

# Learning Environment and Peer Pressure as Correlates of Academic Aspirations among Senior Secondary School Students in Mubi North Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** - The study investigated the learning environment and peer pressure as correlates of academic aspirations among senior secondary school students in Mubi North local Government Area, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of secondary school students in Mubi North Local Government. A sample size of 400 students was chosen from four secondary schools by stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire titled “Learning Environment and Peer Pressure Questionnaire” (LEPPQ) was adapted from Shamaki (2015) and Jack and Gamrajoh (2017). The instrument was validated by an expert in Guidance and Counselling from the Department of Science Education. The reliability value was calculated using Kuder-Richardson formular (KR-21) which yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.88. Data were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics. Four research questions and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the environmental factors that influence learning Biology include classroom brightness, classroom painting, dilapidated classrooms, classrooms with no ventilation, sitting arrangement and lack of seats. The study also revealed that the effects of learning environment on academic performance includes loss of interests in Biology lessons, poor performance, obstruction of the view of the board, and distractions. The way peer pressure influences learning Biology include punctuality to class, through competition, studying together, disturbance in class and helping with academic difficulties. Effects of peer pressure on academic performance include improving or worsening academic performance. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and academic achievement; and that there is a significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female students. It was recommended that government should improve the condition of classrooms by providing electric fittings besides renovations of schools and students should endeavour to form or join groups that are study inclined so that learning would be effective and instructional materials.

**Keywords:** Learning environment; peer pressure; academic achievement; quality of teachers;

## I. INTRODUCTION

Determinants of student’s performance have been the subject of ongoing debate among the educators, academicians and policy makers. Wilson, Lizzio and Simons

(2002) noted that academic achievement of a student is most often associated with a lot of components of learning environment. Environment can be defined as a system within which living organisms interacts with the physical element while education environment is a learning place where the learner learns and interact with learning facilities in order to be socialized and face the challenges in the society. Environment as consisting of all elements existing around man and which exert some influence on him. These include physical, biological and social attributes. Environment can also be seen as aggregate of all the external condition and influence affecting the life and development of an organism. In this study, environment includes all the external condition and influences in the school that affect the academic achievement of the student such as laboratory equipment, library facilities, qualified teachers, furniture, school building, good administrative management, teacher pupil relationship and school location among others.

Tsavga (2011) maintains that the learning environment plays avital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implies that no society is void of environmental influences. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a student behaves and interacts, that is to say that the environment in which we find ourselves tend to mould our behaviour so as to meet the demands of life whether negatively or positively. The author opined that the desire for both qualitative and quantitative education has multiplied the problem of providing an effective and conducive learning environment for teaching and learning. In Nigeria, there is an increase in the number of students’ enrolment in schools with little or no regards to improving the learning environment so as to better their performance.

Research shows that students who trust their teachers are more motivated and as a result perform better in school (Eamon, 2005). School policies and programmes often dictate the school climate. To add to that, if a school is able to accomplish a feeling of safety, students can have success despite their family or neighbourhood backgrounds (Crosnoe, Monica & Glen, 2004).According to Muleyi (2008), teachers

do influence students' academic performance. School variables that affect students' academic performance include the kind of treatment which teachers accord the students. Teachers cannot be dissociated from the schools they teach and academic results of schools. It would therefore be logical to use standardized students' assessment results as the basis for judging the performance of teachers.

Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes, values in order to conform to group norms. The peer group outside the home from which does not always conform to adult standard, and each child strive to abide with the ethics of the group they take membership with because rejection by the group may have negative effect on the learning of the child. Peer groups are an important socialization agent. A peer group is defined as a small group of similarly age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. 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, or punks, allows adolescents to feel like they are on the way to answering some of these questions. Given that adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as with parents or other adults, it is important to study the influence or pressures that peers place on each other. Peer pressure is defined as when people your own age encourage or urge you to do something or to keep from doing something else, no matter if you personally want to do it or not (Ryan, 2000).

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. The current literature reviewed focus on both the positive and negative influence on students' academic performance. Lockwood and Kunda (2002) classify role models into two, namely positive role models and negative role models. Positive role model, they say, refers to individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to pursue similar excellence. Negative role model, on the other hand, refers to the individuals who have experienced misfortunes and are widely expected to motivate people to take the steps necessary to avoid similar unpleasant outcomes. Positive role models can inspire one by illustrating an ideal, desired self-highlighting possible achievement that one can strive for, and the root for achieving them. Negative role model can inspire one by illustrating disasters and highlighting mistakes that must be avoided so as to prevent. Because peer groups are a key part of development process, they can have a negative effect on young people due to peer pressure, which is the pressure from others in certain activities, and peer conformity, which is the degree to which an individual adopts actions that are sanctioned by their peer group.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The influence of school environment on academic achievement of students has been an issue of concern to all stakeholders in education. This is evident in the rate of mass failure of students in both internal and external examinations, as revealed by research studies. Despite the State government's effort towards the provision and renovation of infrastructures in primary schools, students' performance in both internal and external examinations is still very low and below expectation. Several research studies have identified other factors such as school climate, instructional materials, discipline and physical facilities, teacher quality, type of location of school, class size and over population of students in classroom as being responsible for poor academic for poor academic achievement of students.

The problem under study has to do with an unsatisfactory condition of the educational system being operated in Nigeria and relating to the influence of peer pressure on students' academic aspirations. This to variables has been established by resent studies to have serious impact on students' academic achievement independently. This study seeks to explore these two variables as correlates of academic aspirations. It has been very difficult if not impossible for government to standardize the school environment. Thus the environment varies from school to school. Some schools have adequate school buildings, good library and suitable textbooks, good administrative management, professionally qualified teachers, good laboratory equipment as well as good location. While in some schools little or none of these exist.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of learning environment and peer pressure as correlates of academic aspiration among senior secondary school students in Mubi North Local Government, Adamawa State. The specific objectives of the study are to

1. Determine the influence of environment factors on learning Biology
2. Examine the effects of environment factors on academic performance of secondary school students
3. Investigate the influence of peer pressure on learning Biology among secondary school students.
4. Identify the effects of peer pressure on academic performance of secondary school students in Biology

### *Research Questions*

The following research questions are formed to guide the study

1. What are the environmental factors that influence learning Biology among secondary school students in Mubi North?
2. What are the effects of learning environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

3. What are the ways peer pressure influence learning Biology among secondary school students?
4. What are the effects of peer pressure on academic performance of secondary school students?

#### *Research Hypotheses*

Two research hypotheses are formulated to guide this study:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between peer pressure influence and students' academic performance

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the design of the study, population and sample, research instrument for data collection, procedure for data collection and the method for data analysis.

#### *Research Design*

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and examine learning environment and peer pressure as correlates of academic aspiration among senior secondary schools in Mubi North Local Government Area, Adamawa State. This design is chosen because Fajonmi (2003) says that survey is used for descriptive, explanatory an exploratory purpose, and of course this survey is descriptive in nature and therefore is more appropriate for this study. However, descriptive survey design is considered appropriate because it allows for collection of data from a group of people at the same time for the purpose of describing phenomena under study. Descriptive study also allows the investigator to discuss the phenomenon under study as it exists at the time of the study.

#### *Population and Sample*

The target population for the study comprised of senior secondary school students in Mubi North Local

Government Area of Adamawa State. The sample size of 400 was chosen from four secondary schools by stratified sampling technique using age, sex and class as strata. 100 students were chosen from each of the four schools.

#### *Research Instrument*

The research instrument titled "Learning Environment and Peer Pressure Questionnaire" (LEPPQ) was adapted from Shamaki (2015) and Jack and Gamnajoh (2017). The instrument comprised of 36 items divided into 3 sections. Section A contained the demographic characteristics of the respondents which constituted age, sex, class, name of school, local government and number in class. Section B contained 15 items that assessed the environmental factors that influence learning theory in Biology and section C contained 15 items which measured the influence of peer pressure on learning Biology.

#### *Validity and Reliability of Instrument*

The face and content validity of the instrument was established by the expert in Counselling Psychology in the Department of Science Education, Adamawa State University, Mubi. The reliability of the instrument was carried out in Government Day Secondary School, Mubi using test-retest reliability method. First test was administered on 30 students, while the second test was administered on the same set of students after two weeks. The reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained.

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The researcher and two research assistants administered the questionnaires and collected them on the spot. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages, frequency counts and t-test analysis

## III. RESULTS

Table 1: Environmental factors that influence learning of Biology

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1.	The classrooms are bright enough for reading	153 (52%)	93 (31.6%)	33 (11.2%)	15 (5.1%)	294 (100%)
2.	I can perform better academically if my classroom is renovated.	123 (41.8%)	114 (38.8%)	36 (12.2%)	21 (7.1%)	294 (100%)
3.	Dull classroom painting affect teaching and learning of Biology.	60 (20.4%)	87 (29.6%)	81 (27.6%)	66 (22.4%)	294 (100%)
4.	The classrooms have adequate electricity light supply.	57 (19.4%)	69 (23.5%)	105 (35.7%)	63 (21.4%)	294 (100%)
5.	Poor ventilation makes Biology lesson boring	93 (31.6%)	81 (27.6%)	60 (20.4%)	60 (20.4%)	294 (100%)
6.	I can perform better in a moderate classroom temperature.	90 (30.6%)	99 (33.7%)	69 (23.5%)	36 (12.2%)	294 (100%)
7.	Adequate air ventilation during Biology lesson might improve my performance.	111 (37.8%)	102 (34.7%)	51 (17.3%)	30 (10.2%)	294 (100%)
8.	At times, I like staying outside because classroom is very hot.	99 (33.7%)	99 (33.7%)	63 (21.4%)	33 (11.2%)	294 (100%)

9.	The classroom has enough seats and desk for every student.	108 (36.7%)	93 (31.6%)	42 (14.3%)	51 (17.3%)	294 (100%)
10.	Good sitting arrangement makes Biology learning interesting.	156 (53.1%)	78 (26.5%)	30 (10.2%)	30 (10.2%)	294 (100%)
11.	The classrooms have enough space for each and every student.	102 (34.7%)	102 (34.7%)	54 (18.4%)	36 (12.2%)	294 (100%)
12.	No student obstructs another's view due to seats' construct.	87 (29.6%)	90 (30.6%)	72 (24.5%)	45 (15.3%)	294 (100%)
13.	I cannot do well in Biology because your class is overcrowded.	87 (29.6%)	72 (24.5%)	69 (23.5%)	66 (22.4%)	294 (100%)
14.	The chalkboard is noiseless while the Biology teacher is writing.	93 (31.6%)	78 (26.5%)	72 (24.5)	51 (17.3)	294 (100%)
15.	The number of students in your class exceeds forty.	153 (52%)	54 (18.4%)	51 (17.3%)	36 (12.2%)	294 (100%)

Table 1 shows the responses of respondents on the environmental influence of learning Biology. The data shows that the environmental factors influencing learning of Biology as; the classrooms are bright for reading 246 (83.6%), that you can perform better if your classroom is renovated 237 (80.6%), dull classroom painting affect teaching and learning Biology 50% (147) and the other 50% (147) disagreed to the statement, you can perform better in a moderate classroom temperature 59.2% (174), that poor ventilation makes Biology lesson boring, adequate air ventilation during Biology lesson might improve performance 72.5% (213), at times you like

staying outside because classroom is very hot 67.4% (198), the classroom has enough seats and desk for every student 68.3% (291), good sitting arrangement makes Biology learning interesting 79.6% (234), there are enough space for each and every student 69.4% (204), no student obstructs another's view due to seat construction 61.2% (177), you cannot do well in Biology because your class is overcrowded 54.1% (159), the chalkboard is noiseless while the Biology teacher is writing 70.4% (207) and the number students in your class exceeds 40 70.4% (207).

Table 2: Influence of peer pressure on learning Biology

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1.	I belong to a peer group	144 (49%)	63 (21.4%)	27 (9.2%)	60 (20.4%)	294 (100%)
2.	I spend much time with my peer group	93 (31.6%)	96 (32.7%)	54 (18.4%)	51 (17.3%)	294 (100%)
3.	My current achievement in Biology is worse	111 (37.8%)	105 (35.7%)	36 (12.2%)	42 (14.3%)	294 (100%)
4.	My current achievement in Biology is better than the previous one before I met my friends	27 (9.2%)	99 (33.7%)	60 (20.4%)	108 (36.7%)	294 (100%)
5.	I often skip Biology classes to spend time with my friends	102 (34.7%)	63 (21.4%)	78 (26.5%)	51 (17.3%)	294 (100%)
6.	I and my friends are always punctual to Biology class	24 (8.2%)	90 (30.6%)	51 (17.3%)	129 (43.9%)	294 (100%)
7.	I and my friends compete for good grades	39 (13.3%)	105 (35.7%)	39 (13.3%)	111 (37.8%)	294 (100%)
8.	I study Biology together with others after class	165 (56.1%)	69 (23.5%)	36 (12.2%)	24 (8.2%)	294 (100%)
9.	I and my colleagues help ourselves with academic difficulties	108 (36.7%)	123 (41.8%)	36 (12.2%)	27 (9.2%)	294 (100%)
10.	My friends have assisted me to improve my grades in Biology	126 (42.9%)	75 (25.5%)	54 (18.4%)	39 (13.3%)	294 (100%)
11.	I and my friends always solve any assignment given to us in Biology	123 (41.8%)	114 (38.8%)	33 (11.2%)	24 (8.2%)	294 (100%)
12.	My friends like to disturb me in the class while the Biology lesson is going on	78 (26.5%)	81 (27.6%)	84 (28.6%)	51 (17.3%)	294 (100%)
13.	My class always performs experiment during Biology	33 (11.2%)	84 (28.6%)	75 (25.5%)	102 (34.7%)	294 (100%)
14.	I and my friends always revised together before Biology examination and test	135 (45.9%)	81 (27.6%)	51 (17.3%)	27 (9.2%)	294 (100%)
15.	I and my friends dislike Biology as a subject	81 (27.6%)	60 (20.4%)	66 (22.4%)	87 (29.6%)	294 (100%)

Table 2: shows data on the influence of peer pressure on learning Biology. Based on the data, those items that are on influences of peer pressure on learning Biology include I belong to a peer group 71.4% (207), I spend too much time with my peer group 64.3% (189), my current achievement is worst 73.5% (216), my current achievement is better than the previous one before I met my friends 42.9% (126), I often skip Biology classes to spend time with my friends 56.1% (165), I and my friends are always punctual to Biology class 38.6% (114), I and my friends compete for good grades 49%

(144), we study Biology together after class 79.6% (234), we always help each other with academic difficulties 78.5% (231), my friends have assisted me improve my grades in Biology 68.4% (201), I and my friends always solve any assignment given to us in Biology 80.6% (237), my friends like to disturb me in the class while the Biology lesson is going on 54.1% (159), my friends always revised together before Biology examination and test 73.5% (216).

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of peer pressure on students' academic achievement

Table 3: Relationship between peer pressure and students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value	Remark
Peer pressure	59.60	13.64	118	4.350	0.000	Rejected
Academic performance	44.57	17.56				

\*Significant ( $P < 0.05$ )

The p-value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 4.350. This means that, there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female secondary school students in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

Table 4: Difference between the academic performance of male and female secondary school students in Mubi North

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Male	150	54.96	14.84	118	-1.43	0.15	Rejected
Female	150	58.98	15.86				

\*Not Significant ( $P < 0.05$ )

Table 4 showed the difference between the academic achievement of male and female students respondents that are involved in peer group. The male students have a mean of 54.96% while the female students have a mean of 58.98%. The p-value of 0.15 is greater than the alpha value ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the academic achievements of male and female students.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study showed that environmental factors influence learning of Biology. The environmental factors identified by the study are electric light, dilapidated classrooms, classroom painting, poor ventilation, classroom temperature, adequate ventilation, seats and desks, spacious classes, sitting arrangements, use of chalks and number per class. The quality of infrastructure and learning environmental conditions has strong bearing to academic performance among students. This finding is in line with Duruji, Azuh and Oviasogie (2014), who pointed that the quality of learning facilities available within an educational institution has positive affect on the quality of teaching and learning activities which in turn leads to the attainment of good performance. The quality of the school buildings and furniture will determine how long other such inputs will last. A good school indulges in building better learning environment which enables the students to excel especially in external examinations.

The study also investigated the effects of learning environment on academic performance of secondary school students. The findings of the study showed that academic performance is gravely affected by the learning environment. This finding is also in consonance with the opinion of Ode, Oguche, Angelina and Ivagher (2015) who stated that facilities form one of the potent factors that contribute to academic achievement of students in the school system. They include the school buildings, classroom, accommodation, libraries, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials. He went further to say that their availability, relevance and adequacy contribute to academic achievement of students. He however, quickly added that unattractive school buildings and overcrowded classrooms among others contribute to poor academic achievement of the students in primary and other levels of education.

The findings of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between peer group influence and academic achievement of students in Biology. From the findings, it can be said that the student's interaction and discussions improves student's academic performance. The finding is in line with other previous findings by Foster (2006) who asserted that apart from peer effects related to the classroom environment, students belonging to the same class tend to study and revise the subject together, so generating important externalities. Clearly, friendly teacher/student relationships boosted academic achievements of all members of a class. This finding also supports the works of Nicole

(2004), Ide, Parkerson, Haerted, and Walberg (2006); Bankole and Ogunsakin(2015) whose findings also revealed that peers' relationship influences academic performance of secondary school students since peer relationships in school allow the child to learn a host of skill; group interaction conflict resolution, and trust building, among others.

The findings of the study also showed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure influence and students' academic achievement. This finding is in line with Foster (2006); Jack and Gamnjoh (2017) whose studies showed that the achievement of students that are involved in peer group differs from those that do not belong to peer-group.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic achievements of male and female students. This is also in agreement with Jack and Gamnjoh (2017) that the achievement of students that are involved with a peer group have differs from those that do not belong to peer-group.

## V. CONCLUSION

A school, as a learning institution and as a second home for learners, has a strong relationship with students' academic performance. The head teacher and the teachers through their specific roles either have negative or positive influence on students' academic performance.

The study established that home and school environments exert potent influence on students' academic performance. These factors directly and indirectly pointed to areas that have to be addressed in order to promote good academic performance. If the parents/guardians and government could improve the learning environment of the students and motivate them, it is most likely that students' academic performance will improve.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result obtained and the analysis of the findings, the researcher would like to forward the following recommendations.

- Parents and the stakeholders through P.T.A. should work to see that the learning environment conform to UNESCO standard.
- Government should improve the condition of classroom by providing electric fittings besides renovations of schools.
- As a matter of urgency, government should make sure that the number of students per class did exceed (40) forty. In case of new building, the classroom should be constructed in a way to provide enough ventilation.
- Teachers should understand that the peer group is an important factor in child's learning and therefore should use it encourage learning.
- Students should endeavour to form or join groups that are study inclined and encourage learning so that

their learning would be effective or affected properly.

- Parents should make sure their children are well monitored and they should encourage them to have friends that would have a positive influence on their learning both at home and at school.

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