



Original Article

## Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.3.950>

Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

10 November 2022

**Keywords:**

Peer,  
Pupils,  
Academic  
Performance,  
Public Primary  
Schools.

The study determined the influence of peer factors on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County. The research was a descriptive survey design. The study targeted 100 public primary schools with target respondents 500 teachers from these 100 public primary schools. The study utilised a simple random sampling technique for teachers while head teachers and civil society organisations stratified sampling was used. A structured questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. Data was analysed using SPSS version 23 and results were expressed by descriptive statistical data, which included mean and standard deviation. In addition, a correlation analysis was computed to check on the association between peer factors and academic performance. The study found that there was a significant correlation between peer pressure and parental financial status on the academic performance of public in public primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County with  $p = 0.000$ . When a low-performing student interacts with a high-performing peer, their performance improves significantly. The study recommends that the ministry of education should ensure that trained counsellors are stationed in all schools and institutions to provide counselling services to schools.

### APA CITATION

Jeptoo, M. & Edabu, P. (2022). Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(3), 320-327. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.3.950>.

### CHICAGO CITATION

Jeptoo, Milka and Paul Edabu 2022. "Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 5 (3), 320-327. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.3.950>

#### HARVARD CITATION

Jeptoo, M. & Edabu, P. (2022) "Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(3), pp. 320-327. doi: 10.37284/eajes.5.3.950.

#### IEEE CITATION

M. Jeptoo, & P. Edabu. "Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya", *EAJES*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 320-327, Nov. 2022.

#### MLA CITATION

Jeptoo, Milka & Paul Edabu. "Influence of Peer Factor on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 3, Nov. 2022, pp. 320-327, doi:10.37284/eajes.5.3.950

## INTRODUCTION

Peer effects in education have been studied since the 1960s when the famous Coleman Report (1966) was published, although their significance is still debated. However, some bold statements have been made about the effectiveness of peers in child development (Rich, 1999). The results of several research have been inconsistent, with strong, weak, or non-existent impacts seen across a wide variety of outcomes (Misanya, 2013; Gross-Manos, 2014). In recent years, the evaluation of peer impacts at school has gained a lot of attention (Moffit, 2001). Angrist and Lang (2004) studied peer influences through racial integration; Hoxby (2000) studied gender peer influences; Gould et al. (2009) studied the impact of immigrants on native students. Students live in dynamic surroundings such as families, schools, churches, and other cultural communities (Swearer, 2011). Teenagers frequently create groups at school, which are among the most powerful social forces in their lives, influencing anything from trivial decisions about dress, hairstyle, music, and entertainment to more major decisions about short and long-term scholastic ambitions (Misanya, 2013). This paper focuses on peer influence on the academic performance of schools in Tindiret Sub County.

National examinations in Kenya act as a gauge of accomplishment at the culmination of the primary educational cycle. The national exam, basic, is usually done at the termination of course eight and is cast-off to measure the effectiveness of learning comparatively between national and County levels.

However, the national performance of students in KCPE is below fifty% (average across the country). For instance, the mean national performance between 2006 and 2011 was 49.17% with the highest period of performance being reported in 2008 with a mean of 49.66% (Wanjiru & Orodho, 2014). The educational performance in KCPE in Tindiret Constituency has been low every year, with the educational office analysing the results, discussing them with school heads, and coming up with strategies for improving performance. However, a detailed study on the possible factors contributing to this performance such as socioeconomic factors is yet to be conducted in the region. As a result, it makes it necessary to explore the possible elements which underwrite recurring underprivileged educational routines in the region to inform the need for policy changes and enhanced performance. The parameter to measure academic achievement range and are not limited to motivation, intellectual capacity, skills, personality, self-esteem, study habits and the relationship between teachers and students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to research, adolescents are impacted by what their peers do, and this influences the kind of peer groups they join; these networks are based on shared interests (Sarita, 2015). According to Olalekan (2016), students' learning is influenced by peer groups to which they belong since they are faced with the desire to belong and be accepted by members. Other studies have found that students who are in the middle of their group are more likely

to share their actual feelings because they feel more at ease in the company of their peers (Olalekan, 2016). Furthermore, Olalekan (2016) asserted that the most significant influence on student learning behaviour is not necessarily the teacher but rather peer students. Another study, conducted by Taiwo (2004) as cited by Monyamane and Keletsositse (2021) found that within peer group dynamics, each youngster seeks to follow the ethics of the group to which they belong. International boarding schools have well-established institutional rules and principles. Ryan (2001), for example, found that peer groups have a significant impact on the academic attainment, views, and behaviours of peers. Similarly, Parker and Asher (1993) claimed that attitudes and the types of peer groups that people willingly join or are compelled to join influence how people interact with each other in school.

Ryan (2001) discovered that students who kept friendships with high-achieving friends had stronger academic progress over time than students who maintained friendships with lower-achieving peers. Similarly, learners are more likely to enhance their academic performance when they associate with peers who have positive attitudes toward their studies. Furthermore, in boarding schools, associating with highly driven peers may operate as a protective factor, preventing disorderly behaviour in the school environment, particularly among male peer groups. According to Filade et al. (2019), the nature of being able to fit in and be accepted in peer-group harbour positive ramifications, especially academically, if students are accepted into a peer which is better placed academically, leading to improved performance. It has been discovered that children learn more quickly when they are alongside their peers. When he makes a mistake, he prefers to be corrected by a classmate rather than the teacher. The activities that are carried out in order to gain academic achievement in set objectives. The magnitude through which set goals are achieved is highly reliable on peer interactions which in

essence, may have an influence on students' academic achievement (Gross-Manos, 2014). Peer groups play a vital role in children's emotional, psychological, social, and intellectual development. In a study done by Steinberg and Monahan (2007), peer pressure among children commences in the childhood stage and becomes pronounced at the adolescent stage. It is imperative therefore that in order to motivate students to be high achievers academically, it is vital to recognise the peer groups and impediment thereon thus providing the right remedy that enhance the efficiency and organisation of school systems.

Many students who are in the adolescent stage have an opportunity of creating and developing friendships. Friendship has been found to be the vehicle that propels interpersonal relationships in the peer cycle. It has been found to be highly connected to psychological growth and maturity because it allows social compassion that enhances the advancement of self-evaluation (Lavvy & Schlosser, 2007). The preceding remark strongly shows that peer group has an unparalleled impact on practically every aspect of teenage development. Such an effect can be seen in young people's social and emotional life, which does not stop there; it can also be shown in their attitudes toward educational activities, and careful analysis of these factors has demonstrated that they have an impact on students' academic achievement. Castrogiovanni (2002), on the other hand, described a peer group as a small group of friends of comparable ages who share similar interests. Peer group, when it falls in acceptable levels, is healthy because it builds maturity in how one learns to negotiate and develop coping skills to challenges that confront one in the social domain. Peer group bear influence it; for instance, if one has a connection with ambitious people who work hard to achieve good academic results, one would feel compelled to follow the same route in order to fit into the standards of the group. Conversely, negative influence by peers could be blamed for students' low academic

achievement; the rationale is simple: they spend a significant amount of time on extracurricular activities. Academic priorities are frequently overlooked, and academic achievement suffers as a result.

Academic achievement is considered the ability to excel academically in all disciplines. According to Steimberg (2011), academic performance encompasses the student's ability to excel in academic disciplines and extends to the development of multifaceted human dimensions which include emotional, psychological, social, and intellectual development. It can also be considered as an ability for a student to go through education and complete it. There is a significant correlation between peer group connection and the academic performance of students. The relationships can be beneficial or harmful depending on the type of peer group that students align to. When peer groups are of students with dismal education achievement, the academic achievement downs and vice versa (Lashbrook, 2000). Peer group influence is much more pronounced during adolescents and that is where most studies have been carried out. During the adolescent period, peer pressure shoots and most peers connect with their peers more than adults and prioritise peer accepted code of conduct (Brown & Larson, 2009). This is a level where connection drive appears to be very well sustained among peers.

Furthermore, various developmental research on adolescents has found that, in comparison to children and adults, they are sensitive to various social stimuli, such as facial expressions and social feedback and have a high response rate to them (Burnett et al., 2011). Hypersensitive evidence to social responsibility, on the other hand, infers that adolescents are much aligned to positive or negative exposure to peer response when it comes to making decisions which becomes a grounding factor to an exaggerated decision-making approach because of the pressure from the peers. Students who join the university at the undergraduate level are more likely

to engage in risky behaviours such as drug abuse and immoral sexual behaviours, crime, and violence due to peer influence and pressure (Steinberg, 2008). In essence, they are in the same resonance as adults when it comes to cognitive skills, knowledge, and values in taking risks (Bankole & Ogunakin, 2015).

According to Olalekan (2016), peer pressure has a major influence on students' academic performance. This is evidenced in children's life and learning cycles, as seen with children becoming more relaxed and fitting in when with their peers. A child who is gifted academically but surrounded by students who are academically not performers will be affected negatively and will start to perform dimly. A study-oriented peer group, on the other hand, would have a beneficial influence on a sluggish member and promote his or her enthusiasm for studying. According to Olalekan (2016), the nature of a peer group influences its impact on a member's motivation and achievements. He goes on to say that one organisation can have a detrimental impact on its members while the other might have a beneficial impact. Nonfiction designates that peers who are interested in academic issues are more likely to associate with students who have the same interest. They often read unruffled, involvement progression tackles, then establishment (Misanya, 2013).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A mixed methodology approach was employed. The study explored descriptive survey design. This was because the clarification and interpretation of data are clearly explained to enable the researcher to gather information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). This research was undertaken in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County with the teachers in primary schools in Kenya. Teachers of all public primary schools were involved. A total of 100 primary schools and 500 teachers were targeted in the study. The respondents were divided into three educational zones by the researcher. Simple random and

stratified sampling procedures for identifying administrative units were investigated by the researcher. Following that, teachers were chosen from three administrative units using a basic random procedure. Complete and comprehensive questionnaires were sorted and assigned codes for easy extraction of data. After sorting and verifying the completeness and comprehensive nature of the duly filled instrument of data collection, the study utilised descriptive statistics. Expressed in terms of %ages and frequencies, mean and standard deviation in order to measure all quantitative

**Table 1: Gender of the Respondents**

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	48.2
	Female	48	51.8
	Total	93	100
Age	Below 30 years	27	28.8
	30-40 years	23	25.2
	41-50 years	24	25.9
	50 years	19	20.1
	Total	93	100

**Source:** Researcher (2020)

According to *Table 1*, 48.2% were male teachers, and 51.8% were female. This infers that the study targeted both genders in the study and that information given by both genders was equally considered in the study. The researcher wanted to figure out how old the respondents were. *Table 1* shows the findings of the investigation. *Table 1* shows that 28.8% of respondents were under the age of 30, 25.2% were between the ages of 30 and 40, 25.9% were between the ages of 41 and 50, and 20.1% were over the age of 50. This means that the majority of the respondents were adults between the ages of 18 and 25, implying that the majority of

variables. Correlation analysis was also computed to check on the direction of the relationship between peer factors and the academic performance of pupils.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Description of Respondents

The researcher sought to determine the gender distribution of the respondents. The findings are depicted in *Table 1*

teachers are experienced. This indicates that the researcher was able to obtain data from a variety of age groups that reflected the perspectives of all age groups.

### Impact of Peer Variables on Academic Performance

The study looked into the impact of peer variables on academic performance in public primary schools in Nandi County's Tinderet Sub-County. *Table 1* summarises the findings of the investigation.

**Table 2: Teachers' response to peer factors on pupils' academic performance**

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std Dev
My pupils enjoy learning with together	F 5 % 5	5 5	8 8.6	36 39	39 42.4	93 100	3.99 79.8	-0.971
My pupils understand each other problems in school	F 5 % 5	4 4.3	11 12.2	17 18.1	56 60.4	93 100	2.81 56.2	-0.439
My pupils' grades have increased due to learning in groups with their friends	F 0 % 0	4 4.3	11 12.2	22 23.1	56 60.4	93 100	2.97 59.4	-0.593
My pupils encourage each other to work together	F 5 % 5	0 0	0 0	56 60.5	32 34.5	93 100	2.80 56.0	-0.167
My pupils' grades encourage them to study hard and pass	F 5 % 5	5 5	8 8.6	36 39	39 42.4	93 100	2.88 57.6	-0.123

The standard deviation results demonstrate that the data was within a significant range of -2 to +2, indicating that the data was a normal unilabiate distribution. According to the findings of the study, 79.8% ( $M = 3.99$ ) of the respondents agreed on the view that their pupils enjoyed learning together, 56.2% ( $M = 2.81$ ) were of the view that their pupils in the class understand their individual colleagues' problems in school, 59.4% ( $M = 2.97$ ) were of the view that their pupils' grades increased due to learning in groups with their friends, 56.0% ( $M = 2.80$ ) were of the view that in their classes friends encourage one another to work together, 57.6% ( $M = 2.88$ ) were of the view that their pupils' grades encourage them to study hard and pass. According to the findings of the survey, the majority of respondents perceive that most pupils in their

classrooms enjoy learning with together as peers as opposed to individual learning. This means that when a low-performing student interacts with a high-performing peer, his or her performance increases dramatically. Within the school setting, peer group impact has always been deemed less essential in affecting academic success and is frequently overlooked by teachers, but lower grade examination performance was better than upper grade.

### Correlational Analysis

The study objective was to establish the link between peer factors on students' academic achievement.

**Table 3: Correlations**

	Peer factors	Pupils' academic performance
Peer factors	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1
Pupils' academic performance	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 0.000 93

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

There existed a substantial relationship between peer variables on students' academic achievement ( $r = 0.579$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that increase in peer association by pupils in school affects their academic performance and vice versa is true.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of the survey, the majority of respondents believe their co-workers enjoy learning with them. Peer groups have a substantial impact on a student's academic achievement. As a result, school administrators and parents/guardians have a role to play in monitoring the types of peers their students and wards interact with both in and out of the classroom. The government and the ministry of education should ensure that trained counsellors are stationed in all schools and institutions to give preventive counselling and adjust the actions of students who have been negatively influenced by their classmates.

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