INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP ON PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES UNDERGRADUATES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

OLOKOOBA, Issa Nasiru (Ph.D)
email: olokooba.in@unilorin.edu.ng

RASHEED Shofiu Adewuyi (Ph.D)
email: rasheed.sa@unilorin.edu.ng
&
UYANNE, Elizabeth Obiageli(Ph.D)
email: obnwachi@gmail.com
Social Sciences Education Department,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin

Abstract
The main purpose of education is to enhance all round development in the individual so that he can be useful to himself, his family and society generally. Hence, this study investigated influence of peer group on personality development of Social Studies undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to investigate social adjustment, emotional security, moral behaviour and adaptive pattern of Social Studies undergraduates in tertiary institutions in the state. Population of the study consisted of Social Studies undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, while the target population were the Social Studies undergraduates in federal and private universities in the state. More so, the instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire. Four research questions were raised to guide the study, and the questions were answered using mean and rank order. Findings of the study revealed that peer groups have influence on the social adjustment, emotional security, moral behavior and adaptive pattern of Social Studies undergraduates. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made that appropriate measures should be put in place to regulate and check student attitudes to enhance the positive social adjustment of the students; parent should be very watchful in term of the kind of peers which their children keep; undergraduates should ensure that they always work and do things in group instead of isolation as they stand to benefit immensely from one another.

Introduction

Education includes physical intellectual and emotional development that only manifests themselves in the behaviour and mutual activities of the individual. The main motive of education is to develop the individual so that he can be useful to himself, his family and society generally. It emphasizes the ability to change and transform the individual from state of ignorance and underdevelopment to a completely new person who is knowledgeable, culture, well developed and self-realized. Education encompasses the process of teaching, indoctrination, training, learning and instructing. Fafunwa and Babs (2002) stated that education is the process of cultural transmission and renewal, a three-way process of inheriting culture, changing that culture for better or for worse and passing it on to the younger generation. Abiri and Jekayinfa (2010) opined that education consist of formal, non-formal and informal component. Formal aspect of education is the education obtained in schools characterized by socially institutions. Non formal education is the aspect of education organized in any learning activity aimed at meeting specific learning needs of a particular group in the community an example is the adult literacy classes.

Education in Nigeria is regarded as an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). This could be the reason why every scholar irrespective of the school of thought agrees to the fact that education is the bedrock of economic, political and technological development of a nation. For highly literate, an economically productive, educated citizenry can contribute far more tremendously to a nation's gross domestic product than a large pool of irrelevantly educated population. It is noteworthy and highly pathetically that for the past three decades, Nigerian educational system continues to witness enormous quantitative growth at the expense of qualitative development. Thus, the present education reforms in the education sector in Nigeria in the areas of planning, curriculum innovation and teacher education, among others, are management mechanism to revamp the education sector to instil sustainable school quality reform in learners.

Education is generally among one of the tools to aid improvement in the quality of human life and in the progress of the society in general. It has been perceived to be among the best way of reducing the existing space between the rich and poor members of the society. Education is life-long learning process to better one's life, interest, needs, and aspiration and thereby make it a powerful instrument necessary for social, economic, and cultural transformation of the national goals, aims, and objectives. For these reasons and many more is why the education system of every nation should be developed with the aim of achieving, workable, and realistic policy to meet up with the expected goals by every government/institution of each country. Education is agreed to be the substructure of any country's development. It is regarded as the foundation for meaningful and sustainable development growth and achievement in science, art and technology. It has been declared worldwide as catalyst for achieving socio-economic, scientific, and technological development (Abiogu, 2014).

The term 'development' means different things to different people. Some view it as changes, while others see it as advancement, improvement and progress. Development is the process of changing from one stage to another. The term is used in different ways, depending on the context (Okwueze, 2014). However, when this term is applied to a community, it refers to the procedure whereby a community modernizes. Modernization, according to Yakub (2012) is the process of making something modern in appearance or behavior, and bringing a community to the same level as other developed communities that have all basic amenities and infrastructures. Bassey, Adam and Obong (2015) opined that development is the maximization of the potentialities of the total environment of Nigeria-economical, physical, political and human for the betterment of the majority of Nigerians. Also the Obong (2015) viewed development as a means of creating a suitable environment for the individual to live a happy, contented, spiritually satisfying and culturally meaningful life.

Meyer (2015) defines development as it occurs when ongoing learning opportunities are created, so that employees can develop in order to maintain a high level of performance. In this study, development is referred to as the process of improving the life of the community through the role of the Christian church. In comparing the views of scholars on development, it seems that there is some agreement that development is about people,

although as a concept, it has different meanings for different people, as stated by Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2017). It seems that the literature on development wants to suggest that development is a procedure of social and economic change, transformation and evolution, as well as bringing humans to a new state.

Personality development encompasses the vital construction and deconstruction of integrative characteristics that differentiate an individual in terms of interpersonal behavioural traits. Personality development is ever-changing and subject to environmental factors and life-altering experiences. Personality development is also geographical in description and subjective in nature. That is, personality development can be seen as a continuation varying in degrees of intensity and change. It is subjective in nature because its notion is rooted in social norms of expected behaviour, self-expression, and personal growth (Wrzus, 2021).

The domineering viewpoint in personality psychology indicates that personality emerges early and continues to develop across one's lifespan. Students' personality traits are believed to have a basis in infant temperament, meaning that individual differences in disposition and behaviour appear very early in life, potentially before language of conscious self-representation develop. The five factor component of personality maps onto the dimensions of childhood temperament. This suggests that solitary differences in levels of the corresponding personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) are present from young ages (Hang, Soto, Lee& Mõttus, 2021).

The role of education in the personality development of students cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the required education at the basic level is to equip learners with the needed knowledge, attitudes and skills for both personal and national development cannot be underestimated. To this end, Chukwu (2011) and Ugwuoke (2011) supported the fact that except the citizens of a nation acquire at least the standard basic education, the dream of achieving a precipitous social, political and economic development would become difficult. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in the National Policy on Education (NPE) defined education as a tool or an instrument for national development. This implies that education is indeed a necessity for

sustainable living. Other word of Ityav (2014) he noted that education at the essential level constitutes education that is indeed the base and foundation of the required education for development.

The peer group is an example of such anon-shared environment. Odebo (2017), Babalola (2020) who support Harris' theory (2015) argue that two brothers' personalities will contradict as a result of their genetic composition and because they move with different sets of friends, and not because they were raised differently by their parents. Harris (2015) argues that children often behave differently outside the home than they do at home. She argues that their personalities are largely influenced by their conduct outside the home, as adolescents consider the feedback from their friends as more important than that of their parents. Therefore, Social Studies undergraduates of universities of Ilorin are not receiving lectures in isolations. That is, the students interact with each other and also have different cliques regardless of their educational and financial background. The peer groups they have tend to have either good or bad impact on the personality development of the students. For instance, Buhari (2016) reported that peer groups have positive influence on the psychosocial development of secondary school students. However this study is focussing on influence of peer group on personality development of learners.

Moreover, an individual's family background plays an important role in the attitude of students toward peer influence. Families in which children have cordial relationship with their parents, parental monitoring and parental control efforts are effective means in preventing children from involving in problematic behaviour and negative influence by peer. The attachment relationship goes hand in hand with parenting (Dervost et al., 2016). Parents that adequately control and supervise their adolescents may prevent them from bad peer influence. A student who is attached to a peer group that values anti-social activities inevitably finds it difficult to resist the encouragement of peer group members in such negative behaviour (Bada & Adebiyi, 2014).

Several studies about peer group concept and other variable of interest in research have been conducted, for example Omotere (2011) conducted research on the influence of peer group on adolescents, selected schools in Ogun State. The study investigated the influence of peer group on adolescent performance. Descriptive research methodology was used. Random sampling techniques were also adopted in selecting 150 in-school adolescents from four secondary schools in two Local Government Areas of Ogun State. Questionnaire was developed to collect data. The data collected was analysed using t-test and Pearson. The findings of the study revealed that peer group positively influence the academic performance of in-school adolescents. In the study, it was recommended that parents and teachers should provide adequate guidance to adolescents to help them understand how the friends they keep can either positively or negatively influence their academic performance in school. Also, in-adolescent should relate with students that will influence them positively and academically.

Also Akpobia and Nidah (2019) carried out study on incidence and factor associated with the drop out among primary school pupils in Ogoja Local Government of Cross River State. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was 240 drop outs identify in the school record for the study areas. There was no sample because all the population was used. The instrument used for the study where questionnaire and oral interview the study were questionnaire and oral interview on the cause and magnitude to school dropout in vache clan. Based on the analysed data, the following are the main findings. Majority of pupils/students dropped from school in 1995/96 is 11.2% followed by 1996/97 8.8%, whereas few dropped out in 1997/98 7.0%. This situation is however no encouraging, since more youths are expected to be literate because of the need for educational advancement in science and technology. The above research study related to the present study because, it revealed that factors associated with drop out among primary school pupils is negative peer pressure influence which make them not to concentrate on their academic pursuit which result to poor performance. Hence, they cannot cope with educational advancement they now decided to drop out of the school.

More so, Ikwuji (2015) carried out a study on influence of age, gender, and value orientation on adolescent students' moral judgments in conflict situations. A comparative study design was adopted for the study. Sample

for the study was (3650) adolescents. Students between the age of 12 and 19 were selected for the study from 18 schools. The instruments used for the study were Moral Dilemma Questionnaire (MDQ) and value. Method of data analysis, mean scores and standard deviations (SD were used to analyzed the research questions, while t-test was employed to test the hypothesis. The researcher found out that majority of the adolescents based their moral judgment in conflict situations on peer-approved values shows that the peer-group has enormous influence on how the adolescents think and act. The researcher also found that there was no gender difference between adolescent male and female in their moral judgments in conflict situations. This shows that in organizing a moral instruction class the teacher should make it a point of duty to see that both sexes mix freely so that they could share moral experiences in discussing conflicting moral problems. However, none of the studies reviewed considered the variable of peer group against the personality development of Social Studies undergraduates most especially in Kwara state. Hence, this is the space in knowledge this study intended to fill in. therefore, this study sought to investigate influence of peer group on personality development of Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of peer group on personality development of Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State. Specifically, the study investigated the following:

1. Influence of peer group on social adjustment of Social Studies undergraduates
2. Influence of peer group on emotional security of Social Studies undergraduates;
3. Influence of peer group on moral behaviour of Social Studies undergraduates; and
4. Influence of peer group on adaptive patterns of Social Studies undergraduates.

Research Questions

The following question were answered in the study:

1. What is the influence of peer group on social adjustment of Social Studies undergraduates?
2. What is the influence of peer group on emotional security of Social Studies undergraduates?

3. What is the influence of peer group on moral behaviour of Social Studies undergraduates?
4. What is the influence of peer group on adaptive patterns of Social Studies undergraduates?

Methodology

This study was a descriptive survey design. The design was found appropriate to be used in this study because it is capable of using the sample data of an investigation to document, describe, and explain what is existent or non-existent, on the present status of a phenomenon being investigated. Population of the study consisted all Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State, while Social Studies undergraduates in Federal and Private Universities in Kwara State formed the target population. Therefore, the sample of the study was 200 Social Studies undergraduates from the target population using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled ''Influence of peer group on personality development of Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State''. The questionnaire was in 4 sections. Section A was used to get information on the influence of peer group on social adjustment of undergraduate; section B was used to get information on the influence of peer group on emotional security of undergraduate; and section C was used to get information on the influence of peer group on moral behaviour of undergraduate while section D was used to get information on the influence of peer group on adaptive patterns of undergraduate. The content validity of this instrument was ascertained through useful and constructive suggestions, observations and corrections of draft of the questionnaire by five lecturers in Department of Social Sciences Education and administered the final questionnaire on the undergraduates having done the correction observed by the lecturers. Reliability of the study instrument was ascertained through a split-half method of reliability test in which the questionnaire was administered to a set of 20 students who are not part of the respondents of this study. The reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained which implied that the instrument is reliable for use.

Results

Four research questions were raised in this study. All the four questions were answered using mean and rank order. All the questions were answered on the benchmark of 2.5. The 2.5 implies that if the calculated mean is less

than 2.5, responses to the questions would be considered negative, but if it is equal to 2.5 or greater than, the responses would be considered positive.

Research Question 1: *What is the influence of peer group on social adjustment of undergraduates?*

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Influence of Peer Group on Social Adjustment of Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean.	Std	Rank
1	Through my peers I developed interest in sporting activities	3.32.	1.98	1st
5	Through my peers, I learn to be more tolerant with everybody around me	3.07.	1.76	2nd
3	My peers made me become someone who could face the crowd	3.05.	1.55	3rd
2	My peers encourage me to express myself with words	3.01.	1.59	4th
4	I developed political interest and participation due to the encouragement of my peers	2.98.	1.49	5th
	Grand Mean	3.08		

Table 1 revealed the responses on the influence of peer group on social adjustment of undergraduates. The table has it that none of the items in the table above has a mean score below 2.5 with the grand mean of 3.08. This implies that all the items in the table are among the ways in which peer groups influence the social adjustment of undergraduates.

Research Question 2: *What is the influence of peer group on emotional security of undergraduates?*

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Influence of Peer Group on Emotional Security of Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank
4	Through the influence of my peers, I have chosen reading as a habit	3.25	1.87	1st
1	Through the influence of my peers, I have become less shy	3.16	1.79	2nd
5	My peers have helped me to be more understanding	3.03	1.68	3rd
2	I am less temperamental person as a result of the people I have as friends	2.98	1.65	4th
3	I learnt to be a caring person through my peers	2.89	1.45	5th
	Grand Mean	**3.06**		

Table 2 showed the responses on the influence of peer group on emotional security of undergraduates. The table has it that none of the items in the table above has a mean score below 2.5 with the grand mean of 3.06. This implies that all the in the table are among the ways which peer groups influence the emotional security of undergraduates.

Research Question 3: *What is the influence of peer group on moral behaviour of undergraduates?*

Table 3: Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Influence of Peer Group on Moral Behaviour of Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	I am becoming a trustworthy person thanks to my peers	3.12	1.68	1st
5	Through the influence of my peers, I have learnt to accommodate other people opinion	3.05	1.58	2nd
2	My peers influence my dress culture	2.99	1.54	3rd
4	My peers have made me to be a patriotic person	2.97	1.54	4th
3	Through the influence of my peers, I stopped being a bully	2.87	1.31	5th
	Average Mean	**3.0**		

Table 3 depicted the responses on the influence of peer group on moral behaviour of undergraduates. The table has it that none of the items in the table above has a mean score below 2.5 with the grand mean of 3.0. This implies that all the items in the table are among the ways which peer groups influence the moral behaviour of undergraduates.

Research Question 4: *What is the influence of peer group on adaptive pattern of undergraduates?*

Table 4: Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Influence of Peer Group on Adaptive Pattern of Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	My peers made reading in group more enjoyable for me	3.15	1.90	1st
3	My friends influence on me have made me adapt to the issue of not having electricity to read my book	2.98	1.87	2nd
2	Through my peers, I have learned to always be a contented person	2.97	1.85	3rd
5	My peers have improved my spending habit, and made me avoid unnecessary spending	2.95	1.51	4th
4	Through the influence of my friends, I have adapted to the ways of not eating a three square meal	2.93	1.51	5th
	Grand Mean	**2.9**		

Table 4 revealed the responses on the influence of peer group on adaptive pattern of undergraduates. The table has it that none of the items in the table above has a mean score below 2.5 with the grand mean of 2.9. This implies that all the items in the table are among the ways which peer groups influence the adaptive behaviour of undergraduates.

Discussion of Findings

On the basis of the findings of the study related to the influence of peer group on personality development of Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State. Findings revealed that peer group has influence on the social adjustment of undergraduate. This is in support of the report of Omotere (2011) which has it that peer group could positively influence the academic performance and social adjustment of in-school adolescents. More so, Wood et al., (2004) submitted that there is a significant association between both peer group and social adjustment of students.

Findings also revealed that there is a positive influence of peer group on emotional security of undergraduates. How the peer groups influence the emotional security of the Social Studies undergraduates include chosen reading as a habit, become less shy, being more understanding, among

others. The finding corroborates the findings of Ikwuji (2015) who discovered that peer groups help significantly in the development of emotional security of youths and finding of Buhari (2016) reported that peer groups have positive influence on the psychosocial development of secondary school students. However, the finding is in disagreement with the findings of Johnson and Johnson (2010) which has it that peer groups do more harm to the emotional security of the in-school adolescents.

More so, it was found out that peer groups have influence on the moral behaviour of the undergraduates, and among the ways peer groups have influenced the moral behavior of the Social Studies undergraduates include becoming a more trustworthy person, adapting to the issue of not having electricity to read my book, my dressing culture, among others. This finding is consistent with finding of Ikwuji (2015) who found out that majority of the adolescents based their moral judgment in conflict situations on peer-approved values shows that the peer-group has enormous influence on how the adolescents think and act.

In addition to the findings, it was also discovered that peer groups influence the adaptive patterns of the undergraduates. The respondents affirmed it that peers made reading in group more enjoyable for themselves, adapting to the issue of not having electricity to read their books and learned to always be a contented person are among the means via which adaptive patterns of the Social Studies undergraduates are being influenced by their peer groups. This finding is in contrary with the finding of Akpobia and Nidah (2019) who reported that factors associated with drop out among primary school pupils is negative peer pressure influence which make them not to concentrate on their academic pursuit which result to poor performance. Hence, they cannot cope with educational advancement they now decided to drop out of the school.

Conclusion
Based on the findings presented in the tables, the following general conclusions can be drawn regarding the influence of peer groups on various aspects of undergraduate students' lives: Peer groups play a significant role in the social adjustment of undergraduates. The results indicate that peers are influential in various ways, such as fostering interest in sporting activities, enhancing tolerance, and building confidence in public settings,

encouraging self-expression, and promoting political engagement. The grand mean of 3.08 suggests a generally positive impact of peer groups on social adjustment, with all aspects rated above the midpoint, indicating their relevance and significance in the social adaptation process of undergraduates. The influence of peer groups on emotional security is also notable. Peer interactions contribute to emotional development by encouraging habits like reading, reducing shyness, promoting understanding, and moderating temperamental behaviors. The grand mean of 3.06 reflects that all items are relevant, with peer groups positively affecting emotional security and contributing to a supportive and less insecure environment for undergraduates.

Peer groups influence the moral behavior of undergraduates in several ways. Key influences include fostering trustworthiness, accommodating differing opinions, shaping dress culture, instilling patriotism, and discouraging bullying. With a grand mean of 3.0, the findings demonstrate that peer groups have a moderate to strong impact on moral behavior, suggesting that peers significantly shape moral values and behavior patterns among undergraduates. The impact of peer groups on adaptive patterns of behavior is evident, though slightly less pronounced compared to other areas. Peers influence students' adaptability to situations like group reading, coping with electricity shortages, contentment, spending habits, and dietary adjustments. The grand mean of 2.9 indicates that while peer influence on adaptive behavior is relevant, it might be less impactful compared to other aspects such as social adjustment, emotional security, and moral behavior. In summary, peer groups have a substantial influence across various domains of undergraduate life. They contribute positively to social adjustment, emotional security, and moral behavior, while their impact on adaptive patterns is present but slightly less strong. This underscores the importance of peer interactions in shaping the overall development and well-being of undergraduates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were raised based on the findings of the study.

a. Undergraduates should exploit both social and physical environment in such that they could enhance their positive social adjustment.

b. Undergraduates should be very watchful in term of the kind of peers keep on and outside the campus.
c. Social Studies undergraduates should ensure that they always work and do things in group instead of isolation as they stand to benefit immensely from one another.
d. Adaptive strategies and mechanisms should be introduced to beginners to forestall the peer and environment challenges facing the fresh undergraduates on campuses.

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