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**Influence of Peer Groups Based on Socio-Economic Factors on Academic Performance of Students in Junior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the influence of peer groups based on socio-economic factors on academic performance of students in junior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Three objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The research design adopted was descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 54,102 students in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 400 students. There were 180 male students and 220 female students. This was selected using the simple random sampling technique. Self-Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated using 2 experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation. The study adopted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that gender, school type, study habit, parental income and parental level of education have significant influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that government and non-governmental organization should organize seminar programmes for the students on how to avoid peer group influence based on gender, school management, through the counsellor should always counsel the students on how to avoid peer group influence based on school type and government and non-governmental organization should organize awareness and seminar programmes for the students on the dangers of peer group influence based on students' study habit.*

**Keywords:** *Influence, Peer Groups, Socio-Economic Factors, Academic Performance*

**INTRODUCTION**

Peer Group means a small group of friends which have close relations with each other and they have regular interactions. They share views and exchange ideas with each other and do activities in groups. When children take steps into stages of adolescence, they spend a large amount of time with their friends as compared to their parents. Peer group is a group of people who are equal in some way. Those in a peer group have the same status and are about the same age (Agozie, 2018). Udoh (2018) note that peer group is both a social and a primary group of individuals. Peer group may be defined as a group of individuals through homophile who shares similarities such as age, background, social and political affiliations.

Peer groups influence individual's socialization directly as well as indirectly. Social reinforcement is the best example. If beliefs and behavior of peer group are once discouraged or negatively received, their redisplaying become difficult or even impossible, but positive acceptance or encouragement to beliefs and behavior can arouse these beliefs and behaviours once again with other friends. But sometimes the ways of influencing are less direct. For instance, modeling process like commitment to do assignment, voicing to a belief, engaging in school new activities etc. these modeling process can bring positive or negative change in the behavior of peer group. Gossiping, teasing, humor, communication, sharing experiences, exchanging information, interaction with each other's and even motivation in activity based engagement at school for peer influences.

Peer group plays an important part throughout one's life. It is more crucial during the developmental years of learners. The child's peer group consists of people or individuals that are within an age bracket. The school serves as the primary setting for the membership of a peer group. They may be in the same class. The educational foundation of a child starts right from the home in an informal way before the child is sent to school for formal education. At school, the child is exposed to classmates, teachers and peers (Ryan, 2022). They all influence the child in one way or the other. The peer group is therefore the first social group outside the home which the child interacts with. Each peer group has its code of conduct which may not always conform to advanced standard.

Peers who are interested in academic issues are more likely to associate with fellow peers who have same interest. They study together, sharing materials and information with fellow peers who are motivated to learn. For instance, it has been noted by Rubin, Coplan, Chen and Bowker (2015) that students who form positive peer group make more effort during learning. However, Ryan (2022) argues that those students who are identified as jock popular perceive more pressure in the area of social involvement than pressure towards misconduct. Peer group according to Bankole and Ogunsakin (2016) provides a sense of security and helps adolescents to ask questions relating to social identity theory such as trying to find out who they are, and what they want out of life. Many peer groups can exert a positive influence on their friends. It is thought that intelligent students do help their peers by bringing up their academic performances.

Peer groups are significant in students' academic performance at different stages of education. It is highly influential for, pre-reading, linguistic skills and high level of commitment for education and training which influence the individual's educational and professional attainments. The results of different research studies have strongly linked higher-achiever to high achievements (Alvarado & Turly, 2017). Peer pressure is a pervasive phenomenon that affects adolescents, particularly during the junior secondary school phase. As students transition from primary to secondary education, they face various social challenges, including peer influence. This background study aims to provide an overview of the existing literature on the impact of peer pressure on academic performance.

### **Concept of Peer Group**

A peer group consists of people or individuals that are within ages that are close in years, for instance between range of one to four years, the school serves as primary setting for the membership of peer group, they may be in the same class, the same sex and close interaction is of equals (Levitas, 2021). It is generally observed that peer group has a lot of influence on students. This is seen from the role-played by the peer group in the life and learning of a child, it is believed that students feel more comfortable and relaxed among fellow students. A child who is brilliant and surrounded by dull friends would lose interest in learning. Peer pressure is influence that a peer group, observers or individuals exert to encourage others to change their attitudes, values or behaviors and conform to the group norms. Peer pressure is the influence of a social group on an individual. Bobbies and Elhaney, (2015) indicate that peer pressure refers to the way the people of the of the same social group act or believe in order to influence one another, often in negative ways.

Peer pressure is something everybody has to deal with at sometimes in one's life. How successful one handles peer pressure depends to the individuals self concept and position in the world (Hardcastle, 2022). Peer pressure is defined as when persons' desire to or not to (Ryan 2020 in Uche 2020). Peer pressure comprises a set of group dynamics where by a group in which one feels comfortable may override personal habits, individual moral inhibitions or idiosyncratic desires to impose a group norm of attitudes or behavior.

Peer pressure may have a positive influence and help to or motivate us to do our best. Peer pressure may also result in people doing things that may not fit with their sense of what is right and wrong (Black, 2022). Peer pressure may be influence in a number of ways: fashion choice, alcohol and smoking and other drugs use, decision to have a boyfriend/girlfriend, choice of who our friends, organizing and extending parties. Peer pressure may be pressure in the work place, at school or within the general community. It can effect people of all ages and backgrounds.

### **Influence of Gender on Academic Performance of Students**

Education is undoubtedly the greatest instrument in which mankind has devised for his own progress and development in all its ramifications. Our societies have one form of education or another, utilising the knowledge in varying degrees. It is often considered the only way of being recognised as elite in the society, failure of which may bring untold hardship and frustration to the individual. Education commences at birth and progresses throughout one's life. Schooling begins averagely at the ages of three and six years, when children are gathered together for the purpose of specific guidance related to skills and competencies that society deems important. Previously, once the former primary, secondary and post-secondary schooling were completed, the process was terminated. However, in contemporary information age, adults are quite often learning in informal setting throughout their working lives and even into retirement (Agina-Obu, Amakiri & Emesiobi, 2021).

Globalization is a broad and complex concept; Optimists view it as a novel source of optimism in the world. Globalization has radically changed the globe in every aspect of life. But it has specifically transformed the global economy which has become increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent. Beside this, it makes the world economy increasingly competitive and more knowledge based, especially in the developed western nations. Global education interconnects techniques of teaching from worldwide systems to encourage the international development of environmental sustainability, as well as contribution toward fortifying global industries (Gupta, 2017). Educational initiatives prioritize world access to school from primary to university levels, inculcating learning experiences that prepare students for multinational leadership roles. Education is the bedrock to global stability, the development of multicultural awareness from an early age may integrate ideologies sourced from various societies in order to arrive at well balanced conclusions regarding issues that surround the world as a whole. Globalization vis-a-vis education influences one another through mutual goals of preparing young people for successful futures during which their countries will grow increasingly connected (Bakhtiari, 2017).

Globalization transcends the boundaries of space and time. Utilizing advanced Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), a new system of knowledge, education and learning should use wide ranges of synchronous and asynchronous activities that help teachers and students in breaking boundaries of space and time (Scholte, 2018). In the past years, the researches into the factors that influence academic performance of Students have attracted the interest and concern of Teachers, Counsellors, Psychologists, Researchers and School Administrators. This is as a result of the public outcries concerning the abysmal academic performance in the country. Nuthana and Yenagi (2019) reported that students' academic achievement occupies a very paramount place in education as well as in the learning process. It is considered as a key parameter to judge one's total potentialities and capacities, which are frequently measured by the outcomes of examinations. It is used to assess the quality of education offered by academic institutions. Contemporarily, it is still the most topical debate in citadels of learning that poses great concern to Educators, Educationists and Researchers due to the poor examination achievement of students.

Young people in their adolescence deliberately join different peer groups and identify themselves with these groups by participating in their activities in order not to be rejected. Peer group is a source of great influence during the time of adolescence (Majeed, 2020). In a modern society, peer groups have become an increasingly important context in which adolescents spend time. Modernization has resulted to age segregation in school, work place, and in the community. The length of time one spends with friends plays a vital roles in the development of the adolescent into the mature adult (Tome, Margarida, Celeste & Joao, 2022). Most adolescents spends much of their time with the members of their peer groups. They follow the ideals of the group; they would want to be fully accepted. Nothing can be more devastating to the adolescents than to be rejected by their age mates. Adolescents are mostly influenced by their peers in ways that their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are conditioned by what is conceived to be okay by other people (Valentine, 2018).

Gender according to Pollard and Morgan (2022) refers to the socially constructed expectation for male and female behaviour which prescribes a division of labour and responsibilities between males and females granting of different rights and obligation to them. Gender also describes social and historical constructs for masculine and feminine roles, behaviours, attributes and ideologies, which connote some notion of biological sex (Azikiwe, 2021).

1. **Shared Characteristics:** Members of a peer group often have similar backgrounds, social or economic status, and shared interests. This similarity creates a natural bond that can influence each member's behavior and attitudes.
2. **Social Influence:** Peer groups can significantly shape an individual's behavior, values, and identity, especially in adolescent years. Members often emulate each other, adopting similar attitudes and behaviors to fit in and gain acceptance.
3. **Primary Social Group:** Peer groups are usually a person's primary group for emotional and social support, especially during developmental stages. The support and feedback from these groups can impact personal growth and social skills, such as teamwork, empathy, and leadership.
4. **Sense of Belonging:** Being part of a peer group provides members with a sense of belonging, helping them form an identity within the group. This belonging is crucial for self-esteem and social confidence, particularly during teenage years when identity formation is key.

Peer group influence on academic performance varies based on gender, with some studies suggesting that male students are more susceptible to negative peer influence, while female students may be more influenced by positive peer relationships. However, research also indicates that peer influence can be positive for both genders, especially as students progress through their academic careers (Anwata, 2023).

### **Influence of School Type on Academic Performance of Students**

Peer groups can have a significant impact on students' academic performance, with the nature of this impact varying based on school type. Positive peer influence can lead to increased motivation, better study habits, and higher grades, while negative influence can result in disengagement, truancy, and lower academic outcomes (Bassey, 2020). The specific impact is influenced by factors like the overall academic climate of the school, the types of activities the peer group engages in, and the level of support and encouragement provided by the group. Peer group influence is a complex factor that can significantly impact students' academic performance. Understanding the potential for both positive and negative influences, and how these are shaped by school type and other factors, is crucial for educators and parents who want to support students' academic success.

### **Influence of Study Habit on Academic Performance of Students**

Educational activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives which can be evaluated through recipient's academic achievement. Academic achievement refers to how well students accomplish the tasks and studies (Scotts, 2022). Grades are indicators of academic achievement. Grades are the student's score for their classes and overall tenure (Nwigbo, 2014). Grades are most often a tallying or average of assignment and test scores and may often be affected by factors such as class attendance, an instructor's opinion about the students, and peer group. Grading systems vary greatly by country and school; common scales include a percentage from 1-100, lettering systems from A-F, and grade point averages (GPA) from 0-4.0 or above. According to Ward, Stocker and Murray-Ward (2016) academic achievement refers to the outcome of education; the extent to which the students, teachers or institutions have achieved their educational goals. In the context of this study, academic achievement refers to the extent to which students have achieved mastery of the objective of the subjects they are exposed to in school. The grades indicating such achieved mastery appear to be consistently on the decline in the past decade, a situation that reflects poor academic achievement.

Some factors identified as causes of poor academic performance include; poor teaching methods adopted by teachers, lack of adequate facilities like libraries, poor classroom condition, peer group influence among others (WAEC, 2021). Welsh (2014) has also affirmed that the attitude of some teachers to their job, and the peer group influence affected students' academic performance. In support of Welsh Azubuikwe (2016) posited that peer group influence is one of the major factors affecting students' academic performance. This is because peers often follow their classmates wherever they may go.

Peers could be referred to as persons of equal standing with another; persons who are equal to others in age in social class (Hardcastle, 2022). Peer group often pressurise their members to take decisions. This is what is referred to as peer pressure (Hartney, 2022) Peer pressure therefore implies the

process the peers use to influence themselves to do something that they might not otherwise choose to do. Peer pressure is emotional or mental pressure from people belonging to the same social group (such as age, grade or status) to act or behave in a manner similar to themselves (Weinfied, 2021). Furthermore, Jones (2021) defined peer pressure as the ability of people from the same social rank or age to influence another of the same age bracket.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It was observed by the researcher that if adolescents are friends with secondary school dropouts, they have tendency to be absent minded towards school. Attitudes and aspiration of peer as well as peers expectations affects the standard of individual's achievement in school. It is against this background that the researcher conceives the idea to investigate Influence of peer group on the academic performance of junior secondary schools students in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Some key elements that could shape the statement of the problem are Influence of Peer Groups on Academic Outcomes: Peer groups can significantly shape student attitudes, behaviours, and motivations. However, the impact of these influences whether positive or negative on academic performance is not well-defined, creating a need to understand how peer relationships contribute to or hinder student success.

As students spend substantial time with their peers, the guidance of parents and teachers is often limited. This situation makes students vulnerable to adopting peer group behaviours that may not align with academic goals, leading to poor performance in some cases. Peer pressure may prompt students to conform to behaviors that conflict with academic success. This study seeks to explore how pressure to fit in impacts learning outcomes and whether negative influences can be mitigated through supportive interventions.

Current educational strategies often overlook the role of peer groups in academic performance. This gap in policy highlights a need for insights that could inform new approaches to leverage positive peer influence within the school environment. By addressing these issues, the study aims to bridge the gap between academic theories on peer influence and practical interventions that schools can implement to improve educational outcomes.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the influence of peer groups based on socio-economic factors on the academic performance of students in junior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis. In specific terms, the study intends to:

1. Determine the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. Examine the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis
3. Investigate the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. What is the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. What is the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

### RESEARCH METHOD

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research was designed only to solve the existing condition but also used for comparing features of a group. According to Nzeneri (2020), descriptive survey deals with what is happening at present and it handles situational problems as they are without manipulation of variables and also allows the researcher to make recommendations based on findings from the data collected and analysed. The population for the study comprised 54,102 students in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State. There were 39,458 students in Obio/Akpor while 14,644 students for Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The available data shows that we have 24,680 male students and 29,422 female students for the 2 local government. The sample size of the study was 400 students. There were 180 male students and 220 female students. This was selected using the simple random sampling technique to select the sample size. This figure was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The instrument for data collection for this study was structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Peer Group on the Academic Performance Students Questionnaire (IPGAPSQ)". The questionnaire contained section "A" and "B" which was made up of options. The questionnaire was pattern using four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) options, to test the research question raised. The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis, weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The criterion decision rule is that any mean score that was from 2.50 and above is accepted, while the mean score that is less than 2.50 is rejected. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test transformation at 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULT AND DISCUSION

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

S/ No	Questionnaire Items	Male Students = 180			Female Students = 220		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Members of a peer group often have similar backgrounds, social or economic status, and shared interests	2.89	0.85	Agree	2.95	0.86	Agree
2	Peer support alleviate academic stress, enhance self-belief in academic abilities, and promote better learning adaptation	2.86	0.83	Agree	2.86	0.84	Agree
3	Positive peer relationships of the same-gender are important predictors of academic	2.78	0.83	Agree	2.91	0.85	Agree

	achievement and tend to achieve more						
4	In some cases, exposure to more female peers can increase graduation rates for male students	2.83	0.84	Agree	2.82	0.84	Agree
5	Peer groups can significantly shape an individual's behaviour, values, and identity	2.86	0.84	Agree	2.86	0.84	Agree
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.84</b>		<b>2.88</b>	<b>0.85</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 presents that items 1 to 5 have means of 2.89, 2.86, 2.78, 2.83, 2.86 for male students with standard deviations ranging from 0.85 to 0.84 and means of 2.95, 2.86, 2.91, 2.82, 2.86 for female students with standard deviations ranging from 0.86 to 0.84 which indicate "Agree" on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Also, the grand means for male and female students are 2.84 and 2.88 respectively, further confirming a "Agree" on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. So, it is found that peer group has both positive and negative influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis based on gender.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

S/No	Questionnaire Items	Male Students = 180			Female Students = 220		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
6.	Peer groups can offer emotional and academic support, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging students to stay motivated and engaged in their studies	2.89	0.85	Agree	2.95	0.86	Agree
7.	Students are influenced to adopt better study habits such as forming study groups, seeking help from peers	2.86	0.83	Agree	2.86	0.84	Agree
8.	Peer groups help students develop social skills, build confidence and learn to navigate interpersonal relationships	2.78	0.83	Agree	2.91	0.85	Agree
9.	Students are surrounded by peers who value education and encourage academic success	2.83	0.84	Agree	2.82	0.84	Agree
10.	Negative peer pressure lead to a lack of interest in school, truancy, and involvement in disruptive	2.86	0.84	Agree	2.86	0.84	Agree



## Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

**Table 4: t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

	F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	$\alpha$ -value	Decision
Equal variances assumed	15.599	.123	11.985	398	.097	.050	H <sub>0</sub>
Equal variances not assumed			11.985	781.568	.097	.050	Not Rejected

Table 4 presents that equal variances assumed has  $t = 11.985$ ,  $df = 798$ , and 2-tailed  $p = 0.097$ . Therefore the null hypothesis 1 that “there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis” is not rejected as  $t(798) = 11.985$ , 2-tailed  $p = 0.097 > \alpha = 0.05$ . Thus, the respondents agreed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 4: t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

	F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	$\alpha$ -value	Decision
Equal variances assumed	1.085	.298	4.251	398	.107	.050	H <sub>0</sub>
Equal variances not assumed			4.251	796.709	.107	.050	Not Rejected

The information in table 5 shows that equal variances assumed has  $t = 4.251$ ,  $df = 798$ , and 2-tailed  $p = 0.107$ . Thus, the null hypothesis 2 that “there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis” is not rejected as  $t(798) = 4.251$ , 2-tailed  $p = 0.107 > \alpha = 0.05$ . This implies that respondents are in agreement that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

**Table 6: t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

	F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	$\alpha$ -value	Decision
Equal variances assumed	15.599	.123	11.985	798	.097	.050	H <sub>0</sub>
Equal variances not assumed			11.985	781.568	.097	.050	Not Rejected

Table 6 presents that equal variances assumed has  $t = 11.985$ ,  $df = 798$ , and 2-tailed  $p = 0.097$ . Therefore the null hypothesis 3 that “there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis” is not rejected as  $t(798) = 11.985$ , 2-tailed  $p = 0.097 > \alpha = 0.05$ . Thus, the respondents agreed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one: What is the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis revealed that there is significant influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The corresponding hypothesis 1 was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of gender on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This study is in the same view with the Anwata (2023) who noted that peer group influence on academic performance varies based on gender, with some studies suggesting that male students are more susceptible to negative peer influence, while female students may be more influenced by positive peer relationships. However, research also indicates that peer influence can be positive for both genders, especially as students' progress through their academic careers. Peer group is a social and primary group of people who have identical interests, age, background or social status. Members of this group are likely to affect the person's beliefs and behaviour; peer groups possess hierarchies and distinct behavioural patterns. Peer group pressure are divided into two, which could be positive or negative. In a modern society, peer groups have become an increasingly important context in which adolescents spend time. Modernization has resulted to age segregation in school, work place, and in the community.

The findings in research questions two: What is the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis showed that there is significant influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The corresponding hypothesis 2 was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of school type on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The finding is in the same vein with Bassey (2020), who noted that Peer groups can have a significant impact on students' academic performance, with the nature of this impact varying based on school type. Positive peer influence can lead to increased motivation, better study habits, and higher grades, while negative influence can result in disengagement, truancy, and lower academic outcomes. The specific impact is influenced by factors like the overall academic climate of the school, the types of activities the peer group engages in, and the level of support and encouragement provided by the group. Peer group influence is a complex factor that can significantly impact students' academic performance. Understanding the potential for both positive and negative influences, and how these are shaped by school type and other factors, is crucial for educators and parents who want to support students' academic success.

The finding in research questions three: What is the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis indicated that study habit has influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The corresponding hypothesis 3 was accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of study habit on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This study is in collaboration with Izuchukwu (2019) who observed that, study habits are the behaviours adopted by the students especially when preparing for tests or learning academic material. He also explained that study habits are the habitual practices one use to help oneself to study and learn. Good study habits can help students achieve and/or maintain good grades. Study habits include, finding a quiet location to study, taking breaks, jotting down notes while reading, setting goals, and taking practice tests among others. Azubuike (2021) stated that peer pressure can affect students study habit in the positive way

when students organize themselves to form reading clubs and reading groups where everyone is carried along.

### Conclusion

The influence of peer groups based on socio-economic factors on academic performance of students in junior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis cannot be over emphasized. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that gender, school type, study habit, parental income and parental level of education have significant influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study also deduced that peer influence can mobilise students' energy and motivate for success. Peers can act as positive role models. Noting that if a student is influenced negatively, it affects his academic performance. Stronger students do have some impact on their peers and improves the overall academic performance. Attitudes and aspirations of peers as well as peer expectations and standards affect individual effort and achievement in school. From the sociological point of view, peer group is the aggregation of youths of approximately the same age level and status. A peer group as member of individuals bound together by purpose or abilities. Thus, members of a group perceive themselves to be alike in significant ways and a peer group comes into being because its members have common goals, interests and motivations.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to ensure that the study meet its objectives.

The following recommendations were made by the researcher.

1. Government and non-governmental organization should organize seminar programmes for the students on how to avoid peer group influence based on gender
2. School management, through the counsellor should always counsel the students on how to avoid peer group influence based on school type.
3. Government and non-governmental organization should organize awareness and seminar programmes for the students on the dangers of peer group influence based on students' study habit.

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