



Influence of Peer Group Relationships in Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in District Rahim Yar Khan

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Abstract

This research investigates the role of peer group relationship in determination of academic achievements of the students in secondary schools of Rahim Yar Khan. The aims are therefore not only to understand the relationship between peer influences on study behaviors and motivation, but also to evaluate the influence of peer relations on self-esteem and academic efficacy beliefs, as well as to explore the contribution of peer learning to effective learning achievements. Besides, the study aims at comparing effects of peer relationships on gender differences in the desired academic achievement and recommend how positive peer relationships can be promoted in a way that will lead to improvement of achievement. Participants were 230 teaching staffs and 380 students from different secondary schools in the district. The study shows that peer group relationships have a very bad effect on students' performance. About 80 percent of the teachers expressed an opinion that these relationships can result in high or low achievement respectively, based on the type of relationships developing between a teacher and a learner. Also, 85% of stated students recognized the impact of peers on students' academic performance, where they described different aspects of peers' involvement. Based on the study's findings, the researcher established that students' peer relations could greatly help promote their academic achievement in secondary schools. They revisit the importance of intervention and approach directed towards strengthening peer relations in order to increase learning outcomes in Rahim Yar Khan. All these findings help to explain the pattern of peer influence in educational settings and stress the need for creating positive peer contexts in school.

Keywords: *Peer group, Social Comparison Theory, Secondary school education*



Introduction

School peer relationships play a crucial role in determining the students' performance and social behaviors of the secondary school learners. In adolescence, the role of peers increases, cooperation/as well as competition can affect the motives, behaviors and academic achievements of students (Brown, 2020). Friendship can increase student's feelings of worth and relevance in school, increase their levels of participation in school activities; increase students' ability to engage in pro-academic peer interactions, and promote the sharing of knowledge which is beneficial in learners' academic achievement (Wentzel, 2016). On the other hand, unfavorable peer pressure may cause learning loss and poor academic performance. (Ryan, 2013).

It therefore becomes pertinent to look at how these factors play out, at the level of District Rahim Yar Khan, given its unique configurations of education problems and culture. According to research, peer relations are strongly related with student's learned belief that they can succeed academically and their motivational states that are important to the learning process (Schunk, 2016). Moreover, the distribution of gender influenced how students experienced and reacted to the general influence of peers and hence, deserves further research. (Miller, 2015).

This study aims to explore the influence of peer group relationships on the academic performance of secondary school students in District Rahim Yar Khan. By analyzing the nature of peer interactions and their effects on motivation, self-efficacy, and academic outcomes, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into fostering positive peer relationships that enhance educational success.

Statement of the Problem

It therefore becomes pertinent to look at how these factors play out, at the level of District Rahim Yar Khan, given its unique configurations of education problems and culture. According to research, peer relations are strongly related with student's learned belief that they can succeed academically and their motivational states that are important to the learning process (Schunk, 2016). Moreover, the distribution of gender influenced how students experienced and reacted to the general influence of peers and hence, deserves further research.



Significance of the Study

The present study has several important implications as a piece of research. First, it extends the understanding of the role of peer group processes in educational environment, with special regard to the specific cultural and educational context of District Rahim Yar Khan. Thus, understanding how relationships affect academic performance peer, this study seems to help teachers, school principals, school leaders and other policymakers in improving students Boatright (2009) Peer interactions. Second, an implication of these findings is to find specific preventive programs and approaches that can be implemented to prevent undesirable peer relationship and promote supportive and effective ones that can boost the motivation and efficiency of students, therefore there can be a general improvement of academic performance. Last but not the least, the knowledge of gender differences in peer relations will allow educators to develop interventions which target specific gender concerns and provide these students with appropriate solutions that will help to make learning process cozier and more productive. The implications from this study should be useful in offering tangible solutions that will enhance academic performance of secondary school students in the concerned region.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the character and characteristics of peer organization relationships amongst secondary School students in district Rahim Yar Khan.
2. To study the influence of peer group dynamics on the schoolwork habits and motivation of secondary school students in Rahim Yar Khan.
3. To analyze the validity of peers relations on the self-assurance and academic self-efficacy of secondary school students in the district.
4. To investigate the role of peer collaboration and support affect the educational accomplishment of students in district Rahim Yar Khan.
5. To assess any gender differences in the change of peer group relationships on educational accomplishment in district Rahim Yar Khan.

Literature Review

The development of small group success plays a major role in the efficacy and success of the school's academic achievement. It takes precedence over working with children one-on-one. Instructors must assist the work group in developing its cohesiveness and continuously resolving internal issues (George, 2020). Notwithstanding the numerous demands and



dynamic circumstances that impact them, a teacher's role is to assist every student in reaching their full potential. To achieve this, educators must establish a productive learning environment. They also become more knowledgeable and behave productively by having a thorough understanding of social interactions and group dynamics (Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021b).

Positive peer relationships characterized by guidance, trust, and friendship can decorate educational engagement and overall performance. Students who relate to their friends and receive emotional aid are more likely to be triumphant academically (Wiederhold, 2020). Ahmed et al. (2021) examined the influence of peer networks on mental fitness results among School students in Punjab, Pakistan. The observation determined that peer help and social connections were vital protective factors in opposition to mental fitness problems, highlighting the role of peers in selling intellectual well-being amongst teenagers in Punjab. Also, the Social Support Theory points to a great emphasis on peer help and spar between non-kin intimacy, both within the general population and specifically with friendship in the instructional context. This theory focuses on a particular place that a human being is related to. Providing supportive, advice, and support-cum-information related assistance to people. Within peer Businesses, students can gain encouragement and direction from friends who can help them in their work. Can embellish the instructional motivation, resilience and well-being of teachers and students. Positive peers for each of the students and teachers establishes the aspect of quality in the relationship of trust and mutual obligation in a supportive educational. Culture in which students feel the value and are capable of becoming victorious (Herrman et al., 2022).

Family values and beliefs include respect for the elderly and following acceptable societal norms. sex stereotype, or gender roles, can affect relationships with peers as well as social behaviors in the school. setting. Further, people's contributions or Community impact and socio-economic differences can play a role the structure of voluntary associations arising out of ethnic origins, interests and social class status, which define the interaction of School students' peer groups (Clark et al., 2020).

However, students' peer support and friendship in learning environment can also improve their education and achievement. Prosocial peer relations, which included trust and cooperation, understanding, support, body, and fellowship foster the culture of success within academe success. On the other hand, peer rivalry and benchmarking may also define a peer



group occur in the context of development, and where positive competition is a student's driving force to achieve their goal; on the other hand, a negative comparison is when students are in competition or racing against one another or competition becomes a source of tension conflict and rivalry among individuals in peer groups. It further contributes to production, relatively concentrated and highlights the multiple relationships between students and information about the factors that may be inherent in learning of such students (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The Role of Peer Group Relationships

There is no doubt today that peer group relationships are one of the most significant variables in determining academic success and development of adolescents. Past studies suggest that affiliations can through positive interactions prompt positive attitudes towards, activity in, and performance on, the learning process (Wentzel, 2016). In disaster situations, children benefit from the consolation of like-minds in peer-groups to feel that they belong somewhere especially at the junior secondary education level as noted by Brown, 2020. For example, research has found that students who think so and so of their classmates are more likely to exhibit good academic attitudes which include regular attendance at school and active participation in class. (Schunk, 2016).

Negative Influences of Peer Groups

On the other hand, negative peer pressure results in negative consequences for the students' performance. Ryan (2013) points out that whenever students mingle with peers with negative behaviors including truancy or low motivation, then they are also likely to adopt similar behaviors degrading their academic performance. Also, peer pressure creates tension and confusion between academic achievements and social status where students are forced to make decision which is damaging the educational dreams. (Miller, 2015).

Gender Differences in Peer Dynamics

Sexuality also has a very significant influence on peer relations. Studies indicate that boys and girls of the same age replicate different ways of behaving and feeling about peer pressure. For instance, boys will choose to compete and dominate their peers, while girls will better emphasize relationships and encouragement (Brown & Larson, 2009). This divergence can result in diverse effects on academic motivation /achievement based on how gender influences peer relations, there is a need to understand the moderating effects of gender on peer relations. (Miller, 2015).



Contextualizing Peer Influence in Rahim Yar Khan

The literature related to District Rahim Yar Khan is however scarce, which emphasizes the importance of such regional research. It would also help educators and policymakers to know the specific-types of students in this region due to Erasmus-Socrates cultural and social understandings of development. This study therefore seeks to address this research question how peer group relationship affects the academic achievement of secondary school students in District Rahim Yar Khan.

Research Methodology

This research used a descriptive research design for the purpose of finding out the role of peer group relationship towards overall achievement of secondary schools’ students in District Rahim Yar Khan. On the basis of a quantitative design, information was gathered using self-developed structured questionnaires with 230 respondents from 34 public secondary school teachers and 380 respondents from the students. The teachers’ questionnaires had 25 questions, while students’ questionnaires had 40 questions, and response options were on a 5-point Likert scale. There was ‘device collection’ part though it wasn’t data collection rather data collection was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze the results of descriptive (mean, standard deviation, percentage, and frequency) and inferential statistics (t-tests and one-way ANOVA) to infer the relationship between peer dynamics and their grade performance.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information of Teachers.

Table 1
 Gender Wise Distribution of Teachers Sample.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	160	69.6
Female	70	30.4
Total	230	100.0

Table 1 shows that most teachers 69.6% were male and 30.4% were female.



Table 2
Locality-Wise Distribution of Teachers Sample.

Locality	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	94	40.9
Urban	136	59.1
Total	230	100

Table 2 presents that 59.1% of teachers are from urban areas and 40.1% are from rural areas.

Findings The findings of this research study are given below.

Findings of Teacher's Data

- **69%** of teachers agree that peer group relationships have a significant influence on academic performance.
- **87%** of teachers agree that students who have positive peer relationships tend to perform better academically.
- **94%** agree that negative peer influence can have a detrimental effect on student's academic performance.
- **90%** of teachers agree that peer pressure can lead students to engage in behavior that is detrimental to their academic success.
- **94%** of teachers agree that students who are part of a supportive peer group are likely to excel academically.
- **92%** of teachers agree that teachers should actively promote positive peer interactions and create a supportive classroom.
- **96%** agree on peer group influence can also extend to extracurricular activities and involvement in school events.
- **84%** agree on it is important for teachers to address any negative peer group behavior or conflict that may be impacting students' academic progress.
- **91%** of teachers agree that students who are isolated or have negative peer relationships may struggle academically.
- **84%** agree that peer relationship can contribute to a student's overall sense of belonging and connection to the school community, influence academic motivation.
- **93%** agree that collaboration with school counselors and support staff can help address peer issues.
- **86%** of teachers agree that peer group influence can impact a student's level of stress.



- **91%** agree that peer group relationships play a role in shaping a student's aspirations and goals.
- **88%** agree that students may feel pressure to conform to their peer groups, which can impact their own academic performance.
- **87%** agree that peer group does change fundamental values of students.
- **96%** agree that peer group influence on character building both positive and negative.
- **97%** agree that basic conception of secondary school students is based on peer group relationship.
- **91%** agree on students who are isolated or have negative peer relationships may struggle academically.
- **94%** agree on peer group dynamics can influence a student's study habits and approach to learning.
- **95%** agree on peer group relationship can impact a student's motivation and attitude toward school.
- **93 %**.are. Agree on teachers play a crucial role in helping students peer relationship and their impact on academic performance.
- **94%** agree on peer group dynamics can either hinder or enhance a student's ability to focus and succeed in school.
- **86%** agree that it is important for teachers to be aware of the peer group that students are involved in and how it may affect their academic performance.
- **85%** are agree on collaboration with parents and other educators can help to address negative peer influence
- **87%** of teachers agree on Peer groups do change the fundamental values of the pupils. But 2.2% of teachers are neutral and 0.4% disagree on this opinion.
- **87%** of teachers agree on students who have positive relationships with their peers tend to perform better academically.
- **93%** of teachers agree on Peer group relationships have a strong influence on academic performance.
- **94%** of teachers agree on Collaborating with peers on school projects can positively impact academic performance.
- **96%** of teachers agree on Peer group relationships have a strong influence on academic performance.



- 99% of teachers agree on Negative peer influences can lead to a decline in academic achievement.
- 97% of teachers agree pupils who have supportive and successful peers tend to perform better academically
- 97% of teachers agree pupils who have supportive and successful peers tend to perform better academically
- 94% of teachers agree on engaging in study groups with peers can improve academic performance. But 11% teachers who are neutral on this opinion
- 95% of teachers agree peer group acceptance and social approval can impact academic motivation.
- 95% of teachers agree on engaging in study groups with peers can improve academic performance. But 4.3% teachers who are neutral and 0.4% are disagree this opinion
- 95% of teachers agree on engaging in study groups with peers can improve academic performance.
- 97% of teachers agree pupils who have supportive and successful peers tend to perform better academically.
- 95% of teachers agree on Students who have supportive and successful peers tend to perform better academically
- 97% of teachers agree on Teachers must cover lengthy content with a limited time barrier in critical thinking
- 93% of teachers agree on teacher play a vital role in fostering peer relationships among students.
- 81% of teachers agree on group work and peer interactions are key parts of my teaching strategy. But 8% of teachers who are neutral on this opinion
- **Findings of Students' Data are given below**
- 70% of students agree that peer group greatly help students in creating conducive environment for pupils.
- 39.6 % Students agree and 30.1 % are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations.
- 43.3 % of students agree and 27.7 % are strongly agree which reveals that peer groups cooperate effectively with students to fulfil their basic needs by different ways.



- **32.9 %** students agree and **25.8 %** are strongly agree which reveals that Students sometimes feel excluded or left out by their peer group, affecting their academic performance
- **32.9 %** students agree and **25.8 %** strongly agree which reveals that peer groups relationships have no impact on students' academic performance.
- **67%** of students agree on students can support each other in their academic pursuits without fostering unhealthy competition.
- **62%** of students agree that students should be cautious of negative peer influence that may lead to academic dishonesty.
- **74.3%** of students agree that peer relationships can influence a student's study habits and work ethic.
- **75 %** of students agree that positive peer relationships contribute to a student's overall wellbeing and success in school.
- **73.4%** of students agree that students should base their friendship solely on academic performance.
- **72.1%** of students agree that students perform better academically when they study alone.
- **73%** of students agree that jealousy and competition among peers can negatively affect academic performance.
- **76.8%** of students agree that students should actively seek out positive and supportive peer relationships to enhance their academic success.
- **72.7%** of students agree that peer group relationships outside school can have a positive impact on academic performance.
- **78.1%** of students agree that students should establish a healthy balance between socializing with peers and focusing on academic.
- **80.4%** of students agree that social media and technology can negatively impact on peer group relationships and academic performance.
- **73.7%** of students agree that students should support each other in their academic pursuits.
- **76.8%** of students agree that teacher's proactive measures to address student's welfare and mental health positively influence student's overall performance.
- **78.8%** of students agree that students should choose friends who prioritize academic success.



- **73.2%** of students agree that negative peer relationships can hinder a student's academic success.
- **78.5%** of students agree that peer group relationships have no impact on students' academic performance.
- **80.2%** of students agree that peer relationships enhance moral and spiritual improvements.
- **77.6%** of students agree that peer group relationship have a substantial influence on the academic performance of secondary school students.
- **82.3%** of students agree that social, political, moral and behavior changes due to positive peer relationships.
- **73.3%** of students agree that motivation for hard work and spending life to serve the human being.
- **75.9%** of students agree that having supportive friends in your peer group positively influence student's academic performance.
- **39.8%** agree and **36.1%** are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations
- **40.1%** agree and **43.6%** are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations. But 13.4% students believe in neutral and 2.6% are disagree on these perspectives by peer groups
- **36.9%**agree and **42.2 %** are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations. But 18.3% students believe in neutral and 2.6% are disagree in these perspectives by peer groups
- **35.2%** agree and **48%** are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations. But 13 % students believe in neutral and 4.1% are disagree in these perspectives by peer groups
- **35.6%** agree and **50%** strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations. But 11 % of students believe in neutral in this perspectives by peer groups.
- **32%** agree and **59%** are strongly agree which reveals that students get different tools to adopt grades in learning by peer motivations. But 7 % students believe in neutral in this perspectives by peer groups



Positive impacts

- **Positive Peer Influence:** Studies indicate that students in academically oriented peer groups tend to perform better academically. Peer groups that emphasize educational success and support each other's learning can significantly enhance academic outcomes (Kuh et al., 2006). This suggests that in Rahim Yar Khan, schools with strong peer support systems might see improved academic performance among students.
- **Increased Motivation:** Peer groups that provide encouragement and support can boost students' motivation to excel academically. In Rahim Yar Khan, peer groups that promote academic achievement and create a culture of mutual support are likely to enhance student engagement and effort
- **Boost in Self-Efficacy:** Positive interactions within peer groups can strengthen students' belief in their academic abilities. Peer feedback and support contribute to higher self-efficacy, which is linked to better academic performance
- **Improved Study Habits:** Collaborative peer groups often share effective study strategies and learning techniques, leading to better academic performance. Students in Rahim Yar Khan who participate in group study sessions might benefit from diverse perspectives and enhanced learning strategies
- **Emotional Support:** Peer groups can provide crucial emotional support, helping students manage academic stress and challenges. In Rahim Yar Khan, strong peer networks might contribute to better coping mechanisms and overall academic well-being.
- **Negative impacts**
- **Decreased Motivation:** If peer groups prioritize social activities or exhibit low academic aspirations, students might experience reduced motivation. This phenomenon could be relevant in Rahim Yar Khan if peer groups are more focused on non-academic activities.
- **Negative Peer Influence:** Conversely, peer groups that devalue academics or engage in negative behaviors can detract from students' academic performance. Peer pressure and the need to conform to group norms can lead to lower academic achievement
- **Reduced Self-Efficacy:** Negative peer comparisons or lack of support can lower academic self-efficacy. Students who feel less competent compared to their peers may struggle with self-confidence, affecting their academic performance



Discussion and Conclusion

The study focuses on peer relationships and shows much was contributed to the self-esteem and academic self-efficacy of secondary school students. In the case of positive peer interaction, students are encouraging because students also feel that they belong to a group that will help them. When students feel accepted, they get a positive perception of themselves which in turn brings positive better performance in class. On the other hand, negative peer pressure may have a detrimental effect on performance since students may set low goals and or drop out. Hence, parenting peer relationships that are positive and productive are the most appropriate to enhance learning achievement.

Combined with this, the discussion also establishes that peer groups are a double edge sword as much as performance is concerned. In group study one gets crew- dent study habits while group study motivation Which peers share high educational values inspire others in ways of excellence. Nevertheless, negative peer pressure and distraction reduce academic achievement motivation while compromising the self-efficacy beliefs. Constructed peer relationships should be encouraged, and detrimental bitterness within groups should be discouraged so as to create a favorable environment for mutual academic-learner benefits.

Recommendation

- Make sure the activities of your peer group are productive and focused by keeping an eye on them. When addressing any problems or disputes, provide directions as needed.
- Establish networks of support, such as educators or counselors, to help peer groups facing academic difficulties by providing guidance and support.
- Make sure your peer groups are inclusive and diverse so that all children may participate and gain from their interactions with others.
- Encourage the importance of varied viewpoints in study groups to improve learning and problem-solving abilities.
- To avoid impeding academic achievement, offer tools and assistance for settling disputes among peer groups.
- Be aware of any negative peer influences and address them promptly to maintain a positive and productive learning environment.



Suggestion for future research

- The future research should be at higher secondary level or School level as well as university level including teachers, administration, students.
- Further research can be on a broad regional level.
- By varying different parameters of analyzing data from field should be improved.

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