INFLUENCE OF PEER PRESSURE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' MORAL BEHAVIOUR IN KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA, STATE

Abstract

This study examined the Influence of Peer Pressure influence on moral behaviour of secondary school students in Keffi Local Government of Nasarawa State. A sample of 240 students (131 males and 109 female) were selected from a population of 13605 (8199 males and 5406 females) using multi- stage sampling technique. Influence of Peer Pressure on Secondary School Students' Moral (IPPSSSMB) was the instrument used. The instrument was validated by some experts in the Faculty of Education, Adamawa State University, Mubi. The index of reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach' alpha Coefficient was 0.84.One research question and a corresponding research hypothesis guided the study and tested at .05 level of significance. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentage) for demographic characteristics of respondents and to answer research question. Chi-Square was used to test hypothesis. The finding shows that; Peer pressure has significant negative influence on moral behaviour of Secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that parents should have a closer relationship with their secondary school students and lay more emphasis on their moral life.

Keywords: Peer Pressure, Moral Behaviour

Introduction

Peer groups create and maintain a culture separate from what the home provides. Many young people spend more time with peers than with parents or other family members (Akinade, 2015). The secondary school students from this area may exert extraordinary influence over each other into the formation of certain behaviours, among which may include alcohol consumption, drug abuse, truancy, fighting, sexual immorality, and disobedience to the constituted authority. Peer group influence has been recognized as a powerful socializing agent, from the traditional societies to the present modern societies (Akanle & Odu, 2014).

They further observed that negative peer influences contribute a lot to increased use of substances. Peer group influence is a common source for the involvement in negative activities for secondary school students. It is within the peer group that the young person learns to relate to different roles and to experiment with interpersonal interaction skills that will eventually transfer to the world of adults.

Enang (2017) noted that moral judgment is often influenced by peer group pressure. This implies that, the secondary school students struggle to free themselves from parental domination while they rally more on the norms and standards of the peer culture. Hence, the moral judgment of these students is often greatly influenced by the opinion of their peers. It is well known that the general behaviour of an individual is determined by his or her value orientation. Onwuka (2011) studies revealed that there exists a positive correlation between an individual value orientation and his personal formation. This implies that a person with a positive value orientation will be well behaved by observing the rules and regulation of a society that make the society be judged as morally sound. Thus, the negation of societal values by secondary school secondary school students brings about bad moral misconduct. This general immoral behaviour among secondary school students is influenced by so many factors, such as family types, peer pressure, parenting styles among others. As secondary school students spend much of his time with the members of his peer groups. They copy the ideals of the group in a desire to be accepted. Nothing can be more devastating to the secondary school students than to be rejected by his age mates (Adeyemo, 2010). The secondary school students deplore being rejected by their age mates. In the quest for this acceptance, the secondary school student goes out to copy the practices and conduct of the peers irrespective of whether they are acceptable or not to the society at large. Secondary school students in the Keffi Area Inspectorate, which comprised fourteen public secondary schools in the local government area of Nasarawa State exhibit characteristics common among the peers. Morality, as conceptualized by Papero (2015), is to act in the manner expected of all persons by the society in any given situation.

Morality therefore refers to those actions that are considered to be right. Morality requires one to first of all know what constitutes acceptable behaviour as against what is abhorred in a given society and to do what society accepts as desirable. Thus, depriving any member of the community access to a good moral reputation is just as terminating her entire existence. It has been observed that one of the crucial issues that threaten the future survival of Keffi local government area of Nasarawa state is the continuous decay in moral state of her secondary school students. The concept of morality is essential in the understanding of thoughts and behaviours. Thus, morality speaks of system of behaviour with regards to standard of right and wrong behaviour (Papero, 2015). Young people in their secondary school life time according to Laible, and Kupanoff, (2011) joined different peer groups and identify themselves with these groups by participating in their activities in order not to be rejected. A peer is a person who is approximately the same age as another. In most cases peers are heavily influenced by others of their age bracket wherever they find themselves. Their actions are normally done in a group, which is known as peer group.

A peer group is a source of great influence during the time of secondary school student in a contemporary society, most peer groups have become an increasingly important context in which secondary school student spend most time together. Christner, Stewart & Freman (2017) explained that modernization has led more and more to age segregation-in schools, work place, and in the community. How much time one spends with friends will play a great part in the development of the secondary school student into the mature adult.

Peer groups are an important influence throughout one's life, but they are more critical during their developmental years of adolescence. There is often a controversy about the influence of a peer group versus parental influence, particularly during adolescence (Kilourse, 2012). The power of the peer group becomes more important when the family relationships are not close or supportive.

If the parents are largely unavailable, the secondary school students may turn to their peer group for emotional support. Eisenberg (2018) also opined that most secondary school student in this situation are not discriminatory about the kind of group they join. They will often turn to a group that accepts them, even if the group is involved in illegal or negative activities. For some young people, the need for affiliation or closeness is often greater than the need to "do the right thing" (Brown, 2012). In all societies since the beginning of time, secondary school students have learned to become adults by observing, imitating and interacting with the grownups around them. The secondary school students today are socialized more within the confines of their peers than with adults (Enang, 2017).

Similarly Kurtiness (2011) stated that some immoral behaviours of secondary school students' are learnt in everyday life in the course of their interaction in school with other students such as the way other students walks, talks, mode of dressing, going to school late, truancy, going to parties, and disobedience to the constituted authority. Bad peer pressure influence is a type of behaviour which indicates that the secondary school student are unable to uphold the good morals learnt from home, thus they cannot discipline themselves and mange to live an independent life, but solely relay on the peer influence lifestyle. Jones (2011) also stated that due to peer pressure, secondary school students' may sometimes indulge in activities not deemed sociable accepted. This stated that secondary school students' may be subjected to peer pressure within their secondary school students' life time span. As such, they would be influence to have sexual immorality, consume alcoholic beverage, use drugs, gang membership, or commit any activity in which the person who is subjected to may not deem appropriate. Peer pressure is a common experience between secondary school students and may result briefly on a large scale. Thus, Brown (2012) opined that peer influence can be both positive and negative. Secondary school students explore the principles of fairness and justice by working through disagreements with peers.

They also learn to be keen observers of peers' interest and perspectives in order to smoothly integrate themselves into ongoing peer activities, Bukowski (2018) further argued that secondary school students' learn to be skilled and sensitive partners in intimate relationship by forgoing close friendships with selected peers.

In contract, being rejected or overlooked by peers leads some secondary school students' peer culture as a corrupt influence that undermines parental values and control. Peers pressure can introduce secondary school students' to alcohol, drugs, delinquency and other forms of behaviour that adult view as maladaptive (Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 2018). Alenika (2011) however differs in how they describe the influence of peer groups, one theoretical perspective emphasizes the influence of peer groups attitudes behaviour or other characteristics. For example, secondary school student may be influenced by drug-using peer group so they start using the drug themselves (Smith & Flower, 2014). Another theoretical perspective also emphasizes the influence of peer groups with certain features. For example, Johnson (2016) proposed that intimacy in peer group enhances secondary school students' self-esteem and social understanding school adjustment is a broad construct with multiple facets. Secondary school students who describe their peer group more positively have higher self-esteem and less often from emotional disorders (Greenberger, 2015).

In another studies, positive features of secondary school peer group did not predict the changes overtime in their self-esteem, depression, drug-use and academic achievement (Adams & Evans, 2012). Social influence among peer group is a mutual process. Secondary school students' influence their peer group while being influenced by them (Williams & Bendt, 2010). The usual results of this process in that secondary school students' characteristics more similar to those of their peer groups. Some researchers have questioned this conclusions, point out that secondary school students' often select their peer group whose characteristics are already similar to theirs (Raine & Brennan, 2017), (Kandel, 2018).

Because similarity correlations reflect both selection and influence; they can lead to overestimates peer groups.

To obtain more valid estimates a few researchers have longitudinal designs with hierarchical regression analyses, these researchers have examined whether measure of peer group characteristics at one time predict changes overtime in secondary school students' characteristics (Scheafer, Barley & Strans, 2018). Data from these studies suggest that similarity correlations exaggerate peer group on secondary school students. The regression analyses in several longitudinal studies implied that age group influence on secondary school students' drug use and attitudes towards delinquency is no significant or weak (Fisher & Bauman, 2018). If similar results were obtained for other attitude and behaviour, popular beliefs about the impact of peers on secondary school student behaviour would reassures of their peer group adjustment, because peer groups often interacts at school. They have many opportunities to influence one another's attitudes and behaviour. Other studies such as Loeber and Hay (2014) reported no significant relationship between peer group and moral behaviour. Despite these inconsistencies, the theoretical consensus appears to support that peer group improves one's ability to apply relevant moral. This study would therefore determine the influence of peer pressure on students moral behaviour in Keffi Local Government of Nasarawa State.

Moral decadence has assumed the status of a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society, transcending all age brackets with destructive impact on secondary school students. Some families in Keffi Local Government Area seem to be living with a preponderance of social vices, such as acts of political thuggery, fighting, sexual immorality, armed robbery, secret cult, aggressive behaviour, drug abuse and addiction among others. For instance, Akume and Ayuba (2005) also observed that secondary school students exhibit moral decadence such as fighting, truancy, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, abortion and disrespect to the constituted authority among others. This behaviour makes the teaching and learning environment unfaviourable to staff and students.

In turn, result to suspension, poor performances, dropping out, and expulsion from school. Overall factors such as social environment, media, heredity, physiological development, culture, tradition, family types and peer groups predicted secondary school student's moral behaviour (Alenika, 2011). However, most of these studies were largely carried out in other parts of the World such as United States of America and other parts of geopolitical zones of Nigeria like the South east which have a different culture and tradition from this study. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by investigating the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' moral behaviour in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Research Question

1. What is the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students training in Keffi Local Government of Nasarawa State?

Research Hypothesis

H_{0i} Peer pressure has no significant influence on students' moral behaviours in Keffi Local Government Area, Nasarawa State.

Methodology

The research design for this study was descriptive survey design aimed at examining the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' moral behaviour. The population of the study consisted of 13605 (8199 males and 5406 females) students' from fourteen government approved secondary schools in Keffi Local Government Area (Inspectorate Office, Keffi, 2015).Multi-stage random sampling technique was used for the study. Firstly, 8 secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling technique from the two districts of Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Secondly, from each of the two districts, four secondary schools were randomly selected while a total of 240 secondary schools students were obtained which comprised 30 students from each of the school. The selection of the student was through simple random sampling using hat and draw or lottery (picking with replacement) method.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 240 students from the population.

"Influence of Peer Pressure on Secondary School Students Moral Behaviour (IPPSSSMB)" was used as instrument for the study.

The questionnaire had two Section, A and B. Section A consisted of items which elicited respondents' bio-data. Section B elicited respondents' information on peer pressure and moral behaviour, It was a four point response format which ranged from 4-1 with strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) respectively. Respondents' were instructed to indicate by ticking option mostly applied to them. Any mean score of 2.50 was accepted as having interaction with moral behaviour while a mean score of less than 2.50 was not accepted. Validation of instrument was based on face and content validity. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by experts in Science Education Department Adamawa State University, Mubi. Each of the experts was requested to independently give his opinion on the relevance and adequacy of the items.

The instrument was subjected to Pilot testing using 100 students from some secondary schools that were not part of the targeted sample of the study. Data obtained from Pilot test was subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 20 to determine the reliability. The index of reliability was determined using Cronbach' alpha (split half). The Cronbach' alpha Coefficient obtained was .83. The questionnaires items were distributed to the students by simple random sampling technique using hat and draw method (picking with replacement). This was to ensure that every student had equal chance of been selected.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) for demographic characteristics of respondents and in answering the research question. Also, Chi-square was used to test hypothesis, this was to determine the influence of peer pressure on

secondary school students' moral behaviour. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 levels of significance. Data collected were entered unto Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students training in Keffi Local Government of Nasarawa State?

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation on Peer Pressure and Moral Behaviour of Student

S/N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	REMARKS
1	I like alcohol because my sibling do same	240	179	58	0	3	3.70	.600	Accept
2	My peer group influence to take hard dugs	204	181	53	0	6	2.87	.126	Accept
3	My per influence me to take alcoholic drink	240	99	50	52	39	3.65	.681	Accept
4	My peer group influence me to chit in exam to get good grate	240	173	63	6	7	3.52	.642	Accept
5	My peer group influence me to play truancy	240	166	68	0	6	3.64	.618	Accept
	Cluster Mean	-	-	-	-		3.47	.533	Accept

Table 1 shows cluster mean scores of 3.47 with a corresponding standard deviation of .533. Since the cluster mean scores of 3.47 with standard deviation of .533, peer groups has influence on moral behaviour on secondary school students hence the mean is above the cut-off mean point of 2.50

Hypotheses 1 Peer pressure has no significant influence on secondary school students' moral behaviours in Keffi Local Government Area, Nasarawa State.

Table 2

Results of Chi-Square Analysis of Influence Peer Pressure on Moral Behaviour of students

Response	Frequency	Percentage	df	χ^2	P. value	Decision
SA	93	38.75	27	12.675	0.00	Significant
A			54		22.5	
D			03		1.25	
SD			90		37.5	

Table 2 shows chi-square (χ^2) test value of 12.675, df =27, obtained at $P < 0.05$. Since $P < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. This means that peer pressure has significant influence on moral behaviour of secondary school students in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Discussion of Findings

Finding of the study on hypothesis one revealed that peer pressure has significant negative influence on moral behaviour of secondary school students' in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. This agrees with finding of Chemiss and Sluke (2012) who reported that peer pressure has significant influence on secondary school student. This finding is not a surprise because peers act as family replacement and act as "coco parents". In this circumstance, they operate outside the parental supervision, restrictions and protection and therefore have the opportunity to indulge in alcoholic consumption cigarette smoking, drug use and abuse early sexual experiences, truancy among other. Although peer pressure had negative influence on moral behaviour, it also had other positive influences such as development of self esteem, protection of members among others.

This finding is in agreement with Akinboye (1998) who reported that secondary school student thinking, feeling, motivation, attitudes, values, beliefs, social interaction, aspiration, desires, and reactions changes drastically from secondary school student pattern towards adults' hard direction. This finding also agrees with Rubin, Bukowski

and Parker (2018) who found that peer pressure can introduce secondary school student to alcohol, drugs, truancy, delinquency and other forms of behaviour that adult view as maladaptive. The finding of the research was that; Peer pressure had significant negative influence on secondary school moral behaviour in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Conclusion

Base of the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that peer pressure has significant negative influence on secondary school students' moral behavior in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Recommendation

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made; Parents should pay attention to their secondary school student so as to defect peer membership of their secondary school student with the view to discouraging bad peer membership.

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