The study dealt with the effects of peer pressure on academic achievement, educational aspirations and occupational aspirations of secondary school students. The study examined the relationship (if any) between the perception of peer pressure and academic achievement in mock examination, peer pressure and educational aspirations, and peer pressure and occupational aspirations. The study further attempted to find out whether there are differences in the students' perceptions of peer pressure when the intervening variables of sex, school attended and residential status of students were taken into consideration.

The sample included 484 students who were in form 4 in 1987. These students were randomly drawn from five secondary schools in Kericho District. All subjects were administered a questionnaire comprising a section of open-ended items and a section of items utilizing a Likert scale. The Likert scale was used to elicit the subjects’ perceptions of peer pressure on various academic, educational and occupational issues.

The results showed statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and academic achievement when peer pressure to do homework and peer pressure to choose subjects were considered. No statistically significant relationship was obtained for the relationship between academic achievement and peer pressure to work hard for good marks and peer pressure not to miss classes.

A statistically significant relationship was obtained for the perception of peer pressure and educational aspirations. For the relationship between peer pressure and occupational aspirations, statistically significant relationships were obtained for peer pressure to look for employment and peer pressure to look for professional training after completing Form 4. However, no statistically significant relationship was obtained for the relationship between peer pressure to choose an occupation and the occupational aspirations of students.

The analysis further revealed that the sex of the student did not affect the perception of peer pressure towards academic achievement and educational aspirations. However, sex differences were obtained for occupational aspirations.

The type of school attended was not significant for the perception of peer pressure on academic achievement. The school attended was significant in the perception of peer pressure on educational aspirations. The school attended was also found to be significant when occupational aspirations were considered. The residential status of the respondents had quite some interesting results when academic achievement was considered, significant differences were obtained for some academic situations and not for others. For example, significant differences were obtained for the perception of peer pressure to do homework and to work hard for good marks. However, no significant differences were obtained for choice of subjects and in the perception of peer pressure not to miss classes.

Residential status was significant for educational aspirations except when it came to the issue of aiming towards university education, boarders and day scholars were homogeneous. Residential status was found to be significant for occupational aspirations except in the perception of peer pressure to seek after completing Form 4.
The general conclusion emanating from this study was that first; peers exert some influence on the students’ decisions concerning academic activities and aspirational decisions. Secondly, the sex of the student determines the susceptibility to peer pressure in some areas while in other areas; sex does not make a difference. Thirdly, the type of school attended influences some aspects of academic and aspirational behaviour while in others, there is no clear-cut influence. In general therefore, the researcher concludes that the effect of peer pressure largely depends on the issues concerned and the sex, school and residential status of the students i.e. it is significant in short term decision and not significant in long term decisions.

More research needs to be undertaken to compare parent and peer influence on all areas of adolescent behavior. Other factors like age, birth order, and economic and educational background of parents should be studied to determine their influence on adolescent susceptibility to peer pressure.