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PEER GROUP INFLUENCE ON STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to investigate peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state. The area of study is the nine communities that make up Awka south local government area of Anambra namely; Amawbia, Awka, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno and Umuawusislu. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design to guide the study. The population of the study comprised of 1,182 respondents made up of 582 males and 600 female teachers. Fifty percent (50%) of the entire population of the study were sampled and used for study. The population of sampled size used for the study after sampling is 591 made up of 291 males and 300 female teachers. A structured item questionnaire designed by the researcher was used for the study after it had been validated and its reliability index determined using Pearson moment coefficient correlation method which yielded a coefficient of 0.75 which was considered reliable enough to measure what it was intended to reliable enough to measure. A twenty-one (21) item survey structured on a 4-point Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Agree (SA). The findings revealed that both male and female teachers identify academic motivation and goals, academic behavior, academic aspirations, academic support and collaborations, social pressure and conformity and student's involvement in extracurricular activities as factors that influence the peer group while the impact include; defy of school rules and regulations, classroom aggressiveness and disruption, affection, stimulation of student's study habits, time management, student's dominance and engagement in friendship collaboration and extra-curricular school activities amongst other impacts. The study also discovered that peer group influence can be improved upon using the following strategies to enhance teaching and learning thus, monitoring, coaching, cooperative learning and creating study habits amongst others. Conclusions and recommendations were made on the way forward.

Keywords*:* Peer group, Influence, Academic achievement, Secondary school students.

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Introduction

Education is the process by which a person Systematically acquires the knowledge and skills and the desirable attitudes, values, aptitudes and practical experience, vital to the tutorial growth and development that will enable him or her to be self- reliance and contribute to societal socio - economic and political development of the nation (Anna; 2009): This is because the quality of education given to the citizen of a nation at any point in time determines their level of participation in the developmental process of the nation. It is there necessary that both the teacher and the learner be given unrestricted access to education since education is the inalienable right of every citizen if national development is to be achieved (Boutros-Ghali; 2006).

Consequently, the quality of institution given by the teacher to the student must be such geared towards inculcating enhanced knowledge and skills acquisition. It is therefore necessary that these goals be achieved through reforming, restructuring and redefining of educational goals and objectives so as to improve the academic achievement of students in the subject. That is why the influence of peer group on subject's academic activities in secondary school be investigated and identified so as to see how far its academic achievement in secondary schools.

Peer group is one of the agents of socialization in which a group of learners helps each other or people of the same age group or bracket who has the same social status as a member of the peer group (Kalu; 2016). According to Uche (2020) children who found themselves under the same age brackets or group, often times are worried about failing in front of their peers. This is because of the respects they enjoy in the presence of their peer group. This shows that peer group. This shows that peer pressure is strong among young people, hence they want to be like people of the same age brackets. This is why Ogbonnaya (2013) defined them as a group of people who are approximately the same age status especially, if they have the same interests, inspirations and expectation.

In education, peer group influence is one of the psychos- social factors that can cause disruptive behavior in the classroom. This is because in classroom situation, students are attracted to their peers either by affection or by dominance. Through affection Chiaha (2020) noted students are drawn to their likes through interest students are drawn to their likes through interest or likeness or because of Kindness, favor or love shown them by the other student. In most cases she noted affection culminate into friendship which may be lifelong. In classroom, students who are dominance are attracted to each other because he or she believes such relationship has something to offer or gain from the other child; hence he or she becomes dependent to him or her. The resulted effect according to Uche (2020) Is that he controls the other child's attitudes and behaviors knowingly or unknowingly. He is like a charismatic leader to his peer group members he or she wants to control or is in control off. A teacher, with such a student should try as much as possible not to

allow such dominant individual behavior to influence his classroom teaching and learning.

Whichever way the attraction comes, the important thing for classroom teaching is to ensure that peer group influence does not affect the overall classroom behavior. This is because recent research on the subject according to Chiaha (2020), Udoh (2021) and Johnson (2023) have shown that students in this group to defy school rules and regulations to go along with what the peer consider in vogue and lf not properly Checked by the teacher by tallowing it towards useful and positive direction may cause classroom disruptive behavior. This situation If not well check can spread to most of the class members. Ngwoke and Eze (2013) observed that the opinion of the group peer in most case is negative towards the students which in most cases lead to self-rejection.

Peer group influence according to Ngwoke and Eze (2010) therefore can have a significant impact on student's academic activities in Schools by Influencing the academic motivation and goals. This they noted can only be achieved if the peer group member values academic achievement than disruptive behavior. If that happens, they are more and more likely to be motivated to perform well. Conversely, if the peer group is in - different or dismissive towards academics, the students may become less motivated.

According to Johnson (2023), peer group influence can affect student's study habits, time management and their overall engagement in classroom activities. It is the duty of the student to ensure that Students in the group adopt the study strategies of doing their homework and involve themselves in high level of classroom participation model geared towards improving their classroom activities.

This is why peer group members should be encouraged by teachers by their teachers to take their educational careers, expectations, aspiration and ambition seriously. This is because students are likely to pursue higher education or specific career paths of their friends and classmates once they discovered they have similar goals and objectives.

This shows that peer groups can provide academic support through study groups, tutoring and collaboration on projects. This will help enhance learning and problem-solving ability among student members of the peer group, thus ultimately improving student's academic performance. This perhaps, that maybe the reason why Udoh (2021) warned that social pressure and conformity can lead student to have negative or positive norms because he is feeling that he is compelled to either excel or under form academically to fit in with their peers. This shows that there are some positive aspect s of peer group influence and mitigate those impacts negatively on the student's academic activities while others do positively impact on their academic activities as well. To improve negative influence of peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools, there is the need to set in motion.

Strategic plan of action aimed at accomplishing specific goals objectives for it to function effectively. According to Adebayo (2021), this can be used in the school system to foster positive school climate instead of negative relationship with the total support of the entire school community. This he noted comes inform of interaction through team building activities, collaborative learning and extra-curricular activities. This shows that peer group Influence if well-articulated in school system will help establish a positive behavioral expectation and this will consistently reinforce positive behavior among the students in education.

Another strategy advocated by James and John (2019), is the adoption of mentoring performance in schools. According to them, implementing peer mentoring programs using lower performing peers as mentors will provide or promote academic support and guidance and equally serve as role modeling to train peer mentors on effective tutoring techniques and strategies for providing academic activities and social-emotional support. This will also help in creating peer mentoring which will support academic credits, leadership opportunities and other rewards incentives they concluded.

This is why utilizing cooperative learning in schools will help strengthen the educational system by ensuring students work in small and heterogenous groups so as to structure these groups activities into a dynamic strategy for enhancing teaching and learning in the school system. According to Uche (2020), this strategy will help foster positive interdependence, individual accountability and collaborative skills in between the teacher and members of the peer group to ensure teaching and learning activities are enhanced,

Promoting extra-curricular activities in schools by involving peer group members to be part and parcel of school clubs (debating society, boys scout and girls guide as well as members of school sporting team) and align each of their activities to student's needs, expectations, interests and talent will encourage them to participate in activities that will foster positive peer relationship. According to James and John (2019), this type of sense of belonging in school whether inside or outside the school will help reinforce academic priorities and provide the students with opportunities for academic support and skills development.

Other ways peer group Influence can impact on students is in organizing school career in such a way as that it will focus on events where students can share their experiences and aspirations with their peers and leverage the influence of successful alumni to inspire current students in promoting positive academic and career-oriented behavior. That is mentioning the names of ex-students of the school who had made it in life to serve as a tonic to motivate them. Supporting this view, Uche (2020) asserted that, adopting the use of peer academic coaching there by experience student teach the workshops is another strategy that can assist a small group of peers to teach the slow learning ones.

This shows that, peer group influence on student's academic activities in

secondary school therefore cannot be over looked. This is because of the position it occupies in teaching and learning situation. For learning to be achieved, there is the need to organize classroom management activities to accommodate the activities of peer group influence so that their activities cannot be used to disrupt school activities but rather for positive purposes such as career aspirations, extra-curricular activities, collaboration and achievement of school academic goals and objectives.

This is because, we cannot under any circumstances or underestimate exonerate the influence of peer group on student's performance and teachers teaching and learning in classroom organization and management in school. This underscores the need to focus on the peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state, Nigeria. This is because, it is the first association a child forms outside the family and department of parents look out. It offer the children experience based on equality unlike what happens in a family where (he) you are expected to respect all the members of the extended family system. Children gains attentions, companionship and security outside the family. This group of peers affects the perceptions and behaviors of children in different ways. Most of the time, most of the child's behaviors or moral behaviors are leant from here. This shows that the peer group is more powerful and influential than other types of socializations like mass media. In Nigeria, there is no sex education but it is here that children have or learns their first sex experience with boys or girls. You don't need to tell your father or mother when this happens. The initiate couching takes place here amongst peers/friends. This is because at the age of one to two years, the child is solely dependent on his or her parents for food, clothing, shelter and other things of life. By three to four years, the child starts to mix up with his peer groups. Hence, peer groups are described as a distinct group in the society for children. That is why it is described as corrective agents of a child to become what he or she learns from the group, assist him to conform to the social norms of the society and also the social expectant of the child. This is because it serves as a workshop for the child to learn.

As he or she grows up, he comes into contact with religious groups, social class and learns to work with people and cooperate with them socially, emotionally and academically (Adebayo; 2021). This group provides for the child a sense of belonging and a sense of security. It promotes loyalty which they transferred from home. Hence, the group services as a stepping stone for them to use to acquire loyalty to their family members as well as to their group members and the larger society.

According to Chiaha (2020), it assists them to know the important aspect of his life and the import concepts about himself as a person. He is restless and engaged in activities he feels is good for members of his group who most often turn out to be their best friends in life. These people according to are mainly those of his neighborhood whom he sees every day and

interact with them socially, economically and academically. Thus, they are regarded by Uche (2020) as a social group consisting of individuals of similar age, status and interests.

Peer groups play a significant role in shaping an individual's attitudes, behaviors and values. Its positive effects include:

- Socialization which helps an individual develops social skills, empathy and cooperation.
- Peer groups influence, therefore serves as a support system that provides emotional support, encouragement and a sense of belonging. This means that peer group facilitates learning and growth, skill sharing and personal growth and development and
- Assisting in connections and networking opportunities for the groups thus helping them to valuable connections.

Negatively, it creates room for peer group influence as it can exert on due pressure for them to conform to certain behaviors or attitudes, potentially leading to negative outcomes. According to Ngwoke and Eze (2013), it can influence individuals to engage in risky or undesirable behavior which may affect classroom activities thereby disrupting teacher's classroom teaching and learning. This he noted can foster competition among members of the group which in the long run can lead to stress, anxiety and decreased self-esteem in academic performance. This means that peer group can lead to exclusion, bulling or marginalization of individuals who don't fit in. In other words, it can lead to limiting individual peer group member, isolation of him, stifle individual creativity and encouraging conformity over self-expression.

Thus, unhealthy habits can perpetuate unhealthy habits such as substance abuse or poor lifestyle choices due to the influence of other members of the group. In all, the overall effect of peer group's influence is dependent on the dynamics and values of the group. Positive peer groups therefore can have a supportive and enriching influence on the group members while the negative peer groups can equally have detrimental effects on classroom activities if their activities are not channeled to a positive one.

The implications of this to education (James and John, 2019) noted is that, membership of the group can help to educate the child as he learns from each other a d also help him to develop the idea of give and take relationship. In other words, belongs to the group means he or she must learn to obey the code of conduct of the group, the role of the group and keep the security of the group. If he or she is rejected by members of the peer group, the student will feel frustrated, shy, withdrawn and introvert. This is because as the student interact with each other, he comes into contact with significant others (teachers, neighborhood, friends) which helps to reshape his behavior and attitudes.

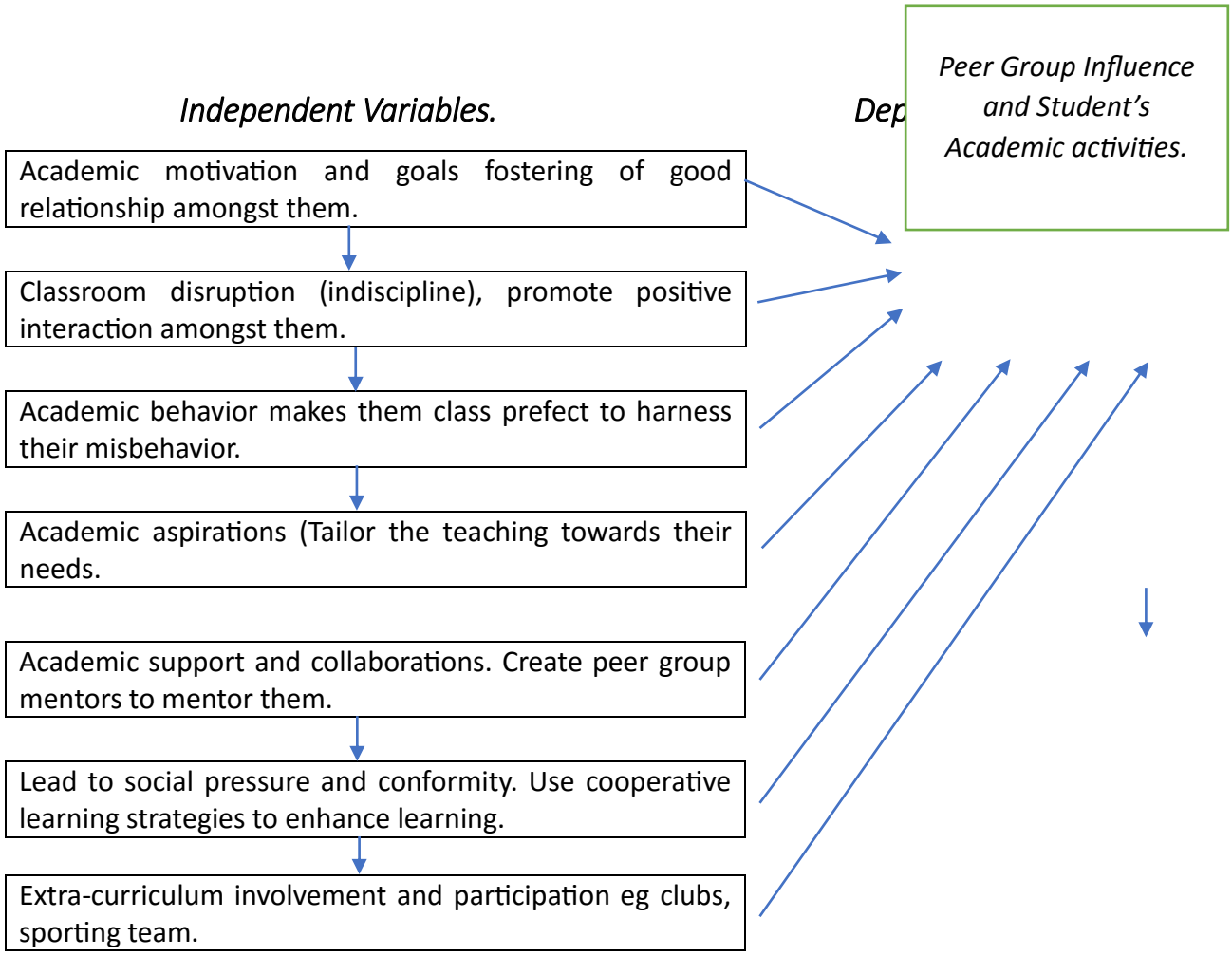
In summary, peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools can be positive and negative.

The positive aspect of it is that it can motivate student's academic achievement, expectations, needs, aspirations, love, respect for one another, attitudes, behavior, correction, engagement, kindness and spirit of dominance. Negatively, it makes them to defy school rules and regulations, disrupt classroom activities, impact student's knowledge and skills through cooperation, negatively, motivate student's study habits negatively or positively and serve as a bond of friendship, collaboration and time management negatively or positively if not well managed. The strategies to adopt include; collaborative learning approach, encourage extra-curricular activities, mentoring strategies, introducing cooperative learning, organizing small group to teach slow learners strategies and encouraging participatory learning strategies through positive relationship and sharing of ideas, experiences, aspirations and common interests. It is the articulation of all these positive, negative and strategies points that Ngwoke and Eze (2013), James and John (2019), Uche (2020), Chiaha (2020) and Adebayo (2021) believed that will help the classroom teacher to know how to handle the peer group influence on student's academic achievement in secondary schools not only in Awka south local government area of Anambra state but also throughout the country if the authorities involve in educational matters put it into practice

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AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

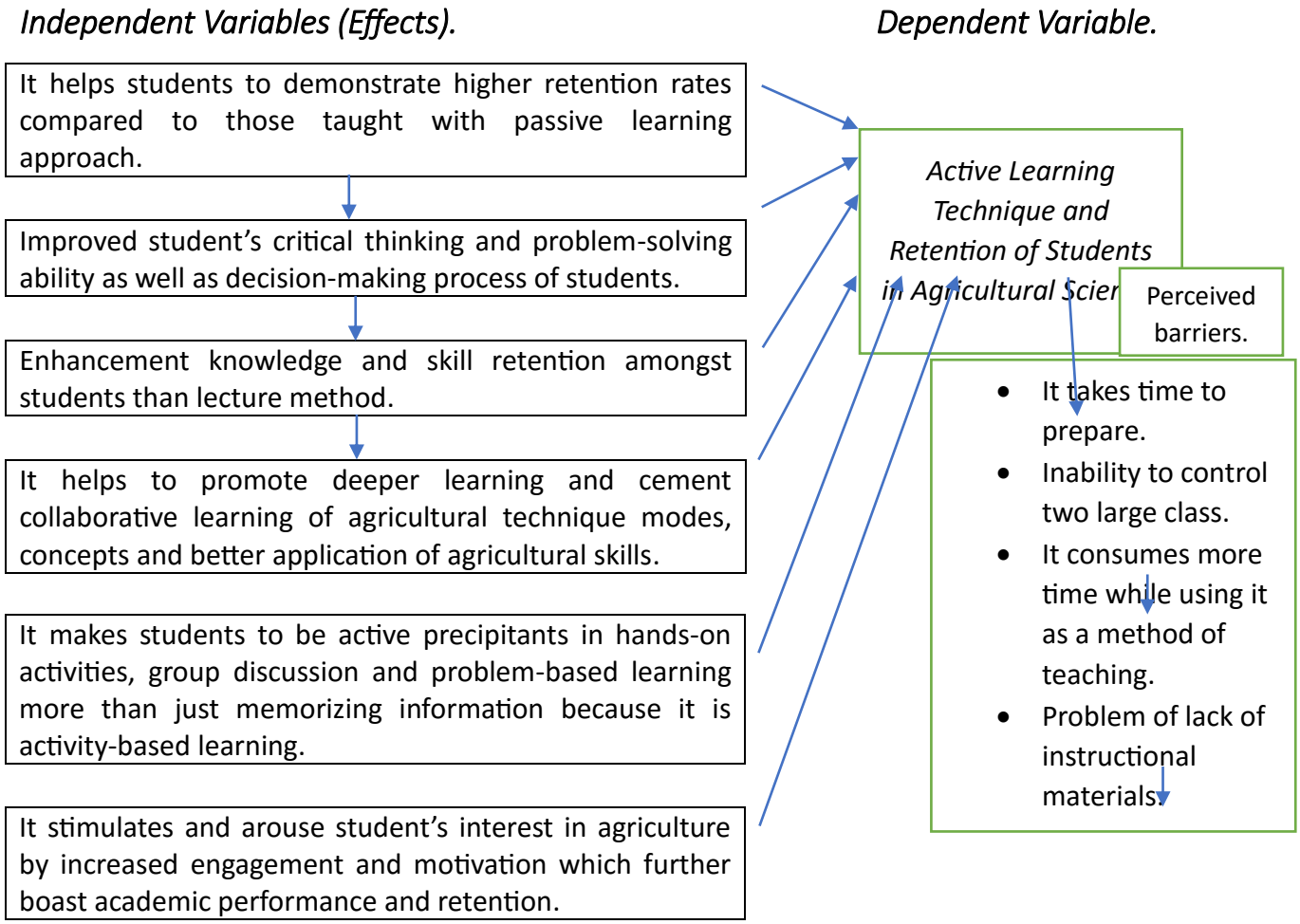
Peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in Awka south L.G.A, Anambra state.



Source: Researcher's concept (2024).
The diagram is based on the discussion in the introduction.

Effects of Active Learning Technique on Student's Academic Performance and Retention in Agricultural Science in Collages of Education in Anambra State

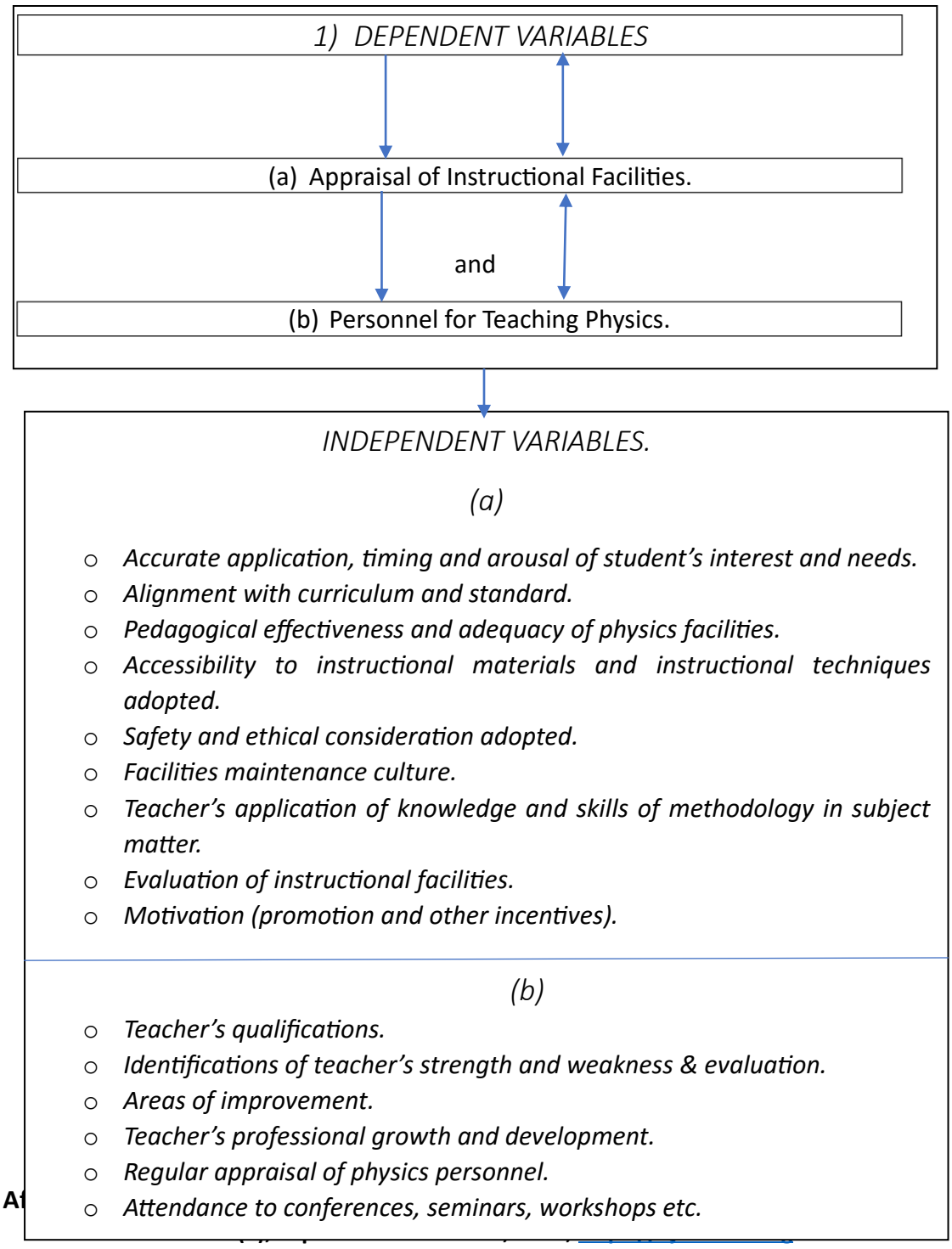
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African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org



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AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

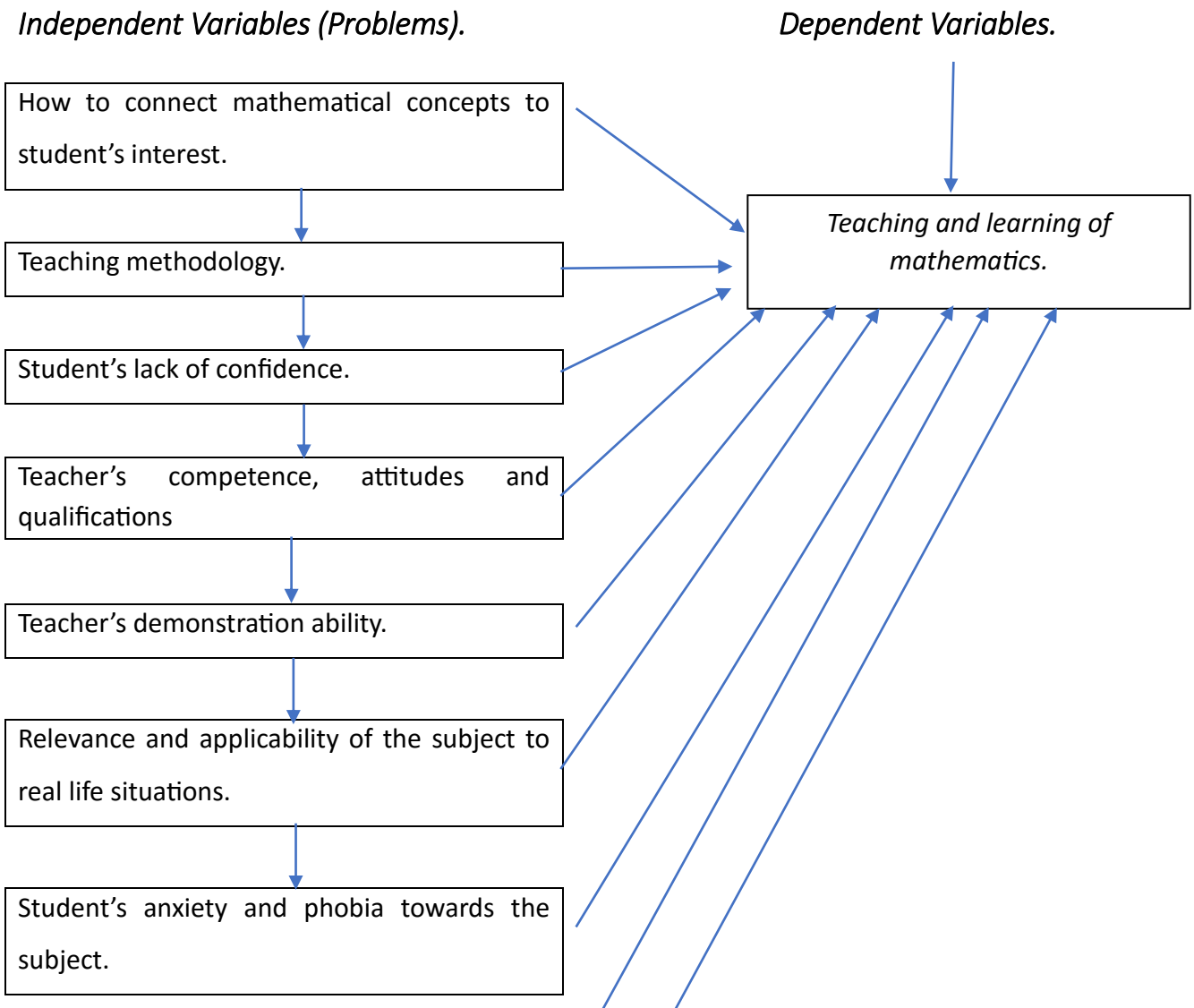
An Appraisal of Instructional Facilities and Personnel for Teaching Physics in Senior Secondary Schools in Onitsah South L.G.A, Anambra State.

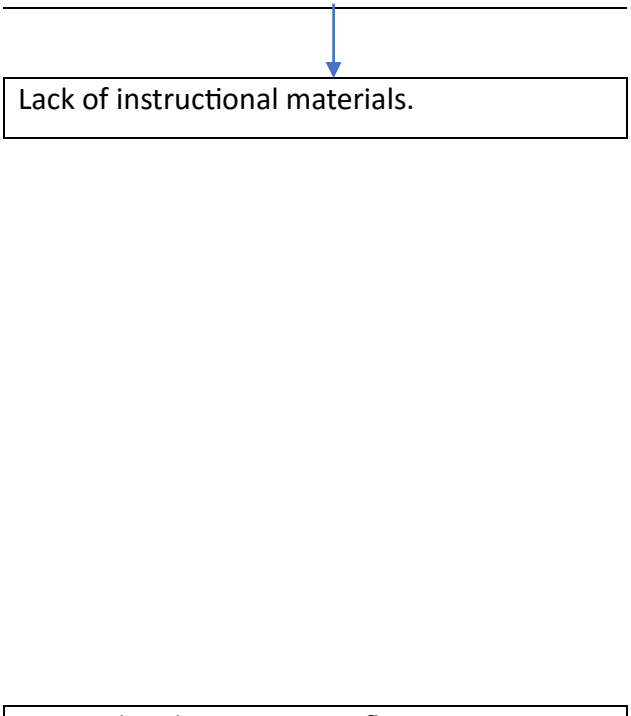


AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

Source: Researcher's concept (2024).
The diagram is based on the discussion in the introduction.

Problems Associated with Teaching and Learning of Mathematics in Aguata L.G.A of Anambra State.





Source: Researcher's concept (2024).
The diagram is based on the discussion in the introduction.

Statement of the Problem

The planning and coordination of peer group influence on student academic activities in secondary school is an important factor in the classroom organization and management. This is because it provides a solid guide in maintaining interest, attention control and discipline in the classroom and also helps the teacher in teaching and learning. However, peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in recent times has witness a number of challenges. The current problems through alleged to be a global problem is more noticeable in public secondary schools particularly those on Anambra state, Awka south inclusive. This has greater effects adverse effects on the student's academic activities such as study habits, collaboration, classroom discipline and control, academic motivation and goals achievement, values for education and enhancement of knowledge, ideas and skills The problem of this study therefore is to find out how peer group influence on student's academic

activities could be managed in secondary schools.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to

1. Identify the factors that influence peer group activities on student's academic activities in secondary schools.
2. Determine the impacts of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.
3. Ascertain strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the factors that influence peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools?
2. What are the impacts of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools?
3. What are the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study:

Ho1, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on factors influencing peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Ho2, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Ho3, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers to the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Research Method

This research was a descriptive survey aimed at investigating peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state. The ears of study include all the nine (9) communities that make up Awka south local government area of Anambra state namely; Amawbia, Akwa, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno and Umuawulu. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 1,182 respondent's males up of 582 male and 600 female teachers in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state. The respondents were selected in order to ensure that those used for the study were significantly knowledgeable about the variables under study and could supply useful information on the item questionnaire. Fifty percent

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

(50%) of the entire population of the study were sampled and used for the study. The sampled size of the population was 291 males and 300 females, bring the entire population sampled to 591. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's developed questionnaire tiled "Peer Group Influence on Student's Academic Activities Questionnaire (P.G.I.S.A.A.Q). A-twenty-one (21) item survey instrument was structured on a 4-point Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA). Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items were developed through information obtained from literature review and was based on three research questions, two from department of Measurement and Evaluation Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and two from the department of Educational Administration and Planning of the same school university The validated instrument was trial tested outside Awka education zone of Anambra state with male and female teachers who possess the same characteristics. This was done to ensure the reliability of the instrument using Pearson's moment coefficient correlation method. The result of the coefficient was 0.75. This shows that the instrument was reliable and could be used to measure what it was intended to measure. Two research assistants were trained and used to collect the data of the study after the respondents (male and female) teachers responded to the distributed research instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation for the three research questions and z-test for the three null hypotheses. The research questions with a means score of 2.50 and above were regarded as rejected.

Results

The results of the findings are presented here according to the research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question one: What are the factors that influence peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools?

Table 1, Mean responses of factors that influence peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

S/N	Item Questionnaire.	Male teachers N = 291			Female teachers N = 300		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
1	Having the same academic motivations, common interest, goals, aspirations and expectations.	3.27	0.90	A	3.04	0.87	A
2	Affection for one another and the spirit of dominance.	3.43	0.92	A	2.77	0.83	A
3	Worried about failing in front of their peer group due to the respect they have for one another.	2.56	0.80	A	2.80	0.83	A
4	To control other student's attitudes and behaviors knowingly or unknowingly.	2.73	0.82	A	2.59	0.80	A
5	They believe among them that there is something to gain for being a member.	3.43	0.92	A	3.04	0.86	A
6	To get favor, love and kindness from peer group members.	2.64	0.81	A	2.94	0.94	A

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

7	To have a sense of belonging for people of the same age among its peers.	3.11	0.87	A	2.56	0.80	A
8	To be noticed as a charismatic leader in the class.	2.59	0.80	A	3.41	0.92	A
	Grand mean	2.89	0.83	A	2.89	0.85	A

Key: N = Number of respondents. SD = Standard deviation. Dec = Decision.

A look at Table 1 research question 1 item questionnaire 1-8 rated the factors that influence peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools 3.27, 3.43, 2.56, 2,73, 3.43, 2.64, 3.11 and 2.59 with standard deviation (SD) score of 0.90, 0.92, 0.80, 0.82, 0.92, 0.81, 0.87 and 0.80 with grand mean score of 2.89 and 0.83 respectively for male teachers. Female teachers on the other hand rated the same item questionnaire 1-8, 3.04, 2.77, 2.80, 2.59, 3.04, 2.94, 2.56 and 3.41 with standard deviation (SD) of 0.87, 0.83, 0.83, 0.80, 0.86, 0.94, 0.80 and 0.92 with the grand mean score of 2.89 and 0.85. All the items questionnaire are rated above 2.50 and therefore accepted with the decision letter of "A" while and score below 2.49 are rejected. Since all the items are above 2.50, it means the research question one is accepted as factors that influence student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Research Question Two: What are the impacts of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools?

Table 2, Mean responses on the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

S/N	Item Questionnaire.	Male teachers N = 291			Female teachers N = 300		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
9	It intends to make them defy school rules and regulations if they consider it to be vogue.	2.71	0.81	A	3.47	0.92	A
10	It has significant I pact on student's academic activities if members of the group value academic achievement over disruptive behavior.	3.46	0.92	A	3.47	0.92	A
11	It helps to enhance student's knowledge, ideas and skills.	2.91	0.84	A	2.59	0.80	A
12	It causes disruptive behavior in classroom if not checked in time.	2.71	0.81	A	2.91	0.84	A
13	It motivates study habits, time management and engagement among students.	2.86	0.84	A	2.74	0.82	A
14	It enhances bond of friendship and collaboration among students.	3.41	0.92	A	3.66	0.95	A
	Grand mean	3.01	0.85	A	3.14	0.87	A

Key: N = Number of respondents. SD = Standard deviation. Dec = Decision.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

The mean score and standard deviation score in table 2 research question two revealed that both the male and female teachers rated the item questionnaire 9-14 high on Likert type scale of 2.50 which means acceptance. The means scores for male teachers are 2.71, 3,46, 2.91, 2.71, 2.86 and 3.41 with the standard deviation (SD) score of 0.81, 0.92, 0.84, 0.81, 0.84 and 0.92 with their grand mean score of 3.01 and 0.85. The female teachers on the other hand rated the same items 9-14 high with the mean score and standard deviation score of 3.47, 3.47, 2.59, 2.91, 2.74 and 3.66 with the SD score of 0.92, 0.92, 0.80, 0.84, 0.82 and 0.95 and grand mean core of 3.14 and 0.87. All items questionnaire were accepted as having impact on student's academic activities with all the item mean score of 2.50 which means accepted with the letter "A".

Research Question 3: What are the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary school?

Table 3, Mean responses on the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

S/N	Item Questionnaire.	Male teachers N = 291			Female teachers N = 300		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
15	Using collaborative learning approach enhance good study habits.	2.59	0.80	A	2.66	0.81	A
16	Encouraging students to be involved in extra-curricular activities such as clubs.	3.91	0.98	A	2.94	0.85	A
17	Adoption of peer mentoring in secondary schools.	2.56	0.80	A	3.01	0.86	A
18	Introducing cooperative learning among students.	2.74	0.82	A	2.91	0.84	A
19	Focusing on events where they can share their experiences, aspirations and common interests.	2.97	0.85	A	2.56	0.80	A
20	Organizing activities where a small group of peers can teach the slow learning ones.	2.96	0.86		3.04	0.87	
21	Encouraging them to participate in activities that will foster positive peer relationship rather than the one that encourages negative ideas.	3.44	0.92	A	2.56	0.80	A
	Grand mean	2.97	0.85	A	2.81	0.83	A

Key: N = Number of respondents. SD = Standard deviation. Dec = Decision.

Research three above revealed both male and female teachers rated the entire items of the questionnaire high with their mean score of 2.50 above the cut-off mark on four-point type scale. The scores of male teachers are 2.59, 3.91, 2.56, 2.74, 2.96, 3.44 with grand mean score of 2.97 with the SD mean score with grand mean score of 2.97 with the SD mean score of 0.80, 0.98, 0.80, 0.82, 0.85, 0.86 and 0.92 with the grand mean score of 2.82 and 0.83. The female teachers on the other hand rated the same item questionnaire which are 2.66, 2.94, 3.01, 2.91, 2.56, 3.04 and 2.56 with the grand mean score of 2.81

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

with the SD mean score of 0.81, 0.85, 0.86, 0.84, 0.80, 0.87 and 0.80 with the grand SD mean score of 0.83. All items 15-21 therefore are accepted as strategies to use to improve student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on factors influencing peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Table 4, summary of z-test analysis on factors influencing peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools

S/N	Source	N	X-	SD	Df	z-cal	z-val	lev	Dec
1	Male teachers	291	2.89	0.83					
2	Female teachers	300	2.89	0.85	589	0.53	1.96	0.05	*Not sig*

Key: N = Number. SD = Standard deviation. Z-cal = z calculated. X = Mean. Df = Degree of freedom. Z-val = z value. Lev = Level. Dec = Decision.

Table 4, present the z-test analysis of the male and female teachers on factors influencing peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools. The table shows that the calculated "z" is 0.53 which is less than the critical "z" value of 1.96. The critical "z" the hypothesis will be accepted. Based on this, the hypothesis is accepted meaning that there is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female teachers on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Table 5, summary of z-test analysis on the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools

S/N	Source	N	X-	SD	Df	z-cal	z-val	lev	Dec
1	Male teachers	291	3.01	0.85					
2	Female teachers	300	3.14	0.87	589	0.58	1.96	0.05	*Not sig*

Key: N = Number. SD = Standard deviation. Z-cal = z calculated. X = Mean. Df = Degree of freedom. Z-val = z value. Lev = Level. Dec = Decision.

Table 5, presents the z-test analysis of the male and female teachers on the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools. The table shows that the calculated "z" is 0.58 which is less than the critical "z" value of 1.96. The decision rule is that the calculated "z" is less than the critical "z" the hypothesis will be accepted. Based on this, the hypothesis is accepted meaning that there is no significant

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difference between the mean score of male and female teachers on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers to the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Table 6, summary of z-test analyses on the strategies to improve peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools

S/N	Source	N	X-	SD	Df^0	z-cal	z-val	lev	Dec
1	Male teachers	291	2.97	0.85					
2	Female teachers	300	2.81	0.83	589	0.55	1.96	0.05	*Not sig*

Key: N = Number. SD = Standard deviation. Z-cal = z calculated. X = Mean. Df = Degree of freedom. Z-val = z value. Lev = Level. Dec = Decision.

Table 6 present the z-test analysis of the male and female teachers on the improve strategies of peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools. The table shows the calculated "z" value of 1.96. The decision rule is that the calculated "z" is less than the critical "z" the hypothesis is accepted meaning that there is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female teachers on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Discussion

Data from research question one of the study indicated that both the male and female teachers accepted the following factors as having influenced peer group on student's academic activities in secondary schools to have a sense of belonging, improve study habits, to get favor, leadership, affection, dominance, to get respect from members of his age brackets are worried about failure and control. The findings is in line with Kalu (2016) and Uche (2020) who observed that children who found themselves under the same age brackets often times do it due to affection, love and dominance in front of their peers. This is because of the respect they enjoy being a member of the group. This is why Ogbonnaya (2013), identify them as factors influencing their activities as people in the same approximately the same status and age.

Data on research question two of the study indicates that the male and female teachers are in agreement that peer group influence impacted on student's academic activities in secondary schools in form of disruptive classroom behavior, motivate them to have study group and to enhance student's behavior and attitudes, time management and overall engagement class activities (Johnson; 2023). This findings are in line with Chiaha (2020) and Udoh (2024) who stated that students in this peer group

defy student's rules and regulation to go along with what the peer group considers in vogue and if not well handled by tailoring such behavior to positive direction may cause classroom disruptive behavior. Uche (2020) noted that this led to other children's attitudes be and behavior being control knowingly and unknowingly.

Research question three data shows that both the male and female teachers agreed that all the strategies listed in the item questionnaire 15-21 influenced peer group academic activities in secondary schools. These findings are in line with Uche (2020) and Adebayo (2021) who observed that the activities of this peer group help to foster positive school climate through team building activities, collaborative learning and extra-curricular activities. James and John (2019) equally noted that, using mentoring performance strategy, cooperative learning, promoting extra-curricular strategy, involving the group to be part of school clubs and using peer academic coaching will help to improve peer group activities in the classroom.

The three hypotheses' questions on tables 4, 5 and 6 indicates there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the factors that influence peer group academic activities on students in secondary schools. It was also observed that the same result was obtained for impact and strategies in *tables 5 and 6* which returned no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on peer group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools in Akwa south local government area of Anambra state. All the three null hypotheses were accepted having calculated "z" of 0.53, 0.58 and 0.55 which is less than 1.96 at z-value. Based on this, the three hypotheses are returned of no significant difference between the mean score of male and female teachers on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of this study that factors such as dominance, getting favor, affection, common interests, expectations, to control other student's attitudes and behavior, to be noticed as a charismatic leader and to get recognition among members of its peer groups if not checked may have negative effect on peer group student's academic activities in secondary schools. Having identified these factors, it was equally observed that these can impact negatively on the school's activities hence it was suggested that strategies such as cooperative learning, collaborative learning, mentoring, coaching, using alumni to talk to students, extra-curricular activities e.g. clubs and having study habits group influence on student's academic activities in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary school identify those factors that influence and tend to affect classroom organization and management through the activities of peer groups and find an appropriate

strategy to stop it from disrupting classroom teaching and learning behavior of students.
2. Government organizes workshops, seminars and in-service training on the best strategies or skills to use in order to stop negative influence of peer group activities on student's academic performance.
3. Teachers should diverse a means of using peer group influence to enhance student's academic activities in schools so as to stop the impact of peer group influence on student's academic activities.
4. School curriculum at the secondary school in the state be restructured or reformed in order to accommodate the good aspect of student's peer group influence in classroom activities by tailoring the good aspects to the student's needs and expectations.

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