

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOL,
SELECTED PEER GROUP ACTIVITIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAIROBI

BY

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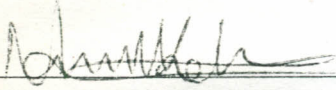
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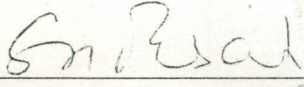
DECLARATION

Apart from several references made in this thesis, the rest is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Wilfred Joash Asakhulu and Mrs. Beatrice Maikuba Asakhulu. Their endless patience, support and encouragement, to educate me resulted in this accomplishment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- K.N.E.C. Kenya National Examinations Council
- UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific Council Organizations

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate the relationship between peer group attitudes towards school, peer group activities, and academic achievement of secondary school students in Nairobi urban area. Rapid socio – cultural situation in Nairobi, and the nature of the adolescence period itself, are among factors that have predisposed students to peer group influence more than before. Gender and residential status of the students (that is, boarder and day scholar), as categorical variables, were also investigated in relation to peer influence on academic achievement.

Eight public and eight private secondary schools – Single sex and Co – educational, and, Boarding and Day schools – were selected using purposive, stratified and random sampling techniques, in that order. A sample of 240 randomly selected form four students from these schools completed the peer effect questionnaire. The students' mock examinations marks were also collected and used as a measure of their academic achievement.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarise the data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation at $P < 0.05$ was used to test the hypotheses related to peer group attitudes towards school, selected peer group activities, and students' academic achievement. Hypotheses on gender and students' residential status at school, were tested using the Kruskal – Wallis Non Parametric test at $P < 0.05$

The statistical analyses indicated a significant relationship with regard to peer group attitudes towards school, selected peer group activities and students academic achievement. A statistically significant difference was also found in the selected peer group activities between borders and day scholars. However, no statistically significant differences were found between boys and girls in relation to peer group attitudes towards school and selected peer group activities. Likewise, there was no statistically significant difference between borders and day scholars in relation to peer group attitudes towards school.

Nonetheless, the results indicate that the incidence of students peer group relationships at school is a significant variable in their academic achievement. Hence, recommendations were made such that both Students, Teachers, Parents, School Counsellors and Education Planners, should be aware of the role played by peer group relations in students, and how this role can be manifested in to positive outcomes in students' academic achievement at school, in particular, and school life, in general.

Further research is recommended with respect to factors such as age, socio – economic class, race, introversion and extroversion; which may bring variations in peer group influence in students. Research is also recommended in different geographical settings to bring harmony in the understanding of the phenomenon of students peer group influence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study:

In the contemporary society, adolescents spend a great deal of time with their age mates (peers). Virtually, many adolescents spend most of each weekday with their peers while at school, and vast majority also see or talk to their friends in the afternoon, in the evenings and over the weekend (Medrich; Roizen; Rubin and Buckley, 1982). Today's teenagers, therefore, spend far more time in the exclusive company of their peers than their counterparts did in the past.

Major factors that emerged during the last century are increasingly contributing to the rise and importance of adolescent – peer groups. Urbanisation and industrialisation processes, technological advancement, the spread of institutionalised age segregation of the young, and changes in the workplaces and in the family that have segregated the young from the old (UNESCO Paris, 1987; Coleman, 1990; Kiminyo, 1992; Steinberg, 1993), are among factors which bring about sociological changes that characterise the modern society, thus leading adolescents to rely more and more on age mates.

According to UNESCO Paris (1987) report, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation processes in Africa have brought about a remarkable transition from a traditional way of life to a Westernised mode of living in most African societies. Towns have rapidly developed increasing the rate at which people

migrate from rural areas to urban areas, particularly in search of employment. This has resulted in plural culturalism in most urban centres in Africa. This kind of a 'pooled culture' constituted by diverse African sub-cultures and the Western culture, has brought about conflicts in the ideals, values and expectations that children in urban areas face as they grow up.

Furthermore, these processes have broken down the African traditional family structure and ways of life. As a result of the contraction of the modern African families both in size and function, families are no longer able to cater for the entire social and moral needs of the young people; hence schools and administrations have increasingly taken over this role from the parents (UNESCO Paris, 1987).

Additionally, most modern parents spend a lot of their time on many activities such as business, further studies, employment, seminars and workshops, at the expense of offering adequate care to their children (Kiminyo, 1992). At the same time most young people spend the better part of their life in learning institutions, where they are segregated as per their age bracket. According to Steinberg (1993), from the time youngsters enter school at age 5 until they graduate at age 18 or so, they are grouped with children of their own age. They then have little contact with people who are older or younger, outside of relatives.

Furthermore, at school they are educated in subjects that are often unrelated to their primary social interests and needs (UNESCO, 1987). Consequently, this situation predisposes them to peer group influence, as age – grouping will carry over into in – and after – school, weekend and vacation activities that may eventually affect their academic achievement accordingly; depending on whether the activities were academic or non academic related.

Coupled with such social changes is the nature of adolescence period itself, which is characterised by emancipation from parental authority. Coleman (1990) asserts that during adolescence, the individual develops the urge to seek for more peer group relations, thus altering family relations to some extent. As a result he/she begins to encounter many new demands in social situations, which are at the same time well expressed in the peer group. Therefore, the adolescents, relative to children, are more involved and intimate with peers, increasingly sharing and influencing each other in their thoughts and feelings. Thus, as the importance of the family in transmitting the 'appropriate culture' is diminished, the peer group becomes important in influencing and determining an adolescent's attitudes, social behaviour, and hence, personality (Coleman, 1990).

In summary such factors are among factors characteristic of Nairobi city that have resulted in more peer group socialisation among adolescents, than many other parts of the country have witnessed so far. A number of these factors have

made the role of peer groups increasingly important in urban areas. In fact, studies in which both rural and urban adolescents have been studied in relation to parent and adolescent – peer group influence indicate that urban adolescents show greater conformity to and influence from their peers than their rural counterparts, who show greater conformity to their parents than to their peers. (Brittain, 1969; Meenakshi, Reeta and Padma, 1985; Kinai, 1994; Ochieng', 1996).

A difference in socio-cultural setting is the main reason normally given in such studies for these differences in conformity behaviour between rural and urban adolescents. Meenakshi et al (1985) conclude that in most rural areas strong family linkage systems still exist, which make rural adolescents to conform more to their parents than to their peers. However, in urban families there are no such family linkages as modernisation processes have accelerated the separation of adolescents and their parents; hence, youngsters interact with different social groups in which they are more likely to exhibit greater conformity.

Most social psychologists have long debated whether the prominent role played by peer groups in the socialisation of young people is a cause for concern or celebration. On one side there are those who suggest that the rise of peer groups has contributed to the development of a separate 'youth culture' that is hostile towards adult values. For example, some research findings and related literature (Gelman, 1990; Curcio, 1993; Plant, 1994; Ndirangu, 2000; KU Peer Magazine,

2000) indicate a conclusive evidence that adolescents strongly influence each others' feelings, attitudes, values and interests towards sexuality and teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and alcoholism, spending leisure time plugged into music, erotic video shows and T.V. programmes, violence and riots, among other antisocial and delinquent behaviours. On the other side there are those who point to the necessary and valuable educational role played by adolescent – peer groups in these modern societies that are ever dynamic.

Indeed, a number of research findings in human development and educational psychology (Coleman, 1966; Brown, 1982; Mitman, 1982; Rono, 1991; Erwin, 1993; Kirk, 2000) show a clear indication that the peer group influences adolescents' achievement in school, self-concept and performance in such specific subjects as reading and arithmetic. However, adolescents may as well exert both positive and negative influences on each other, and it may be incorrect to describe the peer group as a monolithic, negative influence, or otherwise (Cummings, 1995).

essay investigating the role played by students

✓ Some local studies have attempted to explore the significance of peer groups to adolescents' academic life at school. For example, Rono (1991) investigated this influence in terms of peer pressure towards educational achievement and vocational aspirations, and her results indicated that the subjects of the study influenced each other's educational achievements and vocational aspirations. Such a study provides a local investigation of how peers influence each other at

school. However, it was done in an enormously monolithic cultural set up (Kericho District), in which the values of the prominent culture (the Nandis) may be highly expressed and cherished than those of other minor or small groups of immigrants. Nairobi, which is characterised by multiculturalism, in which a number of cultures are near equally represented, and with its rapid urbanisation, gives rise to a complex set up of confusing and incoherent array of values and expectations that have made the urban youth be caught up in an enculturative dilemma.

As a result of this social status of adolescents in Nairobi, peers influence may be among the important factors that are related to students' academic achievement at school. For this reason, it is crucial to understand what takes place within the boundaries of students' peer groups in order to realise the significance of peer groups in the development of students' attitudes towards school, academic achievement and other school related activities.

Apart from generally investigating the role played by students' peer groups in influencing their attitudes towards school and academic achievement, the study went further to investigate specific peer group activities, both academic related and non-academic related, and how they affect students' academic achievement at school. This is because; as adolescents spend more time with their peers they engage in activities that may affect their academic achievement, accordingly. This generated important information about peer group activities as no local

study has attempted to investigate this aspect of the peer group in relation to academic achievement of students.

Occasionally, peer group influence may vary by a number of other intervening factors such as age, gender and residential status of the student at school, and in fact such factors are frequently studied along with peer group influence in a number of related studies. For example, in Costanzo and Shaw (1966), Brown (1982) and Steinberg (1986), age was made as a correlate. In Meenakshi, Reeta and Padma (1985) gender was studied as another correlate. In this study gender and residential status were considered as correlates and were studied along with peer group influence, since the study sample was readily delineated by these two variables. As such boys and girls, and, both day and boarding schools were studied. Age as a correlate was not looked into, as the sampled students were relatively of the same age bracket.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Modern parents, teachers, educators and other adults in Nairobi have realized that peer groups may have an effect on behaviour, values and attitudes of their adolescents. The peer group influence therefore, may be an important factor among other factors that play a leading role in determining the levels of academic achievement in learners, both in classroom tests, mock examination and in national examinations. However, this realization does not fully guarantee this fact unless it is scientifically investigated.

The present study therefore, attempted to investigate the relationship between:

- (i) students' peer attitudes towards school and academic achievement,
- (ii) selected peer group activities (i.e. academic or non academic) and academic achievement,
- (iii) gender (i.e. boy or girl) and peer group influence on academic achievement.
- (iv) residential status (i.e. a border or a day scholar) and peer group influence on academic achievement.

1.2 Research Questions:

This study addressed the following research questions that were formulated in order to generate appropriate answers to the research problem:

- (i) What are their peers' attitudes towards school and academic achievement?
- (ii) What kind of group activities (i.e. academic or non-academic) do they engage in that may influence their academic achievement?
- (iii) Is there a significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and students' academic achievement?
- (iv) Is there a significant relationship between the selected peer group activities and students' academic achievement?
- (v) Is there a significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and the selected peer group activities?

- (vi) Is there a significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between boys and girls?
- (vii) Is there a significant difference in the selected peer group activities between boys and girls?
- (viii) Is there a significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between boarders and day scholars?
- (ix) Is there a significant difference in the selected peer group activities between boarders and day school?

1.3 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study was to explain academic achievement of secondary school students in both public and private secondary schools in Nairobi by analysing the impact of their peer group interactions at school. In order to do this, the relationship between peer group influence and students' academic achievement was investigated. Peer group influence was analysed in terms of peer group attitudes towards school and the specific group's activities (academic or non-academic) that may affect students' academic achievement in either positive or negative ways. The study further examined this influence in relation to gender and the type of school.

1.4 Assumptions of the Study:

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

- (i) That the randomly selected sample of secondary school students used constituted a representative sample of all public and private secondary school students in Nairobi,
- (ii) That mock examination results reflected relatively accurate information about students' level of academic achievement at form IV level,
- (iii) That the research instrument, that is, the peer effect questionnaire, used in the study was valid and reliable in collecting the intended data,
- (iv) That students gave valid and reliable information about their peers' attitudes towards school and academic achievement, and also, about the various peer group activities they involved in.

1.5 Significance of the Study:

Psychologists have long studied the nature of peer relationships in adolescents and their research findings have confirmed the significance of these relationships among adolescents in many aspects of their life. It is therefore hoped that the knowledge gained in this study could be of significance to parents, teachers, educators, school counsellors and policy makers in this country.

This knowledge could guide teachers and educators in the possible ways in which they can use students peer groups at school as a tool of influence to instil positive attitudes towards academic achievement and other school activities, in a

bid to produce a much greater academic success in students. Additionally, the knowledge could guide school counsellors and teachers in offering an effective guidance and counselling program to students in matters concerning their social and academic life at school.

The study also hoped to stimulate further research in this area cross culturally for comparison purposes, and also along the scale of time so that the effects of adolescent – peer groups may not be underrated or overrated due to the social changes which occur with time. For most scholars of adolescent psychology and others who may seek to understand adolescence as a universal phenomenon, this study was of cross-cultural value and its results may be compared with other related studies that have been conducted in other parts of the country and the world at large.

1.6 Delimitation and Limitations of the Study:

This study only dealt with the year 2002 group of form IV students randomly drawn from both public and private schools in Nairobi. Form IV students were chosen for this study because, theoretically, this is the time when peer group influence and or conformity reaches its climax as predisposed by such factors as an adolescent's relative gain in autonomy and independence from parental authority. Therefore, any peer influence in students is most likely to be acknowledged by students.

This study only investigated influences on students' academic achievement brought about by the peer effect. Effects brought about by other factors such as home background, parental influence, teachers' effects, intellectual differences and others like students' personality traits, were not considered in this study.

There is no standardized research instrument developed in place to assess students' attitudes towards school and academic achievement at school. For this reason the researcher developed a questionnaire scale by constructing some questionnaire items and also by adopting some from a number of previously related studies (e.g. Kirk, 2000; Rono, 1991; Coleman, 1961). This scale was subjected to a pilot study to assess its validity and reliability.

Due to limited time and financial resources, the study was confined only within the few sampled schools in Nairobi. As such, the findings can only be generalized to the extent that students in other schools within Nairobi, in particular, and in other urban centres, in general, are similar in characteristics and in environment to the subjects of the study.

1.7 Definition of Terms:

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined as follows:

- (i) **Adolescence:** This is a stage or a period in life that is characterized by rapid physical growth and psychosocial development which chronologically begins at around 10 years of age and terminates at the

age (around age 21) when young people have assumed full responsibility for the major roles of adulthood (i.e. in terms of economic, sexual and political matters).

- (ii) **Puberty:** Refers to the age when the secondary sexual characteristics (i.e. growth of breasts in girls and voice break in boys) emerge marking the onset of adolescence.
- (iii) **Peer group:** Refers to a small group of individuals, roughly same aged, and who may be family close friends, or distant friends sharing relatively same attitudes and activities most of the times.
- (iv) **Peer pressure:** Refers to efforts made by the group to make a member conform to the group's norms and expectations.
- (v) **Peer group influence:** Refers to one's tendency to move towards performing activities and agreeing to behave attitudinally in a relatively similar manner or in a manner likened or preferred by members of his/her peer group.
- (vi) **Peer group academic activities:** Refers to group's activities related towards affecting students' academic achievement in a positive way (e.g. extra reading, doing homework, group discussions etc)
- (vii) **Peer group non academic activities:** Refers to the group's activities which are not related to academic achievement and may negatively affect students' academic achievement (e.g. watching movies, listening to music, story telling, engaging in discussions that are not related to academic stuff like politics, movie stars and world singers.)

- (viii) **Peer group attitudes:** Refers to one's peer's overall manner of thinking, feeling and reacting to or behaving in different kinds of situations, or tasks, or aspects in life. In this study peer group attitudes were considered in reference to school situations, and these included peers' interests towards school, school curricular, schooling behaviour, discipline, among others.
- (ix) **Peer effect questionnaire:** Refers to a set of questions or items used as a research instrument to assess the effects or influences that one's peers impose on his/her behaviour. In this study, the peer effect questionnaire was developed in reference to the peer effects on attitudes towards academic achievement at school.
- (x) **Youth/Peer culture:** Refers to a group in which young people develop and maintain attitudes and values that are different from (even contrary to) those of adults.
- (xi) **Academic achievement:** Refers to the extent to which specified educational objectives have been acquired, as measured by one's performance in academic achievement tests at school; which provides information about one's status or level of learning and, acquiring knowledge and skills, in terms of grades or marks.
- (xii) **Conformity:** Refers to the changes in one's attitudes in accordance with his/her peer's attitudes towards different aspects in life, including school behaviours. It may also involve the learning of a new behaviour as found in the peer group.

- (xiii) **Secondary school:** In Kenya, it refers to the second phase of the formal education process that one joins after successfully completing the primary school education phase. It begins from form one to form two, to form three and finally to form four.
- (xiv) **Residential status:** Refers to whether a respondent is a commuter or a boarder. In a boarding status students reside in school premises, while where students do not reside in school premises, they are expected to commute (Rono, 1991). These two types of situations provide the students with two different status or environment.
- (xv) **Type of School:** Refers to the setting or status of the school, that is, boarding or day school, and or, girls' school or boys' school or mixed sex school.
- (xvi) **Public school:** A school owned and maintained by the government.
- (xvii) **Private school:** A school owned and maintained by private individuals and or organisations.

This chapter has provided the basis for this research by outlining the need to investigate the effects of peer group on academic achievement of students in Nairobi. It was therefore found necessary to acquire empirical evidence to show the extent to which these factors are related within the present social status in Nairobi. The theoretical foundation and review of related research literature for this study has been done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical foundation and conceptual framework of the study are discussed. This is followed by a review of related literature in reference to a number of variables under investigation in this study (i.e. peer attitudes towards school and academic achievement, gender and peer effect, and residential status and peer group effect). Lastly, the hypotheses for the study are stated.

2.1 Theoretical Rationale in Relation to Adolescent Peer Group Relationships:

The study adopted the Sullivan's (1953) Interpersonal approach, and the Erickson (1963; 1968; 1976) Epigenetic approach, for its theoretical foundation. Sullivan's theory gives a framework on the significance of interpersonal environment during adolescence stage, as provided by the peer group relationships. Erickson's theory explains the importance of peer group environment in the development of identity in adolescents. The theory does this by explaining how an adolescent's peers influence him/her towards the development of sex appropriate roles or behaviours or identity. In this study the theory illustrates the difference in the behaviour influence between boys' peers and girls' peers in the development of attitudes towards school and academic achievement, and peer group activities.

2.1.1 The Interpersonal Approach:

Harry Stack Sullivan formulated his approach in a series of lectures that were published after his death in a book called "*The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*" (Sullivan, 1953). These lectures presented a detailed analysis of human development from birth through adolescence that focused on how interactions with other people affect an individual development. For example, Sullivan believed that infants begin to experience primitive kinds of anxieties not as an experience arising from within themselves in relation to their innate drives (as Sigmund Freud proposed), but as an experience communicated to them from their mothers. Similarly, during pre-adolescence, he emphasised the important effect of the interaction with a close friend. Therefore, to Sullivan, people are social beings shaped by their cultural and interpersonal environment, and that personality accordingly evolves largely from the manner in which individuals learn to adapt to their socio-cultural context.

In Sullivan's Interpersonal Theory of Personality three basic tenets can be identified. First, interpersonal relations form the basic foundation of any human personality. In his view personality is created in social contacts. Secondly, one's self concept, good or bad, positive or negative, arises from the kind of appraisal received by the individual from his/her significant others, regarding who he/she is and how he/she looks like. Thirdly, the basic need of a human being is to achieve security and acceptance in interpersonal relations, and failure to do so leaves a lot of anxiety and interpersonal distress. Therefore, from Sullivan's perspective,

human development cannot progress without and is a product of the interaction among on going social relationships. Hence, the individual cannot exist apart from interpersonal relationships, and one's self-definition depends upon how the person fits within the context of those relationships. Thus, regardless of the type of relationship, to Sullivan, each is reciprocal and each involves a significant other.

According to Sullivan (1953) close friends play an important role when it comes to shaping children's and adolescents' well – being and development. In terms of well – being, he argued that all people have a number of basic needs, including the need for tenderness (secure attachment), playful companionship, social acceptance, intimacy, sexual relations, and achievement in a number of aspects in life. Whether or not these needs are fulfilled, largely determines ones emotional well – being. According to Sullivan, if either of the needs goes unfulfilled then one becomes bored and depressed. For example, if the need for social acceptance is not met, one suffers a lowered sense of self – worth.

Developmentally, Sullivan believed that friends become increasingly dependable to satisfy these needs during adolescence and thus the ups – and – downs of experiences with friends increasingly shape adolescents' state of well – being. In particular, Sullivan believed that the need for intimacy intensifies during adolescence, motivating teenagers to seek out close friends. He felt that, if adolescents failed to forge such close friendships, they would experience painful

feelings of loneliness coupled with a reduced sense of self – worth. Research literature supports many of Sullivan's ideas. For example, adolescents report more often disclosing intimate and personal information to their friends than do younger siblings (Buhremester and Furman, 1987; Buhremester and Carbery, 1992). In addition, teenagers with superficial friendships, or no close friendships at all, report feeling lonelier and more depressed and anxious, and they have a lower sense of self – esteem than teenagers with intimate friendships (Buhremester, 1990).

The increased closeness and importance of friendship challenges adolescents to master even more sophisticated social competencies; such as knowing to self – disclose appropriately, being able to provide emotional support to friends and managing disagreements in ways that do not undermine the intimacy of friendship (Buhremester, 1990; Paul and White, 1990). In so doing, adolescent friends support one another's sense of personal worth.

In addition, Sullivan emphasised that friends can become active partners in building a sense of identity. Through various peer group activities and conversations, friends act as sounding boards as teenagers explore issues ranging from future plans to stances on religious, moral and academic issues. Thus, to Sullivan, peers select and reinforce skills that are important for the development of a sense of competence and self – worth, through their tolerance

for differences and norms about achievement in various aspects of life, including academic achievement.

Hence, because of their need to have intimate friendship, and due to the fact that one's sense of competence largely depends on the friendship group he/she engages in (Sullivan, 1953) his/her academic achievement will be affected accordingly. Therefore, because adolescent – peers have got this tendency to invest their emotional being in one another, they may influence each other's attitudes, interests and values towards academic achievement and schooling.

2.1.2 The Epigenetic Approach:

Erick Erickson (1963; 1968; 1976) outlined a life long theory of personality development. In this theory, eight stages of life stretching from birth to death are identified. The fifth stage - *identity achievement versus identity confusion or diffusion* - regards the adolescence period. Erickson (1968) stresses that *ego identity* strongly marks the adolescence period. To him, every individual, regardless of culture, requires and struggles for a certain degree of encouragement, self-mastery and social recognition for the development of what he calls ego identity or independent identity.

This stage in Erickson's scheme arises with the beginning of puberty and the increasing social need to find one's role in life as a responsible adult, with a reasonably consistent set of attitudes and values about oneself. The positive side

of this struggle is a sense of identity, a sense of continuity and consistency of the self over time. The negative side is a sense of confusion about one's identity or role – a lack of certainty about who one is, or about the part one is playing in the scheme of life. The resolution of this stage involves experiencing each of these opposing tendencies within one's self and in relation to one's social environment.

In the midst of this resolution – a phenomenon Erickson called *identity crisis*; in which an adolescent is faced with many choices in life, each of which represents an 'inescapable' turning point for the 'better' or 'worse', i.e. positive or negative (Grinder, 1973), peers become important so that adolescents can support one another and ease other's discomfort during the resolution process. They do this by increasing the adolescent's tactability by opening him/her to new sets of cognitions, attitudes and motives, and support personal transition to a new set of personality character (Cobb, 1998).

Erickson (1976) asserts that the important aspect of identity during adolescence is the development of sex appropriate roles. Through social interactions with parents and peers, these sex role behaviours are reinforced in the adolescents. However, because of the need for emancipation from parental authority to peer group relations during adolescence, peers are especially important in reinforcing these roles (Erickson, 1976).

Erickson notes that these sex roles differ by sex, hence the ways in which boys' peers may socialise each other into these roles may differ from the ways girls' peers socialise themselves into their own sex roles. This eventually results in differences in the psychological significance between boys' peers and girls' peers in the way they socialise each other towards sex appropriate roles (Shalmon, 1995).

The difference in this psychological significance has long been strengthened by the way the society perceives each sex. Women, especially, have been perceived by the society as a weaker sex, and this has contributed to their persistence in downplaying behaviour in many aspects of life, including academic achievement. In majority of recorded history, females have been relegated to subservient roles in the society (Goetz, 1992). As a consequence of this less advantageous position, women have been provided with fewer opportunities to gather knowledge and valuable experience. By depriving them of critical learning opportunities, history also deprived them of the chance to develop their capabilities to the fullest.

This has resulted in fear of success being more prevalent among women than men, especially, during the adolescence period than childhood or adulthood (Ishiyama and Chabassol, 1985). This is because it is during adolescence when girls are socialised into their sex appropriate roles. To support this allegation, some research findings on achievement related conflicts among adolescent girls

(Rosen and Aneshensel, 1975), suggest that the social world of adolescence – peer groups may make it difficult for adolescent girls to integrate into their sense of identity positive feelings towards achievement – especially towards achievement in stereotypically masculine subject areas (Douvan and Adelson, 1966).

Of special importance for girls is the relation between academic achievements, the development of a feminine identity and social relations with boys. Bradwick and Douvan (1971) explains that:

Until adolescence the idea of equal capacity, opportunity, and lifestyle (for men and women) is held out to (girls). But sometime in adolescence the message becomes clear that one had better not do too well, that competition is aggressive and unfeminine, that deviation threatens the heterosexual relationships... (Page 148)

Thus, girls are more likely to socialise each other to believe that their achievement is out of their control, and they are consequently more likely to feel helpless in response to failure (Dweck and Light, 1980). This may eventually result in differences in behaviour influence between girls' peers and boys' peers towards academic achievement and school; and differences in the peer group activities that may affect their academic achievement accordingly, giving rise to

differences in identity in reference to academic outstanding between girls and boys.

2.1.3 Conceptual Framework:

In summary, from the foregoing description, it is indeed clear that adolescents influence one another, and the theoretical foundation provides a useful framework for understanding the mechanism behind this influence. Theoretically, this kind of influence consists of the ability of individuals to comparably influence each other's cognitive and affective behaviour (attitudes), including their activities (peer group activities).

The peer group members influence an adolescent's well-being. This state of well-being influences one's self concept or self worth, as the peer group provides the interpersonal environment in which, in Sullivan's terms, the 'significant' others will influence the other individual's emotional being. Emotional being is a determining factor in the build up of self concept, and in turn self concept is a factor which influences academic achievement (Kiminyo, 1992; Erwin, 1993).

Both peer group attitudes and activities affect the emotional being of an adolescent, hence, his/her academic achievement. Peer group attitudes towards school and academic achievement can either be of positive or negative effect. Likewise, peer group activities can either be academic or non – academic in nature. Therefore, the rationale derived from this is that both positive peer group

attitudes and academic peer group activities result in high levels of academic achievement; whereas, both negative peer group attitudes and non – academic peer group activities result in low levels of academic achievement in students.

This interaction is illustrated in figure 2.1 below.

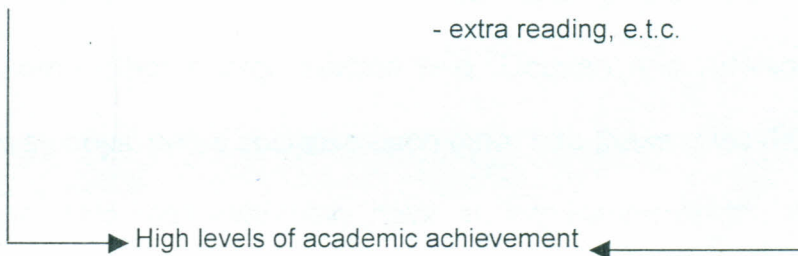
Figure 2.1 The Interaction between Peer Group Influence and Academic

Achievement:

Positive peer group attitudes towards school and academic achievement.

Academic peer group activities:

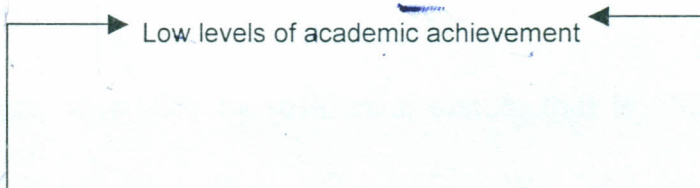
- doing homework assignments
- group discussions on subject content
- extra reading, e.t.c.



Negative peer group attitudes towards school and academic achievement.

Non – academic peer group activities:

- watching movies & listening to music
- story telling
- non – academic discussions, e.g. on politics, movie stars and world singers, e.t.c.



Therefore, through discussions with peers and other group's behavioural rehearsals (peer group activities) adolescents can learn to be disposed either positively or negatively to various aspects at school; for example, academic achievement, sportsmanship, fairness, warmth, friendliness, informality and spontaneity in social situations (Cobb, 1998). Hence, depending upon the particular attitudes and activities of the peer group an adolescent's academic achievement may either be strengthened or reduced.

This influence may differ by gender and to some extent residential status of the student. The theoretical foundation as given by Erickson, stresses so much on the importance of peers in the development of sex appropriate roles. However, this theory and some other related studies (e.g. Douvan and Adelson, 1966) indicate that the way boys' peers socialise each other into these roles differs from that of girls' peers. This may eventually have an implication on the way both sexes influence each other towards school and academic achievement.

Peer influence may also vary by residential status; that is, those in boarding schools are believed to have more contact hours with their peers, hence high degrees of peer group interaction and influence, than those in day schools, as their contact hours are reduced by the fact that they leave each other after school.

2.2 Review of Related Studies:

A number of related studies have been done in different cultural settings and provide some empirical evidence concerning the significance of peer group relationships to adolescents' academic life at school. Some of such studies are discussed below under the following sub – headings.

2.2.1 Peer Group Influence and Academic Achievement:

Peer group influence manifests itself in many forms such as values, pressure, attitudes and activities. In this study, as vividly illustrated under the conceptual framework, attitudes and activities were studied. Hence, these aspects are discussed separately in the following related research.

(i) Peer Attitudes towards School and Academic Achievement:

Empirical evidence from other related studies show that attitudes towards school and academic achievement, and educational aspirations of adolescents are clearly consonant with those of their peers. This is because the degree of adolescent – peer group agreement is directly related to the intimacy of relationship – intimacy that is inevitable during the adolescence period (Conger, Miller and Walsmith 1997).

The classical study by Coleman (1961) on adolescents' culture provides extensive findings on the social world of adolescents in 10 American high schools. Even though this study is more than 30 years old, its influence on the

modern views of adolescent peer groups remains strong. Coleman (1961) studied the status systems in certain Illinois high schools. He used a questionnaire that gauged the nature of these status systems in the sample of high school adolescents studied. One such related item on the questionnaire was, "What does it take to get into the leading crowd in this school?"

He reported that athletic prowess was the single most important criterion for status, since adolescents' answers were more consistent towards this criterion. For boys, overall, the most important determinants of prestige were personality and athletic success as well as having good reputation and good looks. For girls, getting into the leading crowd depended on personality, good looks and clothes. Good grades, particularly for girls, were near the bottom of the list (Coleman, 1961).

Coleman felt that the most significant differences concerned the value placed on academic success. While parents felt that academic achievement should be a priority for their youngsters, adolescents lived in a social world in which academic success was frowned on, in which doing well in school did not earn the admiration of peers. According to Coleman, although their parents may have been pleased by straight – A report cards, the high school students studied said that being a good student carried little weight with their friends. Thus, as reported in Coleman's results, social and athletic successes were more likely to make adolescents feel good about themselves than academic success.

Therefore, according to Coleman (1961) getting into the most popular crowd in the school made adolescents feel confident and self-assured. Doing well academically, however, did not make students more popular and did not boost their self-esteem. Hence, the less the students in a school valued academic achievement, the lower the opinion of academic success that academically outstanding students had about themselves.

Furthermore, in schools in which scholastic achievement was not valued highly, bright students were likely to be underachievers (Coleman, 1961). That is, they were likely to perform worse in classes than would be expected on the basis of their ability. In other words, in the schools that Coleman studied, getting good grades was a real liability, and in order to remain popular, bright students worked below their level of capability.

In a replication of this study, Eitzen (1975) thought that important changes that had occurred in the years that followed, including the rise of the counter – culture, increasing drug usage and racial unrest, and a tendency to question persons in authority; might have changed Coleman's findings. However, he found that there was still widespread acceptance of sports among teenagers than scholastic achievement and this negatively affected their attitudes towards academic achievement, which in turn gave rise to low grades among teenagers. But, Eitzen reported that certain factors, including the increasing size of schools, the larger proportion of adolescents attending suburban schools, and the

increasing improvement of education with each succeeding generation, indicated that enthusiasm for sports might wane in the future.

However, some recent studies still indicate the negative element of peer influence on students' academic achievement, even though enthusiasm for sports may have long worn out. For example, Steinberg and Levine (1992) did a study on African-American peer groups to investigate their relative influence on a student's academic performance. The questionnaire used investigated their peers' academic and educational aspirations. It was found that the African-American peer group might be skeptical about the chance that education can lead to a better life for them; hence, they do not value academic striving. This, to Steinberg and Levine, made it difficult for African-Americans adolescents to devote time to their studies even if they wanted to, for academic success would have had a challenge on their very belongingness to the peer groups.

According to Steinberg and Levine, therefore, this academic mediocrity or at worst failure, is one potentially serious cost of maintaining friendships; and the result is that African-American students put less effort into their school work than do other groups of students. Thus, for African-American students, no matter how hard their parents might cherish the thought of academic success and employ authoritative parenting practices, the peer culture has the stronger negative impact.

Kirk (2000) also did a study on “peer effect and academic achievement in junior high students” and obtained significant results. In this study, it was found that negative peer influence is a factor in lower test scores as much as being a Hispanic or Black minority group member... and more than living in a low-income family. The researcher analysed the responses to the background questions asked to students taking the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, and correlated them with test-scores.

The results indicated that among the 9th graders, almost 36% of African-American and 29% of Hispanic say that their “Friends make fun of people who try to do well in school” compared with just 17% of whites. Among the 10th graders, the numbers were more even but still high; almost over 30% of Hispanic and 23% of Blacks and 16% of whites agreed with the above peer effect statement.

The effect of peer influence was calculated independently from other factors, which were also studied and affect students’ academic achievement (which included race, income, gender and parent’s educational level). From the results, Kirk concluded that the peer effect had a strong negative influence on academic achievement for adolescents.

Not all studies have replicated these results, however. Other studies have reported that the presence of friends is a positive factor in the academic achievement of adolescents. These studies indicate that the world of adolescents

is not dominated by one youth culture as Coleman (1961) had suggested, but by several different youth cultures. Of course, some of these cultures may be anti – intellectual, but others may be very positively oriented towards school. For example, in one study done in America to determine the impact of attitudes and aspirations of students', their peers' and their parents' on academic achievement (Hanson and Ginsburg, 1988), the data from 10th grade Cohort (30,000 students) of the 1980 and 1982 National representative high school students was used.

The data examined the relationship between a wide range of adolescents', peers', and parents' values and high school students' achievement test scores in mathematics and reading, grade point averages, in-school discipline problems and drop out status. The results of the study indicated that educational aspirations among peers were found to be associated with dropping out, with higher aspirations reducing the chances of dropping out. Also peer values were found to have a positive impact on academic achievement of high school youth. Therefore, peers' values, among parents' and students' values, were independently found to significantly affect high school academic achievement positively.

In such a related study, Berndt, Laychak and Park (1990), also investigated friends influence on adolescents' academic achievement motivation. His sample consisted of tenth grade students. Each student was paired with a close friend. Pairs of friends were randomly assigned to either experimental or control

conditions. In experimental conditions, friends discussed dilemmas that required them to decide between two actions reflecting different levels of achievement motivation. In control conditions, friends discussed topics unrelated to school. Before and after the discussions, all adolescents made decisions on the dilemmas independently.

It was found that discussions of the dilemma led to an increase in similarities of friends' decisions. The aim of this study was to examine the influence of friends on adolescents' achievement motivation in school. Therefore, the results showed that discussions with friends were positively related to academic achievement motivation.

Relatively similar results were found in Rosenthal and Fieldman (1991). The questionnaire used surveyed both parental and students' peer group encouragement on academic strivings in the students studied. The results indicated that Asian Americans score highest outperforming whites, African-American and Hispanic students, who attained the lowest grades and were most likely to drop out of school. One possible explanation was that Asian-American students' peers, to add on their parents efforts, focussed very much on instilling and reinforcing a strong work ethic and the belief that there is a pay off to academic success, unlike the parents of African-American and Hispanic students', who focussed very much on authoritative parenting styles and the peers of these very students, who valued their education less.

In the real African context, Opolot (1979) did a study to examine factors that affect educational achievement and aspirations of primary school leavers in Uganda. The sample consisted of 750 pupils randomly selected from 9 urban and 9 rural primary schools from all over Uganda, stratified by province. Four hundred and fifty of these pupils were boys, and 300 were girls. Their ages ranged from 12 to 13. A questionnaire, containing two sections was administered to the sample a month before the Primary leaving examinations (PLE) were done. In the first section items about pupils' aspirations and expectations for further education and training were asked; while the second section asked about factors that affect these aspirations and expectations. The analysis of results indicated that among other factors like type of school attended, a pupil's peers positively influenced his/her academic attainment as well as his/her educational aspirations.

Similarly, in Kenya, Rono (1991) did a study to examine "Peer pressure on academic achievement, educational and occupational aspirations" of secondary school leavers in Kericho District. The sample consisted of 481 form four students from both Government maintained and *Harambee* maintained, boarding and day schools in Kericho District. The questionnaire administered asked about "how much" peer pressure do students perceive from their peers, in relation to academic achievement, educational and occupational aspirations. Her analysis of results convincingly indicated that peer pressure was a positive factor that

determined the academic performance of the students in their mock examinations.

The research literature so far reviewed, depicts peer influence as an independent factor in students' academic achievement at school. Therefore, the following conclusions can be made from the above discussions:

- (i) Students' peers may affect their academic achievement in both positive and negative ways,
- (ii) Athletic prowess has been reported as an important criteria for status than academic achievement, hence students tend to influence each other positively towards athletic abilities than academic achievement,
- (iii) Peer influence has been reported to vary with gender. For example, for boys, athletics, good reputation and good looks were determinants of prestige. On the other hand, personality, good looks and clothes were prestigious for girls (Coleman, 1961).
- (iv) Race is also a factor in the influence. For example, Asian Americans value academic success more than both African American and Hispanic students, thus, Asian American students' peers are more likely to influence each other towards academic striving than do African American and Hispanic students' peers.

(ii) Peer Group Activities and Academic Achievement:

The peer group activities help adolescents to relate to others, to speak the common language of youth, to learn about sex, and to practise appropriate sex role behaviour (Rogers, 1981). The peer group members normally define for the adolescents what they should do with their free time. According to Rogers (1981), adolescents choose (leisure) activities that promote peer participation and autonomy from the authority – Parents or teachers. Studies have indicated that the chosen peer group activities may either positively or negatively affect academic achievement of the adolescents.

In one study (Csikszentmihalyi, Larson and Prescott, 1977) a sample of 400 adolescents filled out reports at random times during their free walk hours for a week, being directed by one – way radio communication. The subjects carried electronic paging devices, and radio signals with a 50 – mile radius was transmitted according to the schedule. Audible beeps signalled subjects to fill out their reports and indicate the activities in which they were engaged.

The researcher found out that the most common activity was conversation with peers, accounting for a third of the total. Work was rare, with only 13% of the time spent studying and 5% doing their homework. Over half (60%) never reported doing housework or other kinds of work except studying; and over half (56%) never reported involvement in any game or sport. Although T.V. was the

second most prevalent activity, they chose it for lack of anything else to do and described it as being somewhat boring and without feeling.

The researcher further reported that activities differed somewhat by sexes. Almost all the teenagers watched T.V. but 9% of the boys' activities fell in the sports category compared with 2% of the girls. Girls spent 6.9% of their time grooming, compared to 1.6% for the boys. Final analysis of the results for this study indicated that adolescent peers who devoted most of their time in academic related activities such as studying and doing homework, had high levels of academic achievement, compared to those who were used to watching T.V. or doing household chores.

In another related study of middle – income suburbs in Massachusetts, America, Leona (1978) disclosed an intriguing picture of peer group components within the school. A sample of 450 students from junior high schools was studied. Two hundred and thirty were boys and 220 were girls. An open-ended questionnaire asking about the type of peer group activities they mostly engage in was used as the research instrument.

From the sample studied Leona found out that there were several peer groups (cliques) in the school, all with a considerable number of members and certain distinctive peer group activities. Among these several cliques were those who spent their free time in weekend practise and games, attending sports events

and going to group parties. They drank alcoholic beverages at the parties and sometimes smoked *marijuana*. However, when these responses, as reflected from the questionnaire they did, were correlated with their class mean grade, the correlation coefficient was found to be negative, since their class grades were still above average.

This is against the general expectation that since they involve so much in non-academic peer group activities then their academic achievement will be below average. Still, there were other distinct peer groups discovered in the sample studied, and whose group's activities negatively influenced their academic achievement. One such group included those who devoted their time to working on their cars and talking about them; and also there were those who took drugs regularly – mostly *marijuana*, but sometimes other drugs. They went to school mainly to make friends, to date and to maintain drug connections. Leona (1978) found out that students in such peer groups made below average academic grades.

Kelly (1979) also reported a study of peer culture in a white middle – class suburb of Detroit. Boys from two schools were asked where they would go if they could go anywhere they wished during the school day. 54% said they would seek a place on the school grounds, and 29% would go off the grounds, but 17% said there was nowhere they wished to go. Of the 83% who did wish to go, 70% said

they would go there with their friends, 17% to be alone, and 13% to engage in some other activity.

Kelly found out that among the boys, two main groupings existed; citizens and tribes. The citizens were active participants in school related activities; and they generally conformed to the school's rules, function and activities. The tribes' members took little part in school activities and often took issue with school rules and authorities. Members of the tribe were distinct from the 'hard guys' or 'greasers', who were somewhat destructive and disruptive, as well as from deviants, such as drug users and political activists. Kelly reported that tribe members employed school settings to carry on considerable informal interaction.

The citizens participated more directly in academic and extra – curricular activities, while tribe members were involved in more active informal behaviours. Kelly's results indicated that the citizens' extra – curricular activities prepared them for future college roles, while tribe boys' behaviour were better prepared for military or semi – skilled work which focused on peer interaction, both on the job and in leisure time. The tribe boys did not seek satisfaction in activities valued in the larger culture, even though they had few alternative outlets for rewarding experience.

Many of the boys from the tribe group, and some of the boys from the citizen group who faired poorly, might do poorly in academic work and other school

related activities (Kelly, 1979). This is because the non – academic activities that dominated in their peer groups made them academically withdrawn by lowering their self- -esteem in their academic work at school than the successful students whose peer groups were dominated by academic related activities that made them perform better academically.

Some of the studies that followed these earlier studies also indicated that peer group activities bear a direct influence on academic achievement of adolescent at school. For example, Davies (1981) study assessed the issues that peers do mostly discuss together in their peer group in his study on 'parental and peer group influence on adolescents' educational plans'. The summary of his results showed that adolescents who talked to the peers about academic materials in the peer group and also attended well in class, were more likely to succeed on cognitive school tasks, than classmates who attended well, but who did not exchange subject matter in the peer group. The reason that Davies gave following this was that attitudes, activities and aspirations of peers, as well as their expectations and standards, affect individual's effort and achievement.

Hanson and Ginsburg, (1988) study (that is discussed in details in the last section) also examined the extent to which students' peer group behaviours outside classroom (for example, time spent watching TV and doing homework) mediates the relationships between values and high school outcomes. The analysis of results indicated that peer values influenced especially the amount of

time spent doing homework and watching TV and reading, which in turn affected academic achievement accordingly. The researchers reported that with high values for education, more time was spent doing homework, than watching TV, thus improving students' academic scores.

From the above review of research literature, it can be summarised that:

- (i) Students' peers spent quite sometime in activities that promote the group cohesiveness,
- (ii) Gender was also a factor in the selection of peer group activities. For example, boys like watching T.V. and indulging mostly in sports related activities, while girls spend most of their time grooming (Csikszentmihalyi et al, 1977).
- (iii) It was reported that adolescent peers who devoted most of their time in studying and doing homework, attained high levels of academic achievement than those who devoted their time in non academic activities,
- (iv) A difference in cultural settings was also reported as a factor in determining the nature of peer group activities. For example, in Kelly (1979) study boys from the tribe group were less involved in school activities, while boys from the citizen group were more active in school related activities.

These studies indicated what happened in the specific cultures in which they were carried out. In this study, the nature of peer group activities in Nairobi, where students come from different sub cultures, was investigated.

2.2.2 Factors in Adolescent – Peer Group Influence:

Indeed, peer group influence may vary with a number of related factors such as age, sex, race and school's residential status. In this study, gender and students' residential status at school, were also considered for investigation. Some related studies did indicate that peer group effect in students tended to vary with gender and residential status of students at school. Some of these studies are reviewed below.

(i) Gender and Peer Group Effect:

Across a broad range of studies, some interesting sex differences in activities and attitudes towards school and academic achievement have been reported. For example, Coleman's (1961) study indicated that girls valued popularity and leadership in extra – curricular activities, while boys valued athletic and scholastic status. Consequently, as reported by Coleman, girls received more pressure towards social skills and popularity than in academic outstanding, while boys peer group emphasised athletics and academic achievement.

In analysis of research literature on sex differences in attitudes, Poole, (1983) indicated that several studies have found girls to be more positive in their

attitudes towards school than boys, but that such satisfaction did not correlate with ability and achievement measures. For instance, in Australia, Keeves (1974) reported a study at the lower secondary level, which found that girls were more favourably disposed towards school than were boys in New South Wales, but that in Victoria no such differences in attitudes emerged. Still, in an earlier study that Keeves (1972) conducted in the Australian capital territory, it was found that girls held more positive attitudes towards school than did boys.

In yet another related study in South Australia and in Queensland, Anderson (1978) found that females were more satisfied with school than were males. This was because girls expressed satisfaction with school and school subjects, and also rated their behaviour in class as better than did boys. In another large-scale study of 4,535 students in New South Wales' secondary schools, Sampson and Watkins (1978), investigated adolescents' attitudes to four aspects of school life: school in general, choice of subjects, discipline and uniforms. Attitudes were examined in relation to sex, form (grade) level and school type. From the researcher's analysis of results, marked sex differences were evident, with girls again showing more favourable attitudes towards school than did boys.

Later on, Brown (1982) also examined the extent and effects of peer pressure among high school girls and boys. His results showed that females seemed to encounter more pressure than males, particularly with regard to dressing and grooming styles, having a steady opposite sex relationship, being active socially,

among other behaviours. On the other hand, males experienced more peer pressure to have sexual intercourse and smoking. Girls also perceived more pressure in obtaining good grades and good relations with parents. It seemed here that girls were inclined to peers if the issues were positive in nature. However, boys have a tendency to be influenced by peers to engage in antisocial behaviour (Brown, 1982).

Contrary to the above studies, which at least indicated some kind of sex differences in the behaviour influence among adolescent peers, are the findings recorded in a local study by Rono (1991). In this study, she assessed the effects of peer pressure on the educational achievement, vocational and occupational aspirations of form four students in the secondary schools investigated. Gender was among the independent variables investigated. The analysis of results indicated no gender differences when it came to perception of pressure from peers to achieve academically, continue schooling and to strive for a university degree.

The studies reviewed above characteristically display the common conflicts in research findings that often occur due to a number of reasons such as the nature of the population sample used and or methodology procedures employed in a number of studies investigating relatively same variables. This study also investigated the nature of gender differences in students' peer group influence especially in the present socio – cultural diversification when gender issues are

openly discussed, globally. This is because it is of no surprise that women have been unable to close an achievement gap that has been widened by centuries of subordination and sparked by sex-role stereotyping, hence the results of this investigation could shed some light about the place of peer factor in this state of affairs.

(ii) Residential Status and Peer Group Effect:

The residential status, which the school provides to the learner, is explained in terms of a day school or a boarding school. In a day school, learners stay at home and commute to school everyday, as the school does not provide residential facilities. On the other hand, in the boarding school, learners stay at school, as there is the provision of boarding or residential facilities to the learners.

These two types of environmental settings provide different residential status in relation to peer influence to adolescents. This is because, in the boarding school students have more time being together with their school peers, unlike in day schools where students may have more contact with parents, other family members and home peers than with their school peers. This may give rise to differences in the extent of peer influence to both day scholars and boarders, especially in the context of their academic achievement.

A number of studies have attempted to investigate the relationship between peer influence and residential status of the students. For example, Pidgeon (1970) studied the achievement in mathematics of students in boarding and day schools in Britain to find out the effect of parental encouragement on performance. The questionnaire used asked about how much the students perceived that their parents involved themselves in their mathematics homework.

The results indicated that day school students performed higher than boarding ones due to the continued day to day support and encouragement given by their parents at home. Boarding school students, therefore, lacked intimate contact with their parents and the encouragement they provide. In his analysis of results, Pidgeon concluded that boarding students experienced more peer influence than day scholarly ones, and that the peer influence did not augur well for their good academic achievement.

Contrary to this conclusion, are the findings of Rono's (1991) study, which specifically investigated the effect of the residential status of the student on his/her academic achievement in relation to peer pressure. Rono (1991) found out that non-boarders (i.e. day scholars) perceived more pressure to do homework than boarders. In addition, non-boarders also experienced more pressure than boarders to work harder at school for better marks.

Therefore, while there is a general expectation for a strong peer influence in boarding schools, as depicted in Pidgeon's (1970) study, the contrary is found in Rono's (1991) study. Indeed, Rono's (1991) study is an example of a local study whose results may be generalized to other parts of Kenya, provided that the conditions and settings as investigated in her study are the same in those other parts of the country. Ironically, even though the results of her study indicated that there was a likelihood of a strong peer pressure to do well academically in day scholarly students, their performance at the national examinations is relatively low as compared to that of boarding school students (KNEC, 1998).

Clearly, there is a contradiction as depicted in the above literature. It was therefore important for this study to also investigate this variable, because, it is generally expected that peer group influence should be stronger in boarding schools than in day schools due to the constant contact among the boarding school students. Therefore, further research on this variable had to be carried out in this study so as to find out more about it.

2.2.3 Summary of the Review of Related Research Literature:

The foregoing literature review reveals that adolescents affect each other's attitudes towards school and academic achievement, and the type of activities they engage in, be they academic related or non – academic. Eventually, this effect from peers affects students' academic achievement accordingly. To be

sure, contemporary adolescents spend more time in peer groups than their counterparts did in the past eras.

This is because changes in the socio-economic status of the modern families have made them leave most of their basic functions of child rearing to school administrations, including, school peer groups. But it is not known (or it cannot be declared) if today's young people are any more susceptible to the influence of their peers than their counterparts were previously, nor is it known if teenagers are any worse off because peer groups have come to play a more prominent role in the modern society.

In fact, Brown (1990) has noted that the nature and strength of adolescent – peer influence varies a great deal from one (historical) period to the next. Therefore, caution must be taken about generalising images of adolescent–peer group influence derived from one point in time (and or culture) to all subsequent generations of young people (or culture). Thus, an investigation of this kind is justified by the fact that at present times there have been major changes in the socio-economic status that have facilitated reliance on peers among adolescents.

The literature also shows that susceptibility to peer influence is affected by such independent variables as age, sex, task, type of school and race, among other factors. Such variations may also affect the way peers influence each other,

hence some of these variables need to be investigated in the light of the present study. Of special considerations were gender and residential position of the student in relation to peer group influence on their attitudes and group's activities, which in turn affects their academic achievement.

2.3 Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were tested in the present study:

Ha₁ There is a positive relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and students' academic achievement.

Ha₂ There is a positive relationship between peer group activities and students' academic achievement.

Ha₃ There is a significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and the selected peer group activities.

Ha₄ There is a significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between boys and girls.

Ha₅ There is a significant difference in the selected peer group activities between girls and boys.

Ha₆ There is no significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between boarders and day scholars.

Ha₇ There is a significant difference in the selected peer group activities between boarders and day scholars.

The next chapter explains the research methodologies used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, there is a brief description of the research design adopted for the study, population and sampling procedures, and instrumentation. Subsequently, data analysis techniques are described.

3.1 Research Design:

In this study, a correlational design was used. This study design was selected mainly because it indicates the degree of relationship that exists in a group of people between one aspect of their behaviour and another (Malim and Birch, 1997).

The main purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between peer group attitudes and some selected peer group activities (both academic and non academic), and academic achievement of secondary school students in Nairobi. Furthermore, the way in which peer group influence varied with gender and residential status of students was studied. In this study, the independent variables were; peer group attitudes towards school and the selected peer group activities (both academic and non academic). Gender (boy or girl) and residential status (day scholar or boarder) were the categorical variables; and academic achievement was the dependent variable.

3.2 Population and Sample:

The population of the study consisted of year 2002 form four students from both private and public secondary schools in Nairobi. Both the schools and students were the sampling units in the study.

3.2.1 Schools:

Both public and private secondary schools were sampled for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used. This was because some schools, both public and private, in Nairobi do not sit for the common mock examination. This examination was essential in this study, since it was used to provide information about students' level of academic achievement. Furthermore, some private secondary schools do not pursue the 8-4-4 type of curriculum that is used in all of Kenya's public schools. Therefore, by using this technique such schools were automatically excluded in this study.

The researcher visited a number of schools in Nairobi, and purposively selected only those schools that qualified the above criteria. Forty schools were sampled by this procedure, in which twenty were public and the other twenty were private. The purposive sampling was done in a way to cater for stratified sampling, since the population sample of the study was divided by gender and residential status of the student. Hence, the schools were selected and listed under these two broad categories. This stratification gave four specific strata as follows: boys' schools, girls' schools, day schools (single sex or mixed) and boarding schools

(single sex or mixed). Each stratum consisted of 10 purposively selected schools, with 5 public and 5 private.

Finally, using simple random sampling two schools out of five public schools, and two schools out of five private schools, from each stratum were selected. This was done by writing the names of the five public and the five private schools in paper folds. The paper folds were put in two separate baskets, for the two categories of schools, mixed up, and two paper folds picked at random from each basket. This was repeatedly done for each stratum. This gave a final representative sample of 16 schools for the study, with eight of them being public schools and the other eight being private schools. Table 3.1 below, shows the schools sampled for the study.

Table 3.1 Descriptions of Schools Sample Distributions.

SCHOOL TYPE STRATA	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
BOARDING	1. State house girls 2. Starehe boys centre	1. Sunshine boys 2. Aga Khan high school
DAY	3. Dandora secondary school 4. Pumwani sec. school	3. Mt. Camel sec. school 4. Buru Buru sec. School
BOYS	5. Nairobi high school 6. Eastleigh boys	5. Arya boys 6. Strathmore boys
GIRLS	7. Huruma girls 8. Precious blood girls	7. Kianda girls 8. Loreto Msongari girls

3.2.2 Students:

The subjects of the study were drawn from form IV classes of the sampled schools. The students were sampled by simple random sampling. The names of form four students in the school registry were written on the paper folds, just as it was done in the sampling of schools. These paper folds were put in a basket, mixed up and only 15 paper folds picked at random. This procedure was repeated in each of the sampled school. Thus, giving 15 subjects from each sampled school. This gave a final representative sample population of 240 subjects for the study, with 126 girls and 114 boys.

3.3 Instrumentation:

A peer effect questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. It consisted of three sections. Section A consisted of items that provided students' background information (i.e. demographic data which gave such details like gender and residential status of the respondent). Section B consisted of a five – point likert scale (i.e. strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and not sure) that assessed peer group attitudes towards school and academic achievement. Finally, section C consisted of items that gave the selected peer group activities, mostly engaged in by the students' peers, which were or were not related to their academic achievement.

In total, the questionnaire consisted of 60 items, some developed by the researcher and others adopted from some previous studies (Ki:k, 2000; Rono,

1991; Coleman, 1961). Under section B the researcher developed the items in a way that focused very much on the group of students with which the sampled students most closely associate. In addition, the items were developed indirectly in order to elicit the most 'correct' response. According to Kirk (2000) when the item directly asks about what a student's peer's influences on him/her, it is most likely to elicit a defensive or otherwise inaccurate answer. For example, when the item directly asks, "My friends make fun of me when I score high marks"; the student is likely to give a defensive response. However, when the item is reframed indirectly to ask that "My friends make fun of people who try to do well in school", it is most likely to elicit appropriate response from the respondent.

Each student's total aggregate score or grade of the eight subjects examined in the mock examinations was obtained from the school examination records. This score was used as a measure of the students' academic achievement.

3.3.1 Pilot Study:

A pilot study was carried out on a random sample of 48 form four students (25 boys and 23 girls) from four randomly selected secondary schools (Shauri Moyo mixed - private, Buru Buru girls - public, Kamkunji boys - public and Kahawa mixed - private). The pilot study was done in order to ascertain the reliability and validity of the research questionnaire used in this study – the peer effect questionnaire. Using split – half method, reliability was found by Spearman – Brown method. A reliability coefficient of 0.9 was obtained. This indicated that the

questionnaire was reliable, because according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a coefficient of 0.8 or more implies a high degree of reliability. Hence, there was no modification done on the questionnaire.

3.3.2 Data Collection:

The peer effect questionnaire was administered to the students to obtain the required data. Each student was given a questionnaire. The subjects were given adequate instructions and explanations before responding to the items. It took about 20 to 30 minutes for students to respond to all the items in the questionnaire.

3.3.3 Scoring Procedures:

The influence of peers on students' academic achievement ranges between the positive and the negative impact. Following this, students were expected to perform high academically if the influence was positive, whereas with a negative influence they were most likely to perform low in their academic work. In this respect, items in section B of the questionnaire, which were related to peer group attitudes towards school, were scored in such a way that positively influenced students scored between 60 – 100 percentage scores. Negatively influenced students scored below the score of 50 percent. A score of between 50 – 60 percent indicated a neutral influence. The scoring was designed this way because each option was awarded marks depending on the positivity or negativity of a student's response versus positivity or negativity of the

questionnaire item. This section consisted of 33 items, with both positive and negative implications.

Section C of the questionnaire consisted of items that gauged the effects of some selected peer group activities on the student's academic achievement. These activities comprised of both academic related and non – academic ones. Academic related ones were automatically awarded five marks, while non – academic activities were awarded one mark. Under some items in this section the five – point likert scale type was used. The scoring of these items was similar to that in section B of the questionnaire, as explained in the above paragraph. A score of between 50 – 100 percent indicated peer group involvements in academic related activities, while scoring below 50 percent showed peer group involvement in non – academic related activities. There were 12 items under this section.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques:

The peer effect questionnaire (PEQ) was scored and coded for statistical analysis by the computer using statistical packages for social sciences – SPSS (Malim et al, 1997). The descriptive statistics, that is, frequency distributions and percentages, were used to describe and summarise the data in reference to a number of related variables, such as age, gender, and duration of the friendship and popularity of the peer group. Each statistical hypothesis was tested as follows:

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and students' academic achievement. Test: Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between the selected peer group activities and students' academic achievement. Test: Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school and the selected peer group activities. Test: Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₄ There is no significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between girls and boys. Test: Kruskal – Wallis Non-Parametric ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₅ There is no significant difference in the selected peer group activities between boys and girls. Test: Kruskal – Wallis Non – Parametric ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₆ There is no significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school between boarders and day scholars. Test: Kruskal Wallis Non – Parametric ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₇ There is no significant difference in the selected peer group activities between boarders and day scholars. Test: Kruskal Wallis Non – Parametric ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

The analyses of the data collected and the report of the findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The results and analysis of the data collected for the study are presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided in five sections. The first section gives the sample description. This is followed by a description of the distribution of test scores. The third section presents statistical analyses of the hypotheses. Each hypothesis is tested and discussed separately. The hypothesis then, is either accepted or rejected at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. This is followed by presentation of secondary analysis of results in the fourth section. Finally, the summary of results is given.

4.1 Sample Distribution:

In this section, frequency distributions and percentages were used to describe and summarize the data in reference to a number of aspects related to the nature of adolescent–peer group influence. The first part of this section shows the distribution of students by age, gender, duration of friendship, popularity of the peer group and the ranking of individuals who greatly encouraged the students to work hard at school. This data was sought under the demographic section of the research questionnaire administered to the students. In the second part, the distribution of students by their performance in mock examination is shown.

The summaries of these data are presented in tabular forms as shown under each part.

4.1.1 Distribution of Students by Demographic Related Variables:

The following important demographic data was sought from the sample of students used in the study: age, gender, duration of their friendship, popularity of the peer group and the ranking of individuals (that is, family members, teachers and friends included) by the extent to which they gave the students educational encouragement. Tables 4.1 to 4.4 present the summaries of this data.

Table 4.1 Distributions of Students by Age and Gender:

AGE RANGE (YEARS)	FEMALE NO.	MALE NO.	TOTAL	
			NO.	%
Below 17	05	03	08	3
17 – 18	61	48	109	45
19 – 20	54	60	114	48
Over 20	03	06	09	4
TOTAL	123	117	240	100

Table 4.1 shows that 93 percent of the total sample of students was of ages 17 to 20 years. Theoretically, this age range is characterized by acute peer group influence, which gradually disintegrates towards early 20s. Those below 17 years of age and above the age of 20 years, constituted 3 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

Table 4.2 Distribution of Student by Duration of Friendship:

DURATION OF FRIENDSHIP	NO. STUDENTS	%
1 – 3 Months	09	4
3 – 6 Months	14	6
6 Months – 1 Year	54	22
Longer than 1 Year	163	68
TOTAL	240	100

In order to establish the duration of friendship, students were asked to indicate how long they had stayed in their particular friendship. As shown in table 4.2 above, 68 percent of the students had been in their friendship for longer than one year, while 10 percent of the total sample of students had been in their friendship for less than six months. Twenty two percent of the students in the total sample indicated their friendship to have lasted for almost a year.

In most cases, time is a factor in any kind of influence. Thus, the characteristics displayed by the students in the study's population sample in relation to the duration of friendship were reasonable ones for the research. This was so, because 90 percent of the total sample of students had been in friendship for at least six months, hence a remarkable amount of peer group influence could be acknowledged.

Table 4.3 Distributions of Students by the Popularity of the Peer Group:

POPULARITY OF THE PEER GROUP	NO. STUDENTS	%
Getting High Grades	118	49
Going out to Movies, Discos and Cinema	32	13
Having a Good Reputation	55	23
Having Latest Hair Styles and Cuts	09	4
Being the Best Athlete or the Best in Games	26	11
TOTAL	240	100

The students were asked to choose on what make their peer groups to be recognized as distinct groups in their schools. Five options, as shown in table 4.3 above, were given for this. From the table 49 percent of the total sample of students said that 'getting high grades' made their peer group the most popular one at their schools. 'Having good reputation' was represented by 23 percent, whereas 'being the best athlete' was represented by 11 percent. Seventeen percent of the total sample chose 'going out to movies, discos and cinema', and 'having the latest hair styles and cuts', to be the aspects that made their peer groups popular in their schools. These results indicate that most students in the total sample were likely to be associated with peer groups whose members worked hard to score high grades in the academic subjects.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Students by the Order of the Person giving them

Educational Encouragement:

RANKS PERSON	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	NO. STUD.	%	NO. STUD.	%	NO. STUD.	%	NO. STUD.	%	NO. STUD.	%	NO. STUD.	%
Parents	128	53	32	13	23	9	19	8	08	3	—	—
Brothers	21	9	38	16	62	26	52	22	31	13	37	13
Sisters	17	7	25	10	50	21	68	28	41	17	35	15
Relatives	19	8	21	9	31	13	40	16	61	25	78	32
Best Friends	23	10	27	11	39	16	33	14	70	29	63	26
Teachers	32	13	97	41	35	15	28	12	29	13	33	14
TOTAL	240	100	240	100	240	100	240	100	240	100	240	100

For the purpose of finding out the relative position of peer group influence in relation to influences from parents, teachers and other individuals alike, students were asked to rank these particular individuals by the extent to which they gave them educational encouragement. That is, whoever gave them the greatest educational encouragement was ranked as number one, followed by the next one with a relatively lesser educational encouragement, being ranked as number two. This followed in that order up to rank six.

As shown in table 4.4 above, the position of each individual(s) is clearly depicted by the highest percentage of the total sample of students who ranked these particular individuals in each rank (i.e. 1,2,3...6). It then followed that parents

were ranked as number one by 53 percent of the total sample of students. Teachers followed in the second position with 41 percent of the total sample of students, then brothers (26 percent) in the third position and sisters (28 percent) in the fourth position. Best friends were in the fifth position with 29 percent of the total sample of students, and finally, relatives came in the sixth position with 26 percent of the total sample of students. This implied that the peer group influence on students' academic achievement became in place after family members and teachers had already played their role of influence on the same.

4.1.2 Distribution of Students by their Performance in Mock Examinations:

Marks were obtained from the students' mock examinations, to be used as a measure of their academic achievement. Table 4.5 below gives a summary of their performance in those examinations.

Table 4.5 Distributions of Students by Mock Examination Performance:

MOCK GRADE OBTAINED	NO. STUDENTS	%
A	28	12
B	61	25
C	83	35
D	56	23
E	12	5
TOTAL	240	100

From table 4.5 above, 37 percent of the total sample of students obtained the current University entrance grade of B- and above. Thirty five percent of the total sample had grade C, whereas 23 percent and 5 percent of the total sample obtained grades D and E in their mock examinations, respectively. This shows that almost three quarters of the total sample population of students (i.e. 72 percent) performed above average in their mock examinations.

4.2 Distribution of Test Scores:

The mean scores and standard deviations of each variable, that is, the independent and the dependent variables, were calculated.

Table 4.6 Characteristics of the Score Distributions (N = 240):

VARIABLES	SCORE DISTRIBUTION CHARACTERISTICS	
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Peer Group Attitudes	77.01	8.49
Peer Group Activities	68.50	13.84
Students' Academic Achievement	50.81	22.35

Table 4.6 above, shows the most important characteristics of the score distributions, that is, the means and standard deviations. All these tests yielded considerable standard deviation in relation to the mean.

In the foregoing section, the most important characteristics of the data as given by the students in the study sample have been discussed. Various descriptions of the students have been identified and made. This discussion has laid the basis for the testing of the hypotheses that were postulated earlier in the study.

The next section, therefore, deals with the statistical analyses of the data in order to test the hypotheses formulated in the study.

4.3 Statistical Analyses:

This section presents the results of the statistical analyses of the study's hypotheses.

4.3.1 Relationship between Peer Group Attitudes Towards School Scores and Academic Achievement Scores:

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test hypothesis Ho₁. The results of the analysis are shown in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Peer Group Attitudes towards School Scores and Academic Achievement Scores:

		MEAN GRADE	ATTITUDE SCALE
MEAN GRADE	Pearson Correlation	1	.329(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	240	240
ATTITUDE SCALE	Pearson Correlation	.329(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	240	240

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

According to the results in table 4.7, there was a statistical relationship between peer group attitudes towards school scores and academic achievement scores. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected at $P < 0.05$. This implied that those students whose attitudes were positively influenced by their peer group members attained relatively higher levels of academic achievement. On the other hand, students whose attitudes were influenced negatively by their peer group members obtained relatively lower scores in their academic work at school.

4.3.2 Relationship between Selected Peer Group Activities (Academic and Non – Academic) Scores and Academic Achievement Scores:

The null hypothesis H_{02} was tested under this part. Table 4.8 below, shows the summary of the results.

Table 4.8 Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Selected Peer Group Activities Scores and Academic Achievement Scores:

		MEAN GRADE	ACTIVITY SCALE
MEAN GRADE	Pearson Correlation	1	.303(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	240	240
ACTIVITY SCALE	Pearson Correlation	.303(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	240	240

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

According to the result analysis in table 4.8 above, the null hypothesis was rejected at $P < 0.05$. Thus, there was a statistically significant relationship between selected peer group activities scores and students' academic achievement scores. This indicated that those students whose peer group members encouraged and participated in academic related activities acquired a relative increase in their academic achievement levels. On the contrary, those students whose peer groups were characterized by non – academic related activities obtained relatively lower levels of academic achievement.

4.3.3 Relationship between Peer Group Attitudes Towards School Scores and Selected Peer Group Activities Scores:

Table 4.9 below shows the results obtained when the null hypothesis H_{03} was tested.

Table 4.9 Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Peer Group Attitudes towards School Scores and Selected Peer Group Activities Scores:

		ACTIVITY SCALE	ATTITUDE SCALE
ACTIVITY SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	.446(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	240	240
ATTITUDE SCALE	Pearson Correlation	.446(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	240	240

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

Following the results in table 4.10 above, the null hypothesis was not rejected at $P < 0.05$. This led to a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference between boys and girls in relation to peer group attitudes towards school scores. In other words, this implied that the impact of peer group influence on students' attitudes towards school was the same in both sexes.

4.3.5 Difference in the Selected Peer Group Activities Scores between Boys and Girls:

When the null hypothesis H_{05} was tested, the results in table 4.11 below were found.

Table 4.11 Kruskal – Wallis Test Analysis for Difference in the Selected Peer Group Activities Scores between Boys and Girls:

DESCRIPTIVES				TEST STATISTICS ^{a, b}		
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Chi – Square	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance
Boys	120	67.47	12.36	0.984	1	0.321
Girls	120	69.52	15.16			
TOTAL	240					

* $P < 0.05$

a, Kruskal – Wallis Test

b, Grouping Variable: Gender

The results in table 4.11 indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in selected peer group activities scores between boys and girls. Following this, the null hypothesis was not rejected at $P < 0.05$. This analysis of results showed that the degree of participation in the selected peer group activities, whether academic or non – academically related, was the same in both sexes.

4.3.6 Difference in Peer Group Attitudes Towards School Scores between Day Scholars and Boarders:

The summary of result analysis for the null hypothesis H_{06} is shown in table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12 Kruskal – Wallis Test Analysis for Difference in Peer Group Attitudes towards School Scores between Day Scholars and Boarders:

DESCRIPTIVES				TEST STATISTICS ^{a, b}		
Residential Status	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Chi – Square	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance
Day	120	77.40	8.01	0.189	1	0.664
Boarding	120	76.61	8.96			
TOTAL	240					

* $P < 0.05$

a, Kruskal – Wallis Test

b, Grouping Variable: Residential Status

In this result analysis, as summarized in table 4.12 above, the null hypothesis was not rejected at $P < 0.05$. Hence, there was no statistically significant difference in peer group attitudes towards school scores between day scholars and boarders. It was then concluded that both day scholars and boarders experienced the same impact of peer group influence on their attitudes towards school and academic achievement.

4.3.7 Difference in the Selected Peer Group Activities Scores between Day Scholars and Boarders:

The last null hypothesis H_{07} was statistically analyzed under this part, and the results of the analysis found were summarized in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 Kruskal – Wallis Test Analysis for Difference in the Selected Peer Group Activities Scores between Day Scholars and Boarders:

DESCRIPTIONS				TEST STATISTICS ^{a, b}		
Residential Status	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Chi – Square	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance
Day	120	72.55	12.97	22.448	1	0.000
Boarding	120	64.44	13.54			
TOTAL	240					

* $P < 0.05$

a, Kruskal – Wallis Test

b, Grouping Variable: Residential Status

As shown in table 4.13 above, the null hypothesis was rejected at $P < 0.05$. This indicated that there was statistically significant difference between day scholars and boarders in relation to selected peer group activities scores. Further examination of this analysis indicated that the difference favored day scholars over boarders; in that students' peers in day schools indicated more involvement in academic related peer group activities, unlike those in boarding.

4.4 Additional Analyses:

The percentage of students whose attitudes towards school and academic achievement were positively influenced by their peers was very high (84 percent). On the contrary, very few students had a neutral and a negative influence (12 percent and 4 percent, respectively). On the basis of the data obtained 75 percent of the students reported that their peer group members participated more in academic related activities. They indicated that most of the time they did activities aimed at improving their standards of academic achievement.

These activities included group discussions on subject(s) content(s) and doing homework assignments. On the other hand, 25 percent of the students in the total sample indicated that their peer group members spent most of their time in non – academic related activities, such as watching T.V., listening to music, going to cinemas and discos. These activities were more likely to lower their standards of academic achievement.

When asked whether their friends always followed what both of them did or told each other, only 15 percent agreed and 27 percent disagreed. The remaining 58 percent of the total sample of students said that they sometimes agreed or disagreed with their friends' opinions. The reasons they gave for this were depended on whether their friends' opinions were going to affect them either positively or negatively in relation to school learning, in particular, and school life, in general.

Sixty two percent of students said that they were part of the most popular peer groups in their schools. Incidentally, in most schools of the study sample, the popularity of many students' peer groups as indicated by the students in the study sample, was independently identified by 'getting high grades' and 'having good reputation'. On the other hand, 38 percent of students said that they were not part of the most popular peer groups in their schools.

The students also reported on what their best friend(s) were doing in the course of the period when this research was done. Eighty five percent of students indicated that their best friend(s) were fully attending school; 12 percent said that their best friends were either in part time employment or doing some business together with schooling, and only 3 percent of students had friends who had quit school. Those who had their friends in part time employment or some business together with schooling gave varied reasons for this: such as, supplementing

their school fees, buying of some learning materials (e.g. textbooks), getting some money for entertainment activities (e.g. going to cinemas, discos and picnics). Those with friends who had completely quit school indicated lack of school fees as the main factor, among other factors like truancy and expulsion.

4.5 Summary:

On the basis of the above analyses and discussions of the results in the foregoing section, the following summaries of the results were made:

- There was a positive significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school scores and students' academic achievement scores at $P < 0.05$.
- There was a positive significant relationship between selected peer group activities scores and students' academic achievement scores at $P < 0.05$.
- There was a significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school scores and selected peer group activities scores at $P < 0.05$.
- No significant difference was found between boys and girls in relation to peer group attitudes towards school scores at $P < 0.05$.
- There was no significant difference between boys and girls in relation to selected peer group activities scores at $P < 0.05$.
- No significant difference was found between day scholars and boarders in relation to peer group attitudes towards school scores at $P < 0.05$.

- A significant difference was found between day scholars and boarders in relation to selected peer group activities scores at $P < 0.05$.
- In the study's population sample, most students were positively influenced in their attitudes towards school by their peer group members (84 percent), and most of them indicated participation in peer group academic related activities (75 percent).

The next chapter presents the conclusions, implications, and recommendations made in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings and the conclusions made with reference to the specific research questions. The chapter is divided into four sections: The first section deals with the summary of the study, the second one deals with the discussions and conclusions; in the third section the implications of the study are provided, and finally, in the fourth section recommendations for further research are made.

5.1 Summary of the Study:

The study investigated the incidence of students' peer group influence at school. This was done by finding out the relationship between peer group attitudes towards school, peer group activities and academic achievement of secondary school students in Nairobi. Other variables investigated were gender and residential status in relation to peer group influence in students, that is, whether the peer group influence varied with gender and residential status of students at school. A population sample of 240 students from both public and private secondary schools in Nairobi urban area was studied. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in that order to select 8 public and 8 private secondary schools, while for the selection of students a simple random sampling technique was used.

The correlation research design was adopted for the study in order to establish the relationships between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses related to peer group attitudes, and activities and students' academic achievement scores. On the other hand, Kruskal – Wallis Non – Parametric Test was used to test the hypotheses on categorical variables (that is, gender and students' residential status of the school).

5.2 Discussions and Conclusions of the Study Findings:

The data analyses in chapter four, gave several findings of the study. These findings are discussed under this section and conclusions are made thereafter with reference to each hypothesis.

According to the results, there was a statistically significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school scores and students' academic achievement scores. This implied that those students who were influenced positively attained higher levels of academic achievement, while those who were influenced negatively achieved low academic levels. These results are consistent with those found in a number of previous related studies. The study findings of Opolot (1979), Hanson and Ginsburg (1988), Berndt, Laychak and Park (1990), Rono (1991) and, Rosenthal and Fieldman (1991), indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between peer group influence and students' academic achievement levels.

On the other hand, results from Coleman (1961), Steinberg and Levine (1992) and Kirk (2000), indicated that there was a negative peer group influence on students' academic achievement levels, since a negative relationship was found between the scores of the two variables. In these studies, peer group influence was analyzed either in terms of pressure, conformity, values, interests of attitudes as discussed in chapter two under review of related literature.

In the present study, majority of students indicated a positive peer group effect (84 percent). Those who were negatively influenced accounted for only 4 percent of the total sample, while 12 percent of the students reported a neutral influence from their peers. From the results, it can be concluded that a positive significant relationship existed between students' peer group attitudes scale scores and their academic achievement scores. Thus, the peer group attitude was a factor in their academic achievement.

A positive significant relationship was also found between selected peer group activities scale scores and students' academic achievement scores. The selected peer group activities comprised of academic and non – academic activities. This indicated that students from peer groups that participated so much in academic activities, like subject content discussions, achieved high academic levels. On the contrary, those whose peer groups indulged in non – academic activities most of the time scored less in academic subjects. These results are in accordance with some findings in previous studies. The analysis of results from

Csikszentmihalyi, Larson and Prescott (1977); Davis (1981) and, Hanson and Ginsburg (1988), indicated that the participation of students' peers in extra – reading, doing homework and discussions on subject content, made individual students to score high in their academic work.

On the other hand, studies by Coleman (1961), Eitzen (1975) and Kelly (1979), reported low performance in students' academic achievement work brought about by ones peer group participation in non – academic activities, like watching T.V. most of the time and spending much time in extra – curricular activities, such as sports and athletics. Incidentally, some of Leona (1978) study findings contradict the above results. No relationship was found between the selected non – academic peer group activities scores and students' class mean.

Among the selected activities were weekend practice, games, sports, peer group parties, alcoholism, and smoking. Peer groups characterized by these kinds of activities had their members still making above average academic grades. A difference in socio – cultural settings was the main reason given for this. This was because the perception of high achievers in the middle – income suburbs of Massachusetts, America; where the study was done, was characterized by indulgence in such leisure – like activities.

Seventy five percent of students in the present study indicated that their peer groups participated more in academic activities. Only 25 percent of the students

reported that their peer group members indulged mostly in non – academic activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that peer group activities played a significant role in students' academic achievement.

A statistically significant relationship was also established between peer group attitudes towards school scale scores and the selected peer group activities scale scores. This is also evident in a number of aforementioned studies, for example, Coleman (1961), Davis (1981) and, Hanson and Ginsburg (1988). In these studies the kind of peer group activities, that is, academic or non – academic, were determined by the attitudes and values placed on academic achievement by students' peer group members. Hence, if one's peer group members valued schooling, more often than not the group was involved in academic activities.

On the contrary, those whose peer group members did not value schooling were more likely to involve themselves in non – academic activities. This consistency between peer group attitudes and activities was clearly depicted in this study, since an average of 78 percent of students indicated a positive attitudinal influence from their peers and participation in peer group academic activities. The remaining percentage (22 percent) indicated a negative attitudinal influence and indulgence in non – academic activities.

No statistically significant difference was found between boys and girls (gender factor) in relation to both peer group attitudes towards school scale scores and selected peer group activities scale scores. Keeves (1974) and Rono (1991) reported similar findings. However, these results are different from some earlier ones by Keeves (1972), and those by Anderson (1978), Sampson and Watkins (1978), Brown (1982) and Poole (1983), who reported that significant sex differences existed in relation to peer attitudes towards school. From these studies it was reported that attitudinally, girls' peers positively influenced each other than boys' peers. Poole (1983), however, pointed out that such satisfaction did not however correlate with their ability and achievement measures.

On the contrary, the typical Coleman (1961,1966,1990) literature on adolescent peer groups indicates different results altogether. In a series of his studies on adolescent peer groups, he reported that girls' peers experienced more pressure towards social skills and popularity than in academic outstanding, while boys' peer groups emphasized on athletics and academic achievement. Such difference in results could be attributed to differences in cultural settings of the groups studied.

There was also no statistically significant difference found between day scholars and boarders in relation to peer group attitudes towards school scale scores. This implied that the perception of peer group influence was the same in both day scholars and boarders, despite the fact that boarders were having constant

interaction with their peers than day scholars. This finding is contrary to some previous studies' results reported by Pidgeon (1970) and Rono (1991). They found a significant difference between day scholars and boarders in relation to peer group effects, with day scholars experiencing positive pressure from their peers than boarders. The results found in this study could be due to the characteristics of the sample population (students) and the area studied (Nairobi). This is because, owing to the socio – economic and cultural setting in Nairobi; both day scholars and boarders may have experienced relatively same exposure to learning resources, role models, and media.

However, there was a statistically significant difference between day scholars and boarders in relation to the selected peer group activities scale scores. In this case, the results were similar to some of Rono (1991) findings, in which day scholars in her study sample, perceived more pressure to do homework than boarders were. In the present study, it was still evident that day scholars indulged more in academic related peer group activities than boarders did, as they recorded the highest mean score (72.55) on the peer group activities scale than boarders (64.44).

Although there was a significant relationship between peer group attitudes scale scores and the selected peer group activities scale scores, as discussed under the testing of hypothesis H_{03} ; the difference established in above results could have been due to actualization of these attitudes into activities with regard to

students' residential status at school. In this case, day scholars perceived themselves as having less time for studies unlike boarders who had plenty of time at their disposal to read and get high-class scores. Peer group members in day schools, therefore, encouraged each other at every opportunity to compensate for any time lost in either home based chores or limited time at school. This could be the reason as to why they indulged more in academic related peer group activities than boarders did.

Following the results analyses in chapter four and the discussions of the results presented in the above section, it is clear that peer influence is a contributing factor to students' academic achievement at school, despite parental and teacher influence. This is because almost 78 percent of students in the total sample of the study experienced a strong positive influence from their peer groups, which augured well for their good academic achievement, that is, mock performance.

The concept of peer group influence in teenagers has been characteristically misunderstood by many individuals such as parents, teachers, and even students themselves. More often than not peer group interactions among adolescents have been perceived to be dangerous avenues that ruin their behavior in a number of aspects such as social states, moral being, including academic development at school.

The findings of this study indicated that peer group influence is an important issue and proper attention needs to be directed towards it by parents, teachers, educationists, researchers and policy makers, among other personalities. In doing this the perception of peer groups, as dangerous gangsters of teenagers will eventually change. Hence, peer groups can be utilized as an important arena to instill positive aspects in students, since with the emerging socio – cultural changes in the present situation, most teenagers are increasingly spending their significant lifetime with peer group members. Of special emphasis should be the important role that peer groups can continue to play in students' academic life at school.

5.3 Implications of the Study Findings:

Some practical implications can be made from the study, despite a few limitations of the study discussed in various sections of this thesis.

5.3.1 Implications for Students:

Individual students should realize that their group members hold and continue to hold maximal significance to many aspects of their life at school such as personal, social, moral, sexual, and more so, academic and vocational. Peers provide immediate moral support for experimentation and amplification of many of these identities. In doing so, peers may positively or negatively influence them (students). Students should, therefore, be cautious when choosing friends. They should choose friends who will contribute towards positive development in

The results analysis in table 4.9 above, indicate that the null hypothesis was rejected at $P < 0.05$. This shows that there was a statistically significant relationship between peer group attitudes towards school scores and selected peer group activities scores. This gave the evidence that those students who were in peer groups with positive attitudes towards school and academic achievement mostly participated in academically related peer group activities. On the other hand, students who were in peer groups with a manifestation of negative attitudes towards school and academic achievement frequently participated in non – academically oriented peer group activities.

4.3.4 Difference in Peer Group Attitudes Towards School Scores between Boys and Girls:

In analyzing null hypothesis H_{04} , Kruskal – Wallis Non Parametric Test was used. Table 4.10 below presents a summary of results for this analysis.

Table 4.10 Kruskal – Wallis Test Analysis for Difference in Peer Group Attitudes towards School Scores between Boys and Girls:

DESCRIPTIVES				TEST STATISTICS ^{a, b}		
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance
Boys	120	73.33	8.74	0.299	1	0.585
Girls	120	76.69	8.25			
TOTAL	240					

* $P < 0.05$

a, Kruskal – Wallis Test

b, Grouping Variable: Gender

various aspects at school. More emphasis should be placed on the choice of friends who may make them excel academically, because it is at this stage in life when this task is being resolved.

Students should also cultivate positive attitudes towards school aspects amongst themselves in their peer groups. They should also share and practice what is important to their school life, with a realization that what they do as individuals or as a group will likewise affect their total school life as individuals or as a group. More importantly, they should always seek guidance from their parents and teachers on the choice of friends and the type of activities they ought to do in their peer groups.

5.3.2 Implications for Parents and Teachers:

It is important that both parents and teachers know the important part that peer groups play in students' academic development at school, in particular and in life, in general. Parents and teachers should be at the forefront in guiding students on the choice of important friends, and in monitoring the development and the status quo of students peer groups.

In so doing, students' interactions can be guided to achieve useful educational objectives. Hence, group may become cohesive and leadership abilities may be developed in students. In turn, social skills may be learned and pro-social attitudes and values may be reinforced. On the other hand, students may

organize themselves a long minority – majority patterns, socio – economic status lines, and other less desirable bases when their interactions are not guided, and this may have adverse effects on their academic life at school.

A cohesive group is one in which all members wish to stay in that group. Members are sufficiently attracted to one another or to the group activity that they wish to stay in that particular group. Therefore, if effective learning in the classroom is to be achieved, then the teacher has no choice but to work in the context of students' peer groups.

This can be done through peer helping relationships (Webb, 1987), in which students' peers will assume formal roles as tutors. Peer tutoring consists of students teaching each other of the same or relatively different age based on their peer group interactions at school. This is a co – operative undertaking whereby students share not only the answers but the process used to reach answers, as well. Since students characteristically identify more easily with their peers than with adult authority figures, modeling amongst themselves is fostered.

Indeed, teachers may demonstrate higher cognitive skills than the peer tutors, but these tutors may often provoke higher efficacy because students believe that greater efforts may result in achievement equal to the tutors', while matching a teacher's ability is impossible. Further more, students in this context may benefit from receiving immediate feedback and clarification of information they do not

understand. This recognized effort of helping others, may reinforce students own knowledge and skills, hence building ones self-confidence and esteem, and developing a sense of responsibility by helping each other to learn. This may eventually improve on students' attitudes towards school achievement.

Additionally, this practice may make teachers more flexible and in a position to focus their efforts on individual students. With time, teachers may assume new roles as coordinators and facilitators, instead of functioning solely as dispensers of knowledge, as it is usually the case.

5.3.3 Implications for School Counselors:

School counselors also need to fully understand the nature and extent of peer group influence in students, as they play a vital role in addition to parents' and other teachers' roles through the guiding and counseling services they provide to students. School counselors can use the powerful influence of students peer groups to instill positive attitudes towards school life in students.

By the use of peer counseling procedures, students in various peer groups may be provided with the useful peer counseling services, with the school counselor acting as the coordinator of these services. This may eventually increase the coverage of such vital services to students at school. This will eventually instill positive attitudes towards school in students.

5.3.4 Implications for Policy Issues:

Policy makers in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should carry out extensive research on the development of programs that will formally include students' peer group influence in the teaching – learning processes. Numerous studies (for example, Webb, 1987, discussed under section 5.3.2 above) have demonstrated the effectiveness of peer helping relationships and they have reported that students in effective programs constantly reach higher levels of academic achievement than those in conventional or mastery learning institutions. Such a program (in – school peer helping relationships) may also be used as a vehicle for diversifying and re – defining the role of the classroom teacher, as a response to personnel and resource limitations; while facilitating learning through the powerful influence of students' peer group relationships.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research:

The findings of this study were based on a sample of both public and private secondary school in Nairobi, Kenya. This study appears to be among the very few studies of this nature that have been carried out quantitatively, and often after a long time lapse, in this country. Kenya as a country is endowed with different geographical and socio – cultural settings. On the basis of such factors a replication of this study in other regions where this study has not been scientifically carried out or was carried out a long time ago (to the extent that the results have had to be de – validated by changes in socio – cultural settings), will be important in order to bring out regional comparison of the results. Such

subsequent studies may delineate some issues that can be known and done to improve the quality of peer group relations in schools in different regions of the country.

Further research is recommended with respect to other factors, which may affect peer group influence. These factors include age, socio – economic class, race, introversion and extroversion.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This is a research study. Through sampling procedures you happen to be included in this study.
2. You may choose to or not to participate in this study.
3. You are requested to respond to all questions.
4. Remember this is not an examination of any kind. Therefore, any response you give is correct.
5. Respond to the questionnaire items appropriately by filling in and or ticking against a given option.
6. You are free to ask the researcher for any clarification in cases whereby you do not understand what the question/item demands.
7. All the information given will be treated with ultimate confidentiality.

Student's consent for participation:

[] I agree to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your anticipating response of participating in this study.

Yours faithfully,

MUKOLWE ASAKHULU NEWTON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.

SECTION A

Demographic data

1. Name of school _____
2. Is it a Private school [] or a Public school []
3. Type of school: Girls school [] Boys school [] Mixed school []
4. Residential status: A day scholar [] A boarder []
5. Student's age: _____
6. Gender: Male [] Female []
7. Do you have friends here in school? Yes [] No []
8. For how long have you been friends?
[] 1 to 3 months [] 6 months to 1 year
[] 3 to 6 months [] Longer than 1 year
9. Do you like your friends? Yes [] No [] Somehow []
If No, why? -----

If somehow, why-----

10. Do you think your friends like you? Yes [] No [] Somehow []
11. Do your friends always follow what both of you do or tell each other?
Yes [] No [] Sometimes []
If No, why? -----

If sometimes, why? -----

12. Who gives you the greatest encouragement in your education? (Rank them from the first to the last in that order).
Parents []
Brothers []
Sisters []
Relatives []
Best friends []
Teachers []
13. What is your best friend(s) doing currently?
[] Fully attending school
[] Has quit school. Reasons: -----

[] Doing some part time employment or business together with some schooling. Reasons: -----

14. What does it take to get in with most popular students in this school?
- Getting good grades
 - Going out to movies, discos and cinema
 - Having a good reputation
 - Having the latest hair styles and cuts
 - Being the best athlete (or being best in games)
15. Would you say you are a part of the leading or popular crowd in your school?
- Yes No
- If No, would you like to be part of the leading or popular crowd?
- Yes No Don't care

SECTION B

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. Most of your friends believe that success depends on luck and fate.					
17. Your friends say that with hard work anyone can succeed.					
18. Most of your friends believe that education cannot change people in any basic way.					
19. Your friends think that people who don't have much education enjoy life much as well as educated ones.					
20. Most of your friends believe that in school there are more important things than getting good grades.					
21. Your friends say that most students have to be made to learn.					
22. Your friends believe that most school learning has little value for life.					
23. Most of your friends believe that one can learn more on a job than in school.					
24. Most of your friends are not likely to encourage each other to study a lot.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. Your friends believe that everybody should get as much education as possible.					
26. Most of your friends believe that if one wants a good job he/she must go to school and get good grades.					
27. Most of your friends say that getting good grades is the most important thing in school.					
28. Your friends believe that most students do not have to be made to learn.					
29. Your friends say that there is a real value in school learning.					
30. Most of your friends make fun of people who get good grades at school.					
31. Your friends believe that even though they are willing to study there are some people that just can't learn.					
32. Your friends believe that even if everybody is stopped to be educated a country will still prosper.					
33. Your friends believe that it is possible to get a good job even if one doesn't go to school and get good grades.					
34. Your friends say that education can change people.					
35. Most of your friends think school is a waste of time.					
36. Your friends try to attend most of the school activities.					
37. Most of your friends spend a lot of time studying.					
38. Most of your friends like school.					
39. Most of your friends want to get good grades.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. Most of your friends are working hard to pursue further studies.					
41. Most of your friends encourage each other to work hard at school.					
42. Most of your friends encourage each other to miss classes if they have other important personal duties to attend to.					
43. Most of your friends like assisting each other with learning materials e.g. textbooks, pens etc.					
44. Your friends like people who assist each other academically and who always seek teachers' assistance on academic work.					
45. Most of your friends believe that failure in examination ruins a person's chances in life.					
46. Most of your friends say that they get bored and fed up with school and do not really enjoy anything connected with it.					
47. Most of your friends believe that an educated person stands a better chance in life than an uneducated one.					
48. Most of your friends believe that examinations are the only fair test of a student's knowledge.					

SECTION C

49. Which activities below are important to do in order to be popular with your friends?
- Making sure that you have sharp clothes, good haircuts and hair styles.
 - Having money to spend together.
 - Reading hard to get good grades.
 - Discussing what is going on in world of popular singers and movie stars.
 - Stirring up a little excitement.
50. Which places do you and your friends go together most often?
- Discotheques Picnics
 - Movies/Cinemas Visit other friends and relatives
 - Libraries
51. What activity do you and your friends engage in most often during leisure time?
- Sleeping Story telling
 - Jogging or playing games Watching TV or listening to music
 - Extra reading
52. What activity do your friends strive for to be identified as a group of its own uniqueness?
- Pleasing parents and teachers by behaving well.
 - Having good reputation.
 - Learning as much as possible in school.
 - Living up to religious ideals.
 - Becoming best athletes.
53. What activity do your friends engage in to spend the extra money they have?
- Buy new clothes.
 - Buy meals and soft drinks.
 - Buy textbooks and other learning materials.
 - Make memorable trips, visits and tours.
 - Use it in entertainment activities.
54. What activity do your friends practice and encourage in your group?
- Being athletic/games stars.
 - Being brilliant students
 - Being disciplined students.
 - Practicing cleanliness
 - Being religious.
55. Which activity do you do most when you are together with your friends?
- Watching T.V.
 - Listening to Music
 - Discussing on the country's political affairs.
 - Doing homework and other assignments.
 - Characterizing teachers.

56. During weekends which of the following group's activities do your friends like and enjoys most?
- Going for weekend shows and parties.
 - Smoking and enjoying a drinking spree
 - Hassling people
 - At least doing an academic activity
 - Making trouble
57. Doing corrections in any academic subject is part of your peer group activity!
- Strongly disagree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
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 - Strongly disagree

Thank you for your participation and cooperation in this study.



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
CHAIRPERSON'S OFFICE

P.O BOX 43844
NAIROBI, KENYA
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Email: kuppsych@nbnet.co.ke

DATE: 12/9/2002

Ministry of Education Science & Technology
New Jogoo House B
P.O. Box 30040
Nairobi

Dear Sir / Madam,

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PERMIT FOR MR. MUKOLWE ASAKHULU
NEWTON – E55/8985/2000

I request you to grant research permit for Mr. Mukolwe Newton who is a registered full time Master of Education student.

He is doing his graduate studies by course work, examination and thesis. He has completed his course work and examination and is ready to go for research on ***“Relationship between peer group attitudes towards school, peer group activities and academic achievement of secondary school students in Nairobi”***.

Your assistance is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

DR. MARY MWANGI

CHAIRPERSON, EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT.

MWM/ek

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When replying please quote

Ref. No. MOEST 13/001/32C 203/2
and date



JOGOO HOUSE "B"

HARAMBEE AVENUE

P.O. Box 30040

NAIROBI

24th September, 2002

A. Mukolwe
Kenyatta University
P.O. BOX 43844
NAIROBI

Dear Madam

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to conduct research on 'Relationship between peer Attitudes towards School Peer Group Activities and Academic Achievement of Secondary School students in Nairobi, I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorised to conduct research in Nairobi for a period ending 30th June, 2003.

You are advised to report to the Provincial Commissioner and the Provincial Director of Education Nairobi before embarking on your research project.

You are further expected to avail two copies of your research findings to this Office upon completion of your research project.

Yours faithfully


A. G. KAARIA
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY/EDUCATION

CC
Provincial Commissioner
Nairobi

Provincial Director of Education
Nairobi

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This is a research study. Through sampling procedures you happen to be included in this study.
2. You may choose to or not to participate in this study.
3. You are requested to respond to all questions.
4. Remember this is not an examination of any kind. Therefore, any response you give is correct.
5. Respond to the questionnaire items appropriately by filling in and or ticking against a given option.
6. You are free to ask the researcher for any clarification in cases whereby you do not understand what the question/item demands.
7. All the information given will be treated with ultimate confidentiality.

Student's consent for participation:

[] I agree to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your anticipating response of participating in this study.

Yours faithfully,

**MUKOLWE ASAKHULU NEWTON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.**

SECTION A

Demographic data

1. Name of school _____
2. Is it a Private school or a Public school
3. Type of school: Girls school Boys school Mixed school
4. Residential status: A day scholar A boarder
5. Student's age: _____
6. Gender: Male Female
7. Do you have friends here in school? Yes No
8. For how long have you been friends?
 1 to 3 months 6 months to 1 year
 3 to 6 months Longer than 1 year
9. Do you like your friends? Yes No Somehow
If No, why? -----

If somehow, why-----

10. Do you think your friends like you? Yes No Somehow
11. Do your friends always follow what both of you do or tell each other?
Yes No Sometimes
If No, why? -----

If sometimes, why? -----

12. Who gives you the greatest encouragement in your education? (Rank them from the first to the last in that order).
Parents
Brothers
Sisters
Relatives
Best friends
Teachers
13. What is your best friend(s) doing currently?
 Fully attending school
 Has quit school. Reasons: -----

 Doing some part time employment or business together with some schooling. Reasons: -----

14. What does it take to get in with most popular students in this school?
- Getting good grades
 - Going out to movies, discos and cinema
 - Having a good reputation
 - Having the latest hair styles and cuts
 - Being the best athlete (or being best in games)
15. Would you say you are a part of the leading or popular crowd in your school?
- Yes No
- If No, would you like to be part of the leading or popular crowd?
- Yes No Don't care

SECTION B

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. Most of your friends believe that success depends on luck and fate.					
17. Your friends say that with hard work anyone can succeed.					
18. Most of your friends believe that education cannot change people in any basic way.					
19. Your friends think that people who don't have much education enjoy life much as well as educated ones.					
20. Most of your friends believe that in school there are more important things than getting good grades.					
21. Your friends say that most students have to be made to learn.					
22. Your friends believe that most school learning has little value for life.					
23. Most of your friends believe that one can learn more on a job than in school.					
24. Most of your friends are not likely to encourage each other to study a lot.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. Your friends believe that everybody should get as much education as possible.					
26. Most of your friends believe that if one wants a good job he/she must go to school and get good grades.					
27. Most of your friends say that getting good grades is the most important thing in school.					
28. Your friends believe that most students do not have to be made to learn.					
29. Your friends say that there is a real value in school learning.					
30. Most of your friends make fun of people who get good grades at school.					
31. Your friends believe that even though they are willing to study there are some people that just can't learn.					
32. Your friends believe that even if everybody is stopped to be educated a country will still prosper.					
33. Your friends believe that it is possible to get a good job even if one doesn't go to school and get good grades.					
34. Your friends say that education can change people.					
35. Most of your friends think school is a waste of time.					
36. Your friends try to attend most of the school activities.					
37. Most of your friends spend a lot of time studying.					
38. Most of your friends like school.					
39. Most of your friends want to get good grades.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. Most of your friends are working hard to pursue further studies.					
41. Most of your friends encourage each other to work hard at school.					
42. Most of your friends encourage each other to miss classes if they have other important personal duties to attend to.					
43. Most of your friends like assisting each other with learning materials e.g. textbooks, pens etc.					
44. Your friends like people who assist each other academically and who always seek teachers' assistance on academic work.					
45. Most of your friends believe that failure in examination ruins a person's chances in life.					
46. Most of your friends say that they get bored and fed up with school and do not really enjoy anything connected with it.					
47. Most of your friends believe that an educated person stands a better chance in life than an uneducated one.					
48. Most of your friends believe that examinations are the only fair test of a student's knowledge.					

SECTION C

49. Which activities below are important to do in order to be popular with your friends?
- Making sure that you have sharp clothes, good haircuts and hair styles.
 - Having money to spend together.
 - Reading hard to get good grades.
 - Discussing what is going on in world of popular singers and movie stars.
 - Stirring up a little excitement.
50. Which places do you and your friends go together most often?
- Discotheques Picnics
 - Movies/Cinemas Visit other friends and relatives
 - Libraries
51. What activity do you and your friends engage in most often during leisure time?
- Sleeping Story telling
 - Jogging or playing games Watching TV or listening to music
 - Extra reading
52. What activity do your friends strive for to be identified as a group of its own uniqueness?
- Pleasing parents and teachers by behaving well.
 - Having good reputation.
 - Learning as much as possible in school.
 - Living up to religious ideals.
 - Becoming best athletes.
53. What activity do your friends engage in to spend the extra money they have?
- Buy new clothes.
 - Buy meals and soft drinks.
 - Buy textbooks and other learning materials.
 - Make memorable trips, visits and tours.
 - Use it in entertainment activities.
54. What activity do your friends practice and encourage in your group?
- Being athletic/games stars.
 - Being brilliant students
 - Being disciplined students.
 - Practicing cleanliness
 - Being religious.
55. Which activity do you do most when you are together with your friends?
- Watching T.V.
 - Listening to Music
 - Discussing on the country's political affairs.
 - Doing homework and other assignments.
 - Characterizing teachers.

56. During weekends which of the following group's activities do your friends like and enjoys most?
- [] Going for weekend shows and parties.
 - [] Smoking and enjoying a drinking spree
 - [] Hassling people
 - [] At least doing an academic activity
 - [] Making trouble
57. Doing corrections in any academic subject is part of your peer group activity!
- [] Strongly disagree
 - [] Agree
 - [] Disagree
 - [] Not sure
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58. Your friends consider participation in peer group discussions on subject content to be more reliable than teacher explaining everything!
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SEP
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NAIROBI

DR. MARY MWANGI
CHAIRPERSON, EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT.

MWMM/ek

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Telephone: Nairobi 334411

When replying please quote

Ref. No. MOEST 13/001/32C 203/2
and date



JOGOO HOUSE "B"
HARAMBEE AVENUE
P.O. Box 30040
NAIROBI

..... 24th September 2002

A. Mukolwe
Kenyatta University
P.O. BOX 43844
NAIROBI

Dear Madam

RE: RESEARCH ATUTHORISATION

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