation, engagement, and achievement in school (and in life) and the satisfaction they obtain from their choices depend, in part, on the context in which they make such choices (Ryan, 2000).

Teachers, parents, and peers all provide adolescents with suggestions and feedback about what they should think and how they should behave in social situations. These models can be a source of motivation or a lack thereof (Ryan, 2000). Adolescents are well aware that they influence each other. Brook (2000) reported on a national Gallup poll release that surveyed 13- to 17-year-olds. It was found that 40 percent of the sample cited peer influence when asked why they thought the Columbine High School shooting happened. The Gallup poll release shows that America's teenagers put the blame for

tragedies such as Columbine directly on themselves rather than on parents, gun laws or media violence. The poll also reported that the country's youth suggest that one of the best ways to prevent future occurrences is to find ways to foster better communication among students, and to break down the barriers that apparently create hostility between groups.

This research shows that peer influence can be a scary phenomenon for both adolescents and adults in the school setting.

As already stated, that peers can also provide many positive elements in an adolescent's life, it is important, however, to remember that peer influence can potentially have a deadly impact or other various negative effects. It is vital for education-related professionals to understand and be aware of the complex aspects of peer influence in order to stop these negative effects before they occur.

Thus, the researchers have in mind to conduct this study to find out the extent of peer influence and its relation to the social well-being and mathematics academic achievement of the college students.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the extent of peer influence and the social well-being, and mathematics academic achievement of the college students at Passi City College.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of peer influence among college students?
2. What is the social well-being of the college students?
3. What is the level of mathematics academic achievement of the college students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of peer influence and mathematics academic achievement of the college students?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of peer influence and social well-being of the college students?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research work used the descriptive-correlation method to determine whether the variables in the population of interest are related to each other. The critical distinguishing characteristic of this research design is the effort to estimate a relationship, as distinguished from simple description (Fox, 1969).

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Passi City College, Passi City, Iloilo.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study are the sixty-four (64) second year college students at Passi City College enrolled during the second semester of academic Year 2019-2020.

Data Gathering Procedure

Two (2) data gathering instruments was used in this study: the Extent of Peer Influence Questionnaire and the Social Well-Being Questionnaire.

The data gathered were subjected for statistical analysis using the following statistical tools; Mean and Pearson r .

FINDINGS

1. Extent of Peer Influence of the College Students

Table 1 presents the extent of peer influence among the second-year college students at Passi City College. The result showed that the extent of peer influence was described as “high” which is reflected in the mean of 3.74. This may imply that students are always engaged with their peers’ activities, wherein they spend most of their time. It is also worth considering that statement number 5 (My peers and I try our best to get good grades) is described as “very high” (M=4.21) which means that students are influenced by their peers for better academic achievement. On the other hand, statement number 20 (I learn to skip classes because of my friends), a negative statement, is also described as “very high” which means that students are not in favor of the statement and that they are not skipping classes together with their peers.

According to Black (2002), peer groups provide a forum where teens construct and reconstruct their identities. Castro Giovanni (2002) stated that at no other stage of development is one’s sense of identity so unstable. A peer-labelling process may be contributing to the construction of positive identities for some adolescents but negative identities for others (Downs & Rose, 1991).

James Jaccard, professor of psychology at the University at Albany in New York, noted that young people might be influenced as much by what they think their peers are doing as by what they are really doing. A young person may think that everyone is smoking or everyone is sexually active and may therefore feel pressure to try those behaviors (cited in Fischhoff, Cromwell, & Kipke, 1999).

The result may also be congruent to the results of the study of Burns and Darling (2002) which states that self-Conscious worrying about how others will react to future actions is the most common way adolescents are influenced by their peers.

The subtler form of peer pressure is known as peer influence, and it involves changing one’s behavior to meet the perceived expectations of others (Burns & Darling, 2002).

Table 1. Extent of Peer Influence of the College Students

Items/Statement	Mean	Description
1. I spend much time with my peer group.*	2.53	Often
2. I am being bullied whenever I refuse to my peers.*	3.79	Sometimes
3. Studying with my peers enhances my academic achievement.	3.56	Very Often
4. I’m careless about my academic achievement because my peers are careless about theirs.*	3.29	Often
5. My peers and I try our best to get good grades.	4.21	Always
6. My peers motivate me to study hard and improve my academic performances.	4.03	Very Often
7. I prefer not to study just to hang out with my friends.*	3.96	Sometimes
8. I feel pressured to obey my peer’s decision.*	3.79	Sometimes

9. My peers and I spend most of our time talking about our education.	3.70	Very Often
10. It's pretty hard for my friends to get me to change my mind.	3.20	Often
11. My peer relation is more important to me than my academic performance.*	3.64	Sometimes
12. My peers and I work together on our school duties.	3.98	Very Often
13. My peers push me to skip classes.*	4.12	Sometimes
14. My friends persuade me to participate in our class.	3.81	Sometimes
15. I and my friends strive hard to get good grades.	4.17	Very Often
16. I learn to do prohibited acts because of my friends.*	3.54	Sometimes
17. My friends serves as a shoulder to cry on.	3.51	Very Often
18. I have the courage not to follow the rules and regulations of the school when I am with my friends.*	3.89	Sometimes
19. My peers always give me moral support.	3.92	Very Often
20. I learn to skip classes because of my friends.*	4.23	Never
Overall Mean	3.74	High

*negative statement

Legend:		Positive	Negative
4.20-5.00	Very High	Always	Never
3.40-4.19	High	Very Often	Sometimes
2.60-3.39	Moderate	Often	Often
1.80-2.59	Low	Sometimes	Very Often
1.00-1.79	Very low	Never	Always

2. Social Well-being of the College Students

Table 2 reflects the social well-being of the second-year college students at Passi City College. The result shows that the status of the social well-being of the students was described as “sociable” as reflected in the mean of 3.48. The data revealed that students are able to socialize and be comfortable to interact with other people, their peers. Furthermore, it could be noted that negative statements number 3 and 8 are both interpreted as “not sociable” and “less sociable” which means that students have many friends and that they are liked by their friends.

The result of this study is supported by the study of Wrightsman (1991) and Horney (1945) that says individual who illustrate social acceptance trust others, think that Others are capable of kindness, and

believe that people can be industrious, socially accepting people hold favorable views of human nature and feel comfortable with others.

Alvermann and Phelps (2005), Vacca and Mraz (2011) stated that one way for students to shoulder the responsibility for learning is for them to be the readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and thinkers in the classroom through active engagement in social interaction with others.

Routman (2005) also contends “students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved” (p. 2017). In short, social interaction is vital to the learning process.

Table 2. Social Well-Being of the College Students

Items/Statements	Mean	Description
1. I actively lead my group.	3.31	Often
2. I don't engage myself in different clubs and organization.*	3.64	Sometimes
3. I don't have many friends in school.*	4.64	Never
4. I gladly participate in different activities in our school.	3.37	Often
5. I feel that my classmate don't like me.*	3.92	Sometimes
6. I am sociable.	2.82	Often
7. I see myself as part of an organization in our school.	3.28	Often
8. I don't feel I belong to our school.*	4.09	Sometimes
9. I feel isolated with my classmate.*	3.68	Sometimes
10. I join in class discussion.	3.89	Very Often
11. It is possible for me to make good friends among my classmates.*	2.35	Sometimes
12. I go along with my friends in school just to make them happy.*	3.26	Often
13. I have enough support from my classmates.	3.17	Often
14. I feel like I'm an important person in our school.	3.07	Often
15. I like being surrounded with my friends.	3.62	Very Often
16. I feel that people are not trustworthy.*	3.75	Sometimes
17. I feel accepted by my fellow students.	3.53	Very Often

18. I don't like to be with other people.*	3.78	Sometimes
19. I often go out with my way to help another person.	3.20	Often
20. I do not have the courage to express my thoughts in the presence of others.*	3.34	Often
Overall Mean	3.48	Sociable

*negative statement

Legend:		Positive	Negative
4.20-5.00	Highly Sociable	Always	Never
3.40-4.19	Sociable	Very Ofen	Sometimes
2.60-3.39	Moderately Sociable	Often	Often
1.80-2.59	less Sociable	Sometimes	Very Often
1.00-1.79	Not Sociable	Never	Always

3. Mathematics Academic Achievement of the College Students

Table 3 reflects the mathematics academic achievement of the second-year college students during the academic year 2019-2020. Data show that majority of the students have “good” mathematics academic performance or 45.31% have grades which ranges from 86-88.

Furthermore, when the overall mean grade was computed, the result revealed a grade of 88.21 which is described as “good”. This indicates that the students were doing well in their class.

Table 3. Mathematics Academic Achievement of the College Students

Grade Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Description Rating
98-100	4	6.25	Excellent
92-94	3	4.69	Outstanding
89-91	17	26.56	Very Good
86-88	29	45.31	Good
83-85	8	12.5	Very Satisfactory
80-82	3	4.69	Satisfactory
	N=64	100.00	
	Group Mean	88.21	Good

Legend:

98-100	Excellent
95-97	Highly Outstanding
92-94	Outstanding
89-91	Very Good
86-88	Good
83-85	Very Satisfactory
80-82	Satisfactory
77-79	Fair

75-76

Passing

4. Relationship between the Extent of Peer Influence and Mathematics Academic Achievement of the Students

The relationship between the extent of peer influence and mathematics academic achievement of the college students at Passi City College is presented in table 4. It was determined using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

The result revealed that there is a negligible and not significant relationship found between the extent of peer influence and mathematics academic achievement of the students, $r(64) = .038, p = .765 > .05$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the extent of peer influence and mathematics academic achievement of the students was not rejected.

The result implies that students' mathematics academic achievement is not affected by their extent of peer influence, in which they are able to participate well in their class despite of peer pressures.

The result is supported by the study of Vaquera and Kao (2008) which states that stronger friendships may provide adolescents with an appropriate environment to develop in a healthy way and to achieve good academic results. Adolescents with reciprocal friendships mention high levels of feelings of belonging in school; at the same time, reciprocity and feelings of belonging have positive effects in academic results.

In contrast with the result, Ryan (2000) found that peer groups were influential regarding changes in students' intrinsic value for school (i.e., liking and enjoying) as well as achievement (i.e., report card grades). The peer group was not, however, influential regarding changes in students' utility value for school (i.e., importance and usefulness). It was found that associating with friends who have a positive affect toward school enhanced students' own satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative affect toward school decreased it. Landau (2002) stated that an adolescent's expectancy of success was the primary predictor of academic effort and grades. A sense of belonging and support of a peer group was also significantly associated with these outcomes.

Table 4. Relationship between the Extent of Peer Influence And Mathematics Academic Achievement of the College Students

Item Correlated	r	Sig. (2- tailed)	Interpretation
Peer Influence vs. Mathematics Academic Achievement	.038	.765 ^{ns}	negligible and not significant relationship

Legend

- ±0.00 to ±0.20 denotes negligible or no relationship
- ±0.21 to ±0.40 denotes low or slight relationship
- ±0.41 to ±0.70 denotes marked or moderate relationship
- ±0.71 to ±0.90 denotes high relationship
- ±0.91 to ±0.99 denotes very high relationship
- ±1.00 denotes perfect relationship

5. Relationship between the Extent of Peer Influence and Social Well-being of the Students

The extent of peer influence was correlated with social well-being of the students using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. It revealed a marked or moderate and highly significant relationship, $r(64)=.536, p=.001 < .05$. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the extent of peer influence and social well-being was rejected.

A literature that says adolescents with reciprocal friendships mention high levels of feelings of belonging in school (Vaquero & Kao, 2008).

On the other hand, having friends allows to share experiences and feelings and to learn how to solve conflicts. Not having friends, on the other hand, leads to social isolation and limited social contacts, as there are fewer opportunities to develop new relations and social interactional skills. Friendship is also positively associated to psychological well-being (Ueno, 2004), whilst a conflicting relation with peers is negatively associated with health (Laftman & Östberg, 2006).

The researchers found that peer behaviors are more likely to affect the adolescent than parental behaviors, whereas parental norms are more likely to affect the adolescent than peer norms. Parents have had a longer time to influence adolescents and retain a responsibility to represent the standards of the adult world. Peers, in contrast, may be shunned if they attempt to impose standards on their adolescent friends but are likely to be omnipresent as behavioral models within schools (Biddle, Bank & Marlin, 2001). It is unfortunate that many adolescents do not have parents who are actively involved in their lives, do not provide appropriate supervision, and are unable to clearly communicate their values. This puts adolescents in an even greater danger of giving in to negative peer pressure.

Table 5. Relationship between the extent of peer influence and social wellbeing of the college students

Items Correlated	R	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Peer Influence vs Social Well-being	.536	<.001**	Marked or moderate and Highly Significant

**highly significant

Legend

- ±0.00 to ±0.20 denotes negligible or no relationship
- ±0.21 to ±0.40 denotes low or slight relationship
- ±0.41 to ±0.70 denotes marked or moderate relationship
- ±0.71 to ±0.90 denotes high relationship
- ±0.91 to ±0.99 denotes very high relationship
- 1.0 denotes perfect relationship

Conclusions:

In view of the results and findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents are highly influenced by their peers in school.
2. The college students are sociable.
3. The respondents have performed well in their academics.

4. The respondents' mathematics academic achievement is not affected despite of high peer pressures and influences.
5. Students' social well-being is significantly affected by the influence of their peers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researchers arrived at the following recommendations:

1. Students are encouraged to maintain a harmonious relationship with their peers since it helps them to have the sense of belongingness and worth.
2. Students' mathematics academic achievement is not directly influenced by their peer engagement; they are advised to be wise in choosing the group they are to get along with. Students may consider the benefits that they can get from joining in a particular peer group in order to avoid the negative impacts of peer and social interaction.
3. The school should implement symposium program about socialization and social interaction and peer influence in order to guide the students on purposeful peer engagement.
4. Students should continue to be sociable in order for them to gain confidence and interest in joining and participating in different school activities.
5. Parents should continually encourage their children to prioritize their academic life than peer interaction.
6. Parents should continually show their love and support to their children in both social and academic life.
7. Teacher should continue to develop friendly environment inside the classroom.

References:

1. Alderman, K. (2000). *School groups and peer motivation*. Retrieved January 24, 2004, from: [http://www3.uakron.edu/education/safe schools/peer/peer.html](http://www3.uakron.edu/education/safe%20schools/peer/peer.html)
2. Biddle, B.J., Bank, B.J., & Marlin, M.M. (1980). Parental and peer influence on adolescents. *Social Forces*, 58, 1057-1079.
3. Black, S. (2002). When students push past peer influence. *The Education Digest*, 68, 31-36
4. Brown, B.B., Mounts, N., Lamborn, S.D., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting practices and peer group affiliation in adolescence. *Child Development*, 64, 467-482.
5. Burns, A., & Darling, N. (2002). Peer pressure is not peer influence. *The Education Digest*, 68, 4-6.
6. Castrogiovanni, D. (2002). *Adolescence: Peer groups*. January 24, 2004, from: <http://inside.bard.edu/academic/specialproj/darling/adolesce.htm>
7. Cohen, J.M. (1977). *Sources of peer group homogeneity of Education*, 50, 227-241.
8. Cohen, J.M. (1983). Peer influence on college aspirations with initial aspirations controlled. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 728-734.
9. Downs, W.R., & Rose, S.R. (1991). *The relationship of adolescent peer groups to the incidence of psychosocial problems*. *Adolescence*, 26, 473-493.
10. Fischhoff, B., Cromwell, N.A., & Kipke, M. (Eds.) (1999). *Adolescent decision making: Implications for prevention programs*. Retrieved January 24, 2004, from: <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/adolescent99>
11. Howard, N.M. (2004). *Peer Influence in Relation to Academic Achievement and Socialization among Adolescents*. Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu>

12. Ide, K., Parkerson, J., Haertel, G.D., & Walberg, H.J. (1981). Peer group influences on Educational outcomes: A quantitative synthesis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73, 472-484.
13. Keyes, C.L.M. (1998) *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61 (2), 121-140. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable>
14. Laftman S. B, Östberg V. The pros and cons of social relations: An analysis of adolescents' health complaints. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2006; 63:611–623.
[PubMed] retrieved October 26, 2018
15. Landau, A. (2002). *Peer groups and educational outcomes*. Retrieved January 24, 2004, from: <http://inside.bard.edu/academic/specialproj/darling/bullying/group2/alison.html>
16. Lashbrook, J.T. (2000). Fitting in: Exploring the emotional dimension of adolescent peer pressure. *Adolescence*, 35, 747-758.
17. Lingren, H.G. (1995). *Adolescence and peer pressure*. Retrieved January 24, 2004, from: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/family/nf211.htm>
18. Ryan, A.M. (2000). Peer groups as a context for the socialization of adolescents' motivation, engagement, and achievement in school. *Educational Psychologist*, 35, 101-112.
19. Ungar, M.T. (2000). The myth of peer pressure. *Adolescence*, 35, 167-180.
20. Zeijl, E., te Poel, Y., du Bois-Reymond, M., Ravesloot, J., & Meulman, J.J. (2000). The of parents and peers in the leisure activities of young adolescents. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32, 281-303.
21. Academic Achievement. (2019). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>
22. Extent. (2019). In *Google Dictionary*. Retrieved at google.com
23. Influence. (2019). In *Oxford Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>
24. Peer. (1828). In *Merriam Webster*. Retrieved from Merriam Webster Dictionary
Relation. (2019). In *Oxford Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>