

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**PEER GROUP INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE OF  
STUDENTS IN FAFRAHA COMMUNITY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.**



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STUDENTS IN FAFRAHA COMMUNITY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.**



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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Nana Nyarko Appiah-Gyasi, declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledge, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**Signature**.....

**Date** .....

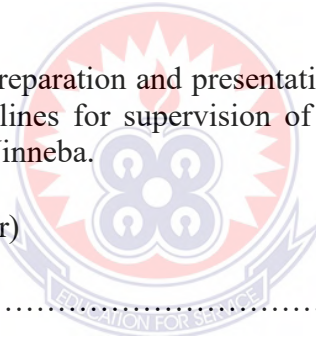
### Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Peter Eshun (Supervisor)

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....



## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Yaw Appiah-Gyasi, and Miss Cynthia Saforo, my siblings, Rev. Paul Appiah-Gyasi, Mr. Edward Appiah-Gyasi, Osei Bonsu Appiah-Gyasi, Adwoa Serwaa Appiah-Gyasi and my nieces Nana Yaa Tsiankama Arthur and Aseda EwuraAma Arthur



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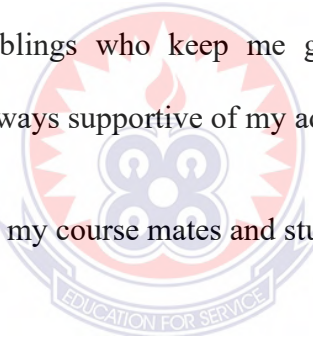
Many thanks and praises to the almighty God for His amazing grace, strength, knowledge, wisdom, and fountain of love which made it possible for me to write this project. My sincere gratitude also goes to Mr. John N-yelbi for his immerse support.

I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Peter Eshun who read through this work, gave constructive criticism, and painstakingly directed me all the way forward despite his busy schedule.

I am grateful for my parents whose constant love and support keep me motivated and confident. My accomplishments and successes are because they believed in me.

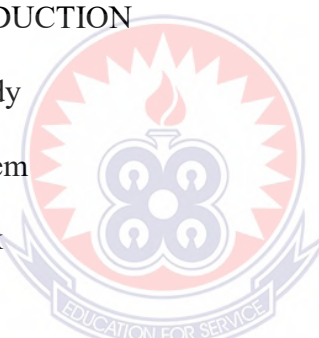
Deepest thanks to my siblings who keep me grounded, remind me of what is important in life and are always supportive of my adventures.

Finally, I am grateful to all my course mates and study group members.



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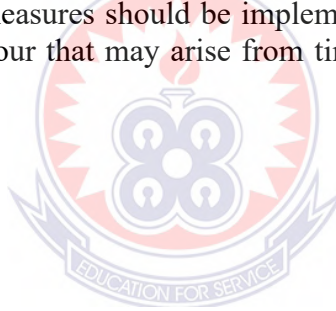
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## ABSTRACT

Recently, the nature of peer groups that have sprung in our senior high schools in Ghana have had a tremendous negative impact on both the social life and academic life of the students. Generally, the study examined the influence of peer group on the social and academic life of students in Fafraha Community Senior High School. The quantitative cross-sectional survey strategy was used involving 300 students from SHS 1, 2, and 3 at the Fafraha Community Senior High School. The selection was done using the stratified simple random sampling technique. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that the bond that exists among peers is very strong to the extent that they find it very comforting to listen to their peers as compared to their family, hence, the possibility of them getting lured into any bad act is very high. Also, the study found out that because the opinions of the members of peer groups are cherished, other friendships were based on the peer group's approval. This means that a bad friend made by a peer can lead to a multitude of bad friends around them, hence, jeopardizing the social life of that individual. The study then concludes that the nature of peer groups students belong to have a negative effect on both the academic life and social life of students. Hence, the study then recommends that the Guidance and counseling unit in the school should be given an important role in the life of students while they are in school. This would help enlighten them on the consequences of mingling with bad peers. Finally, strict but reasonable disciplinary measures should be implemented sustainably in the school to check the deviant behaviour that may arise from time to time, mostly resulting from peer influence.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the Study

Adolescence is a time of rapid changes in many areas of the life of an individual (Alderman, 2000). As these physical, emotional, and social changes take place, youth begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance (Howard, 2004). Adolescence is also a time for individuals to make important decisions about their commitment to academics, family, and in some cases religion. The choices that adolescents make regarding their motivation, engagement, and achievement in school and life depend on the context in which they make such choices (Ryan, 2000). Academic activities are directed towards ensuring that students achieve educational objectives. In schools, the extent to which these objectives have been met is determined greatly by the interaction of peer groups which could possibly reflect in students' academic life.

According to Castrogiovanni (2002), a peer group is defined as a small group of similarly aged, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In general, peer groups or cliques have two to twelve members, with an average of five or six. Peer groups provide a sense of security and help adolescents to build a sense of identity. Adolescents ask questions relating to social identity theory such as, "Who am I?" and "What do I want out of life?" Feeling part of a group, be it the stereotypical jocks, goths, or punks, allows adolescents to feel like they are on the way to answering some of these questions. Peer groups play a major part in the social, emotional, and academic development of students. Steinberg (2005) has stated that peer group influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years. Thus, understanding the effects of the peer group on the academic and social development

of an individual is necessary for stakeholders to make the necessary adjustments and implement control measures to ensure that the experience of peer groups does not destroy the future of youth.

Lavy and Schlosser (2007) indicated that for many students, friendships are an important interpersonal medium that moves them towards growth and maturity, allowing social compassion which influences the positive development of the individual. This suggests that the peer group affects almost all areas of adolescents' growth. Such effects could also manifest in their attitude towards educational activities and careful consideration of these elements has shown that they reflect in the academic life of students (Ungar, 2000).

Castrogiovanni (2002) defined a peer group as a small group of similar age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In its most acceptable form, a peer group is a healthy intermediary in the life of a young person, by which youth can learn negotiating skills and learn to deal with challenges and solve problems in a social context. Peer groups can also act as a positive role model, for example, if one is involved with a group of people that are ambitious and working hard to attain high academic goals, one might feel pressured to follow suit to avoid feeling excluded from the group. On the other hand, negative peer influence could be seen as one of the negative forces which cause most students to record poor performance in school and to act or respond inappropriately in social settings. The reason for this power of the peer group is easy to understand. Adolescents spend a large amount of time in extra-curricular activities. More often than none, academic priorities are neglected, and thus academic life is grossly affected.

Academic life refers to excellence in all academic disciplines. Steinberg (2005) states that academic life is multi-dimensional, is closely associated with human growth and cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Academic life also refers to how well a student is accomplishing his tasks and studies. It is believed that a student's academic life correlates with the group he or she belongs to (Deepika & Prema, 2017). Peer Influence can be either positive or negative. If a student is influenced negatively by a peer, it affects his or her academic life. Nevertheless, stronger students have an impact on their peers and actually help improve their overall academic life. Conversely, positive peer influence on academic life depends on a person's self-identity, self-esteem, and self-reliance. Peer influence can as well inspire students' academic vigor and motivation for achievement. Peer relations usually reach their peak in adolescence which falls within the age group under this study. They spend more time together than adults and younger children, interacting with peers and generally enjoying themselves in peer contexts while giving the greatest priority to peer norms for behaviour (Brown & Larson, 2009).

Moreover, several developmental studies on adolescents indicated that, relative to children and adults, they are more sensitive and demonstrate a high response to a variety of social stimuli such as facial expressions and social feedback (Burnett et al., 2011). However, this evidence for hypersensitivity to social situations implies that this age group may be more likely to be exposed to either positive or negative peer influence in decision-making situations. It is well established that teenagers are more likely than adults to take risks, as revealed by elevated rates of experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, unprotected sex, violent and non-violent crime, as well as reckless driving (Steinberg, 2008). In fact, they actually possess the knowledge, values, and processing competence to evaluate risky decisions

as proficiently as adults do (Bankole & Ogunsakin, 2015) but are often prone to trying new things and experimentation.

Teachers, parents, and peers all provide adolescents with suggestions and feedback about what they should think and how they should behave in social situations. But according to Olalekan (2016), the 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, evident in the fact that students feel more comfortable and relaxed among fellow students. Peer groups provide models that make the most impressions on teenagers. These models can be a source of motivation or a lack thereof. Modeling refers to individual changes in cognition, behaviour, or effects that result from the observation of others (Ryan, 2000). Observing others perform a particular behaviour or voice a certain opinion can introduce an individual to new behaviours and viewpoints that may be different from his or her own. Observation also enlightens an individual on the consequences of such behaviour and opinions depending on these consequences, observation of a model can strengthen or weaken the likelihood the observer will engage in such behaviour or adopt such beliefs in the future. A child who is brilliant and surrounded by dull friends would lose interest in learning.

On the other hand, a peer group that is prone to study would have a positive effect on a dull member towards learning and stimulate his/her interest in learning. Olalekan (2016) wrote that the nature of a peer group determines the impact on the motivation and achievements of its member. The author further suggests that one group may have a negative impact on its members while the other may have a positive impact on its members as well.

The question many observers and studies grapple with is how many of the young people have the willpower to choose a group that impacts positively on them. However, the attractive nature and the morals of the group determine whether a group is likely to have a positive or negative impact on members' motivation and achievement. If the atmosphere of the group is warm, understanding, and supportive, the group influence, task performance, and achievement will most likely be positive. A hostile group will constantly frustrate and produce a negative impact not only on the member's growth and behaviour but also on their drive to studies and academic achievement.

In the same vein Lavy and Schlosser (2007) also noted that imitation of behaviours in a group occurs when a person acts in a way that is likely to be joined by the rest of the group. Students who are playful but have academic traits should be encouraged to join a study inclined group. Stressing the positive benefits of a group, Olalekan (2016), noted that through observing and imitating the behaviour of others, learners can avoid much wasteful random behaviour and come close to reproducing the behaviours of which members are recognized. A student may not be dull but playful. If he is well monitored and he falls into a group of brilliant students who are not playful, he imitates them, and this changes his attitude towards learning for the better. Moreover, a study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2016) investigated the influence of peer groups on the academic life of students. The finding showed that peer relationships influence the academic life of students.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Humans have an innate desire for social belonging, which drives us to become attached to and linked with others. Indeed, the association is required due to genetics



or experience (Ampofo & Osei-Owusu, 2015). Adolescents typically spend less time with their parents and more time with their peers as they grow older (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Larson et al., 1996). Using the perceived restrictive attitudes of friends approach, one study in the Gambia found that during adolescence, the frequency of interactions and activities with parents reduces, whereas time spent with same-age peers increases significantly. Another qualitative study conducted in Bamako, Mali, found that while many adolescents maintain positive, warm relationships with their parents if they existed previously (Offer & Offer, 1975; Youniss & Smollar, 1985), some adolescents believe that their parents do not understand them as well, or that parent and adolescent viewpoints and opinions diverge.

Steinberg (1989) employed a multi-method qualitative study in KwaZulu/Natal, South Africa, that adolescents may believe their parents are unable to relate to the changes they are going through, such as pubertal development, the challenges of adjusting to expanded social networks associated with middle, junior, or high school, peer influences and pressures, and a growing interest in the opposite sex (Elkind, 1988; Furman & Wehner, 1997).

Cairns, R. B., Cairns, B. D., & Neckerman, H. J. (1989) also discovered that peer networks can support healthy growth and favorable results, as well as impede an individual from reaching their full potential, using a mixed-method approach and the positivist paradigm. Adolescents who self-select into or end up in low-level social groups, such as school leaders, have a greater social standing and more opportunity for rewarding experiences than adolescents who self-select into or wind up in high-status social groups. Adolescents in high-status social groups have higher test scores,

report card grades, and are more active in school because they feel encouraged by their peers. They also have positive feelings about their friends, family, and school (Feldman & Elliot, 1990). Peers frequently see adolescents in low-status social groups as violent and antisocial (Hogue & Steinberg, 1995). They are also less engaged in school activities, have worse academic success, and are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour (Aseltine, 1995).

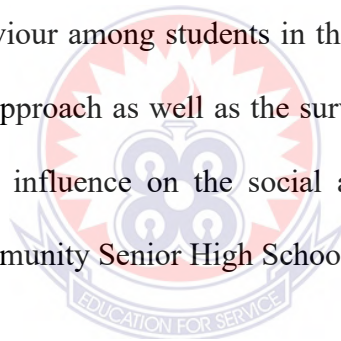
Gregory (1995) looked into the elements that influence at-risk high school students' capacity to transition from behaviour patterns linked with academic failure to academic achievement. According to open-ended interviews with 66 teenagers, students avoided hanging out with friends who influenced them to fail in favour of making new friends who cared about their well-being and valued education.

Fafraha Community Senior High School's performance has deteriorated dramatically since writing its first West African Senior Secondary School certificate Examination (WASSCE) in 2019. The pass rate has consistently remained below 60%. In 2021, it reached a low of 24%.

Even though many students make good use of their time, it has resulted in additional opportunities for peer group connections. The Free Senior High School programme which started in 2017 has also changed the demographic of the school drastically. Whereas most of the students previously came from the nearby towns, many of them now come from various parts of the country. Thus, there is also greater diversity and opportunity to learn new things, good and bad. There are unconfirmed rumors of gangs and occult groups in the Fafraha Community Senior High School. In 2019, three suspects of occult activities were brought before the disciplinary committee of the school, but not enough evidence was found to indict and punish

them. Additionally, since, 2018, not less than five incidences of pregnancy occur annually among students in Fafraha Community Senior High School. These occurrences have raised a lot of concern among the teachers and parents and have been subjects of discussion in most Parent-Teacher Association meetings. In this regard, the researcher would like to investigate into the effect of peer groups on the social and academic life of students in the Fafraha Community Senior High School.

Although all these studies have researched into peer influence on academic life, most of them failed to capture the simultaneous impact of peer groups on the social and academic development of students. They also fail to address the impact of peer groups on the critical age group of adolescents. In the light of the above, and the current spate of misbehaviour among students in the school, this study has set out to employ the quantitative approach as well as the survey research design to investigate the effect of peer group influence on the social and academic life of students in Fafraha Community Community Senior High School.



## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **1.2.1 Bandura's Social Learning Theory**

Bandura's social learning theory speaks precisely to the human interactions involved in learning. Observational or "vicarious" learning is based upon learning by watching than "modelling" or acting similarly to others. If the student views and works with people who appreciate learning by engaging in learning activities, then the student too will engage in learning and might work harder at learning. Peers with positive attitudes and behaviours toward education will allow and teach each other to set goals that include opportunities to learn and achieve. If peer models do not convey positive attitudes toward learning, then the students observing these models will not

prioritize learning in their own lives. They will learn to prioritize other goals. (Bandura, 1996).

Bandura (1996) Social cognitive theory also emphasizes the importance of cognitive representations in the form of expectations about social norms that arise from observational and experiential learning. Reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) emphasizes the importance of perceived social (subjective) norms on intentions.

### **1.2.2 Social Bonding Theory**

Hirschi (1969) in his explanation of social bonding theories suggest that adolescent peer group effects will be stronger in the absence of strong social bonds with family and school. Social identity theory (Terry, et al., 2000) suggests that adolescents try on various identities and adopt the norms that are central to the social identity of the peer group to remain in good standing. Similarly, social exchange theory (Kelley & Thibaut 1978) argues that friendships and group membership require fair exchanges (reciprocity), leading to the conformity of behaviour between friends and group members. Of course, the nature of the relationships of group members greatly influences the nature of this reciprocity (Plickert et al., 2007). Social network theory suggests that social norms are shaped by information shared among members of a social system (Scott 2011; Valente 1995). Norms also figure prominently in the literature on persuasion and social marketing (Hastings & Saren, 2003).

### **1.2.3 Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity theory proposes that an individual's self-concept is influenced by the "*ingroups*" he or she belongs to. Individuals are motivated to attach positive evaluations to their ingroups when compared with "*outgroups*" with whom they do

not have a relationship. Positive associations one attaches to an ingroup may then extend to having a positive self-concept and high self-esteem. The important role of peer groups in the development of identity must be monitored within the peer program context to ensure that peer-based programs do not reinforce negative identity and negative role stereotypes associated with the target group. Without monitoring and guidance, participants may begin to dwell on issues and adopt the identity of 'being a teenage mum' or 'being a gay or lesbian youth' rather than constructing more positive identity descriptions and roles e.g., being a positive role model for others, advocating for equal rights. (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

#### **1.2.4 Attachment Theory**

Cotterell (1996) in his explanation of Attachment theory in relation to peer influence states that in bonding with peer groups the person experiences a sense of belonging and endorsement, a 'sense of place' in the group, and the secure feeling of being 'at home' with her/his mates or chums" Peer groups supply positive emotional experiences to their members through acceptance and recognition of the individual. They provide a sense of belonging and solidarity within the group which confirms their group identity".

#### **1.2.5 Behaviourism Theory**

Behaviourism provides one way to explain the association between motivation to learn and peer interactions. In basic behaviourist theories, relationships between people affect learning only as much as people reinforce each other (or not) in the academic arena. For example, if the peer group encourages education and learning, then the individual student within that group will value learning, because the individual is reinforced, or rewarded, for behaviour that indicates that learning is

valued. Students in peer groups that do not value education lack the stimulation and reinforcement needed to encourage personal learning. These peer groups presumably stimulate and reinforce other values.

Vygotsky (1978) also presented ideas on the facilitation of learning through experiences mediated by other people. In his explanations, the learner cannot reach full potential without the aid of others. The processes of guiding the learner to higher stages of cognitive functioning rely on interactive human relationships. Mentors, for example, teachers or more capable peers, can raise the student's competence through the zone of proximal development. This is defined as the gap between what a student can do alone and what the student can achieve with assistance. In this view assistance is transitional, a 'scaffold' that is removed when it is no longer needed and the student has internalized another's support.

In summary, varied theories agree that the values and attitudes of the peer group are essential elements in motivation and learning. Students who surround themselves with academically focused, goal-oriented peers will be more likely to appreciate, internalize, and exhibit these features themselves.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the positive and negative effects of peer influence on adolescents. More specifically, this research focuses on how peer influence relates to academic life, social behaviour, and other areas related to the development of the youth.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives the study sets out to achieve.

1. To investigate the nature of peer groups in the Fafraha Community Senior High School.
2. To find out the effects peer groups have on the academic life of students of Fafraha Community Senior High School.
3. To find out the effects peer groups have on the social life of students of Fafraha Community Senior High School

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of peer groups in the Fafraha Community Senior High School?
2. What influence does peer groups have on the academic life of the students of Fafraha Community Senior High School?
3. What influence does peer groups have on the social life of students of the students of Fafraha Community Senior High School?

#### **1.6 Significance of Study**

The findings of this study will help determine some of the factors associated with the peer groups in relation to their academic life. The factors when identified will form a base for offering appropriate solutions to parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to beware of the ways they can direct peer-group relationships. The result will also guidance counselors to find the best ways of handling peer groups relationship. The students will also benefit from the study by acquiring knowledge on peers that can hinder their progress in academics.

Finally, the result will also enable the teacher to know more about the peer group which in turn will continue to enhance the teaching and learning process. It is also hoped that the present research study will at least provide some background information for future studies on the topic.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the influence of peer group relationships on the academic and social performance of students in the Fafraha Community Senior High School in the Adenta Municipality of the Republic of Ghana. The study was carried out among the students and teachers of the school. The tools used in this study were Microsoft Excel 2016 and SPSS version 22.

The researcher is a member of the teaching staff of Fafraha Community Senior High School. As such he has the necessary background knowledge of the environment in which the students of the school find themselves. This makes him more capable of understanding the context in which the participants respond to the questions posed to them for the study.

### **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

Aristotle was of the firm opinion that intelligent discussions must begin with a definition of terms. Thus, the researcher deems it fit to give operational definition to the following concerning terms in the study:

**Peers:** This refers to the students of the same gender and similar age.

**Peer Group:** This is the association of close friends of the same gender, who interact with each other very frequently and have a high impact on the behaviour of the members.



**Peer Group Relationship:** This is the way peers communicate among themselves whether in public or isolated.

**Academic life:** This is the achievement a student attains through learning and applying him/herself to a structured learning process to achieve set targets.

**Influence:** This refers to the effect that students have on each other.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

This study sets out to investigate the effect of peer group influence on the social life and academic life of students of Fafraha Community Senior High School. This study is being undertaken because the researcher believes that some of the recent acts of misdemeanor among students are rooted in the increased peer group interactions in the school. Thus, the context of the study imposes significant limitations on it. Firstly, the study is being carried out in Fafraha Community Senior High School. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized for all peer groups since the dynamics of peer groups vary from group to group. For the same reason, it may be wrong to generalize the findings even for the school itself.

Additionally, the suspicion of the researcher may be wrong. There could be other factors other than peer group influence causing the observed spike in misbehaviour among students. This means that the findings may not be even directly applicable to the school. The researcher is also concerned that if the students involved in the study are uncomfortable with some of the questions by virtue of their own involvement in some of the misdemeanours, they may opt to provide wrong answers and skew the findings in the wrong direction.

### **1.10 Organization of Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One contains the general background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, limitation of the study, delimitation, significance of the study, research methodology, and chapter organization. Chapter Two is devoted to the detailed treatment of the theoretical framework of peer group dynamics and their potential to lead students in many different ways. This forms the literature review of the study. Chapter Three presents the methods for data collection, population, sample and sampling techniques, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the analysis of the data obtained and the discussions of the results. Chapter Five is the final chapter of the study and summarizes the main results of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

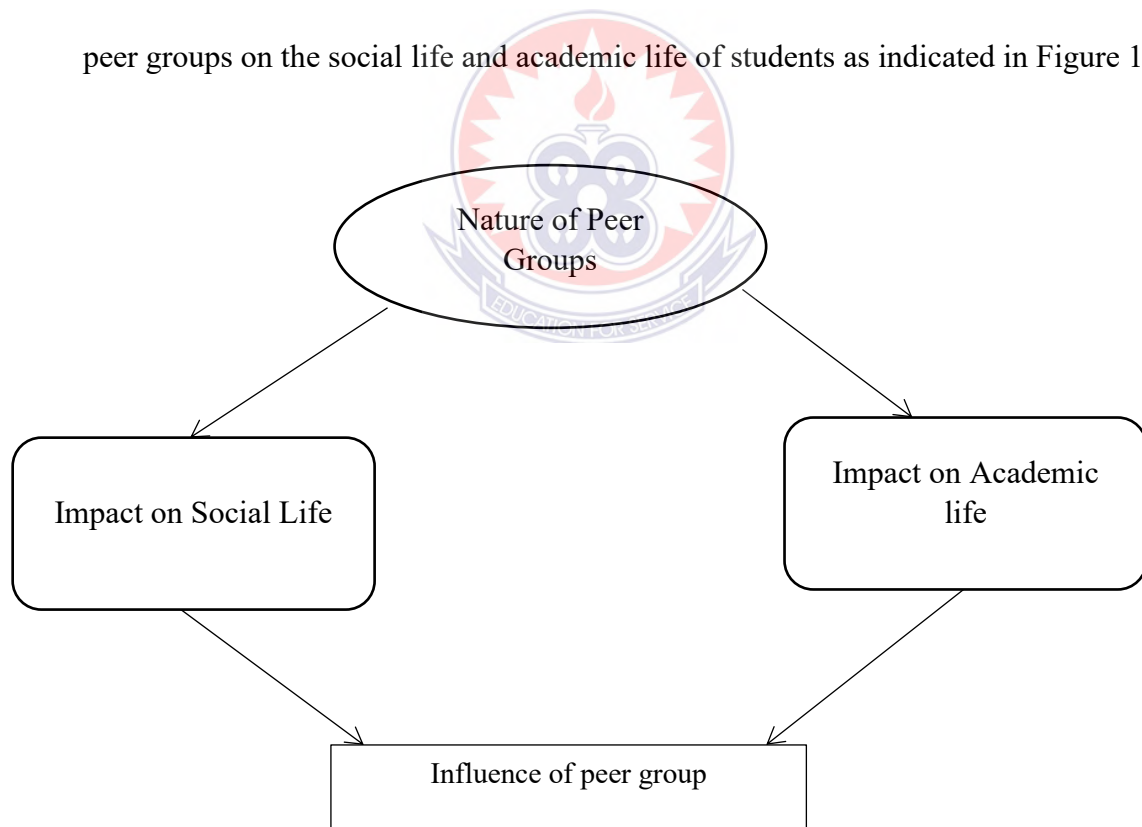
### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on the effect of peer group influence on the social and academic life of students. It reviews the concept of the peer group, its composition, its power, and the influence it can exert on an individual. The chapter also examines some empirical studies on the subject.

#### 2.1 Conceptual framework

Findings from both the theoretical and empirical literature as well as the researcher's inferences were used to conceptualize the proposed framework for the influence of peer groups on the social life and academic life of students as indicated in Figure 1



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

**Source: Author's Self Constructed, 2021**

The researcher inferred from literature that the nature of peer groups in the school are very pertinent in shaping the lives of students' social life and academic life. At the primary through to secondary level, peers, could influence the expectation of teaching and learning in the school. That is, the nature of peers' students affiliates themselves to have a relationship with how students engage at school. This is seen in the situation where friends continue to prick the conscience of students to take their studies serious by allocating more time to learning, visiting the school's library and also interacting more with their tutors so as to do well in class.

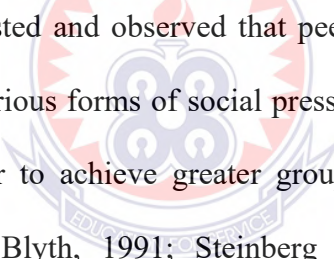
In today's world, where the use of technology has exposed children to all facet of life, students who are more exposed to the abysmal side of technology can influence their peers to also do same. For instance, a student who has decided to watch pornographic pictures and movies on the internet can lure his or her peers in also engaging themselves in the act of watching these pornographic stuffs.

Similarly, when peers participate in educationally related activities, they tend to develop their self-efficacy, that makes them confident, and persist to do well academically at school. Also, within the campus environment, some students engage in entrepreneurial activities and this may tend to influence both their social life and academic life positively or negatively.

## **2.2 Nature of Peer Groups**

As prevalent as peer groups are, not all adolescents belong to one. Network analysis performed by Ennett & Bauman, (1996) from a panel study conducted in 1980 and 1981 of 8 through 10-grade students identified two additional sociometric categories for adolescents, "isolates" and "liaisons" Isolates were identified as adolescents who do not belong to a peer group. They had few or no links to other

adolescents in their school social network. In contrast, liaisons were adolescents who maintained friendships with individuals in more than one clique or peer group but did not claim allegiance to a particular group. Liaisons provided indirect connections between 19 cliques through their interactions with various clique members. Adolescents classified as liaisons or isolates ranged from less than one-fifth to one-half of the school samples. Females were more likely to be clique members and males were more likely to be isolates. Classification as an isolate or clique member tended to be more stable over time (one year between wave one and wave two data collection points) than did classification as a liaison. Liaisons were more likely to become clique members rather than isolates between the two assessment periods (Ennett & Bauman, 1996).



It has been suggested and observed that peers take an active role in shaping behaviour by applying various forms of social pressure (e.g., reinforcement, rewards, and punishment) in order to achieve greater group conformity or to enforce peer norms (Foster-Clark & Blyth, 1991; Steinberg et al., 1988). Early and middle adolescents appear to be especially susceptible to peer influences, more so than younger children or older adolescents (Brown et al., 2000). However, peer influence is not the same as peer pressure. Peers also provide positive role models for each other, define social norms, and structure opportunities for peer interactions and socialization. Research findings suggest that peer influence is often positive (Steinberg et al., 1988), providing important social and emotional support for adolescent psychosocial development. Within larger peer groups, smaller clusters of friends or friendship pairs are common. Because close friends provide greater social and emotional support (Dunphy, 1963), friends likely have a greater influence on adolescents than do other peer acquaintances. In a review of several studies, Cohen

(1983) concluded that "selected friends have more influence on an individual than non-selected (peer) acquaintances" (p. 163).

In assessing the developmental significance of friends, Hartup (1995) contends that it is important to consider three aspects of friendships: 1. Having friends or not; 2. the identity or personality characteristics of a child's friends; and 3. friendship quality (e.g., conflict-ridden, supportive, or non-supportive). These three factors lead to substantial variations in adolescent psychosocial development. Thus, friends can contribute in positive ways toward individual development and they can impede development. A teen who belongs to a large peer group consisting of antisocial, coercive friends (e.g., gangs) may be at greater risk than a teen with only one or two friends. Adolescents with no friends are at the greatest risk for negative psychosocial outcomes and school experiences (Epstein, 2005).

The influence of friends on adolescent attitudes and behaviours is well-documented. Kandel (1978a, 1978b) observed that adolescent friends tend to be similar or become more similar in their attitudes and behaviours as a result of their interactions. Homophily among friends is enhanced by selection processes (who is chosen to be a friend), socialization (how friends influence each other), and elimination (who is rejected or eliminated from the circle of friends). Individuals who are similar in several characteristics (e.g., age, race, sex, socioeconomic status) may already associate with one another due to propinquity (e.g., they grew up in the same neighborhood, attended the same schools). This is commonly the case among elementary-age children and early adolescents. In addition, peers become more similar in their attributes through the process of interacting with one another (Brown

& Theobald, 1999; Kandel, 1978a, 1978b). Over time, some peers are ostracized because they are judged as not fitting in with the group anymore.

### **2.3 Peer Group influence on the social life of students**

Adolescence gaining social support from its peers is an important factor to cope with different problems and challenges by letting go of emotions by talking to someone. Social support plays an important role for teenagers to lessen the effects of stressful situations and stressors through the support of the peers in the group (Esen & Gundogdu, 2010). Knowing how teenagers interact with their peers and how they interact with each other and how the presence of peer-group affects students' academic achievement in school plays an important role for various categories and even the whole educational system (Leka, 2015).

Peer pressure is commonly described as peers encouraging other teenagers to do things (Santor et al., 2000). Peer pressure is also caused by parents' lack of supervision towards their children during adolescence, children tend to enjoy their peers' company and spend more time with friends during the adolescence period. There are different factors that could affect students' socialization in school whether it's their family is giving proper guidance and motivation to their children with the healthy and harmonious interaction with their surroundings.

Students' interactions with their peers could help enhance their capability and increase their academic life in school because they could seek help from their peers that could serve as a motivation than working alone. Student peer group in school plays an in-socializing teenager with peers to socialize with each other that help should the child adolescents (Dassen, 2000). Interaction of students between its peer

is likely to influence the students and can be crucial for the student to determine their choice and could affect student performance (Fischhoff, 2008).

Understanding peer influence towards teenagers is important for developing and understanding how to improve socioeconomic policies (Hansen & Bryant, 1980). Peer among youth plays a vital role during the adolescence of a teenager. This is the time when teenagers develop deep friendships among their peers and become permanent during their adolescence (Jacob, 1998). The author further added that peer pressure towards a person's behaviour is said to be a social phenomenon where the members of a particular society may not be influenced negatively but the majority are affected by the undesirable behaviour of those people who resist what others do.

Looking to the different group of factors that influence adolescents in their pursuit of academic excellence it is further hindered by developmental challenges (Kathryn, 2007). An individual seeks emotional support towards communicating publicly and showing his private objectives or goals. Indeed, through showing your emotions to others individuals can get emotional benefits from it because it could help them to overcome temptation and could give them emotional benefits (Babawale, 2015). Also, peer groups answer questions from teenagers with different concerns from the adolescence stage including physical appearance or changing bodies (Bankole, 2015).

Peer pressure could easily affect the self-esteem of students that an important factor in adolescence. Individuals adopt attitudes towards a certain aspect that they encountered or are aware of (Steinberg, 2008). In many events, students fantasize and visualize what they dream to become through under the influence of their colleagues. Eventually, they pursue their choices with the influence of peer pressure (Uche,



2010). The pressure among peer group members may cause them to do undesired things or negative behaviour in the presence of a particular peer group leader who engages its member to do deviant acts or promote undesirable things to the group (Droege & Stipek, 1993).

Peer group is important in the social context that plays a vital role in society and to determine the ability of the adolescent to negotiate and interact well with society (Kathryn, 2007). Adaptive behaviour of the development increasingly becomes broader and more complex as age increases. The schools that the students attend serve as an institution among students that determine their learning capacity based on the school environment that gives the learning experience toward students (Korir, 2014). Thus, choosing major courses within an institution are major choices a student intends to make but it is affected by their interactions among other students (Olalekan, 2016). Hence, the behaviour of an individual has similarities with those of the members of the group due to the effect of their peers, it is still difficult to relate the consequences that the individual within the group is similar with each other or social to be pursuing their intentions together to have similar outcomes (Mosha, 2017). Interactions between students with their agemates appeal to enhance their learning capacity under the guidance of an adult educator (Nicole, 2004).

Educators and parents should be aware that peer groups provide a variety of positive experiences for adolescents. Castrogiovanni (2002) cited the following benefits: the opportunity to learn how to interact with others; support in defining identity, interests, abilities, and personality; autonomy without control of adults and parents; opportunities for witnessing the strategies others use to cope with similar

problems, and for observing how effective they are; involved emotional support and; Building and maintaining friendships.

According to Burns and Darling (2002), peer groups provide a forum where teens construct and reconstruct their identities. Castrogiovanni (2002) stated that at no other stage of development is one's sense of identity so unstable. A peer-labeling process may be contributing to the construction of positive identities for some adolescents but negative identities for others (Downs & Rose, 1991). Unfortunately, members of groups may accept negative labels, incorporate them into their identity, and through the process of secondary deviance, increase levels of deviant behaviour. Teenagers learn about what is acceptable in their social group by "reading" their friends' reactions to how they act, what they wear, and what they say. The peer group gives this potent feedback by their words and actions, which either encourages or discourages certain behaviours and attitudes. Anxiety can arise when teens try to predict how peers will react, and this anxiety plays a large role in peer influence.

Burns & Darling (2002) stated that self-conscious worrying about how others will react to future actions is the most common way adolescents are influenced by their peers. When a teen takes an unpopular stand and goes against the expectations or norms of the peer group, he or she is at risk of being ridiculed. Ridicule is not an easy thing to accept at any age, let alone when you are twelve or thirteen years old. This leads to the topic of peer pressure.

The influence of peer groups among students can boost their anxiety especially pertaining to their education (Kadir et al., 2018). The relationship within the group with its peers is co-related with each other, hence the direction of this particular relationship should be monitored where these relationships should go

considering all possible factors correlated within the group's outcome (Temitope & Ogunsakin, 2015). Peer pressure faced by many teenagers of the society, professionals understood the concept of peer influence that could affect teenagers in a negative way which can be prevented by educating and preparing teenagers to face the negative aspects caused by peer pressure (Temitope & Ogunsakin, 2015). Similarly, peer influence among teenagers does not directly negatively affect them but it varies in how much and how the students receive the climate of the peers coming from the group (Mosha, 2017). When a student is influenced and motivated by peers, he will perform excellently at school and get good grades in mathematics (Boechnke, 2008). Getting the support needed coming from the peer group, students tend to excel and exceed their capability and concentrate more pertaining to their studies and do good in the academic tasks in school (Olalekan, 2016).

Carlo et al. (1999), explain that peer influence is the process by which children shape each other's behaviour and attitudes, leading to conformity within the group. Much of the research on peer influence focuses on adolescence, mainly because adolescents spend increasing amounts of time with peers as they gain independence from their parents. It is during this time that individuals begin to choose their peers based on interest rather than convenience. This is because adolescents are more dependent on their peers compared to younger children as this age group is particularly susceptible to influence from their friends (Barry & Wentzel, 2006).

Research has shown that adolescents influence each other to engage in risky activities like doing drugs. Lamsaouri, (1995) conducted a study on adolescents and drugs in Morocco and found that 55% of teenagers were introduced to drugs by the

intermediary of peers. This huge rate indicates the salient and strong influence that peers have on each other, especially in drug abuse.

In the study conducted by Steinberg and Kathryn (2007) on age differences in resistance to peer influence, age differences and developmental change in resistance to peer influence were assessed using a new self-report instrument that separates susceptibility to peer pressure from the willingness to engage in the antisocial activity. Data from four ethnically and socioeconomically diverse samples comprising more than 3,600 males and females between the ages of 10 and 30 were pooled from one longitudinal and two cross-sectional studies. Results indicated that across all demographic groups, resistance to peer influences increased linearly between ages 14 and 18. In contrast, there was little evidence for growth in this capacity between ages 10 and 14 or between 18 and 30. Middle adolescence is noted by the researchers as an especially significant period for the development of the capacity to stand up for what one believes and resist the pressures of one's peers to do otherwise.

Peer conformity, sometimes referred to as peer pressure, occurs when individuals choose to adopt the attitudes or behaviours of others because of real or imagined pressure. In Western cultures, as the amount of time spent with peers increases, so does the influence and support they provide. Berndt et al. (1990), traced the developmental patterns of family and peer influence in American families and found that in the third grade, the influence of parents and peers are often in opposition to each other. However, these children are influenced more by their parents than their peers. By sixth grade, the influence of peers rises dramatically, but it tends to be found in different situations from those of parents. Consequently, the influence of parents and peers is not in opposition. In ninth grade, conformity to peers' peaks and

is again in strong opposition to parents. At this time, peers often endorse the adoption of antisocial standards that inevitably conflict with parental values and standards. American adolescents' movement towards independence the author found peaks around ninth grade and is met with maximal opposition from parents. It concluded that adolescent conformity to peer influence declines through late high school and college-age years.

In summary, peers are more influential in adolescence than at any other time in life. The quality of the relationship between adolescents and their peers, as well as the type of peers they associate with, play important roles in aiding or impeding their current and future functioning. There are aspects of all peer relations that are unique to the culture and environment in which they exist. The relationship parents have with their adolescents influences their children's susceptibility to negative peer influence.

#### **2.4 Peer Group Influence and Academic life**

Empirical evidence shows links between peer relationships and academic lives. (Ladd et al., 1996). The research conducted by the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP 1998) asked a most interesting question to gauge the effect of peers on academic achievement. The survey asked the child to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "My friends make fun of people who try to do well in school." This question is particularly useful in measuring the effect of peers on academic achievement.

First, it focuses on the group of children with which the sampled child most closely associates. Second, it does not ask whether the child's friends make fun of him or her, which would be more likely to elicit a defensive or otherwise inaccurate answer. A study conducted by Johnson and Sheets (2004) revealed that peer effects

become more important as time passes, peaking somewhere during adolescence. At the same time, children must foster positive peer groups early to become well-adjusted adolescents and adults. Having friends in school allows the child to learn a host of skills: group interaction, conflict resolution, and trust-building, among others. Without positive peer group interactions, serious social problems may develop. Peer rejection in early childhood and early adolescence, for example, is a good predictor of social and academic problems later.

Goethe (2001) found out that weak students do better when grouped with other weak students. It shows that students' performance improves if they are with students of their own kind. Sacerdote, (2001) found that students' grades tend to be higher when students have unusually strong academic peers. The results of Hughes et al., (2003) were somehow contradictory to Goethe's results but again it proved that students' performance depends on several factors. Having friends allows the child to learn many skills: group interaction, conflict resolution, and trust-building. Peer rejection during adolescence is a good predictor of social and academic problems (Kadir et al., 2018).

Wentzel and Asher (1995) conducted a similar line of research on peer relationships and academic life, but focused on the limited research on younger children, it seemed reasonable to on adolescents in this review. Wentzel and Asher (1995) further provide support for the linkage between peer relationships and academic life. In the second portion of their two-part, longitudinal study, these researchers followed 404 children from the beginning of sixth grade to eighth grade to explore peer relations and academic life. An index of academics was based on end of the year Grade Point Averages (averaged English, science, social studies, and maths final grades). Final grades were obtained from school records at the end of grade and

eighth-grade academic years and were coded (0=failing grade, 1= D, 2=C, 3=B, and 4=A). Reciprocated friendships were measured by obtaining best friend nominations. Children were given a list of same-sex classmates and were asked to circle their three best friends. Students' nominations were matched with peers' nominations to see which friendships were reciprocated. Peer acceptance was measured by using a rating system in which children indicated how much they liked to participate in school activities with particular peers by rating them on a 5-point scale (1=not at all, 5 = very much). Results suggest that reciprocated friendships, peer acceptance, and group membership are significantly related to academic life. Further evidence supporting the relation between sociometric status adjustments suggests that being a member of a particular status group predicts changes in academic adjustment over time.

Kandel's (1978b) study of high school friendship pairs revealed that adolescents were most similar on four sociodemographic attributes: grade in school, sex, race, and age. In addition, friends were most similar in their use of marijuana and other illicit 23 drugs, followed by their academic interests (educational aspirations, overall grade average, class cutting, school program) and participation in peer activities. The peer group was not, however, influential regarding changes in students' utility value for the school. It was found that associating with friends who have a positive effect on school enhanced students' satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative effect on school decreased it (Ryan, 2000). Landau (2002) stated that an adolescent's expectancy of success was the primary predictor of academic effort and grades. A sense of belonging and support of a peer group was also significantly associated with these outcomes. Athletics, dating, and sexual behaviour, as well as alcohol, drug, and tobacco use, have been shown to be important to friendship choice in adolescence.

For some adolescents, other interests may compete with or take charge of similar academic motivation and engagement as criteria for selecting a peer group. This could put an adolescent's motivation and engagement in school in a precarious position (Ryan, 2000). Through selection, some adolescents may place themselves in peer-group situations that support or foster their achievement-related beliefs and behaviours. Others may place themselves in contexts that weaken achievement-related beliefs and behaviours.

Gest et al., (2005) argued that peer academics may influence children's academic motivation and achievement, even if it is not veridical. This argument is consistent with research on the effect of teacher expectations on achievement, which demonstrates that teacher perceptions of children's academic ability, whether accurate or not, affect students' grades and scores on standardized achievement tests (Brophy, 1983; Jussim et al., 1996; Jussim & Harber, 2005). The teacher expectancy research has identified ways in which teachers treat high and low-expectation students differently that may account for the expectancy-confirming impact of teacher expectations. For example, relative to low expectancy students, teachers demonstrate a positive bias in evaluating the work of high expectancy students (Jussim, 1986; Jussim et al., 1996); provide more response opportunities and praise and less criticism. Brophy, (1983); provides more challenging instruction (Brophy, 1983; Jussim, 1986), and interacts in ways that are warmer and more accepting (Babad, 1992).

Similarly, peers' perceptions of classmates' academic competencies may influence their interactions with classmates in ways that impact their achievement. The limited research on peer perceptions of classmates' academic ability is consistent with such a view. Studies with older elementary and middle school students found



that students prefer to work with students whom they perceive as more academically capable on school-related tasks, but this preference does not extend to non-academic tasks (Droege & Stipek, 1993; Plummer & Graziano, 1987), suggesting that peers' perceptions of children's abilities may influence peer interactions in the classroom. Classmates likely discuss among themselves the relative abilities of classmates. Through such shared discourse, individual members of the class develop a reputation that is largely shared by and reinforced by members of the class (Filby & Barnett, 1982). Peers may give children with reputations as academically capable more response opportunities when working in groups and may approach them more often for help with academic problems. They also may offer more support and acceptance to children perceived as academically competent. Indeed, peer perceptions of ability are associated with their liking for classmates (Ladd et al., 1999), especially in classrooms in which cues regarding students' performance are more available (Hughes & Zhang, 2006).

Peer Group Influence also affects a child's friendships. Children tend to select friends and social networks based on similar levels of academic achievement and achievement motivation (Kindermann, 1993; Kiuru et al., 2007). Thus, children with reputations as academically capable may be more likely to affiliate with high-achieving peers. Longitudinal studies suggest that the academic characteristics of one's friends may influence a child's academic engagement and achievement (Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003; Berndt et al., 1990; Kiuru et al., 2007).

## **2.5 Ways of Combating Negative Peer Pressure on the Social Life and Academic life of Students**

Diminishing negative pressures involves a difficult and delicate choice between taking an authoritative role and stepping back to allow individual freedom.

Teachers can increase their awareness of adolescent social systems by investing more energy in getting to know their students and the groups to which they belong. In the classroom, teachers should avoid making achievement a game of winners and losers. One step to accomplish this is to use criterion-based grading instead of grading on a curve. Most importantly, the school system and community should enhance the status of academic achievement. (Nicole, 2004).

Schools should recognize academic excellence in areas outside of the core curriculum by having trade fairs. It is important to avoid sending mixed messages about the relative worth of academic versus non-academic achievement. This involves being aware of the peer-group social structure that operates in a particular school, the norms that operate within each group, the relationship of one group to another, as well as the loyalty students display towards their group (Alderman, 2000). Harnessing the power of peers can be important to create a school climate supportive of academic excellence (Burns & Darling, 2002).

Nicole (2004) further pointed out that it would also be beneficial for adults and families to abandon the stereotype of peer groups always being negative, promoting positive peer relations, and perhaps setting up parent education programs for families with teenagers. Establishing peer intervention programs could target teens with poor social skills and aggressive tendencies. These groups could teach appropriate ways to communicate, deal with anger, and even raise self-esteem. There are some ways parents can cultivate teens' self-confidence so they are not at risk for negative peer influences. For instance, adults can praise smart choices and compliment adolescents' accomplishments. It is important for parents to get involved and know their child's friends, which could be accomplished by inviting them to the home, carpooling, and asking appropriate questions. Questions like: "Where are you

going?” “Who will you be with?” and “When will you be home?” are traditional, but crucial for parental involvement. Parents can also encourage activities that are likely to include teens they approve of. These activities might include after-school clubs, church youth groups, and scouts. When teens are secretive about new friends, they may be hiding individuals they know their parents will not approve of.

If a parent finds out that their teen is engaging in unacceptable behaviour with their friends, the adult should be direct in addressing the issue and make their expectations clear. It is always possible for parents to talk with school counsellors and professionals to help with the problem. Overall, parents need to be present in their adolescents’ lives. They should never underestimate the value of quality time spent together. If parents have a busy schedule and cannot be physically present, they should still make their presence felt in the home through phone calls, personal notes, or other forms of communication.

Black (2002) stated that teenagers with close ties to their parents were far less likely to become delinquent or suffer depression than students who felt distant from their families. The bottom line is that it is of utmost importance for parents to be tolerant, patient, and show unconditional love during the teen years, and to realize that adolescence is not terminal, it just feels like it.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research paradigm, approach and design, the population, sampling techniques, research instrument, pre-testing, validity and reliability of the research instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (1994) define research paradigm as a basic set of beliefs or world view that guides research action or an investigation. It is the lens through which a researcher looks at the world and examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed.

In this study, the researcher adopted a positivist paradigm for the study. The researcher's choice of this approach is in line with Patel (2015), who opined that positivist believe there is a single reality which can be measured and known, and therefore quantitative methods is the best approach to measure this reality. Moreover, the researcher was of the opinion that positivist paradigm can be used in large-scale research for a short period of time to uncover social trends, such as the relationship between educational achievement and social class. In addition, the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation in an objective way.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

According to Yates (2004), there are three most dominant research approaches namely, the quantitative research approach, the qualitative research approach, and the mixed-method research approach which entails a combination of both quantitative and

qualitative research approaches. In general, the choice of any research approach depends on the nature of the research problem and the objectives that the research intends to achieve. This study made use of the quantitative approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), quantitative research methods generally attempt to determine the relationship between two variables traditionally referred to as dependent and independent variables using statistical models and formulas. Quantitative research methods are noted to generate greater objectivity in research findings. This is simply attributed to the fact that the researcher does not have any impact on research outcomes, unlike the qualitative research approach. Data collected under the quantitative research approach are external to the researcher and the researcher derives results based on statistical tools, not on subjective interpretations (Creswell, 2015). In sum, the quantitative research approach was most appropriate in determining the existence of a significant relationship between the variables of the study, to be specific, peer group influence on the social life and academic life of students.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design is considered as the blueprint which specifies how data relating to a given problem is collected and analyzed. It provides the procedural outcome for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992) notes that research design indicates the structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis, and the variables involved in the study. The study applied the survey research design. The survey design was used because the study seeks to establish the prevalence or incidence of a particular condition (Mathers et al., 2009), namely the involvement in peer groups and its influence on the social and academic life of students in the Fafraha Community community Senior High School. According to Kothari (2004), surveys produce

findings that may be generalized to the wider population more accurately than others. The author adds that surveys are efficient and have ethical advantages since they do not expose individual respondents to invasive techniques of study. Creswell (2009) also indicated that surveys are flexible and can be combined with other methods to produce richer data.

### **3.4 Population**

The boundary of this study was limited to students and the target population of the study constituted students of Fafraha Community Senior High School. Students who had at least one semester experience in the school were the focus of the study. The population of the study was a homogenous one which comprised of students from all the Departments in the school. This helped the researcher to see across board how peer pressure impacted the academic and social performance of the students of Fafraha Community Senior High School. From the records of the students obtained from the school, it was realized that early adolescents could be found in SHS1 while late adolescents could also be found in SHS 2 and 3.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Stratified, purposive, and proportional sampling techniques were used for the study. Gender was the basis for the stratification. The students engaged in the study were selected purposively in the sense that, once the number required was obtained for both genders, the actual selection of the participants was based on convenience and availability. The numbers were proportional since the sample size for the male and female students corresponded with their actual proportion in the student population. That is 49 percent male and 51 percent female. This was to enable a proportionate representation of both male and female students. This study used the

Slavin (1960) formula as cited in Mappigau et al (2005) to determine the sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

Where n = sample size

N = target population

e = Tolerance at the desired level which is taken at 0.05 or 95% confidence level

The sample size was computed thus:

$$n = \frac{1385}{(1 + 1385 \times 0.05^2)}$$

n = 310. This constituted 22.4% of the target population.

The study used a stratified random sampling technique in the selection of the sample. Saunders et al. (2009) assert that stratified random sampling technique is appropriate where the most population can be segregated into several mutually exclusive sub-populations. The sample was determined as summarized in Table 3.1 below.

*Table 3. 1 Sample size determination*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Sample size (Percentage ratio ×310)</b>
Male	679	49	120
Female	706	51	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>1385</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>310</b>

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

The instrument was developed after a thorough review of the literature. The main instrument for the study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire as identified by Kerlinger (1973) is widely used for collecting data in educational research because if it is developed to answer the research question, it is very effective for securing factual

information about practices and conditions of which the respondents are presumed to know. It is also used for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of subjects.

This study was a quantitative work and required the use of a quantitative instrument. The questionnaire was considered to be the most appropriate instrument for data collection because it provided an equal level of items that brought about responses for comparing early and late adolescents. The questionnaire has as part of its merits a high response rate particularly when the questionnaire design is good and appropriate follow-up mechanisms are used. It simplifies data analysis when properly understood and implemented.

### **3.7 Development of Questionnaire**

The reason for this instrument is the ease with which closed questions can be analyzed. The assignment of numbers or values to each answer makes statistical interpretation easily assessable. As a result, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed to capture the objectives of the study. According to achieving the objectives of the research, the views and opinions of the students were solicited. The questionnaire was adapted with respect to (Code et al., 2016) questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first part was on the demographic data of the students which included age, gender, level of students, and programme of study. The second part was on the research objectives. The items on the questionnaire were 28 altogether. With regards to the second part of the questionnaires, it was further divided into 3 sections, namely; data on the nature of peer groups, data on the influence of peer groups on academic life, and data on the effect of peer groups on the social life of students. The statements on the Likert scale were expressed on a five-point scale pioneered by Rensis Likert in 1932, which asked respondents to indicate



the extent of their agreement ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral ((N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA).

This notwithstanding, the questionnaire has some weaknesses in the sense that it is expensive in terms of time especially if respondents are scattered over a large area. This was resolved when selected respondents in each school were put in one classroom to respond to the items on the questionnaire. There is also the possibility of respondents not providing the appropriate responses as the method involves structured questions. The other weakness is that there is the likelihood of respondents trying to compare answers given. This, the researcher resolved by making sure that respondents did individual work when they were filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability tests to establish its suitability for the study.

### **3.8 Pre-Testing**

Donald (1990) stresses the need for pretesting because it helps the researcher to decide whether the study is feasible and worthwhile to continue. It provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness and practicality of the data collection instrument. Gay (1992) in agreement added that a pilot testing could be used to revise questions in the guide that are apparently unclear or produce negative reactions in subjects. Frankel and Wallen (2000) supported it with the view that pre-test of questionnaire or interview could reveal all ambiguities, poorly worded questions that are not understood and could also indicate whether the instruction to the respondents is clear.

The pre-testing was done at Ghanata Senior High School with 25 students representing 12 females and 13 males drawn randomly. Based on the pretest results,

some of the items that recorded lower reliability were modified while other items were completely taken off because they recorded negative scores.

### **3.9 Reliability**

The Cronbach's coefficient alpha measure of internal consistency was used in determining the reliability of the questionnaire used for the study. Since the majority of items were multiply scored especially on the Likert scale, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was deemed appropriate. The choice of Cronbach's alpha was made on the merit of Ary et al. (1990) view that Cronbach's alpha is used when measures have multiple scored items.

The instrument was pretested to check how consistent the results will be during the actual work. It was tested for its reliability. The Cronbach alpha for the instrument was .81 which meant the instrument was reliable.

### **3.10 Validity**

Content validity of the instrument was established by submitting the instrument to lecturers of the Department of Educational Foundations who had expert knowledge in research. The instrument was shaped and modified while ambiguous items which could not provide appropriate responses were cancelled. The supervisors for the study vetted and approved for content and face validity before the instrument was pre-tested. The pre-testing was done at Ghanata Senior High School at Dodowa.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedure**

An introductory letter was given to the headmaster of the school for the study. Further discussions were made with regards to what the study was about and the number of respondents needed for the study. Arrangements were made with the

headmaster as to how and when the questionnaire could be administered without excessively disrupting the activities of the respondents and the school in general.

The school organized a meeting with the respondents for the researcher to brief them about what the study was about and what was expected of them and from them. Peer pressure was defined for respondents as ‘when people of your age encourage or urge you to do something or to keep you from doing something else, even if you personally want to or do not want to’. The respondents were allowed to ask questions bothering their minds concerning the study and explanations were offered to clear any doubts. All completed questionnaires were collected the same day to ensure a hundred percent return rate. After collecting the data, respondents were debriefed and school authorities were also appreciated for their support.

### **3.12 Data Analysis**

The administered questionnaires were later collected from the students after filling, and it was examined properly to avoid any inconsistency. Data collected from the field was sorted out and those that were valid to be used for the study were subsequently coded and entered into an excel spreadsheet for onward analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research objectives were answered using both descriptive and inferential analyses. The descriptive and inferential analyses were appropriate because it gives a complete picture of the data collected. Descriptive statistics were depicted using percentages for objectives one, two, and three. In analyzing the three objectives which are investigating the nature of peer groups in Fafraha Community Senior High school, and also examining how these peer groups influence the social life and academic life of students, a degree of

consensus with a mean and standard deviation of 2.5 and above was chosen to describe the degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement.

Finally, a correlation and regression analysis was made to establish the relationship between the nature of peer groups in the school and its impact on both the social life and the academic life of students.

### **3.13 Ethical Consideration**

This section indicates the ethical considerations underpinning the research. The researcher considered these ethics in the process of gathering data for the study. Since some of the respondents were below 18 years of age consent letters were sent to their parents to agree before they were included in the research. Respect for the dignity of respondents was a priority for the researcher. Respondents who participated in this study were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided by ensuring that their names and personal details are not included and revealed. The researcher also sought the voluntary participation of respondents with their full consent; no one was coerced into participating in the study. Respondents were also assured that the information gathered would be used purely for academic purposes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that was collected to carry out this study. The study was carried out to investigate the involvement in peer groups and its influence on the social and academic life of students of Fafraha Community senior high school. The study obtained data on the demographics of the respondents; the nature of peer groups; the influence of peer groups on the academic life of students and the influence of peer groups on the social life of students.

#### 4.1 Response Rate

The self-completed questionnaires method was used in this study. Even though they are subject to the inability and/or willingness of the respondents to return the questionnaires (Dillman et al., 2009), Leatherbery (2004) has stated that they are a reliable means of obtaining survey data. A sample of 324 employees was used for this study. 310 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents (students). 300 questionnaires were returned fully filled. 4 questionnaires were partly filled, 4 of them were not filled at all and 2 were not returned. The 300 questionnaires that were filled represented a 96.8% response rate. Baruch (1999) has stated that a response rate of 70% is satisfactory for making reasonable inferences on a population. The 10 questionnaires that were either not properly filled, not returned, or not filled were left out of the analysis (Pallant, 2011). Table 4.1 shows the response rate.

*Table 4. 1 Response rate*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Returned	120	180	96.8
Not Returned	2	3	1.6
Not Fully Filled	0	2	0.6
Not Filled	0	3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, (2021)**

#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

This section presents the background characteristics of the participant including data on participants' age, sex, year of school, and the leadership role performed by respondents in the study area. Table 4.2 and Figure 2 below illustrate the overall demographic characteristics of respondents while the elaborative and specificity of the data are further presented in the sub-sections.

*Table 4. 2 Demographic characteristics of respondents*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	120	40
	Female	180	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	Below 15	105	35
	15 – 17	140	46.7
	Above 17	55	18.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Year of school(class)</b>	First-year	115	38.4
	Second-year	100	33.3
	Third-year	85	28.3

**Source: Field Data, (2021)**

As shown in Table 4.2, 40 percent of the respondents who took part in this study were males while 60 percent of the respondents were females. The reason for

this disparity in the gender can be attributed to the fact majority of students being enrolled in the school are females. Also, another reason for the female dominance in this study can be deduced from the fact most of the courses that are offered in the school are quite dominated by females. For instance, courses such as General Arts and Home Economics constitute the greater portion of the population in the school, however, records of the school revealed that about 70 percent of these students offering these courses are females.

Also, as depicted in Table 4.2, In terms of age, 35% of the respondents were below 17 years, 46.7% were between the ages of 15 – 17 years, while only 18.3% were above the ages of 17 years. The inference from the age distribution indicates that most of the students are below the age of 17, hence are in their prime ages in adolescence and are more susceptible to the influence of their peers. This finding corroborates with a study conducted by Manzoni et al., in 2011. Their studies discovered that students in their early teens are more open to the influences of peers on both their performance in class and social life. Also, with regards to their classes, from Table 4.2, out of the 300 respondents, 38.4 percent were in their first year, 33.3 percent were in their second-year while 28.3 percent were in their third year.

Finally, the leadership role performed by the students in the school was also considered in the study. These included any form of leadership that can be identified in the school, from the classrooms to dormitories, hostels, and in the school, and the results are presented in Figure 2. As shown in Figure 1, out of the 300 respondents, only 12 percent of them indicated that they are in leadership positions in the school, however, an overwhelming percentage of the respondents (264) representing 88 percent posited that they are not in any leadership positions. An observation made

during this study revealed that most of the students occupying positions in the school are males. This shows that the level of female involvement in leadership positions in the school is very low.

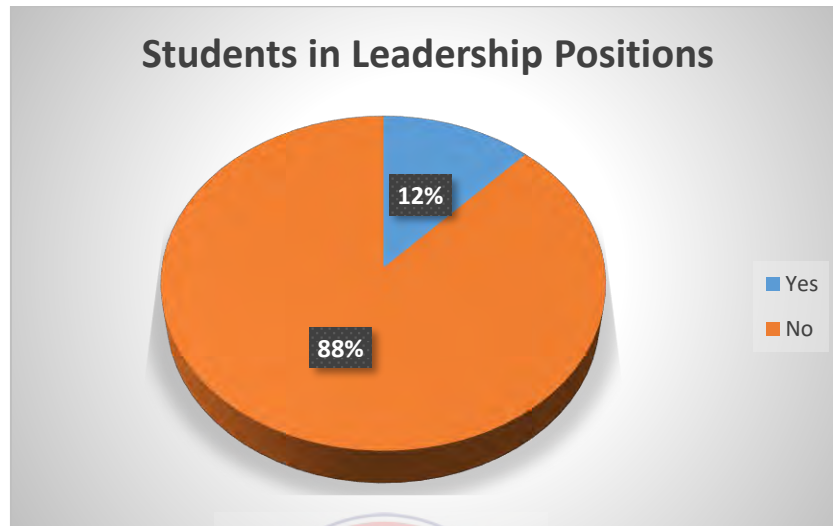


Figure 2 Students in leadership positions

Source: Field Data, (2021)

Table 4. 3 Nature of peer groups

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I spend much time with my peer group	300	1.0	5.0	4.32	1.02
My friends and I share problems with each other	300	1.0	5.0	3.12	1.07
My friends give me advice on my problems	300	1.0	5.0	3.98	1.18
My friends and I do school activities together	300	1.0	5.0	3.90	1.11
I and my friends share thoughts and opinions to strengthen our bond	300	1.0	5.0	3.87	1.34
Some of my friends are in relationships with the opposite sex	300	1.0	5.0	4.09	1.37
I share secrets with my friends that no one else knows about	300	1.0	5.0	4.29	1.24
I am willing to introduce my peers to my parents	300	1.0	5.0	2.42	1.19

Source: Field Data, (2021)



Table 4.3 shows the descriptive analysis of the nature of peers in the Adentan Frafrah Senior High School. In terms of respondents indicating whether they spend much time with their peers or not, the mean and standard deviation obtained indicated that most of the respondents ( $x=4.32$ ;  $SD= 1.02$ ) do spend much time with their peers. This is because they felt very conversant around their peers since they are all of the same age. This finding corroborates with a study conducted by Steinberg in 1989. He revealed that adolescents may feel that their parents cannot relate to the changes they are currently experiencing, such as pubertal development.

Furthermore, the computed mean and standard deviation rating showed that “I share secrets with my friends and that no one else knows about” ( $x=4.29$ ;  $SD= 1.24$ ) was rated as the highest, followed by “some of my friends are in relationships with the opposite sex” ( $x=4.09$ ;  $SD= 1.37$ ) and “my friends give me advice on my problems” ( $x=4.09$ ;  $SD= 1.37$ ). The inference from this is that students see themselves as their own people who can relate to whatever problem or bottlenecks, they are going through, hence, they find it very relaxing to discuss pertinent and sensitive issues with their peers. It can also be deduced from the study that some of the students are engaged in sexually related activities which can affect their sexual reproductive health. This finding is synonymous with that of the study conducted by Youniss and Smollar (1985). Their study disclosed that although many adolescents maintain positive, warm relationships with their parents if they existed, some adolescents believe that their parents do not understand them as well, or that parent and adolescent viewpoints and opinions become somewhat divergent.

On the other hand, when respondents were quizzed on whether they are willing to introduce their peers to their parents, most of them reiterated that they

would not be conversant introducing their peers to their parents, hence, disagreed with the statement. This is because certain parents would not subscribe to their wards having bad peers hence they will try all possible means to break any ties that exist with the peers their kids hang around with.

#### **4.3 Research question One: What is the nature of peer groups in the Fafraha Community Senior High School?**

This research question sought to investigate the nature of the peer groups in the Fafraha Community Senior High School by posing questions that helped the students to describe the peer groups they belong to, the characteristics of the groups, and the perceptions of the students of the groups. Their responses are presented in the Table. The responses are presented in table 4.3.

#### **4.4 Research Question Two: *What is the effect of Peer Groups on the social life and Academic life of Students?***

The research question sought to examine the influence of peer groups on the social life and academic life of the students. This section has been divided into two. The first section will elaborate on the effects peer groups have on the social life of students while the other section will also expatiate on the effects peer groups have on the academic life of students in Fafraha Community Senior High School. The results of this data are presented in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 respectively.

##### **4.4.1 Effect of peer groups on Academic life of students**

Empirical evidence shows that there is a link between peer relationships and academic lives. (Ladd, 1990; Ladd et al., 1996). Gest et al. (2005) argued that peer academics may influence children's academic motivation and achievement, even if it is not veridical. The results are presented in Table 4.4 below.

*Table 4. 4 Influence of peer groups on the Academic life of Students*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
I prefer to study with my friends	300	1.0	5.0	3.11	0.75
I discuss my learning problems with friends	300	1.0	5.0	3.54	1.34
The group work helps to boost my grades	300	1.0	5.0	3.49	1.27
I love to make friends with intelligent students only	300	1.0	5.0	2.50	1.01
My friends help in group discussion helped to improve my grades	300	1.0	5.0	3.49	1.34
My performance has improved with the strength of my friendships	300	1.0	5.0	3.61	1.28
My friends' high grades encourage me to work harder	300	1.0	5.0	4.29	1.12
My friends respect me because of my good performance in class	300	1.0	5.0	4.48	1.09

**Source: Field Data, (2021)**

As shown in Table 4.4, the majority of the respondents agreed that ( $\bar{x}=3.11$ ;  $SD=0.75$ ) they prefer to study with their friends. The respondents also indicated that ( $\bar{x}=3.54$ ;  $SD=1.34$ ) they normally discuss their learning problems with friends. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation calculated revealed that most of the respondents have seen a tremendous boost in their grades as a result of the group work activities with their peers. It can be deduced from this study that weaker students who normally find their way among peers who are intelligent in class are likely to improve on their academic life. This study affirms the findings of Leka (2015). He asserted that knowing how teenagers interact with their peers and how they interact with each other and how the presence of peer-group affects students' academic achievement in school plays an important role for various categories and even the whole educational system.

Again, the researcher quizzed the respondents on whether they loved making friends with only intelligent students. As depicted in Table 4.4, most of the respondents were undecided ( $\bar{x}=2.50$ ;  $SD=1.01$ ) as to whether they would prefer to associate themselves with only intelligent students. This means that their peers do not necessarily have to be smart before they mingle with them. They choose friends regardless of their learning abilities.

Moreover, respondents were asked if their friends' help in group discussion has aided them to improve on their grades. In respect to this, the majority of the respondents agreed that ( $\bar{x}=3.49$ ;  $SD=1.34$ ) the group discussions they often engage in with their friends have really paid off, hence, have seen an improvement in their grades. From Table 4.4, most of the respondents affirmed that ( $\bar{x}=4.29$ ;  $SD=1.12$ ) indeed their friends' high grades encourage them to work harder. An informal conversation with the students revealed that normally weaker students perform well when they are grouped with strong students. This is because the stronger students teach the weaker ones more often for them to understand as compared to the teachers. This finding disagrees with the study conducted by Goethe in 2001. He found out that weak students do better when grouped with other weak students. It shows that students' performance improves if they are with students of their own kind. Sacerdote (2001) found that students' grades tend to be higher when students have unusually strong academic peers.

Finally, the researcher sought to solicit their views on whether their friends respect them because of their good performance in the classroom. In this regard, the study revealed that most of the respondents ( $\bar{x}=4.48$ ;  $SD=1.09$ ) are being respected by their friends as a result of their brilliant performance in the classroom. This finding

affirms to the findings of Coleman in 1961. He disclosed that individual popularity or peer status may depend upon their peer group affiliations. Thus, membership in high-status peer groups is actively sought by many adolescents and is usually contingent upon participation in school-sponsored activities such as athletic teams, student government, or certain school clubs.

#### 4.4.2 Influence of peer groups on the Social Life of Students

This section of the study sought to find out about the influence of peer groups on the social life of students. The students were requested to answer questions on their social life and interactions with peers. The responses are presented in Table 4.5.

*Table 4. 5 Influence of peer groups on the social life of students*

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am shy	300	1.0	5.0	3.76	1.12
The opinions of my friends are very important to me	300	1.0	5.0	4.12	1.07
I make new friends based on recommendations of my current friends	300	1.0	5.0	3.210-	1.33
I dress to fit in the group of my friends	300	1.0	5.0	2.87	1.16
I sometimes copy the mannerisms of my friends	300	1.0	5.0	3.83	1.18
My friends and I give support to each other no matter what we do	300	1.0	5.0	3.72	1.23
I prefer friends from rich homes	300	1.0	5.0	2.73	1.31
I sometimes rebuke my friends	300	1.0	5.0	3.07	1.09

**Source: Field Data, (2021)**

From Table 4.5, it can be deduced from the study that most of the respondents asserted ( $\bar{x}=3.76$ ;  $SD=1.12$ ) to the fact they are shy among their peers. Also, the mean and standard deviation obtained revealed that the majority of the respondents ( $\bar{x}=4.12$ ;  $SD=1.07$ ) believed that their opinions of their friends are very important to them. This means that they find it very comforting to listen to their peers as compared

to their family, hence, the possibility of them getting lured into any bad act is very high. This finding agrees with the findings of Chen and Cheng, (2003). They believed that interaction of students between its peer is likely to influence the students and can be crucial for the student to determine their choice and could affect student performance.

As shown in Table 4.5, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they make new friends based on recommendations of their current friends or not. The mean and standard deviation obtained ( $\bar{x}=4.12$ ;  $SD=1.07$ ) indicated that most of the respondents agree with the statement with less dispersion around the mean. The inference from this study is that the bond that exists between peers or among peers is very strong to the extent that even making new friends rest on the bosom of their friends. This means that a bad friend made by a peer can lead to a multitude of bad friends around him or her, hence, jeopardizing the social life of that individual.

Again, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they dress to fit in the group of their friends or not. Most of the respondents revealed that ( $\bar{x}=2.87$ ;  $SD=1.16$ ) they dress to fit in the group of their friends. From Table 4.5, most of the respondents also disclosed that ( $\bar{x}=3.83$ ;  $SD=1.18$ ) they sometimes copy the mannerisms of their friends. It can be deduced from this study that students are liable to imitate wrongdoing or bad manners by their friends since they think they have to align themselves to their friends and also look like them.

Finally, as it can be seen from Table 4.5, most of the respondents disclosed ( $\bar{x}=3.72$ ;  $SD=1.23$ ) that they give support to each other no matter what the issue is. This means that they wouldn't mind covering up for their peers if they engage themselves in deviant behaviours. The study also revealed that most of the

respondents ( $\bar{x}=2.73$ ;  $SD=1.31$ ) indicated that they prefer friends from rich homes to poor homes. However, some of the students had reservations about this statement. They argued that they make friends regardless of the background of the fellow. On the other hand, it was evident that most of the respondents agreed that ( $\bar{x}=3.07$ ;  $SD=1.09$ ) they sometimes rebuke their friends. The inference of this is that the majority of people who agreed to this statement are people who are quite trained in their various homes.

#### 4.5 Correlation analysis on the relationship between peer groups influence and social life and academic life.

Correlation and regression analyses were carried out to determine the relationship between the nature of peer groups and the effect they have on the social life and the academic life of students and the strength of the relationship (Pallant, 2011). The results are presented in Table 4 below.

*Table 4. 6 correlation analysis on the relationship between peer groups influence and social life and academic life.*

Variables		Nature of groups	Effect on Academics	Social life Effect on
Nature of groups	Pearson Correlation	1	.823**	.746**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	315	315	315
Effect on Academics	Pearson Correlation	.823**	1	.312*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.025
	N	315	315	315
Effect on Social life	Pearson Correlation	.746**	.312*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.025	
	N	315	315	315

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Field Data, (2021)**

From Table 4.5, it can be observed that the nature of the peer groups and the effect on the academic life of students positively at 0.825\*\* and  $p < .01$ . This means that peer groups affect the social life of the student (Pallant, 2011). The nature of the peer groups also correlates positively with the social choices made by the students at 0.746 and  $p < .01$ .





## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The specific objective of this study was to investigate the effects of peer group influence on the academic life and social life of students at the Fafraha Community Senior High School. Data was collected on the nature of peer groups in the school, the effects on the academic life of students, and the social life of students in the school. This chapter presents the findings of the study, conclusions drawn, and recommendations for the school in particular and other schools in general.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study was quantitative and hence the data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression analyses. Regression analysis was used since the study sought to establish a cause-effect relationship between peer groups on one hand and academic life and social life on the other hand in the school.

The respondents were students in the school with at least a year of experience in the school environment. The information they provided is therefore considered to be credible. Using the Slovin (1960) formula, a sample of 300 was computed from a student population of 1,385. Questionnaires were prepared and the validity of each set of questions for the nature of peer groups, effects on academic life, and effects on social life was tested and found to be consistent with acceptable values of Cronbach's alpha above 0.7.

The questionnaires were presented to all 310 students sampled for the study but only 302 were returned. 2 of them were not fully filled and in keeping with the recommendation by Pallant (2011), they were not used for the analysis. Most of the students have been in the school for over one year. Thus, they were deemed capable of understanding the school environment enough and capable of providing credible information in a study such as this.

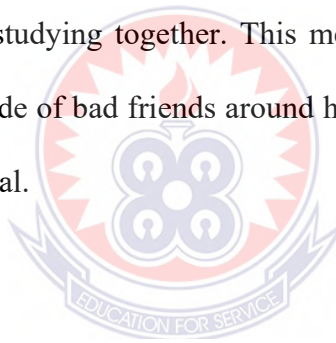
The conceptual framework of the study hypothetically assumed a cause-effect relationship between the nature of peer groups on one hand and the academic life of the students and their social life on the other hand based on literature review. This relationship was investigated to ascertain its operability. eight questions were presented to the respondents on the nature of peer groups in the school; eight questions were presented on the academic life of the students and eight statements were presented on the social life of the students.

Most of the students spend time with their friends. During this time of interaction, they share their challenges and offer advice to each other. Some of the time is spent on school activities, among them studies and experiments with relationships with the opposite sex. Intimate secrets are shared and very strong bonds are formed. However, relatively fewer students are willing to introduce their peers to their parents. This suggests that the students are aware that their parents would not approve of many of the friendships, but they are willing to risk being in such friendships for the benefits of belonging, camaraderie, and a sense of identity.

Moreover, the study found out that normally weaker students perform well when they are grouped with strong students. This is because the stronger students teach the weaker ones more often for them to understand as compared to the teachers.

Additionally, some of these groups help to boost the grades of some of the students since they engage in group discussions of schoolwork. The improved performance increases the self-esteem of the students who benefit and offer encouragement to those that are not doing so well.

Finally, the study found out that because the opinions of the members of peer groups are cherished, other friendships are based on the peer group's approval. The strength of these bonds and the sense of belonging they provide manifest in behaviour such as the alignment of dress codes and habits, imitation of mannerisms, and mutual support in whatever the group agrees to do. These may be deviant behaviour such as involvement in unsupervised relationships with the opposite sex or the more appropriate activities of studying together. This means that a bad friend made by a peer can lead to a multitude of bad friends around him or her, hence, jeopardizing the social life of that individual.



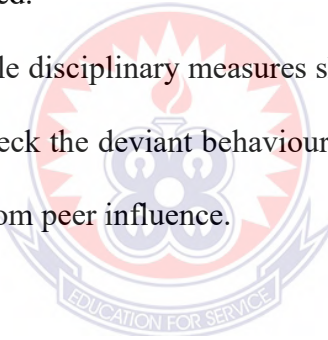
### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that although peers influence the academic life of students positively, they also have had a negative impact on the social lives of students. The study shows that many of the students are willing to kowtow or subscribe to any act orchestrated by their peers, irrespective of the impact it has on them. This suggests that there is a high tendency of deviant behaviours getting diffused in the school, hence, authorities and other stake holders should try as much as possible to provide proper mechanisms that would enlighten students on the kind of friendship they make in the school.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation is made:

1. Students should be taken through a detailed process of orientation upon admission. In the process, the issue of the selection of friends should be highlighted to ensure that students are more deliberate in the selection of peers.
2. Guidance and counseling in the school should be given an important role in the life of students while they are in school. This offers an opportunity for them to evaluate their associations in the light of the greater wisdom of teachers to ensure that their private decisions on the selection of friends are positively influenced.
3. Strict but reasonable disciplinary measures should be implemented sustainably in the school to check the deviant behaviour that may arise from time to time, mostly resulting from peer influence.



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## APPENDIX ‘A’

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on “ Peer Group Influence on the Academic and Social Life of Students in Fafraha Community Senior High School.”

### INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire has been designed to collect data from students for this academic exercise. You have been selected to take part in this study and you are requested to fill the questionnaire to facilitate the study. The information you provide will be used only for the study and will be treated with absolute confidentiality. Thank you for your kind assistance.

### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age
  - a. Below 15
  - b. 15-17
  - c. Above 17
2. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
3. Year of school
  - a. First
  - b. Second
  - c. Third
4. Role
  - a. Student leader
  - b. Not a student leader



### Section B: Nature of Peer Groups

The following statements describe the nature of peer groups. Indicate the extent to which you perceive each statement to be applicable to your peer group by ticking against the options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Statement	Response				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I spend much time with my peer group					
2	My friends and I share problems with each other					
3	My friends give me advice in my problems					
4	My friends and I do school activities together					
5	I and my friends share thoughts and opinions to strengthen our bond					
6	Some of my friends are in relationships with the opposite sex					
7	I share secrets with my friends that no one else knows about					
8	I am willing to introduce my peers to my parents					

### Section C: Effects of peer groups on the academic performance of students

The following statements describe the effects of peer groups on the academic performance of students. Indicate the extent to which you perceive each statement to be applicable to your peer group by ticking against the options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Statement	Response				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I prefer to study with my friends					
2	I discuss my learning problems with friends					
3	The group work helps to boost my grades					
4	I love to make friends with intelligent students only					
5	My friend's help in group discussion helped to improve my grades					
6	My performance has improved with the assistance of my friendships					
7	My friends' high grades encourage me to work harder					
8	My friends respect me because of my good performance in class					

**Section D: Effects of peer groups on the social life of students**

The following statements describe the effects of peer groups on the social life of students. Indicate the extent to which you perceive each statement to be applicable to your peer group by ticking against the options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Statement	Response				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I am shy					
2	The opinions of my friends are very important to me					
3	I make new friends based on recommendations of my current friends					
4	I dress to fit in the group of my friends					
5	I sometimes copy the mannerisms of my friends					
6	My friends and I give support to each other no matter what we do					
7	I prefer friends from rich homes					
8	I sometimes rebuke my friends					





## **APPENDIX ‘B’**

### **PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE, WINNEBA

Dear Parent/legal guardian,

#### **PARENTAL CONSENT**

My name is **Nana Nyarko Appiah-Gyasi** and I am a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) student at the University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting a research study on “Peer Group Influence on the Academic and Social Life of Students in Fafraha Community Senior High School”.

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information that will help you decide if you will give consent for your child to participate in this research. The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether you want your child to be a part of this study.

The general purpose of this study is to examine the positive and negative effects of peer influence on adolescents. More specifically, this research focuses on how peer influence relates to academic life, social behaviour, and other areas related to the development of the youth.

Your child will be asked to complete a survey and possibly a follow-up interview. We expect that your child will be in this research study for up to an hour during break time.

If you agree to participate, your child will be one of the three hundred participants in the study from Fafraha Community Senior High School. Moreover, your child will be expected to respond to a questionnaire that will be provide by me.

The main risk may be the time the child spends for participating in the study might be considered inconvenience. To minimize this inconvenience of time, the following measures will be taken: The child can skip any questions that he or she feels uncomfortable answering while taking the survey or during the interview and the survey will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to the child.

Your child's responses will be anonymous and confidential. This implies that participants will be assigned pseudonyms for identification during the study and therefore there won't be a collection of personal information such as name, student ID or email address. Moreover, information will only be accessed by the researcher who is doing the study. Additionally, the results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your child's name will not be used.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline participation at any time. You may also withdraw your child from the study at any time; there will be no penalty. Please note that although you will not receive any payment or compensation for participating in this study, the possible benefit of your child's participation is the knowledge to be gained from this study and information provided by your child for the study will contribute to educational research.

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 0549195997 or e-mail me at nanaadwoay@gmail.com If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in this research or if you feel your child has been placed at risk, you can contact the UEW Educational Foundations department at [edufound@uew.edu.gh](mailto:edufound@uew.edu.gh). Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

**Nana Nyarko Appiah-Gyasi**

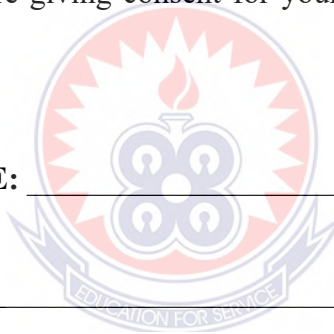
By signing below, you are giving consent for your child to participate in the above study.

**YOUR CHILD'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER

NANA NYARKO APPIAH-GYASI

6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2021.

THE HEADMASTER  
FAFRAHA COMMUNITY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
POST OFFICE BOX DT 2696  
ADENTA – ACCRA.

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN FAFRAHA COMMUNITY SENIOR HIGH.**

I am a student at the University of Education studying for a postgraduate diploma in Education. The university requires that all students must carry out research projects in partial fulfillment of the degree's requirements. I therefore thought it wise to conduct the research in Fafraha Community Senior High School since I teach here. The topic for the research is "Peer Group Influence on The Academic and Social Life of Students in Fafraha Community Senior High School".

With your permission, I would like to conduct my research on the 27th of January 2021 during the teaching staff's Continuous Development Program (CPD) period. This research will require data collection from students in years 1 to 3 by responding to questionnaires administered to them without disrupting the overall activities of the respondents and the school. The information gathered will be used for academic purposes only.

Your assistance and permission will be enormously helpful and appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

.....

Nana Nyarko Appiah-Gyasi