

**PEER GROUP INFLUENCE AND ATTITUDE DEVELOPMENT AMONG NIGERIAN
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF ILORIN METROPOLIS**

BY

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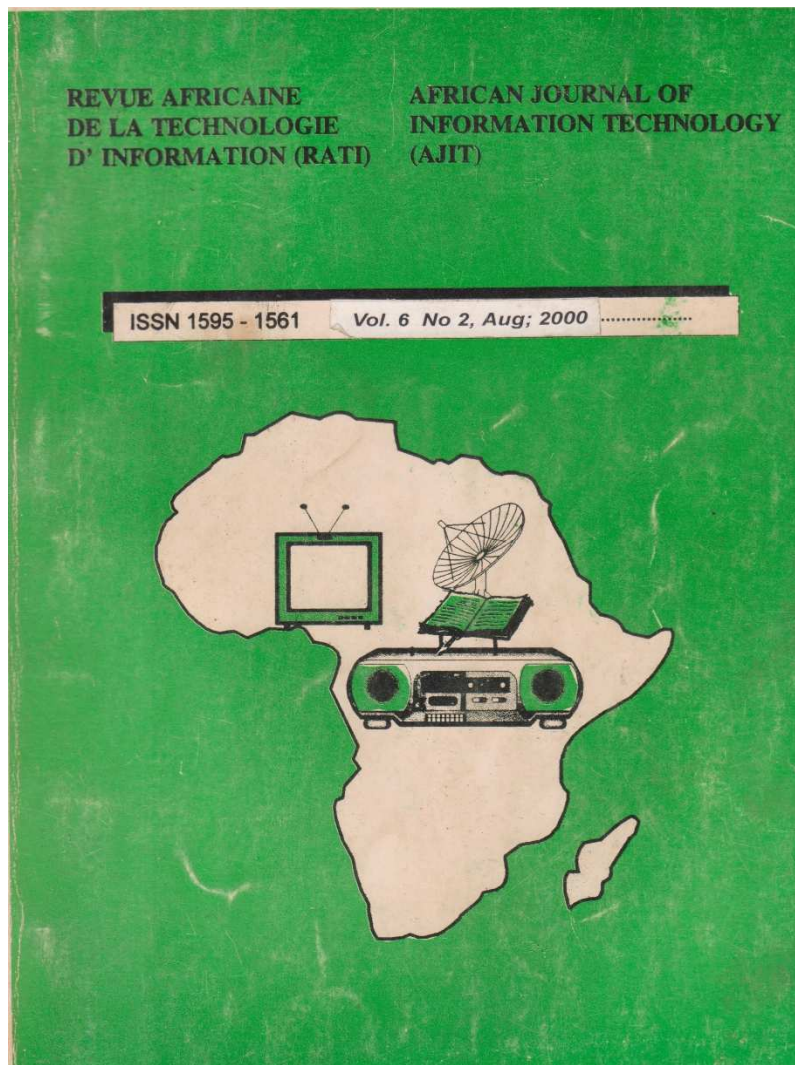
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Abstract

This study investigated peer group influence and attitude development. The sample used for the study consisted of one hundred and thirty-four students selected from four randomly selected private secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. Questionnaire designed by the researcher was the instrument used for collection of data. Frequency count of the responses and percentage was used to analyse the result. The findings revealed that the type of school attended is perceived as the greatest factor which influences attitude development. It has recommended that schools should lay down adequate rules which must be a-'Dreed so as to breed academically disciplined children.

Introduction

Peer group influence consists of cluster of associates who know each other and serve as a source of reference or compassion for one another. Bakare ' 236) explains that there are some attributes characteristics found amongst peers. These are:

1. Establishing supportive setting that permits adolescents to increase anatomy from parents and older siblings
2. Offering avenue for restatement of one's own cultural ways.

In any social group, peers are usually observed and the influences of these peers have a great deal on attitude development. This is why Patterson (1998) Trained that children influence each other a great deal through their actions.

Also, Bricker (1998) explained that even at the nursery school level, peer interaction affects an amount of aggression that children direct towards each other. Many studies have revealed that peer groups play significant role in the educational attainment of a pupil. Idowu (1991) in his research on peer groups in secondary school revealed that most of the bad attitudes such as smoking, use of drug and hooliganism are seen as characteristics that toughen the individual. Apparently, students tend to guard these "bad attitudes" jealously. Thus, the peer group usually significantly affects the attitudinal development of a child. Almost every teacher is involved in one way or the other in moulding pupils, which are placed in their custody. It has been well documented that peer relationships are a central component of adolescent development. For the majority of children, adolescence marks a time of increased orientation towards peers and peer - related activities, with adolescents spending more than fifty percent of their working hours with friends. The atmosphere or condition of relationships which exists in the peer group facilitates member's intellectual development. That is, they are opportuned to learn from their interaction with others. One of the characteristics of children is that they are anxious to know or learn Unfortunately, most of the questions they ask in the home are not answered by parents; especially when it's got to do with sex or some adult roles. But when he is in the peer group, he asks his question freely and members who have the answer give him freely. By so doing, the peer group reinforces the intellectual development of its members. According to Bamisaiye (1991), peer group with positive influence act as support for one another in their academic pursuit.

Coleman (1961) in his studies investigated the workings of peer groups in eight large high schools and concluded that the dominant values and behaviour were set by the leading crowd in the group. In other words, if the sole interest of the group is pro - academic, the members would do well in their academic work but if the sole interest of the group is anti -

academic, then members' academic performance would be poor.

Hence, the study attempted to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the factors that influence attitudinal development amongst secondary school students?
2. Does peer group significantly affect the attitudinal development of secondary school students?
3. Does peer group influence academic performance in the school?

Research method Sample

Four private secondary schools within Morin metropolis were randomly selected for the study. In each of the secondary, schools, samples were drawn from the SS 3 students who were stratified according to their-sex before they were randomly selected. Thus, the two sexes were adequately represented in the sample as follows:

SCHOOLS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
SCHOOL A	20	10	30
SCHOOL B	25	15	40
SCHOOL C	18	12	30
SCHOOL D	20	14	34

In all, a total of one hundred and thirty-four students participated in the study.

Instrument

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of ten items which sought the opinions of respondents on what they perceive as factors influencing attitudinal development amongst students.

Both the face and content validity of the-instrument were ascertained by the use test - retest method of reliability. The co-efficient of reliability was 0.76. This *value* was considered high enough for the use of the instrument.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Respondents opinion on factors influencing attitudinal development

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	N %	N %	N %	N %
1. Type of school attended.	109 (81.3)	10 (7.5)	10 (7.5)	5 (3.7)
2. Uncaring attitude of the parent.	80 (59.7)	10 (7.5)	35 (26.1)	9 (6.7)
3. Uncaring attitude of the school authority.	55 (41.0)	15 (11.2)	42 (31.3)	22 (16.4)
4. Family background.	79 (59.0)	12 (9.0)	23 (17.2)	20 (14.8)
5. Socio Economic status of the parents	50 (37.3)	25 (18.7)	52 (38.8)	7 (5.2)

From table 1 above, it was revealed that about 129 (87%) of the respondents indicated that the type of school attended is a major factor influencing attitude development. This was followed by the family background with 90 (68%), socio-economic status of parents 75 (56%) and the least being uncaring attitude of parents with 70 (52%)

Table 2 : Respondents opinion on factor causing peer group influence

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	N %	N %	N %	N %
1. Lack of drugs among adolescents is as a result of peer group influence	108 (80.6)	15 (11.2)	6 (4.5)	5 (3.7)
2. Lack of encouragement from parents make students turn to their peers.	80 (59.7)	40 (29.9)	8 (6.0)	6 (4.4)
3. Lack of responsibility encourages students to join bad gang.	49 (36.3)	30 (22.4)	42 (31.3)	13 (9.7)
4. Lack of counseling in school encourages peer influence.	57 (42.5)	31 (23.1)	23 (17.2)	23 (17.2)
5. Peer group encourages study habit amongst students	40 (29.8)	28 (20.9)	38 (28.4)	28 (20.9)

Result in Table 2 revealed that 123 (91%) of the respondents indicated that peer group influence encourages adolescents to use drugs while 120 (89%) indicated that lack of encouragement from parents make students turn to peers. Furthermore, the study revealed that opinions were divided as those that agreed that peer group encourages study habit.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that some factors influence attitudinal development, factors include type of school attended and the uncaring attitude of parent? The type of school attended was seen as the most prominent factor influencing attitudinal development while uncaring attitude of the parents was the factor. It was revealed that based on study habit, opinions were equally among those that agreed and disagreed that peer group influences study habit.

Recommendation

It is recommended that schools should be monitored on a constant basis; so as to improve the constituents of its members. Schools should have adequate laid down rules which must be enforced so as to reduce adolescent misdemeanors in schools.

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