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**PEER PRESSURE AS CORRELATE OF SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CLASS ATTENDANCE OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN MAKURDI AND GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS, BENUE STATE**

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**Citation:** Taavaan, M. P., Obida, J. A., & Ikwulono, M. A. (2024). Peer pressure as correlate of social interaction and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas, Benue State. *Journal of Science, Technology, and Education (JSTE)*; [www.nsjkste.com/](http://www.nsjkste.com/) 7(8), 91-101

### **Abstract**

This study investigated peer pressure as correlate of social interaction and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas, Benue State Nigeria. To guide the study, two research questions and hypotheses were raised and formulated respectively. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study and multistage sampling techniques was used to select the 368 respondents out of the total population of 1778 students from the 29 public secondary schools in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State. A self-structured questionnaire titled: “Student Academic performance questionnaire (SAPQ)” and an adopted Peer Pressure Inventory titled: “Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ) were used to elicit information from the respondents. The content and face validity of the instrument were done by 3 experts in the Faculty of Education, Benue State University Makurdi. To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability coefficients of SAPQ and PPQ and the coefficients obtained were 0.88 and 0.78 respectively. Pearson Product Moment

Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and tested hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between Peer Pressure and Students’ Social Interaction, there is a negative correlation between Peer Pressure and Students’ Class Attendance of students in Makurdi and Guma LGAs of Benue State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that educational psychologist, counselors and teachers in secondary schools should supervise, educate and monitor students through counseling on how to relate with peers in relation to their social interaction and class attendance.

**Keywords:** Peer pressure, Correlates, Social interaction, class attendance, adolescents.

### **Introduction**

Education is undoubtedly the bedrock of human and national development. A nation’s position in today’s highly competitive global economy is directly dependent on the quality of knowledge imparted to its citizens by its

education system (Adamu, 2017). Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. It is an activity as well as a process that modifies behaviours of a person from instinctive to refined behaviour. Educational activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives. In the formal school setting, the extent to which these objectives have been achieved is reflected in students' academic performance (Allen, 2011).

The Nigerian educational system is increasingly challenged with many complex problems. There is a general outcry that the standard of education is falling and morals flagging. The decline in education is also characterized by the mass failure in the internal and external examinations which has become a great concern to various stakeholders in the educational sector and the society at large. This challenge can also be narrowed down to Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State, as the students in these areas are also sharing in this national challenge in the decline in education. Despite the impressive performance by students in standardized examinations notwithstanding, teachers, parents and other stakeholders continue to express concern on students' social interaction and class attendance, more to the point, worries

have been expressed over the years by stakeholders in education on the ignoble role of so called miracle centers in performance in their examinations (Personal Communication, 2022)..

Social interaction is an important factor that relates to the academic performance of students. The role of social interactions in modifying individual behavior is central to many academic fields. In education, it is essential to note that “good” peers can potentially improve students' academic performance and career aspirations. There is evidence that good peers may be important in positively relating to students' performance (Telhaj, 2018). Social interaction plays an important role in learning. Interacting with people has proven to be effective both positively and negatively in assisting the learners to organize their thoughts, reflect on their understanding and find gaps in their reasoning. Under the umbrella of social interaction and learning, variants can range from peer learning, reciprocal teaching, and learning by teaching, learning by observation, learning by doing, and self – other monitoring. Social interaction with people can be effective in guiding the students to maintain their thoughts, provide a reflection on their understanding, and find gaps in their studies. Social interaction has both positive and

negative relationship with student's peer relationship (personal opinion). The relationship that emerges from the process of social interaction produces two patterns namely, associative and dissociative. Good interactions with peers in the classroom can help the students to identify their own learning methods, guide them to communicate easily, give them an exposure to learning and enhance their academic performance, negative interactions in the other hand can encourage low academic performance of students. In the study of Gremmen, Berg, Steglich, Veenstra, and Dijkstra, (2018), a longitudinal social network analysis (RSiena) showed that student's academic engagement and performance improves when their friends score better and vice versa, regardless of their physical position in the classroom. Students learn more when they are able to interact with one another and can be actively involved, in short, social interaction is vital to the learning process.

Class attendance means the physical presence of a child in school attendance scheduled class or during such hours and on such days as determined by the school or during school hour schedule by the school for the student. Being present in school is important in ensuring that the students have a good foundation for learning. It should be noted that it is not

uncommon for students to find school activities stressful and many focus on expectations of failure and the undesirable consequences of personal inadequacy which may lead to poor class attendance (Bruce, 2013). High class attendance can be seen as a contributor to academic performance, while low class attendance is also seen as a contributor to low academic performance as well as diminished esteem and life satisfaction. Students who do not attend school regularly find it difficult to perform well in school while those who records high attendance perform well in school. Several previous studies have shown that class attendance is an important predictor of academic performance. Peer relationship can also have both positive and negative relationship with class attendance of students and their academic performance. When students are involved with positive peer group who attend classes regularly, the tendency for such a student to record high attendance in class is sure. While those who are involved with negative peer group that skip classes regularly have the high tendency to have low class attendance.

Peers are people with similar interest, age group, background, and social status from one's peer group. The term peer group refers to a group of individuals or companies that share similar characteristics with one another. These

characteristics may be age, education, ethnic background, size, industry, or sector. This peer group is both social and primary group of like-minded and aesthetics group. The student's behavioural change happens in the school wherein peers have a vital role in performing such a change. Student-peer relationship has been shown to be significantly associated with student academic performance (Vignery & Laurier, 2020). For example, using both horizontal and longitudinal analysis, Espelage (2013) showed that bullying and peer victimization were related to low academic performance, The selection effect (i.e., students for groups of friends that share the same levels of academic performance) and socialization process. (i.e., peer performance is significantly associated with future student performance), which were reported by Vignery and Laurier (2020), could be used to understand the link between student academic performance and peer relationships. Peers play an increasing role in early age to teenage. Adolescents have healthy relationship with their peers and give importance to them compared to other age groups and their trust. The peer group is the first social group outside the home in which the child attempts to gain acceptance and recognition. Peer group has an important relationship throughout one's life and more critical during the developmental years of

childhood and adolescence. Adolescents always emulate whatever form of behavior their peers' exhibit, particularly that which interest them (Arief, 2011).

The child gets into social groups of like minds and interest; As a result, various attitudes, skills and knowledge are acquired through role-play. Adolescents have higher tendency to experience peer pressure in school. peer pressure is often seen during the adolescent stage of a teenager because they often seek comfort among their peers and tend to do what their peers do without knowing if it is good or bad for them. Adolescent is a period of an individual that is transitory when a child reaches the point in changing its childhood to adulthood (Adeniyi & Kolawole, 2015). It is in this regard that the researcher seeks to investigate the relationship between peer pressure and social interaction and class attendance of in-school adolescent in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between peer pressure, social interaction and class attendance of in-school adolescents' in Makurdi and Guma Education Zone, Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas.
2. ascertain the relationship between peer pressure and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

- 1 What is the relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-school adolescents’ in Makurdi and Guma LGA in Benue State?
3. What is the relationship between peer pressure and class attendances of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma LGA in Benue State?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-school adolescents’ in Makurdi and Guma LGA in Benue State.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma LGA in Benue State.

**Methodology**

The study adopted the correlational survey design. Usually, such study indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between two variables. The area of the study is Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of 1778 students from all the 29 grant-aided secondary schools in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State. The sample size of study is 368 students selected from 8 schools, four from each local government area from the population of 1778. The instrument that was used to generate data for the study were a self-structured questionnaire titled “Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ)” and an adopted Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ) by Brown (2019).

The instruments were subjected to scrutiny by three experts, two from Guidance and Counselling and one from Measurement and Evaluation all in Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. The reliability of the instrument was established through

Cronbach Alpha method and the test yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.78 indicating that the instrument are reliable. The data was collected by direct administration of copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of 4 research assistants. The data generated were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was used to answer all the research questions. The direction and magnitude of the Pearson Product

Moment Correlations Coefficient was interpreted based on the guideline provided by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010). The research hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as a statistical tool that measures the strength of the linear relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable.

**Results**

The following results were obtained in the course of this research.

**Research Question One**

There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma LGA in Benue State.

**Table 1: Correlation Coefficient on the Relationship between Peer Pressure and Social Interaction**

		Peer Pressure	Social Interaction
Peer Pressure	Pearson Correlation	1	.781
	N	368	368
Social Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.781	1
	N	368	368

Table 1 shows that there was a strong positive relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of students (r = .781, n = 368). This

result implies that strong level of peer pressure is correlated with strong level of students' social interaction.

**Hypothesis One:** Peer pressure has no significant relationship with social interaction of in-school adolescents' in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Area in Benue State.

**Table 2: t-test for Significant Relationship between Peer Pressure and Social Interaction**

Variable	No	r	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Peer Pressure	368				
		0.781	23.92	3.29	Reject
Social interaction	368				

Table 2 t-test for Significant Relationship between Peer Pressure and Social Interaction. Since the t-cal (23.92) is greater than the t-crit (3.29), the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-

school adolescents' in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas in Benue State is rejected. This further means that there is a significant positive relationship between peer pressure and social interaction.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between Peer Pressure and class attendance of in-school adolescents' in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Area in Benue State?

**Table 3: Correlation Coefficient on the Relationship between Peer Pressure and Class Attendance**

		Peer Pressure	Class Attendance
Peer Pressure	Pearson Correlation	1	-.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.089
	N	368	368
Class Attendance	Pearson Correlation	-.789	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	
	N	368	368

Table 3 shows there was a strong negative correlation between peer pressure and class attendance of students ( $r = -.789$ ,  $n = 368$ ). This result means that high level of peer pressure is not associated with high level of students' class attendance

**Hypothesis Two:** Peer pressure has no significant relationship with class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Area in Benue State.

**Table 4: t-test for Significant Relationship between Peer Pressure and Class Attendance**

Variable	No	r	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Peer Pressure	368	0.789	24.56	3.29	Reject
Social Interaction	368				

Table 4 t-test for Significant Relationship between Peer Pressure and Class Attendance. Since the t-cal (24.56) is greater than the t-crit, the hypothesis is therefore rejected, which implies that, there is a significant relationship between poor pressure and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State is not rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

From this study, the first finding revealed that there was a significant relationship between peer pressure and social interaction. The result of the first finding further revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between peer pressure and social interaction. This implies that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and social interaction of in-school adolescents in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas of Benue State. The findings disagreed with those of Adeniyi and Kolawole (2015), who found out that peer pressure, has no significant impact on adolescents’ social behaviours. But the finding agrees with those of Moldes, Biton, Gonzaga, and Movena (2019) who revealed that there was a correlation between perceived level of peer pressure in terms of social interactions, curiosity, and cultural orientation and their academic performance. It is the researcher’s

contention that the finding of the present study may be so as students who are engaged with peers, may learn from each other through group reading and assignment.

Also, the finding revealed that there was no significant relationship between peer pressure and class attendances, and result from the second finding revealed that there was a strong negative relationship between peer pressure and class attendance. This implies that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurd and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State. This finding is not in line with Babatunde (2019) whose review showed a positive significant relationship between peer influence, absenteeism and students achievement. In the same vein, Augustine and Lawrence (2017) found that there is no significant relationship peer victimization and school attendance. Based on the finding, the researcher asserts that a learner who is strongly attached to peers may

have the tendency to skip classes because he or she is busy involving in the activities more interesting to them than attending classes.

### **Conclusion**

This study established that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and students' social interaction and class attendance of in-school adolescents in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. This is based on the fact that there is a significant negative relationship between peer pressure and students' social interaction and class attendance.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational psychologist, counselors and teachers in secondary schools should educate students through counseling on the importance and benefits of involving with positive peer group as regards their social interaction.

2. Students should be sensitized through seminars and workshops on effects of bad friends so as to improve their class attendance.

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