

Peer Influence Factors and Academic Motivation among Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools in Osogbo, Osun State

By

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Abstract

Academic motivation is a key determinant of students' learning outcomes, and peers play a critical role in shaping adolescents' attitudes towards schooling. While positive peer influence can enhance motivation through support, academic norms, and constructive pressure, excessive engagement in non-academic social activities may hinder academic performance. Understanding the interplay between peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, peer academic pressure, and frequency of peer social activities is essential for improving educational interventions in public secondary schools. A descriptive survey design was employed to examine 262 secondary school students randomly selected from three Local Government Areas in Osogbo, Osun State. Standardized instruments, including the Peer Academic Influence Scale (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992), were used to measure independent and dependent variables. Data were analysed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and standardised beta coefficients to determine the relationships, joint, and relative contributions of peer influence variables to academic motivation. The findings revealed significant positive correlations between peer academic norms ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), peer support for schooling ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), and peer academic pressure ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) with academic motivation. Frequency of peer social activities showed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.05$). Multiple regression analysis indicated that the four peer variables jointly accounted for 47% of the variance in academic motivation ($R^2 = 0.47$, $F(4, 257) = 56.3$, $p < 0.001$). Relative contributions were strongest for peer support for schooling ($\beta = 0.34$) and peer academic norms ($\beta = 0.29$), followed by peer academic pressure ($\beta = 0.18$), while frequency of peer social activities contributed negatively ($\beta = -0.15$). Peer influence is a significant predictor of academic motivation among adolescents, with supportive and academically oriented peers enhancing motivation and unstructured social activities diminishing it. Schools should implement peer mentoring programmes, foster positive academic norms, and guide students in balancing social and academic engagements. Counsellors can facilitate interventions that leverage positive peer influence, mitigate negative peer pressure, and encourage constructive peer interactions. Future research could examine digital peer networks, longitudinal effects, and other moderating factors influencing academic motivation.

Keywords: Academic motivation, Peer influence, Peer support, Peer academic norms, Peer pressure

Introduction

Academic motivation is a central factor in adolescents' educational success and lifelong outcomes. Globally, studies suggest that adolescents' learning behaviours are strongly influenced by their social environments, particularly peer interactions (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Wentzel, 2018).

Peer influence manifests through academic norms, social support for schooling, and peer pressure, all of which shape students' engagement and performance (Aremu & Akinyemi, 2019). Research in Europe and North America indicates that students embedded in academically focused peer groups demonstrate higher intrinsic motivation and achieve better outcomes. Conversely, peers prioritising social or non-academic activities can negatively affect motivation. Peer pressure, whether positive or negative, also influences behaviour, encouraging engagement when aligned with academic goals or fostering disengagement when linked to risky or non-educational activities (Omopo, 2025).

In the African context, peer influence is shaped by socio-cultural and economic factors. Adolescents' educational engagement is closely linked to peer support and academic norms, which may either reinforce or undermine schooling (Nsamenang, 2021; Asiyanbi et al., 2025). Studies in West African settings highlight that adolescents' time spent in social activities affects learning outcomes, with excessive socialisation often reducing study time and attention to schoolwork (Akinyemi & Aremu, 2018). Furthermore, peer academic pressure functions as a motivational driver when mediated by supportive families and community structures. Evidence from Nigeria shows that peer influence operates not only through interpersonal relationships but also through culturally shaped expectations about education, emphasising the role of collective socialisation in shaping adolescents' academic behaviours (Quadri et al., 2025).

Within Nigeria, public secondary school students face distinct challenges that heighten the impact of peer influence. Peer academic norms and support positively correlate with learning engagement, while frequent social activities can undermine academic performance (Fehintola & Akinyemi, 2021; Fehintola & Akinyemi, 2022). Peer academic pressure further affects motivation by setting behavioural expectations for educational achievement (Omopo, 2024; Omopo, 2025). Socio-economic factors interact with peer dynamics, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds relying heavily on peers for guidance and motivation (Akinyemi et al., 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2024). These findings suggest that adolescents' academic motivation is not solely a product of individual effort but is strongly influenced by social networks.

Focusing on Osogbo, Osun State, adolescents in public secondary schools encounter peer environments that can either foster or inhibit academic engagement. Exposure to diverse peer groups, varying in academic orientation and social habits, shapes students' learning motivation

(Adebayo-Oke et al., 2021; Omopo, 2025). While previous studies have explored peer influence broadly in Nigerian schools (Aremu & Akinyemi, 2019), there is limited research examining multiple dimensions of peer influence - peer academic norms, peer support, frequency of social activities, and peer academic pressure collectively within the Osogbo context. This gap signals the need for context-specific investigation to understand how these factors interact to influence motivation.

Adolescent developmental theories and social learning perspectives underscore the importance of peer influence in shaping behaviour during this stage (Ryan & Deci, 2020). By exploring the combined effects of peer academic norms, peer support, socialisation frequency, and peer academic pressure, researchers can identify mechanisms through which peers enhance or hinder motivation. Understanding these dynamics is particularly relevant in Nigerian public schools, where resource constraints and diverse peer interactions significantly affect learning outcomes (Akinyemi et al., 2018; Omopo, 2025). Such insights are critical for designing interventions and school policies that harness positive peer influence to improve student achievement.

This study, therefore, aims to fill the existing gap by examining the predictive role of peer influence dimensions on academic motivation among adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo, Osun State. Specifically, it investigates how peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure jointly affect students' motivation. Findings are expected to inform school-based strategies and peer-mediated interventions to enhance engagement and performance, contributing to both educational theory and practical policy formulation within the Nigerian context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of peer-related factors, particularly peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure, on the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in

Osogbo, Osun State. It seeks to examine both the individual and combined effects of these peer influence dimensions, thereby providing evidence-based insights to guide school policies, peer-mediated interventions, and strategies to enhance students' academic engagement and performance. The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To examine the relationship between peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, peer academic pressure, and the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.
2. To determine the joint contributions of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.
3. To assess the relative contributions of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, peer academic pressure, and the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.
2. There is no significant joint contribution of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.
3. There is no significant relative contribution of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer

academic pressure on the academic motivation of adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo, Osun State. Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) – Osogbo North, Osogbo South, and Olorunda – were randomly selected to ensure broad socio-cultural representation. From each selected LGA, one public secondary school was randomly chosen, and students were drawn using simple random sampling, yielding a total sample size of 262. Secondary school students were selected as they have sufficient exposure to academic demands, providing a stable and reliable group for assessing predictors of academic motivation.

Data were collected using standardised instruments to ensure validity and reliability. Peer influence was measured using the Peer Influence Scale (PIS) by Brown, Clasen, & Eicher (1986), which assesses peer academic norms, peer support, and peer pressure on school-related behaviours. Frequency of peer social activities was assessed using the Social Activities Questionnaire (SAQ) by Cairns & Cairns (1994), capturing time spent in peer group interactions and recreational activities. Academic motivation was measured with the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) by Vallerand et al. (1992), a widely validated instrument assessing intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation dimensions in students. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities, and permission was sought from school principals, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. Data were analysed using Pearson correlation to examine relationships between variables and multiple regression to determine both the joint and relative contributions of peer influence factors to academic motivation.

Result and Discussions

Demographic Representations of the Participants

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Participants

LGA	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Male (f)	Female (f)	Age 12–14 (f)	Age 15–17 (f)	Age 18+ (f)
Osogbo North	110	42.0	55	55	30	70	10
Osogbo South	85	32.4	42	43	25	50	10
Olorunda	67	25.6	33	34	20	40	7
Total	262	100.0	130	132	75	160	27

The table shows that the majority of participants were drawn from Osogbo North (42%), followed by Osogbo South (32.4%), and Olorunda (25.6%), reflecting variations in school sizes across the LGAs. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 130 males (49.6%) and 132 females (50.4%), indicating an almost equal representation of both sexes. Regarding age, the largest group of participants was aged 15–17 years (61.1%), followed by ages 12–14 years (28.6%), while only a small proportion were 18 years and above (10.3%). This distribution indicates that most participants were mid-adolescents, a developmental stage particularly relevant for examining peer influence and academic motivation.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Relationship between Peer Influence Variables and Academic Motivation

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, peer academic pressure, and the academic motivation of adolescents. A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Peer Influence Variables and Academic Motivation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Peer Academic Norms	1				
2. Peer Support for Schooling	0.56**	1			
3. Frequency of Peer Social Activities	-0.18*	-0.12	1		
4. Peer Academic Pressure	0.42**	0.37**	-0.10	1	
5. Academic Motivation	0.48**	0.52**	-0.22*	0.35**	1

The correlation results in Table 2 indicate significant positive relationships between peer academic norms ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), peer support for schooling ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), peer academic pressure ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), and academic motivation. In contrast, frequency of peer

social activities showed a significant negative correlation with academic motivation ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that supportive and academically oriented peer interactions enhance motivation, whereas higher engagement in social activities without academic focus may reduce motivation. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected.

The significant positive correlation between peer academic norms and academic motivation ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that students who perceive their peers as valuing academic success are more likely to be motivated in their own studies. This aligns with findings from Woreta et al. (2025), who demonstrated that peers' academic norms positively predicted students' academic engagement through mediators like self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The influence of peer norms can be attributed to social learning theory, which posits that individuals model behaviors observed in others, especially those they consider similar or influential. In the context of education, when students observe their peers prioritizing academic achievement, they are more likely to adopt similar behaviors, thereby enhancing their own academic motivation. This underscores the importance of fostering a culture of academic excellence within peer groups to promote motivation among students.

The strongest positive relationship observed was between peer support for schooling and academic motivation ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). This finding is consistent with recent studies, such as Zhu et al. (2025), which found that perceived peer support significantly predicted academic adjustment and motivation. Peer support encompasses emotional encouragement, academic assistance, and shared learning experiences, all of which contribute to a student's sense of belonging and competence. According to social support theory, such support can buffer against academic stress and enhance motivation by providing students with the resources and confidence needed to succeed. The presence of a supportive peer network can also foster a collaborative learning environment, where students feel more engaged and motivated to participate actively in their academic pursuits.

The positive correlation between peer academic pressure and academic motivation ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that some level of pressure from peers can serve as a motivator for students to enhance their academic performance. This finding is supported by Fudolin and Dioso (2025), who reported that peer pressure was positively associated with students' academic success, particularly when it encouraged healthy competition and adherence to academic standards. The

underlying mechanism may involve social comparison theory, where students evaluate their own academic abilities relative to their peers, leading to increased motivation to perform well. However, it's important to note that excessive or negative peer pressure can have detrimental effects, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that encourages academic excellence without inducing undue stress.

The negative correlation between the frequency of peer social activities and academic motivation ($r = -0.22, p < 0.05$) suggests that an increase in socializing with peers may detract from time and energy allocated to academic pursuits. This finding aligns with research by Fredricks and Eccles (2006), who found that unstructured peer interactions often compete with academic responsibilities. Excessive socializing can lead to distractions, procrastination, and a shift in priorities away from academic goals. Moreover, adolescents may place higher value on social acceptance and peer approval, which can diminish the perceived importance of academic achievement. This underscores the need for students to find a balance between social activities and academic responsibilities to maintain motivation and academic success.

Hypothesis 2: Joint Contribution of Peer Influence Variables to Academic Motivation

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant joint contribution of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to academic motivation. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Peer Influence Variables on Academic Motivation

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	0.69	0.47	0.46	56.30	<0.001

The multiple regression analysis, as shown in Table 3, revealed that peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure jointly accounted for 47% of the variance in academic motivation ($R^2 = 0.47, F(4, 257) = 56.3, p < 0.001$). This indicates that the four variables together exert a substantial influence on students' motivation in school, highlighting the importance of the peer environment as an interconnected system. One possible explanation is that these variables are conceptually related: peers who establish strong academic norms often provide support and encouragement for schooling, which can reinforce motivation, while peer academic pressure can amplify these effects by creating

expectations for achievement. Conversely, the frequency of peer social activities can moderate this influence, as excessive socialising may detract from time and attention devoted to academics.

The interconnected nature of these peer factors suggests that they do not operate in isolation but interact to shape students' academic behaviours and attitudes. For instance, a student in a peer group with strong academic norms and support may still experience reduced motivation if social activities dominate group interactions, but the positive effects of norms and support often outweigh the negative effects of socialising. This synergy between the IVs aligns with findings from recent studies in educational psychology, which emphasise that peer influences are multidimensional and jointly contribute to academic outcomes (Wentzel, 1999; Woreta, 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). Therefore, fostering a balanced peer environment - one that promotes supportive academic norms and moderate, goal-oriented pressure while managing non-academic socialization can effectively enhance adolescents' academic motivation.

Hypothesis 3: Relative Contribution of Peer Influence Variables to Academic Motivation

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relative contribution of peer academic norms, peer support for schooling, frequency of peer social activities, and peer academic pressure to academic motivation. The beta coefficients from the multiple regression model were examined.

Table 4: Relative Contributions of Peer Influence Variables to Academic Motivation

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Peer Academic Norms	0.28	0.05	0.29	5.10	<0.001
Peer Support for Schooling	0.33	0.05	0.34	6.20	<0.001
Frequency of Peer Social Activities	-0.14	0.05	-0.15	-2.80	0.006
Peer Academic Pressure	0.18	0.05	0.18	3.50	0.001

The relative contributions of the peer influence variables, as shown in Table 4, indicate that peer support for schooling ($\beta = 0.34$) and peer academic norms ($\beta = 0.29$) had the largest positive effects on academic motivation. This suggests that students who receive encouragement, guidance, and collaborative support from peers are most likely to experience enhanced motivation. Peer support directly facilitates access to academic resources, emotional reassurance, and practical advice, which can strengthen students' self-efficacy and commitment to learning. Likewise, strong academic norms within a peer group create expectations for success and model positive study behaviours, which students are likely to adopt. The prominence of these two

variables is consistent with social learning and social support theories, which emphasise that observational learning and supportive interactions are key drivers of motivation (Woreta, 2024; Zhu et al., 2025).

Peer academic pressure ($\beta = 0.18$) made a moderate contribution, indicating that some level of peer-driven expectations can encourage students to meet group standards and improve performance. This may work through social comparison mechanisms, where students are motivated to perform at levels comparable to their peers, or through the desire to maintain social approval within an academically oriented group. However, its effect is smaller than support and norms, possibly because excessive pressure can also induce stress or anxiety, limiting its positive influence. In contrast, frequency of peer social activities ($\beta = -0.15$) had a small but significant negative contribution, highlighting that time spent on non-academic socialising can detract from focus on learning tasks. While social interaction is important for emotional and social development, excessive engagement in recreational activities may reduce study time, attention, and goal-directed behaviours. Collectively, the results underscore that supportive and academically focused peer interactions are the most influential determinants of academic motivation, whereas unstructured social activities may hinder it.

Conclusion

The study revealed that peer influence significantly affects academic motivation among adolescents in public secondary schools in Osogbo. Specifically, peer support for schooling and peer academic norms were the strongest predictors, demonstrating that encouragement, guidance, and academically oriented peer behaviours positively enhance motivation. Peer academic pressure also contributed positively, though moderately, while frequent engagement in non-academic social activities negatively impacted motivation. These findings highlight that the peer environment functions as an interconnected system, where positive interactions and academic expectations foster motivation, whereas excessive recreational socialisation can hinder it. Overall, the study underscores the critical role of peers in shaping adolescents' academic engagement and goal-directed behaviours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, schools should encourage the development of peer-support programmes, mentorship schemes, and collaborative learning activities that promote academic norms. Educators and school administrators could facilitate workshops or group activities aimed at strengthening positive peer influence while monitoring excessive socialising that may detract from academic focus. Additionally, school policies should support structures where students can seek help, encouragement, and guidance from peers without experiencing harmful pressure. Parents can also be engaged to reinforce positive peer interactions and guide adolescents in balancing social and academic commitments.

Implication for Counselling Practice

Counsellors in schools can play a pivotal role in leveraging peer influence to enhance motivation. By identifying students who are positively or negatively affected by peer groups, school counsellors can provide targeted interventions, including peer mentoring, group counselling, and skill-building sessions on time management and goal-setting. Counsellors can also educate students on the importance of aligning social activities with academic goals and encourage the cultivation of supportive peer networks that reinforce learning behaviours. Moreover, understanding the dynamics of peer academic pressure allows counsellors to guide students in using it constructively rather than experiencing stress or anxiety.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Future research could explore peer influence and academic motivation across different cultural contexts and educational levels to examine whether similar patterns hold. Longitudinal studies could investigate how peer influence evolves over time and its sustained impact on motivation and academic outcomes. Additionally, studies could examine the role of digital peer networks, social media interactions, and online collaboration on academic motivation. Research could also investigate other potential moderators, such as personality traits, parental involvement, and teacher support, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping adolescents' academic motivation.

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