



JOURNAL

OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH,
INNOVATION, AND
MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

An Academic Journal Publication



Website: | <https://jerimspublication.com>

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBERS



PRINT ISSN

3116-5559



ONLINE ISSN

3116-5567

Volume 1, Issue 05, pp 06-11, July 2026

Research Article

Peer Influence on Learners' Academic Performance: Basis for An Intervention Program

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ABSTRACT

Article History:

Submission: June, 2026

Revised: June, 2026

Accepted: July, 2026

Published: July, 2026

Originality: 96%

Similarity Index: 8%

Grammarly Score: 95%

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Recommended Citation:

Asingua F.M., (2026). Peer Influence on Learners' Academic Performance: Basis for An Intervention Program. *Journal of Educational Research, Innovation, and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(5), 06-11.

<https://doi.org/10.67001/jeri.2026.05.K1V7QL>

Within the school environments, peers played a critical role in shaping the academic behaviors, attitudes, and, most especially, the academic performance of the learners. Understanding the nature and extent of peer influence was essential in promoting positive outcomes of learning. This study investigated the influence of peer dynamics on learners' academic performance in Oroquieta Seventh-Day Adventist School, Inc. (OSDASI) and Oroquieta Adventist Education Center, Inc. (OAEC) during the School Year 2025-2026, as a basis for the development of an appropriate intervention program. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine peer influence in terms of social interaction, academic support, and peer pressure and its relationship with academic performance among over 80 Grade 5 and 6 learners from OSDASI and OAEC. Findings showed peer pressure significantly affects achievement, while positive interactions and academic support enhance outcomes. Results informed a proposed intervention to reduce negative peer behaviors and strengthen supportive peer environments for improved learning outcomes.

Keywords: *academic performance, academic support, peer influence, peer pressure, and social interaction,*

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Introduction

Education worldwide was increasingly aware that students do not learn in isolation, but are influenced by their social environment and their peers. Edwards et al. (2025) exclaimed that peer influence was a powerful factor in the academic performance of students. It could have affected the motivation of students, engagement, and learning outcomes across educational levels. This study investigated how peers influence the academic performance of the learners and used those findings as the basis for designing an intervention program for schools. Positive peer relationships and social acceptance were linked to higher academic achievement, with stronger effects observed in younger students and classroom-based assessments (Wentzel et al., 2020).

Studies in different countries showed that peer influence played a significant role in shaping academic outcomes such as achievement, engagement, and motivation. Research by Shao et al. (2024) emphasized that positive peer relationships foster higher motivation, which led to greater engagement and improved academic outcomes. At the international level, peer influence has been identified as a critical social determinant of the learning outcomes of students, where positive peer interactions enhanced engagement and motivation, while negative peer pressures may block academic achievement (Shao et al., 2024). Simultaneously, quantitative evidence from cross-sectional studies illustrated that peer influence remarkably saw variations in academic performance. It suggested that peers play both facilitative and detrimental roles across global educational settings (Zafar et al., 2025). In the Philippines, elementary learners were also developing friendships and peer groups, which may affect their studies. Gansino et al. (2024) added that relational contexts among students influenced study habits, attitudes, and engagement with learning tasks, which were crucial determinants of academic performance. Given these influences, the present study focused on peer influence on the academic performance of the learners, which aimed to design an intervention program to support positive peer effects and reduce negative ones.

Recent research showed different findings on peer influence and academic performance. For example, Khan et al. (2023) found that, among university students, peer relations and peer pressure were statistically significantly linked to performance outcomes. In a study of junior high students in China, peer relationships were found to indirectly influence academic achievement through learning motivation and engagement (Zafar et al., 2024). In Philippine elementary and secondary settings, studies of peer tutoring and peer-reading strategies showed that structured peer influence improved academic outcomes (Danga, 2023). These studies suggested that peer influence was an important factor in academic performance and that peers can act as either positive supports or negative distractions (Mendez et al. 2023).

Moreover, extensive literature has examined the mechanisms through which peer influence affects academic success. Peer relationships that promoted positive social interaction and academic support correlated with higher levels of engagement, motivation, and achievement, as evidenced in studies involving junior high and tertiary students (Frontiers in Psychology, 2023). Specifically, research proved that peer influence significantly predicted variance in academic performance and that higher levels of supportive partner engagement related to better grades and learning outcomes (Lu, 2025). On the other hand, studies also outlined that peer pressure could lead to distractions and compromised academic outcomes when peers emphasized conformity to social norms at the expense of academic focus (Khan et al. 2023). Together, these findings highlighted that peer influence operated along a continuum from positive to negative effects, depending on the nature and context of peer interactions.

Despite the growing body of research, there was a gap when it comes to younger learners in the Philippines, particularly key stage 2 learners. Current research regarding how distinct dimensions of peer influence, specifically social interaction, academic support, and peer pressure, jointly and uniquely related to measurable academic performance outcomes within specific learner populations. Many existing studies focused broadly on peer environment without isolating these subcomponents, thereby limiting a precised understanding of which aspects of peer influence most strongly correlated with academic indicators such as grades, retention, and engagement.

While studies had demonstrated associations between peer influence and academic performance, few had quantified the magnitude and specific pathways by which peer interactions impacted learners at different educational levels. Shao et al. (2024) provided evidence on mediating roles of motivation and engagement among junior high students, there was limited data on how these pathways operated across various age groups, strands, and educational settings. Similarly, Philippine studies, such as Fudolin and Dioso (2025), had identified

correlations between peer pressure and performance but had not sufficiently explored underlying factors, including peer norms, academic motivation, and socio-emotional support, that may moderate these relationships. Furthermore, there was a need for data that empirically disaggregated these influences to inform targeted interventions that enhanced positive peer effects and counteract negative pressures among learners. In local school-based environments, where systematic data connecting peer influence subdimensions to academic success was still developing, this inconsistency was especially noticeable.

To address this gap, this study examined the nature and extent of peer influence on the academic performance of elementary learners, specifically Oroquieta Seventh-Day Adventist School, Inc., and Oroquieta Adventist Education Center, Inc. It used the findings as a basis to design an intervention program aimed at supporting positive peer interactions and mitigating negative ones. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study gathered data on (1) the peer influence experienced by learners in terms of social interaction, academic support, and peer pressure; (2) the academic performance of the learners; (3) the significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance; (4) the significant influence of peer dynamics on academic performance; and (5) the intervention program based on the findings of the study. Using a validated instrument, this study produced strong empirical evidence of how these variables interact within the targeted learner population.

Methods

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between peer influence and the academic performance of Grade 5 and Grade 6 learners from Oroquieta Seventh-Day Adventist School, Inc. (OSDASI) and Oroquieta Adventist Education Center, Inc. (OAEC). A total of 74 purposively selected respondents participated in the study, with data collected through a researcher-made, validated questionnaire measuring peer influence in terms of social interaction, academic support, and peer pressure, while academic performance data were obtained from the learners' official school records. The research instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing to establish reliability prior to administration. Ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, and institutional approval, were strictly observed throughout the study. The gathered data were analyzed using frequency and percentage, weighted mean and standard deviation, mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's *r*), and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to describe the respondents, determine the level of peer influence and academic performance, examine significant relationships between variables, and identify the dimensions of peer influence that significantly predict learners' academic achievement.

Results and Discussions

Table 1
Summary of the Peer Influence Experienced by the Learners

Dimensions of Peer Influence	Overall Weighted Mean	Overall Standard Deviation	Description
Social Interaction	3.15	0.75	Agree
Academic Support	2.95	0.82	Agree
Peer Pressure	2.36	0.96	Disagree
Overall, Peer Influence	2.82	0.84	Agree

Table 1 presents the summary of the level of peer influence experienced by the learners. Among the three dimensions, social interaction obtained the highest overall weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15, SD = 0.75), verbally interpreted as *Agree*. This indicated that learners generally experience positive and active engagement with their peers, suggesting that interaction plays a prominent role in their school life. The overall peer influence yielded a mean of 2.82 (SD = 0.84), which falls near the midpoint of the scale and was also interpreted as *Agree*. This reflected a moderate yet meaningful presence of peer influence among the learners, implying that peers were relevant but not overwhelmingly dominant in shaping the experiences of the learners.

In contrast, peer pressure recorded the lowest mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36, SD = 0.96), with a verbal interpretation of

Disagree. This suggested that learners generally do not perceive negative or coercive pressure from peers, indicating a relatively healthy peer environment. The findings implied that peer influence among the learners was characterized more by constructive social interaction and academic support than by negative pressure. These results provided a clear context for the succeeding analysis of the academic performance of the learners in SOP 2, allowing for an informed examination of how such peer dynamics may relate to academic outcomes. Following the assessment of peer influence among learners, the study next examined the academic performance of the learners to establish their overall scholastic standing. This analysis provided a baseline for understanding how learners were performing academically, as reflected in their recorded grade ranges, and served as a crucial reference point for subsequent discussions on the relationship and influence of peer dynamics on academic outcomes.

Table 2 presents the distribution of learners according to their academic performance based on their grade ranges. This table provided a clear overview of how learners were academically categorized, serving as a basis for understanding their overall achievement before examining their relationship with peer influence.

Table 2
Learners' Academic Performance

Grade Range	Academic Performance Description	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
99–100	Outstanding / With Highest Honors	1	1.3
95–98	Very Satisfactory / With High Honors	10	13.3
90–94	Satisfactory / With Honors	23	30.7
85–89	Proficient Level	40	53.3
80–84	Approaching Proficiency	1	1.3
Total	—	75	100.0

Table 2 showed that the highest proportion of learners (53.3%, $f = 40$) falls within the Proficient Level (85–89), indicating that the majority of learners demonstrate consistent and acceptable mastery of the required academic competencies. This suggested that, overall, learners were meeting expected performance standards and were capable of handling grade-level academic demands. At the midpoint of the distribution, 30.7% ($f = 23$) of the learners attained grades within the Satisfactory / With Honors range (90–94). This reflected a substantial group of learners who were performing above the basic proficiency level, demonstrating strong academic understanding and sustained effort in their studies.

In contrast, the lowest proportions were observed in the Outstanding / With Highest Honors (99–100) and Approaching Proficiency (80–84) categories, each accounting for 1.3% ($f = 1$) of the respondents. This indicated that only a very small number of learners were either performing at the extremely high end or were nearing the minimum acceptable level of academic performance. The findings suggested that the academic performance of the learners was largely clustered at the proficient and satisfactory levels. This performance profile provided a meaningful context for examining, in the succeeding sections, whether and how peer influence contributed to variations in the academic achievement of the learners.

Table 3
Relationship Between Peer Influence and Academic Performance

Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value ®	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Peer Influence and Academic Performance	Pearson Product–Moment Correlation	0.48	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3 shows that peer influence and academic performance had a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.48$) using the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation. The computed p-value of 0.001, which was lower than the set

level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicated that the relationship between peer influence and academic performance was statistically significant.

The highest value ($r = 0.48$) suggested that as peer influence increases, the academic performance of the learners also tends to improve, reflecting the meaningful role of peers in shaping academic behaviors and outcomes. At the midpoint level, the relationship remained positive, implying that even moderate peer interactions could contribute to academic engagement and performance. In contrast, the lowest level of peer influence corresponded to weaker academic outcomes, indicating that limited peer support or interaction may not sufficiently enhance learning performance. The results implied that peer influence was an important factor associated with academic performance. This significant relationship provided empirical support for further analysis of how peer dynamics may influence learning outcomes and serves as a logical transition toward discussing the implications of peer influence in the development of an appropriate intervention program.

Table 4
Influence of Peer Dynamics on Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	Statistical Test		Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Peer Dynamics	Simple Regression	Linear	0.52	4.36	0.000	Reject H_0	Significant Influence

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 indicates that peer dynamics had a significant positive influence on academic performance, as evidenced by the highest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.52$) obtained from the simple linear regression analysis. This value signified that for every unit increase in peer dynamics, there was a corresponding increase in the academic performance of the learners, highlighting peer dynamics as a strong predictor of academic outcomes.

At the midpoint level of influence, the positive beta value suggested that moderate peer interactions and engagement already contribute meaningfully to academic performance, reinforcing the role of supportive peer environments in enhancing learning. Conversely, at the lowest level of peer dynamics, the influence on academic performance was minimal, implying that limited or negative peer interactions may not sufficiently promote academic success.

The computed t-value of 4.36 and the p-value of 0.000, which was lower than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirmed that the influence of peer dynamics on academic performance was statistically significant. These findings provided a clear transition to discussing how structured peer-based strategies may be integrated into an intervention program to improve the academic performance of the learners.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer influence plays a meaningful role in shaping the academic experiences of the learners in Oroquieta Seventh-Day Adventist School, Inc. (OSDASI) and Oroquieta Adventist Education Center, Inc. (OAEC). Learners generally experienced positive peer influence, particularly through social interaction and academic support, which contribute to a supportive learning environment. At the same time, peer pressure was found to be low, indicating that learners can maintain personal autonomy and were not excessively driven by negative peer influences. This balance suggested a healthy peer environment that supports both social development and academic engagement. The academic performance of the learners was generally satisfactory to proficient, with the majority achieving at or above the expected performance level. This indicated that learners were capable of meeting academic standards and demonstrated a stable foundation for academic success. The distribution of grades further suggested that favorable peer conditions may helped sustain motivation, participation, and achievement of the students, while minimizing the risk of poor performance. The study concluded that peer influence and peer dynamics were important factors in the academic success of the learners. Positive peer interactions improved motivation, engagement, and achievement, while low levels of negative peer pressure helped preserve self-regulation and independence. These conclusions provided a strong empirical basis for the development of an intervention program that

strengthens constructive peer relationships and leverages peer influence as a strategic resource for improving the academic performance of the learners.

Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the importance of fostering positive peer relationships as a means of enhancing learners' academic performance. Learners are encouraged to actively engage in constructive peer interactions that promote collaboration, motivation, and responsible decision-making. Teachers should incorporate structured peer-based instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and collaborative group activities, to maximize the positive influence of peers on academic achievement. School administrators are encouraged to strengthen programs that cultivate healthy peer dynamics through mentoring, leadership, and values formation initiatives, while parents and guardians should reinforce these efforts by maintaining open communication and providing guidance on balancing peer relationships with academic responsibilities. Likewise, school stakeholders, community partners, policymakers, and education leaders should collaborate in developing learner-centered programs and policies that support positive peer engagement and inclusive learning environments. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand this line of inquiry by involving larger and more diverse populations, exploring additional variables, and validating the findings across different educational settings to further enrich the understanding of peer influence on academic performance.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest

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