



**Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance:  
Perspectives of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in Selected Schools  
of Lusaka District.**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

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This dissertation of **MBEWE NELLIE** is approved as partially fulfilling the requirements for the award of the Masters of Education in Educational Management and Administration by the University of Zambia in association with the Zimbabwe Open University.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the following people:

Firstly dedication goes to my mother and father, Mrs. and Mr. Mbewe who, despite having a humble educational background, encouraged me to go to school and get the best education. You did all you could to ensure that, we all went to school. I salute you. Secondly, to my beloved husband, Gibson Masumbu, who always supports and motivates me positively. Thirdly, to my family Priscilla, Yamikani and Kondwani Masumbu who are my lovely gifts and family investment. Last, but not least Mubangwe Mubangwe, who has been a great source of inspiration and motivation.

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To all learners, teachers and parents who participated in the research.Your full cooperation helped this study to gain knowledge about Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study of “Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspectives of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in selected schools of Lusaka district”, employed descriptive research design. The objective of the study was to establish aspects of peer group influence that affect pupil academic performance in schools. The sample comprised one hundred and fifty (150) secondary school pupils randomly selected from four (4) secondary schools namely Kaunda Square, Kabulonga Girl, Tunduya and Munali. The study was guided by the theory of Weidman’s model of socialization in learning institutions. Weidman’s (1989) model of socialization in learning institutions is perhaps the most appropriate theoretical model with which to investigate and interpret peer group influence. My adaption of Weidman’s model follows similar studies of peer effects done by Dey (1996, 1997) and Milem (1998). Weidman conceptualizes the major influences on student change in learning institutions to be prelearning institutions or student background characteristics, the academic and social normative context of an institution, and the impact of parental and non-college reference groups.

The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. It is always possible for parents to talk with school counselors and professionals to help with the problem. Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh, and McElhaney (2005) report that adolescents who were well-liked by many peers displayed higher levels of ego development and secure attachment, as well as better interactions with their best friends.

This study found that associating with friends who have a positive affect toward school enhanced students’ own satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative affect toward school decreased it. The study further stresses the point that not all peer group influence is negative. Peer groups are, in essence, necessary for adolescent growth and development. As such, educators should praise the positive choices that students make in regards to peers and work to combat the negative ones.

Therefore, teachers and other educational practitioners and those in related professional training, need to have knowledge of the effects of peer group pressure and understanding of the issues surrounding negative peer influence to prevent.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

DEBS: District Education Board Secretary

MoE : Ministry of Education

OVC : Orphans and Vulnerable children

PTA : Parents and Teachers' Association

SPSS: Microsoft Excel 2010 and Statistical Package of Social Sciences

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction

This chapter contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, theoretical framework, and operational definition. Above all, it contains what prompted for the study.

#### 1.1. Background

According to Kang (2006) Peer Group means a small group of friends which have close relations with each other and they have regular interactions. They share views and exchange ideas with each other and do activities in groups. When children take steps into the stage of adolescence, they spend a large amount of time with their friends as compared to their parents. Peer group is a group of people who are equal in some way. Those in a peer group have the same status and are about the same age.

According to Kang (2006), peer influence on academic outcomes is gradually becomes more dominant. In support, Harris (1998) maintained that peer groups have an even stronger influence than that of parents, although that extreme position has been refuted by other researchers like Santor (2000).

Santor (2000), comments that taking part in peer groups is a key stage of development and creation of adolescent identity. Many see their peers as role models. These models can be a source of motivation or lack thereof. There are two kinds of models, the positive and the negative: Positive models, refer to individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to pursue excellence and similar negative patterns that refer to individuals who have experienced disaster and is widely expected to motivate people to take steps necessary to avoid similar unpleasant result (Lockwood and Kunda, 2002). Also, we can say that it is the pressure of their peers which can lead teens to unhealthy and unsafe behaviors and in their academic achievements. Peer pressure may be defined as the insistence and encouragement of the same age group individuals to make or force the individual to do something (Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar, 2000). Pressure coevals is associated with wrong decisions, rebellion and

humor fluctuations, which will lead to a poor academic performance, because of the fact that adolescents are not cooperative in the process of learning outcomes and as a result their school results fall weakly (Sharry, 2004). Contrary to popular belief, not all peer influence is negative. Spending more time with peers does not always translate into trouble (Lingren, 1995). Positive peer influence on academic performance depends on adolescent self-identity, self-esteem and self-reliance.

The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. It is always possible for parents to talk with school counselors and professionals to help with the problem. Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh, and McElhaney (2005) report that adolescents who were well-liked by many peers displayed higher levels of ego development and secure attachment, as well as better interactions with their best friends. It was found that associating with friends who have a positive affect toward school enhanced students' own satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative affect toward school decreased it (Ryan, 2000). Less motivated or disengaged students, on the other hand, "are passive, do not try hard, and give up easily in the face of challenges" (Skinner and Belmont, 1991). From a social competency perspective, it is likely that students who have difficulty establishing themselves in a peer group may also have academic difficulties in school (Wentzel, 1991). While the differences are more observed between adolescents that are neglected and those who are rejected. Wentzel and Asher (1995) find that socially neglected early adolescents may fare better than average in terms of academic achievement. Experiencing peer rejection can produce heightened anxiety (e.g., worry over being teased or left out) which interferes with concentration in the classroom and impedes children's acquisition and retention of information (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt, 2001; Sharp, 1995). This finding emphasizes the importance of which elements are most important in affecting the academic arrivals. However, the percentage of teenagers' friends with academic orientation itself is not predictive of academic achievement (Fuligni, 2001). This may be an evidence of lack of peer influence academic achievement, or a need to investigate other aspects of friendship beyond the similarity in academic success (Fuligni, 2001).

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

The low academic performance in schools is brought the need to investigate the effects of peer-group influence on academic performance. At school, the child is under the influence of not only the teacher and the books he reads, but also of the friends he begins to make. This group of friends is referred to as his peer group. Pupils in their day-to-day life come into contact with several boys and girls and acquire various kinds of perception. These processes continue for a long period without undergoing any change in content, leading to attitude formation, but little has been done to specify on which are those certain aspects. This scenario gives rise to one research question which aspect of peer group influence affects pupil's academic performance.

## **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to establish which aspects of peer group influence affects pupils' academic performance in selected schools of Lusaka district.

## **1.4. Study Objectives**

In order to deal with and examine the research problem adequately, the research aimed to:

### **Main Objective:**

- i. Establish aspects of peer group influence that affects pupil's academic performance.

### **Supporting Objective:**

- i. Determine measures that parents, teachers and pupils themselves should take to minimize negative effects of peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance.
- ii. Identify specific positive aspects of peer influence on pupils' academic performance?
- iii. Examine peer group socialisation influence on pupils' academic performance?

## **1.5. Research Questions**

In order to deal with and examine the research problem adequately, the researcher formulated questions to be answered:

**Main Question:**

- i. Which aspect of peer group influence affects pupil's academic performance?

**Supporting Questions:**

- i. What measures should parents, teachers and pupils themselves take to minimize negative effects of peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?
- ii. What are some positive aspects of peer influence on pupils' academic performance?
- iii. How does peer group socialisation influence pupils' academic performance

**1.6. Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the findings might in turn help in finding better ways of enhancing pupils' learning. The study may also find ways of minimizing the adverse effects of peer-group influence on the academic performance of pupils which will be of value to educational planners and implementers. Lastly, the study findings will add to the existing literature on peer-group influences on education.

**1.7. Theoretical Framework**

This study will be guided by the theory of Weidman's model of socialization in learning institutions. Weidman's (1989) model of socialization in learning institutions is perhaps the most appropriate theoretical model with which to investigate and interpret peer group influence. My adoption of Weidman's model follows similar studies of peer effects done by Dey (1993) and Milem (1998). Weidman conceptualizes the major influences on student change in learning institutions to be pre-learning institutions or student background characteristics, the academic and social normative context of an institution, and the impact of parental and non-college reference groups.

Misanya (2013) in his study points out that normative contexts are particularly important in Weidman's model for influencing change in personal orientations during college. However, Weidman also made three points about the role of the interpersonal environment and interpersonal processes in socialization. First, he cites Homans (1950, 1961) and argues that the socialization process depended on interpersonal interaction and the sentimental intensity of the relationship associated with interaction. Second, he

notes that frequency of interaction was also critical. Lastly, he underscored a conclusion made by a number of researchers, that the long-term academic impacts of learning institutions are not the result of classroom experiences, but of informal forms of social interaction with students and faculty (Misanya, 2013). By focusing on peer group influences, this study concentrated on two parts of Weidman's model, the normative context of positive peer group influence and negative peer group influence that forms socialization process of interpersonal interaction in peer groups.

### **1.8. Application of Weidman's model of socialization Theory**

Weidman's (1989) model of socialization in learning institutions is perhaps the most appropriate theoretical model with which to investigate and interpret peer group influence on pupils academic performance. My adaption of Weidman's model follows similar studies done by Misanya (2013) on Peer Influence On Academic Performance Of Form One Students In Girls Boarding Secondary Schools In Kanduyi Constituency with great bearing on the parent study of peer effects by Dey (1993) and Milem (1998). Weidman conceptualizes the major influences on student change in learning institutions to be pre-learning institutions or student background characteristics, the academic and social normative context of an institution, and the impact of parental and non-college reference groups. Normative contexts are particularly important in Weidman's model for influencing change in personal orientations during college. However, Weidman also made three points about the role of the interpersonal environment and interpersonal processes in socialization: First, he cites Homans (1961) and argues that the socialization process depends on interpersonal interaction and the sentimental intensity of the relationship associated with interaction. Second, he notes that frequency of interaction was also critical. Lastly, he underscored a conclusion made by a number of researchers, that the long-term academic impacts of learning institutions are not the result of classroom experiences, but of positive influence of social interaction with peer and teachers.

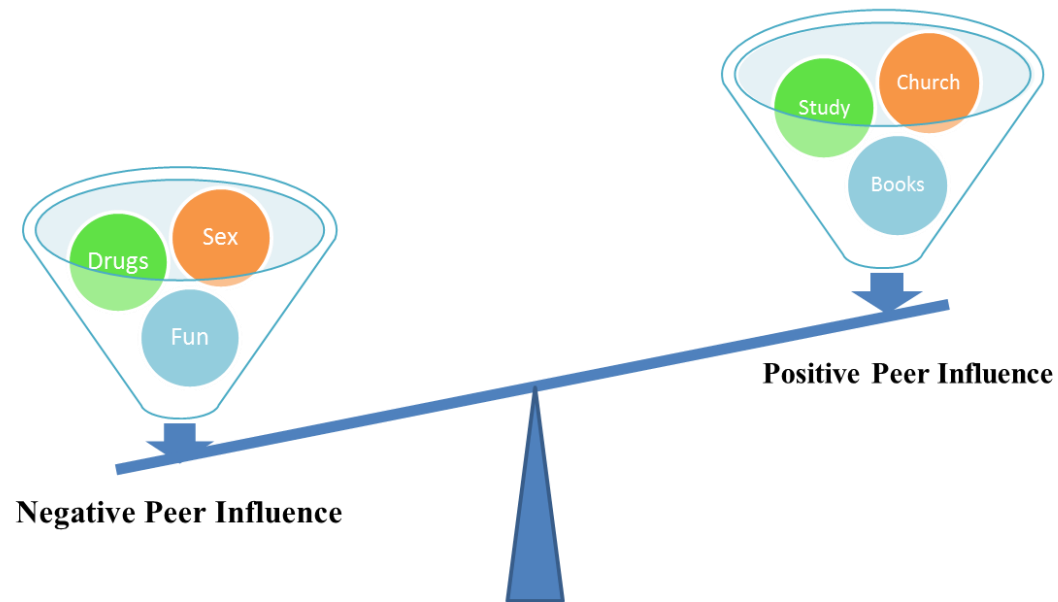
Its on this grounds that this researcher views Weidman's model of socialization in learning institutions is perhaps the most appropriate theoretical model with which to investigate Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in selected schools of Lusaka district. This researcher agrees with the three points about the role of the interpersonal environment and interpersonal

processes in socialization. Truly it is about how much time of interaction with peer and teachers is what shapes the effect of peer influence on peer academic performance.

## **1.9. Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. It gives a real picture of the relationship of variables. The framework formulated by the researcher here helps to explain the logic link of the variables. These variables are interrelated components that point to better pupil academic performance. The framework reviews the relationship between and among the variables in this study on Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in selected schools of Lusaka district.

Below is a multi-level conceptual framework as a tool for addressing peer-group influence on pupil academic performance: perspective of teachers, parents and pupils in selected schools of Lusaka district”,



*Source: Formulated and designed by the*

## 1.10. Operational Definition of Terms

The key concepts in this study will be defined according to their operational uses.

**Peer Group:** This is the association of close friends of the same sex, which are bound together by common emotional attachment and have a complex social system of which they possess certain code of conduct such as dressing codes.

**Peer Group Relationship:** This is the form, way and why close friends of the same sex (peers) communicate among themselves.

**Academic Performance:** This is the level of achievement attained through efforts or skills during the learning processes (theoretical and practical) and has effect on the standard of education.

**Influence:** This refers to the effect which an element has on another specific element.

**Peer Influence:** This is the tendency or readiness in people of the same age or social status to behave in a particular way as a mark of conformity to the opinion, interest, standard and norms of their peer.

**Positive Peer Influence:** A peer is considered to be positive when it is directed towards producing a successful academic performance or result.

**Negative Peer Influence:** Contrary to positive peer influence, a negative peer influence is directed towards producing failure, poor, bad or harmful academic performance.

**Adolescent:** This is a young person(s) who is in a stage of rapid psychological development from a child into an adult, usually between the ages of 13 and 18 and the crises they face.

**Academic Failure:** This is pertaining to a situation where student does not attain the expected academic achievement according to his/her ability thereby resulting in an altered state of academic pursuit.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1.Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature on the study. It is structured as follows: Peer Socialization, Negative Peer Influence, Positive Peer Influence, Facts about Peer Relations, Motivation, Engagement, and Academic Performance. The purpose of this review is identification of the missing gaps.

In Zambia, one of the researchers who have discussed peer-group influence versus academic performance under different lines in his dissertation is Moolalkakena (2013): Parents, Teachers and Pupils' Attitudes towards Peer-Group Influence on Pupils' Academic Performance in selected High Schools of Sesheke District, Zambia. Elsewhere in Kenya, Keke Liu's study of Peer Group Effects on Student Outcomes: Evidence from Randomized Lotteries. Moola's concentration was on attitude. Elsewhere, Keke's attention was on the general peer-group effects and outcomes. However, this study focuses on establishing aspects of peer group influence that affects pupils' academic performance in schools.

Misanya (2013), says understanding the nature and the magnitude of peer group effects in education is crucial for the "productivity" of educational processes and the organizational design of school systems. For example, in order to improve pupil outcomes, it is important to know which inputs influence their performance most and the relative importance of peer effects compared to other inputs, such as teacher quality or school resources. If peer effects are at work, educational outcomes are affected by how students are arranged across classes and the desirability of comprehensive schools (which mix students of different abilities together) or stratified schools (which tend to aggregate students according to their abilities) depends on the magnitude and non-linearity of peer effects. More importantly, the nature of peer effects also has fundamental implications in a family's choice with regards whether parents consider that their offspring would benefit from schools which sort pupils according to their abilities (Foster, 2006).

Apart from peer effects related to the classroom environment, pupils belonging to the same class tend to study and revise the subject together, so generating important externalities. Clearly friendly relationships do not involve all members of a class: some pupils might attend course together, but their interaction might still be limited. We are able to address this

problem by considering a measure of peer group which weights peers in relation to the number of exams taken together. In fact, students who continually do exams in the same session as one another are often these who study together, sharing course material and information. The researcher looked at all the students passing an exam on the same date and used this information to define a second measure of peer group quality, which highlighted the abilities of each pupil according to the number of exams taken together (Epple and Romano, 1998).

## **2.2. Peer Socialization**

Socialization being a life-long process cannot be limited to the family members alone. As a child grows older and more matured, it becomes more necessary for the external bodies to be involved in his/her life. The family is not expected to provide all the education required by the growing child. The school which is an established academic institution in which the behaviour of an individual is sharpened to get him/her equipped for occupational socialization. In the school system, the child gets into the social group of “like minds” and interest. As a result of the various attitudes, skills, knowledge is acquired through role-play. Peer group as an agent of socialization is the most important socializing agent for the developing child and in agreement with Cobb (2007) who puts it that Peer group is the pivot of social change and during interaction peers; the child’s life is transformed from the helpless child into a mature adult.

The peer group influences development of children’s socializing skills. These early friendships help children learn how to negotiate and relate to others, including their siblings and other family members. They learn from peers how to cooperate and socialize according to group norms and group-sanctioned modes of behavior. The peer group can influence what the child values, knows, wears, eats, and learns (Cobb, 2007).

## **2.3. Negative Peer Influence**

Cobb (2007) reveals that Peer group effect/influence is an important component in determination of student outcomes. A typical student learns from discussions with his peers and can possibly be affected by their personality and attitude towards learning. Peer students can also be motivated by working together. It is well established that the quality of peers could affect a wide range of student outcomes from school performance to health conditions or even juvenile criminal behaviour.

Most studies have shown that peer group influence brings a lot of negative effects on pupils' academic performance than positive ones (Gidde, 2010). Bandura (2003) noted that through observing and imitating the behaviour of others, learners can bypass much wasteful random behaviour and come close to reproducing the behaviours of which members are recognized. A child may not be up to date but playful. If he is well monitored and he falls into a group of brilliant students who are not playful, he imitates them and this changes his attitude towards learning for better. This is why it is important for teachers to be able to distinguish a playful child from dull one. Festigen (2006) also shares the same view that imitation of behaviour in a group occurs when a person acts in a way that is likely to be joined by the rest of the group.

A hostile atmosphere, constant frustration and frequent conflicts produce a negative impact not only on the member's growth and behaviour but also on his motivation to work and achievement. The kind of person a child is dictates the type of group he/she is in, as children tend to imitate each other.

The attractiveness of the group, the nature of conformity demanded by the group and the morals of the group determine whether a group is likely to have positive or negative impact on members' motivation and achievement. If the atmosphere of the group is warm, understanding and supportive, then the group influence or motivation, task performance and achievement will most likely be positive, (Gidde, 2010).

## **2.4. Positive Peer Influence**

Unlike other writers who concentrate on the negative influences, Cobb (2007) points out that peer-group influence has numerous positive aspects on pupils' learning. He says that the interactions among peers are normal and an essential part of the learning process that influence the life-long learning habits of pupils.

Again contrary to popular belief, Lingren, (1995) confirms that not all peer influence is negative. Spending more time with peers does not always translate into trouble. Peer influence can, in fact, keep youth participating in religious activities, going to meetings, and playing on sports teams, even when they are not leaders. The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. This factor is consistent with Bowmeister and Leary's "belongingness hypothesis" in that there is a genetically based need to belong. The basic premise is that people of all ages seek

inclusion and avoid exclusion. Influence in these primary peer groups can vary from joining the track team or drama club to motivation, engagement, and achievement in algebra class.

As already suggested, students define themselves by the groups with which they affiliate. Values that are important to most adolescents include: school learning and achievement; social activities; and whether or not to engage in delinquent activities (Landau, 2002). Fischhoff, Cromwell, and Kipke (1999) cited a systems theory perspective, arguing that groups that provide a lot of positive feedback encourage action to maintain good feelings. These good feelings are often reported in peer groups, and actions could lead to engaging in risky behaviors to keep the “fun” going. According to Ryan (2000), students who were identified as “jock-populars” perceived more pressure in the area of school involvement and less pressure toward misconduct than students identified as “druggie-toughs.”

## **2.4.Facts about Peer Relations**

Nicole (2004) observes that peer groups are constantly evolving and many factors play a role in how peer groups function today. Equally, Lingren (1995) cited some interesting facts about peer relations that are in line with Nicole. These facts may help adults better understand the potential foundation of some peer group behaviors during adolescence. Adults should understand the facts surrounding peer relations before forming an opinion about adolescent groups in general. The ideas of Lingren (1995) are: First, during adolescence, parents and their children are more physically and psychologically distant from each other. This is a normal process, but it is shown in decreases in emotional closeness and warmth, increases in parent-adolescent conflict/disagreement, and an increase in time adolescents spend with peers. Second, increases in family strains, such as economic pressures and divorce, have prompted teenagers to depend more on peers for emotional support. Third, in ten to twenty percent of families, parents and adolescents are in distressed relationships characterized by emotional coldness and frequent outbursts of anger/conflict. Fourth, youth gangs commonly associated with inner-city neighborhoods are becoming a more common phenomenon among youth in smaller cities, suburbs, and even rural areas. Fifth, formal dating patterns have been replaced with informal socializing patterns in mixed-sex groups. This may encourage casual sexual relationships that heighten the risk of teenage pregnancy, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Sixth, ethnicity is replacing individual abilities or interests as the basis for defining peer “crowds.” Finally, the increase in part-time employment among youth has had little effect on peer relations. In order to spend time with peers, teenagers drop extracurricular activities, reduce time spent on homework, and withdraw from family functions.

It is clear that everything from family strain to ethnicity plays a role in how peer groups develop and operate. All of these factors have the potential for creating greater peer influence in or outside of school, and sometimes have the consequence of generating increased pressures on adolescents to engage in problematic behaviors. Some parents may assume that they are the only family experiencing frustration with some of their adolescent’s behaviors when, in reality, frustration between parents and adolescents is a fairly universal occurrence.

## **2.5. Motivation, Engagement, and Academic Performance**

Nicole (2004) adds that another important aspect of peer groups is motivation. The difference between motivation and engagement is that motivation is more focused on student cognition underlying involvement in schoolwork (i.e., beliefs) and engagement is more focused on actual involvement in schoolwork (i.e., behavior). Ryan (2000) found that peer groups were influential regarding changes in students’ intrinsic value for school (i.e., liking and enjoying) as well as achievement (i.e., report card grades). The peer group was not, however, influential regarding changes in students’ utility value for school (i.e., importance and usefulness). It was found that associating with friends who have a positive affect toward school enhanced students’ own satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative affect toward school decreased it (Ryan, 2000). Landau (2002) stated that an adolescent’s expectancy of success was the primary predictor of academic effort and grades. A sense of belonging and support of a peer group was also significantly associated with these outcomes.

Athletics, dating, and sexual behavior, as well as alcohol, drug, and tobacco use have been shown to be important to friendship choice in adolescence. For some adolescents, other interests may compete with or take charge over similar academic motivation and engagement as criteria for selecting a peer group. This could put an

adolescent's motivation and engagement in school in a precarious position (Ryan, 2000). Through selection, some adolescents may place themselves in peer group situations that support or foster their achievement-related beliefs and behaviors. Others may place themselves in contexts that weaken achievement-related beliefs and behaviors.

### **2.5.1. Factors Affecting pupils' Academic Success**

According to Chen (1998), factors affecting pupils' success and failure might come from two potential sources. They might either come from an individual accomplishment or from the environment influences. The factors in the category of the individual accomplishment may include personal education backgrounds, learned abilities, personal experiences, personalities and personal interests. Meanwhile, the factors in the category of environment influences may include a person's academic concern, his work or career concern, family concern, technology or facility concern, time and cost concern and social or personal relationship concern. Further research Kopich (2009) showed that parents' attitudes about education and their children's achievement have a profound early impact on pupils' conceptions of the place of education in their lives. The way parents think about whether it is important or otherwise in doing well in school is often evidently seen through the students' results. A study by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (1998) of New York found that almost all of the pupils (97%) who earned mostly A's and B's on their report cards revealed that their parents encouraged them to do well in school. Among pupils who earned mostly C's, nearly half (49%) said they received little parental encouragement.

### **2.5.2. Parental Involvement in Children's Academic Success**

It seems there is no universal definition of what really is parental involvement. Some definitions comprise greater participation in the life of a school, while others focus on increased contributions to an individual child's learning process (National Human Service Assembly, 2004). According to the Department of Education of the United State of America (2002), "parental involvement" means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Parental involvement occurs when parents actively,

critically, resourcefully and responsibly contributed in promoting and developing the well-being of the communities (Family Support America, 2001).

Chen (2008) says that when parents are involved in their children education, their children's academic achievement increases and the more intensively involved the parents are, the greater the positive impact on academic achievement. The parental involvement in the children education gives effect to various aspects. Among the aspects are the students' attitudes and behaviors as well as the students' achievements (Cotton, 2001). Besides that, Bandura in his Modeling Theory suggested that knowledge, processes, and certain concepts are acquired through observation (Santrock, 2008). Hence, through homework, parents have an opportunity to model a good figure to their children. Furthermore, if the model is from someone that the children look up to and admire, the process of transmitting the model behavior is more effective and successful (Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, Dejong & Jones, 2001).

Reinforcement comes through parents' involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001), based on the Skinner's theory, children learn certain behaviors when they associate the actions with positive outcomes. Therefore, if the parents provide positive outcomes for their efforts in completing their homework such as praises, the possibilities for the same behavior (completing the homework) to reoccur is high.

In some case parental involvement also influences students' outcomes through parental instruction. Based on collaborative learning, parental instruction will help student to understand more about their homework as it provides guidance, directing, and explanation (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001).

Parents' involvement practices have been associated, sometimes causally, with the pupils learning outcomes. Predictably, the pupil achievement has been the most frequently examined outcome. Perhaps more intriguing, however, are the varied learning outcomes associated with the parental involvement which are proximally related to the pupil achievement (Goldstein and Zentall, 1999). According to Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2001), there are several students' outcomes that are influenced by the parental involvement in class work. The first pupils' outcome influenced is in term of the pupil academic achievement. Children whose parents are involved in their

homework showed better results in their examinations. Pupils' attributes which are associated with achievement is the second outcome influenced by the parental involvement in homework.

Positive parental attitudes towards homework have been related to the pupil's development of positive attitudes about homework and school learning (Cooper, 1998). Parental involvement appears to support positive pupils' attitudes in learning because their involvement promotes positive pupils' moods and intrigues greater passion towards the homework among the pupils. In addition, positive pupil's attitudes towards homework are related to the students' decisions about time and effort to be spent on homework, sense of personal responsibility for learning, and persistence in task completion (Cooper, 1998). On the other hand, perception on the personal competence, ability, and academic self-concept is the third outcome. Furthermore, parents' attitudes and ideas about children abilities and competence which are conveyed during their homework involvement also influenced the pupil variables that are subsequently associated with school performance.

The fourth pupils' outcome is the pupil knowledge on the task demands and performance strategies. When the parents have adequate knowledge regarding homework tasks and related work strategies, their involvement have been proven to support positive pupils' perceptions of task difficulties and manageability (FromeandEccles, 1998 in Hoover-Dempsey et. al 2005).

#### **2.5.2.1. Barriers for Parental Involvement**

According to Comer, (1993) in Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), in spite of the agreement that parental involvement has positive result towards education, educators and parents have reported barriers for them to get involved. For example, parents have reported that teachers do not really welcome their involvement; they have also reported an unmet need for specific suggestion about how to help their children (Pena, 2001 in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). According to Chen (2008), time constraint is the top reason that parents give for not participating more in their children's education. Lack of time is also cited by school personnel as a reason for not seeking parental support more actively (Chen, 2008).

Besides, another barrier for parental involvement is that parents do not understand about the areas of involvement that are effective in improving achievement and differences sometimes exist between the parents and the teachers concerning how parents should be involved in education (The Alliance School Initiative, 1999). Furthermore, according to Ballen and Moles (1994), there are some barriers for parental involvement reported by parents and teachers which includes; differing ideas among parents and teachers on what constitutes involvement, a less than welcoming atmosphere toward visitors in schools and classrooms, negative or neutral communication from schools, insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to both mothers and fathers, lack of parental education and parenting skills, time pressures, job pressures, and language barriers.

#### **2.5.2.2. Children’s Perception towards Parental Involvement**

According to Beavers and Dewberry (2002), most students believe that their parents are at least somewhat involved, but do not want them to become more involved. However, according to Bargheto and Ronald (2001) in Beavers and Dewberry (2002), stated “students do not want parents that are ‘always around’ but take comfort in the fact that their parents are ‘always around’ is but one paradoxical and often tumultuous landscape that is middle school.” For students that are in this confusing and difficult stage in their development, parents are needed more than ever.

According to Alldred and Edwards, (2000) one of the potential barrier to parental involvement in middle school was the child’s growing ability to resist and adjust the degree to which their parents participated in their education .Teenagers actively shape, and work towards encouraging or discouraging, ensuring or preventing, their parents’ involvement in their education (Saunders, 2007). Parents are frequently puzzled by the sudden changes and are not ready to adjust to the needs of the adolescents, consequently causes the involvement declines (Saunders, 2007). As children grow older, their enthusiasm for parental interest and parental involvement evolves because they are growing more peer-oriented, more independent, and less interested in accepting obvious helps, praises, or even expressions of interest from parents (Dushek, 2001).

## **2.6.Summary**

The major aim of this chapter was to review relevant literature dealing with Peer-Group influence on pupil academic performance: perspective of teachers, parents and pupils in selected schools of Lusaka. The review show that peer group forms the main basis through which the child learns a lot of empirical facts about his physical and social environment, acquisition of skills and value as well as attitude for a better future. It is therefore, concluded that peer group has a significant influence on the academic performance of adolescent students. Peer group influence also have a relationship with students' academic performance, as students whose friends engage in negative activities such as use of drugs, sneaking out of school and being absent from school chronically are likely to have lower academic performance. What this literature does not make clear, however, is when and why some peer relationships promote achievement, whereas others encourage disinterest and, in some cases, obstruct optimal achievement. The next chapter outlines the methodologies that were used in this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes the research designs which will be employed: the population, methods and procedures in data collection and how the data was analysed. Further, it describes the study population; sample size, the sampling techniques and the data collection instruments used in the investigation are discussed.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

A research design is the plan, which specifies how the research participants (samples) are going to be obtained and what is going to be done with them with the view to reaching conclusions about the research problem (Huysamen, 1994). This study employed a descriptive research design coupled with qualitative method and be supplemented by quantitative ones in order to obtain in-depth understanding of the research problem. According to Reichard and Cook (1979), descriptive research design is a process through which social researchers find solutions to fundamental questions such as “*what is going on?*” Descriptions can be concrete or abstract. Good description provokes the ‘why’ questions of explanatory research “*why is it happening?*”

The study used participant observation. Participant observation allows the researcher to get as close as possible to the action as it is actually happening. Participant observation is a technique of unobtrusive, shared or overtly subjective data collection. It involves the researcher spending time in an environment observing behaviour, action and interaction; so that he/she can understand the meanings constructed in that environment and can make sense of everyday life experiences (Grbich, 1999).

#### **3.3. Study Area or Site**

Decisions on site selection are made first for the purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research question. In this study, sample comprised one hundred and fifty (150) secondary school pupils randomly selected from four (4) secondary schools namely Kaunda Square, Kabulonga Girls, Tunduya and Munali. Secondly the study area is purposively selected from the list of secondary schools of Lusaka district because the

site was convenient for the researcher as it is located in the area easily serviced by public transport.

### **3.4. Study Population**

The population is ‘the study object, which may be individuals, groups, organizations, human products, and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed’ (Welman and Kruger, 1999). In this study the target population comprised all the pupils from the four (4) selected schools of Lusaka district, as well as all their parents and teachers.

### **3.5. Study Sample**

The sample comprised one hundred and fifty (150) secondary school pupils randomly selected from four (4) secondary schools namely Kaunda Square, Kabulonga Girls, Tunduya and Munali. Cooper and Schindler (2001), defines a sample as ‘a group of cases, respondents, or records comprised of part of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population’. The researcher had to study small subsets of the population Lusaka districts.

### **3.6. Sampling Techniques**

This study will choose respondents on the basis of accessibility and their being informed about the subject matter in the purposive method of sampling. The sample population should be within reach and accessible (Dellinger, 2005).

### **3.7. Instruments for Data Collection**

To collect data from the respondents both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used. The researcher will use primary data thus direct from the respondents. The researcher has developed two questionnaires for data collection, one for the pupils, the other one for the teachers and an interview guide for parents of the children attending schools from selected four (4) secondary schools namely Kaunda Square, Kabulonga Girls, Tunduya and Munali. The questionnaires developed were semi structured ones; thus open and closed ended questions to accommodate specific categories of responses from respondents, while the open ended questions enabled respondents to express their feelings and views.

### **3.7.1. Questionnaire**

The questionnaires was administered to the College Students. It was felt that the questionnaire was the most ideal method of collecting data because first, the instrument could be administered to a considerably large number of respondents at the same time and enabled the survey to be done within the limited time given. Secondly, data collected through questionnaires will be easily analysed as all respondents are asked the same questions and the themes were easily developed. Thirdly, it was cheaper to print the questionnaires and administer them at once.

### **3.7.2. Semi-Structured Interview guide**

The interview was used to obtain information from three (3) key informants targeted (teacher, parents and pupils) of the selected of secondary schools of Lusaka district. The researcher engaged in a face-to-face interaction with the respondents. These participants are believed to possess some information on the Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in selected schools of Lusaka district. The advantages in using interviews are that, firstly, the researcher will get prompt feedback from participants. Secondly, there is room for the researcher to alter or clarify the interview question(s) or item(s) in-depth interviews. Thirdly, the researcher can obtain more and clearer data from the respondents' non-verbal expressions and by making follow-up leads.

### **3.7.3. Observation**

Observation guide will be used for assessing pupils participation in expression of their views in the presence of peer groups, all observable aspects like the decisions they can make in the class or elsewhere. This method offer approach reality in its natural setting. Observation is a fundamental way of finding out about the world around us. Information is picked up in detail by our human senses. According to Nyirenda (2015), observation is part of the systematic way that we enquire information so as to make it public through research. As a method of data collection, observation is more than just listening and looking around. It is highly selective as we are constantly bombarded with streams of information both relevant and irrelevant as we monitor our environment. Observation focuses on information that is perceived as critically important to the research study at

hand. Observed information must then be recorded effectively for analysis and interpretation (Stenhouse, 1975).

### **3.8. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

Cohen et al (2007), point out that validity is important for effective research. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. Apart from ensuring that the instruments used in this study measured what they purported to measure, validity was addressed through member checking, the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data. This was achieved by ensuring that, as much as possible, the researcher presented data as it is given and focused on the issues at hand. The researcher was as objective as possible and was supervised by an expert, who provided substantive guidance during the entire research. Bearing in mind that this was largely a qualitative study, the subjectivity of the researcher, his opinions, attitudes and perspectives as well as those of the respondents together contribute to a degree of bias. Therefore, validity then should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state (Cohen et al, 2007).

Reliability as defined by Cohen et al, (2000), is the consistency of the results obtained from a measuring instrument in a piece of research while validity refers to whether a measuring instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, or the degree to which the finding is interpreted in a correct way. To ensure that this study produced realistic, valid and reliable results, triangulation method will be used. This study used various data collection techniques such as questionnaires, observation and interview. The data collected from different methods was checked for credibility. Furthermore, instruments (i.e. questionnaires, observation schedule and interview) used for data collecting were piloted. The researcher also avoided asking leading questions to the respondents during interview and in the questionnaire.

### **3.9. Procedure for Data Collection**

Before data collection is done, permission will be sought from District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in Lusaka district and head teachers of sampled schools using an introductory letter from the University of Zambia (Appendix F), permission will be sought orally from teachers and pupils. The purpose of this research will be explained to DEBS in Lusaka, head teachers of sampled schools, teachers and pupils. Permission will be sought from parents of the selected secondary schools. (Appendix G).

### **3.10. Data Analysis**

A total of 150 questionnaires will be distributed to teachers, parents and pupils as participates. The data, which was obtained from questionnaire, interview and observation, will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In this study, the data collected will be analysed both manually and electronically. Basic descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages will be used in the analysis of quantitative data. Frequencies, percentages and some tables will be generated electronically using the Microsoft Excel 2010 and Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

The qualitative data will be analysed through the identification and categorization of common items from the respondent's description of their experiences. This is known as the thematic analysis of data. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and pattern of living or behaviors of respondents (Morton,1975). The figures arrived at were analyzed with reference to the aims of study and its objectives.

### **3.11. Ethical Considerations**

Human beings are not guinea pigs to be experimented with and research participants need to be protected from any harm before, during and after the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2006). In this investigation, ethical considerations were put in place to safeguard human dignity and safety.

Rule and John (2011) note that the key aspects of the quality of research are the ethical relationships and its practices. Therefore, conducting research in an ethical sound manner enhances the quality and trustworthiness of the research. That is the reason this researcher applied for ethical clearance before the research begin. No respondent was forced to participate in the research and they were all told of the confidentiality that is to be attached. All data collected during the study will be kept strictly confidential and not used for any purpose other than for the intended one. Therefore it was the responsibility of the researcher to inform the participants about their rights. The participants have the right to privacy and confidentiality.

### **3.12. Summary**

The chapter looked at Research Design and Study Area, Study Population, Study Sample, Sampling Technique, Instruments for Data Collection, Validity and Reliability of the Instruments, Procedure for Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Ethical Consideration.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1.Introduction

This chapter is concerned with data presentation, analyses and interpretation of the results of data collected from the questionnaire administered to the respondents. The main objective of the study was to establish which aspect of peer group influence affects pupil's academic performance in Lusaka Province of Zambia. The study solicited information from pupils, guidance teacher and parents. The views were obtained from in-depth interviews and questionnaire conducted during the research. Respondents were requested to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement posed in the questionnaire. Using this format the results were interpreted.

#### 4.2.Pupils Responses

**KEY : Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)**

**Table 1**

No	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	Most of my friends in school perform well in exams	45	35	12	58	150
2	My friends encourage me to work hard in school	56	42	26	26	150
3	My friends affect my academic work positively	75	45	20	10	150
4	My friend make fun of students who try to do well in school	40	53	36	21	150
5	My friends are drug addicts	12	29	59	50	150

6	Most of my friends are discipline in school and home	26	38	56	30	150
7	My friends attend school Regularly	59	68	20	3	150
8	My friends affect my academic work negatively	60	45	41	9	155
9	Is it important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence?	62	71	14	3	150
11	My friends sneak out of school	36	45	50	29	160
12	My friends engage in sexual activities	45	35	25	45	150

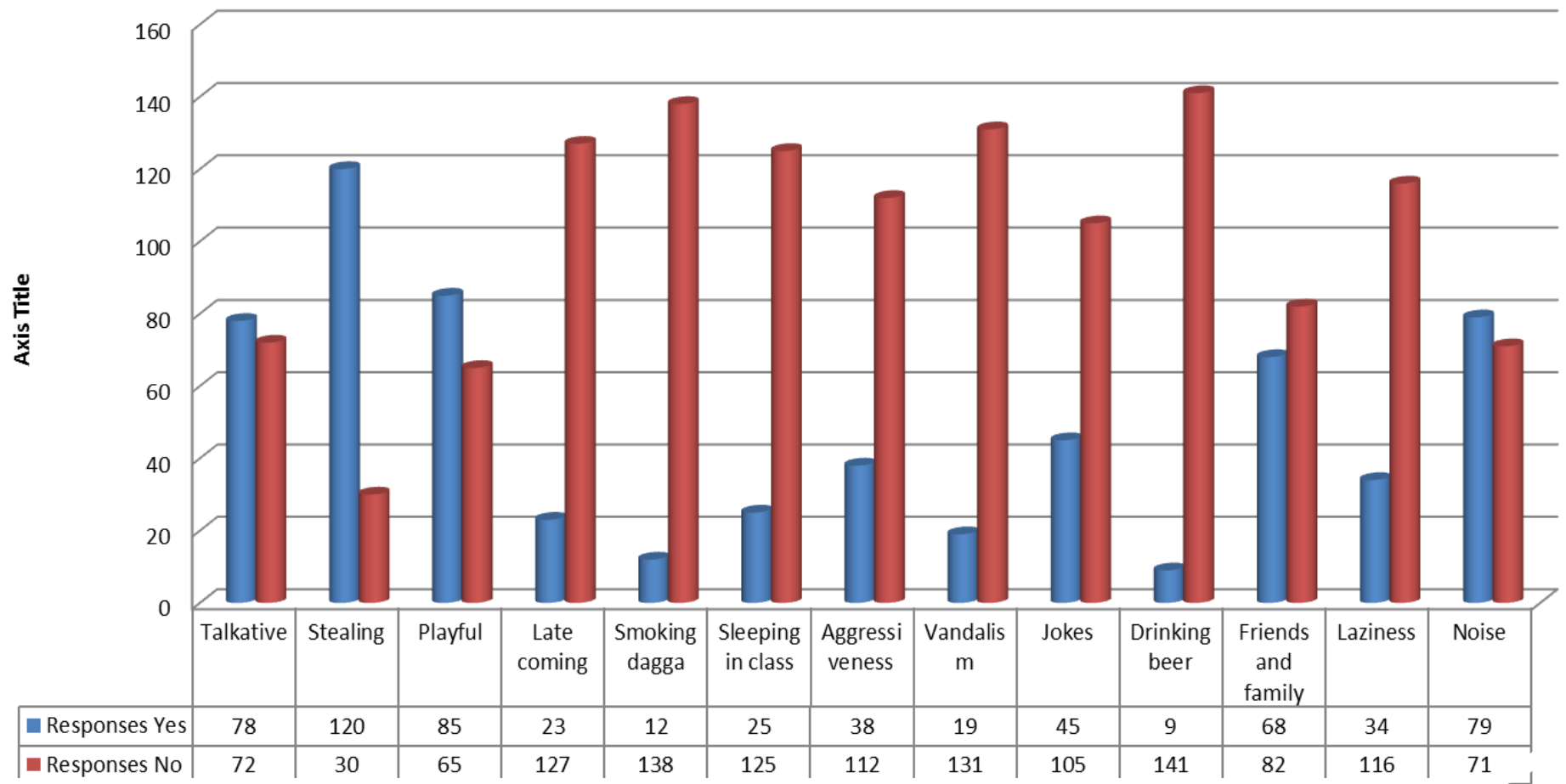
Table 1 above shows that 45 students representing (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that their friends performs well in school examination, 35 (23.3%) has agree with the assertion, while, 12 (8%) and 58 (38.6%) of the students strongly disagreed and disagree that their friends perform well in academics. Another 56 respondents (37.3%) of the students strongly agreed that their friends encourage them to work hard in school, with 42 (28%) agreeing with the statement and 17.3% strongly disagreeing with the statement. 75(50%) strongly agree that their friends affect their academic work positively, 48(32%) agreed with the statement, 12% of the respondent strongly disagree, while 6% of the students disagree.

40 represented by 26.6% of the students strongly agreed that their friends make fun of students who try to do well in school, 53 represented by 35.3% agreed, 36 represented by 24% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement, while the rest represented by 21(14%) disagreed. Another 60(33.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they spent most of their time in school discussing with friends, 45(47.1) agreed on the same issue. 41 represented by 27.3% strongly disagree on the issue, while 9 (6%) of them disagreed. 8% representing 12 of the students strongly agreed that their peers are drug addicts, 29 represented by 19.3% also agreed, 39.3% of the students strongly disagreed and the rest of 50(33.3%) disagree with the assertion.

Furthermore, 26 represented by 17.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that their friends are discipline in school and at home, 38(25.3%) agreeing on the same item, 56 represented by 36.3% strongly disagreed, with the statement, while 30 represented by 20% disagreed respectively. 59 represented by 39.1% of the respondents indicated that their friends attends school regularly, 68(45.3%) agreed with the issue, 20 represented by 13% strongly disagreed, while the remaining 3(2%) disagreed. 45 represented by 30% of the respondents indicated that their friends engage in sexual relations, 35 represented by 23.3% are in support of the statement, 25 represented by 16.6% strongly disagreed, while 45 represented by 30% totally disagreed with the assertion.

Finally, 36(24%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that their friends sneaks out of school, 45(30%) of the respondents share the same view, 50 represented by 33.3% of the students strongly disagreed, while 29(19.3%) disagreed with the statement that their friends sneak out of school.

**Figure 1**



**4.3.Factors Influencing Pupils in Their Academic Performance**

The result of the analysis from figure 1. reveals that only stealing had a higher representation of 120 respondents followed by playfull 85, while noise and talkativeness had 79 and 78 respectively. This implied that there is a significant relationship between peer group influence and pupils' academic achievements in through what had caused pupils not to perform well in school.

#### 4.4. Peer Group Interaction as its result to Absenteeism

**Table 2**

Does peer-group interaction result to absenteeism among primary school pupils?

S/N	Question	No. of Respondents		Percentage	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
1.	Do you have the habits of making friends with pupils who are often absent from class?	41	109	27%	73%
2.	Do you imitate your friends who are often absent from school?	24	126	16%	84%
3.	Do you miss classes sometimes in order to be with friends?	98	52	65%	35%
4.	Do you believe that peer group interaction result to pupils absenteeism?	62	88	41%	59%

In the above table, item 1 (Do you have the habits of making friends with pupils who are often absent from class?) showed that 27% of the respondents agreed that they have the habits of making friends with pupils who are often absent from class, while 73% disagreed with the view. Item 2 (Do you imitate your friends who are often absent from school?) in the table showed that 16% of the respondents responded positively that they imitate their friends who are often absent from school, while 84% responded negatively to the statement. Item 3 (Do you miss classes sometimes in order to be with friends?) from the table showed that 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that they miss classes sometimes in order to be with

friends, while 35% disagreed to the statement. Item4 in the table indicated that 41% of the respondents agreed that they believe that peer group interaction result to pupils absenteeism, while 59% disagreed with the view.

Based on the analysis, it could be deduced that peer group interaction to some extent result to absenteeism among primary school pupils, as pupils miss classes sometimes in order to be with friends.

**Table 3**

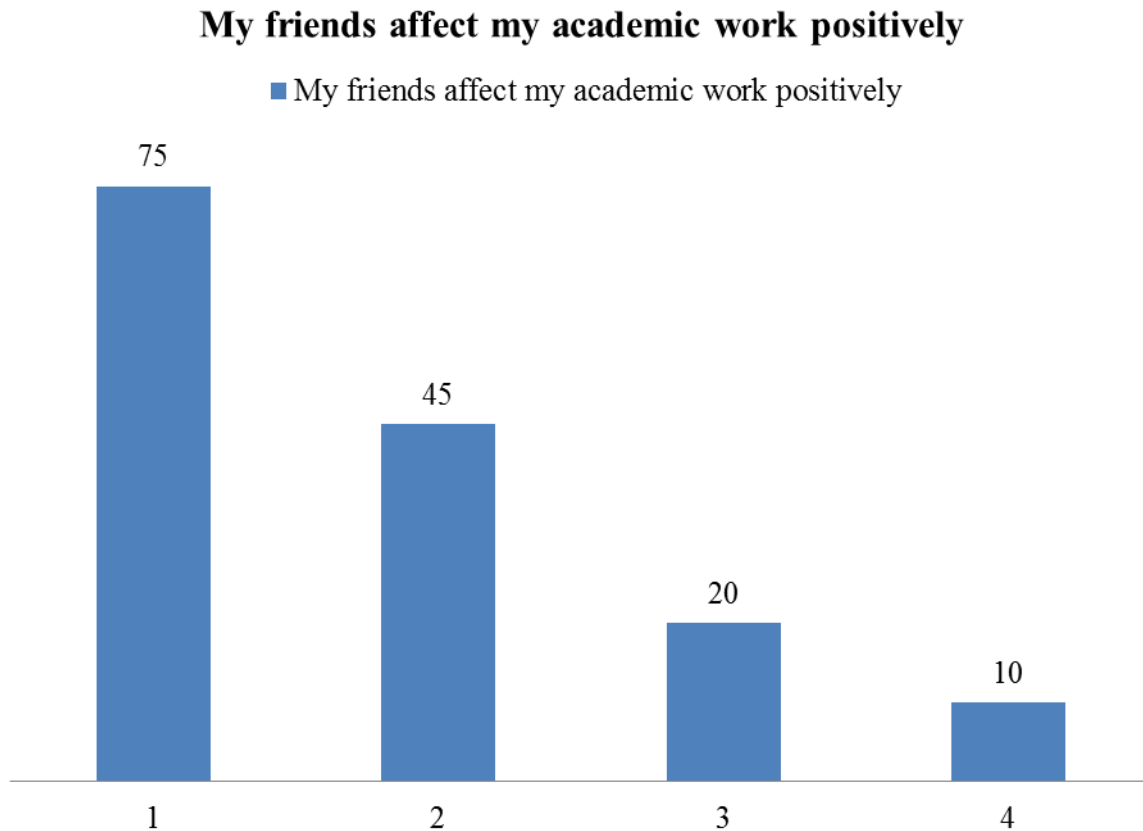
**KEY : Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)**

No	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	My childs' friends affect my child academic work positively	4	5	4	2	15

The table above show responses of parents to the question if their children are affected positively academically by peers. Four (4) parents confirmed of there children being affected positively by friends academically. This was followed by five (5) who equally felted in the similar way by them just agree. Of cause two(2) parents disagreed with the ascretion of there children having been affected by peers. The feeling of the parents is weighing heavily on the fact that a big number has confirmed having there children receiving positiveaffects. The reasons to this is best known to the parents.

#### 4.5. My friends affect my academic work positively

Figure 2



The figure on the left side show a very good results of peergroup influence where 75 learners responded that there friends affect them academic performances positively. Table 3 equally confirms that the responses from the parents and teachers reveals that 4 were strongly agreed and 5 agreed that there children's friends do affect them positively.

#### 4.5. Parents and Teachers Responses to the Questioners

**Table 4**

**KEY : Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)**

No	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	Do peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance?	4	5	4	2	15
2	School and parents together to discuss negative peer-group influence	1	1	6	7	15
3	Do pupils affect others in academic work positively	5	5	3	2	15
4	Do pupils make fun of others who try to do well in school	1	3	4	7	15
5	Are pupils drug addicts	0	1	6	8	15
6	Most of my pupils are discipline in school and home	4	2	6	3	15
7	My friends attend school Regularly	6	4	3	2	15
8	Do pupils affect others in academic work negatively	5	4	3	3	15
9	Is it important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence?	9	5	1	0	15
11	Do pupils sneak out of school	6	3	4	2	15

**Table 4** above shows responses of parents and teachers. 4 parents and teachers representing (26.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance. 5(33.3%) has agree with the assertion, while, 4 (26.7%) and 2 (13.3%) of the parents and teachers strongly disagreed and disagree that peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance. Another 1 respondent (6.7%) of the parents and teachers strongly agreed that School and parents together do discuss negative peer-group influence, with 1 (6.7%) agreeing with the statement and 40% strongly disagreeing with the statement. 5(33.3%) strongly agree that their pupils affect friends academic work positively, 5(33.3%) agreed with the statement, 20% of the respondent strongly disagree, while 13.3% of the parents and teachers disagree.

1 represented by 6.7% of the parents and teachers strongly agreed that their pupils make fun of those pupils who try to do well in school, 3 represented by 20% agreed, 4 represented by 26.7% of the parents and teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, while the rest represented by 7(46.7%) disagreed. Another 6 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that pupils do sneak out of school, 4 (26.7) agreed on the same issue. 3 represented by 20% strongly disagree on the issue, while 2 (13.3%) of them disagreed. 0 % representing 0 of the parents and teachers strongly agreed that their peers are drug addicts, 1 represented by 6.7% also agreed, 40% of the parents and teachers strongly disagreed and the rest of 8(53.3%) disagree with the assertion that there peer are drug addicts.

Furthermore, 4 represented by 26.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that their pupils are discipline in school and at home, 2(13.3%) agreeing on the same item, 6 represented by 40% strongly disagreed, with the statement, while 3represented by 20% disagreed respectively. 6 represented by 40% of the respondents indicated that their pupils attends school regularly, 4(26.7%) agreed with the issue, 3 represented by 20% strongly disagreed, while the remaining 2(13.3%) disagreed. 6 represented by 40% of the respondents indicated that their pupils are engage in sexual relations, 4 represented by 26.7% are in support of the statement, 2represented by 13.6% strongly disagreed, while 3 represented by 20% totally disagreed with the assertion.

Finally, 9(60%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that it's important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence?, 5(33.3%) of the respondents share the same view, 1 represented by 6.7% of the parents and teachers strongly disagreed, while

0(0%) disagreed with the statement that it's important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence.

#### **4.6. Findings from interviews held with parents**

Findings from parents were done using the interview guide that had preliminary questions that lead to the objectives of the study. When asked to indicate whether peer influence on academic performance influenced other pupils' academic performance, most of the parents interviewed were quick to mention that they did. One of them had this to say:

*In fact I have just learnt that my child was doing badly in classas compared to what he used to do in his first grades. The group that he is associating with comprise deviants. They don't want school, and have a negative attitude towards academic work. In fact I have come to learn about it when his classteacher approached me a few days ago before they closed. I was really shocked.*

Apparently, most of the parents interviewed had similar sentiments. They said that peer-groups had bad repercussions in that they played seek and hide games. As a result their children are engaged in a lot of bad things like drinking beer and coming home late. This worried the majority of the parents in the two communities and they complained very much about these repercussions. However, some few parents argued that it was the fault of most parents when it came to their children's friends' influence on their academic performance. One parent said:

*Parents in Munali have an I don't care type of attitude. What I have noticed is that just because most of the children are being paid for by non-governmental organizations and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Munali, the responsibility of caring for their children at home is not there. They don't even care what type of friends their children are engaged with. This makes them not to even check their homework after school. The influence can be there 'Yes' but it is up to us parents to advise our children.*

Asked whether the peer-group's influence had negative or positive effects on pupil's academic performance, most parents said that peer-groups had negative effects. They said

that peer-groups usually indulge in bad things instead of concentrating on school work. One of the parents had this to say:

*Peer groups have negative effects in as far as I am concerned. I hate them and don't like them, I don't want even to see my daughter involving herself with one of the groups. Children of nowadays have gone beyond control. This technology has brought harm to our children. Once you see your child in a group, expect something bad to happen. This may be pregnancy, truancy or something else. The facebooks, pornographies are the game of the day. I really hate peer-groups.*

But a few parents argued that peer-groups have some positive effects. Children, they said, have to be given chance to have friends; since it was the only way a child could develop in the community. They stated that peer-groups gave children an opportunity to learn from each other. It was from these interactions that they discussed positive issues of education. One parent who was a retired teacher had this to say:

*Adolescent stage is a crucial stage and this is where peer-groups emerge from and a stage that everyone passes through at some point during one's developing stage. It's up to us parents just to monitor our children and see what type of group they find themselves in. This stage is very important for socialization, hence it should not be missed.*

#### **4.7 Summary**

The chapter looked at the data presentation which was analysed and interpreted the results from the questionnaires which were administered to the respondents.

## CHAPTER 5

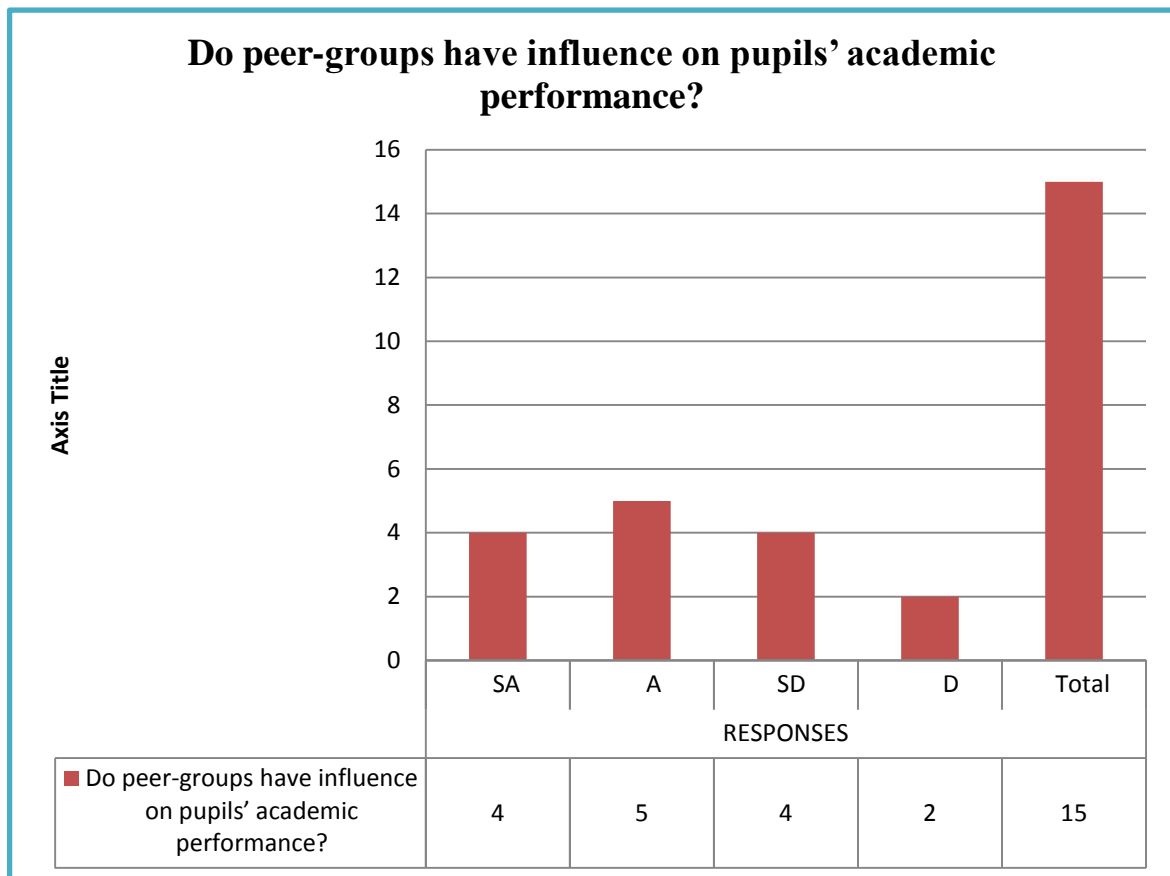
### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study which sought to establish peer-group influence on pupil academic performance: perspective of teachers, parents and pupils in selected schools of Lusaka. The findings are discussed according to the objectives of the study. The following were the objectives of the study: Establish which aspect of peer group influence affects pupil's academic performance. Determine measures that parents, teachers and pupils themselves should take to minimize negative effects of peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance. Identify specific positive aspects of peer influence on pupils' academic performance, and Examine peer group socialisation influence on pupils' academic performance.

#### 5.2. Aspect of Peer Group Influence Affects Pupil's Academic Performance.

Figure 3



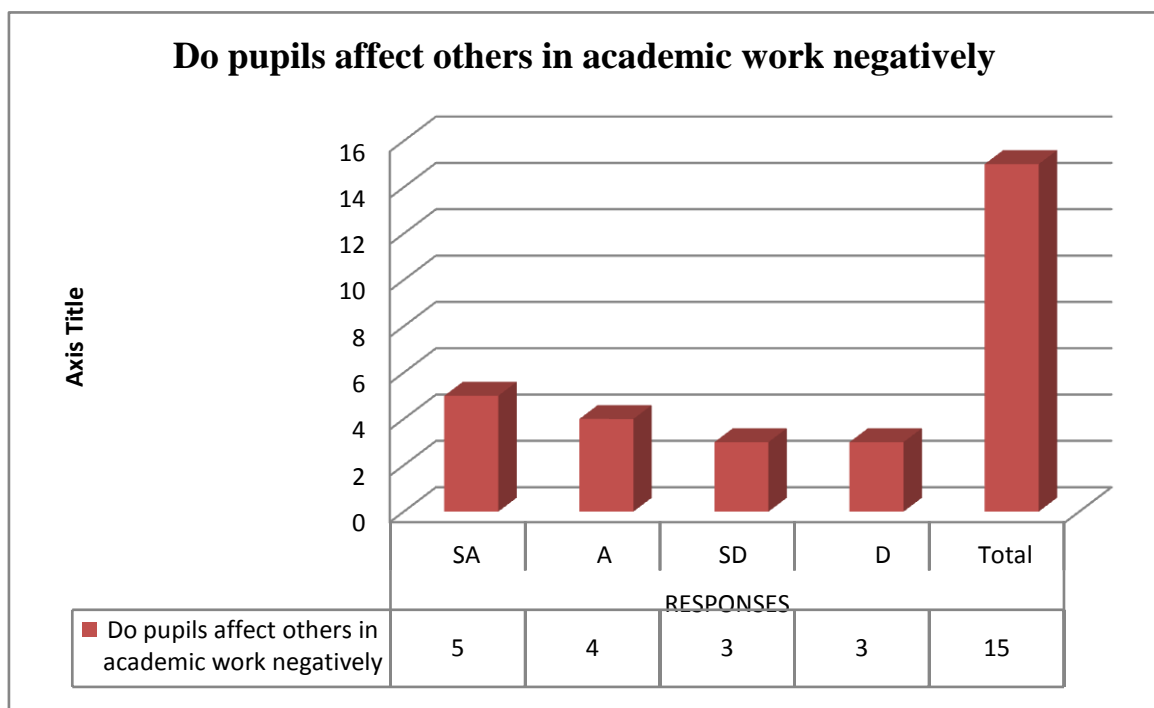
In the above figure or table, its revealed that 9 of the respondents are of the opinion that their pupils are affected by peer- group influence, while 6 strongly disagreed and disagreed. Based on the analysis and their corresponding percentage, it could be stated that peer group interaction lead to lack of concentration among primary school pupils.

From the analysis of data, it was discovered in the finding that peer group interaction to some extent result to absenteeism among primary school pupils, as pupils miss classes sometimes in order to be with friends. This is in harmony with the study of Barker and Jansen (2000) who observed that pupils who continuously absent from class do so not because of lack of academic ability or failure to meet school requirements, but they do so as to be with friends and peers for interaction.

Further analysis of data, revealed in the finding that peer group interaction to some extent result to poor study habits among primary school pupils. The study shows that pupils hang out with friends who have poor study habits. This is in agreement with the study of Romer (1993) who said that peer interaction sometimes lead the school child to follow what his friends feels right by blindly imitating the peer group which he/she belong and adopting their behaviors and habits and the child losses his/her original way of life.

### 5.3. Measures To Minimize Negative Effects Of Peer-Group Influence On Pupils’.

Figure 4



The table and figure above illustrate that peer groups have significant effect on the academic achievement, the values shows the different peer groups having different features and formation background which affect them differently.

This study is in agreement to studies done by Lockwood and Kunda (2002) that reveal on the role models to humans. Its clear as results from the findings show on negative influence of peer group on academic performance of the learners. Observation also enlightens an individual on the consequences of such behaviour and opinions. Depending on these consequences, observation of a model can strengthen or weaken the likelihood that the observer will engage in such behaviour or adopt such beliefs in the future.

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

Substance abuse and sexual activities are risk taking behaviours that have been shown to negatively affect school performance in a negative way (Santor *et al.*, 2000). Teenagers learn about what is acceptable in their social group by "reading" their friends' reactions to how they act, what they edfbnwear, and what they say. The peer group gives this potent feedback by their words and actions, which either encourages or discourages certain behaviours and attitudes. Anxiety can arise when teens try to predict how peers will react, and this anxiety plays a large role in peer influence. In fact, Burns and Darling (2002) state that self-conscious teenagers worry about how others will react to their future actions; infact this is the most common way of how adolescents are influenced by their peers. When a teen takes an

unpopular stand and goes against the expectations or norms of the peer group, he or she is at risk of being ridiculed. Ridicule is not an easy thing to accept at any age, let alone when you are young.

While it is clear that peer groups can be positive for identity formation, negative peers groups do exist and should be of concern to education-related professionals. One aspect that may contribute to the continuation of negative peer groups is passive acceptance of peer-group structure. Teachers expect that students will behave in a certain way that is consistent with their peer group affiliation and consequently make no attempt to intervene with the structure. In other words, teachers passively accept the “brain-nerd” differentiation. Another problem that arises in the school is favoritism toward athletes. Athletes often receive more esteem in school and are often seen by other students as receiving special treatment. Special treatment could come in the form of more teacher-student interaction or more academic help from advisors. This extra attention given towards athletes can be very discouraging for non-athletes and can spark jealousy. If educators focus too much on the athletes and/or popular students, they may not even fully notice a struggling student slip through the cracks.

An additional drawback in the eyes of Alderman (2000) is ability tracking. Ability tracking involves separating students based on their achievement in school in the past. Ability grouping forces isolation among students at different achievement levels, with each group forming its own peer culture. Low achievers are isolated from models of achievement motivation and more effective strategies to succeed. In essence, ability tracking forces students to form groups that may not result in the best outcome. High achieving students can benefit from interacting with low achieving students and vice versa.

#### **5.4. Specific Positive Aspects of Peer Influence on Pupils’ Academic Performance**

Table 2 and 3 are proof of response from both the parents and teachers and that of the pupils on the asension that they are affected positively. Pupils themselves seemed to know what is good for them, hence a good number of them confirmed that they are not much affected by peer. Contrary to popular belief, not all peer influence is negative. Spending more time with peers does not always translate into trouble. Peer group influence can, in fact, keep youth participating in religious activities, going to JEST, and playing on sports teams, even when they are not leaders (Lingren, 1995). The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. This factor is consistent with Bowmeister and Leary’s “belongingness hypothesis” in that there is a genetically based need to belong.

The basic premise is that people of all ages seek inclusion and avoid exclusion. Influence in these primary peer groups can vary from joining the track team or drama club to motivation, engagement, and achievement in algebra class.

As already suggested, pupils define themselves by the groups with which they affiliate. Values that are important to most adolescents include: school learning and achievement; social activities; and whether or not to engage in delinquent activities (Landau, 2002). Fischhoff, Cromwell, and Kipke (1999) cited a systems theory perspective, arguing that groups that provide a lot of positive feedback encourage action to maintain good feelings. These good feelings are often reported in peer groups, and actions could lead to engaging in risky behaviors to keep the “fun” going. According to Peer Influence 15

According to Ryan (2000), students who were identified as “jock-populars” perceived more pressure in the area of school involvement and less pressure toward misconduct than students identified as “druggie-toughs.”

Further, this study indicated that there was significant relationship between peer group influence and the academic performance of students. This suggests that the group of students related with had positive impact on their academic performance. The findings support that of Sprinthall and Collins (1994), Kolawole (2004) and Wentzel (1991), Furlong et al (2004), that student’s interaction with their peer group could influence learning and invariably their academic performance. The probable reason for this significant relationship is that, if students interact with the right peer group that could positively influence their interest to learn, this could invariably motivate them towards their studies and enhance their academic performance. The result of this study contradicts that of Skues, Cunningham and Pokharel (2005), who discovered that students who were bullied by their peers at school tended to report lower levels of self-esteem, feel less connected to peers, teachers and schools were less motivated to perform well at school.

The study further revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental support and the academic performance of students. The findings support that of Olutola (2007), Baumrind (1980), Ginsburg and Brotein (1993), while it slightly contradicts the finding of Kayode (1999), Danesy and Okediran (2002) and Johnson (1996), that the family (parents)

Socio-economic status is a strong predictor of academic achievement not just the parenting styles and moral support encouragement received from parents' contributions to students' academic performance.

### **5.5. Peer Group Socialisation Influence Pupils' Academic Performance**

Besides poverty, respondents pointed to peer-pressure, sexual desires, stress, ignorance, anxiety, protection, religion, technology, environment, not being assertive, lack of proper guidance, broken homes as other factors that made pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance.

### **5.6. Peer-Socialisation**

This was pointed out by all the respondents as being one of the factors that made pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance. It was found that most pupils joined peer-groups through ignorance because of peer-pressure especially, those that found themselves in deviant groups. These pupils indulged in beer drinking, smoking and sexual relations. It was discovered that pupils resorted to doing all these things in order to obtain money to buy prestigious things they admired from friends. Hence, the results are that most of them do not do well in their academic studies. This is in conformity with (1987) who asserts that through peer-pressure, activities such as alcohol abuse, grafting, vandalism, drug abuse, truancy and many others affected pupils' academic performance.

The other factor that seemed to be prominent announced by the respondents that made pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance was socialisation. Through watching television and other media it was found that pupils wanted to imitate what they heard and saw. It was also found that most pupils, especially those from poor families, would want to have friends so that they access these facilities even though such friends were bad or good. As a result it was observed that time spent on watching such facilities was greater than studying. This is in line with Schaefer (2005) who points out that the impacts of technology on socialization amongst adolescents have more time spending on watching television and other media per day on different activities than reading. This study finds the factors very reasonable and believes that addressing them would greatly help in reducing the vulnerability of peer-group influence on their academic performance.

## **5.7. Summary**

Overall, peer groups provide a strong sense of security that allows an adolescent to build a sense of identity. For better or for worse, adolescents spend much of their structured and unstructured time with peers. Parents can have some influence in how that time is spent if they encourage activities they approve of without being over-bearing. Based on research, the bottom line is that it is important for parents to be actively involved in their adolescent's life. They should ask questions and be able to get a sense of how their son or daughter is spending his or her time. Parents need to be approachable and keep communication lines open in order for this to happen.

Peer influence happens differently among males and females. Research has shown that males are more likely to associate with larger peer groups, while females are more likely to form close, dyadic friendships. Furthermore, males tend to be seen in public more often with their peers and females tend to spend more time with peers in the home. In either case, males and females both exert influence on their peers, just in slightly different ways.

In closing, this researcher would like to further stress the point that not all peer influence is negative. Peer groups are, in essence, necessary for adolescent growth and development. As such, educators should praise the positive choices that students make in regards to peers and work to combat the negative ones. It is obvious that peer groups are not a fad or a trend, they are around to stay. For this reason, peer influence is a phenomenon that will be studied throughout time.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The school as an institution of learning and which also acts as a second home for learners has been found to have a strong relationship with students' academic performance. The parents and the teachers through their specific roles either have negative or positive influences on students' academic performance. Therefore the parents and the teachers should provide conducive learning environment where learners are free to consult them when in need. They should also provide adequate learning facilities that are able to arouse interest in the learners and to motivate them to work hard.

The study established that peer group influence exert potent influence on learners' academic performance. The study has directly and indirectly pointed to areas that have to be addressed in order to promote good academic performance. If parents/guardians and teachers could monitor the peer group of the learners and motivate them, it is most likely that learners' academic performance will improve.

Peer groups provide a strong sense of security that allows an adolescent to build a sense of identity. For better or for worse, adolescents spend much of their structured and unstructured time with peers. Parents can have some influence in how that time is spent if they encourage activities they approve of without being over-bearing. Based on research, the bottom line is that it is important for parents to be actively. The extent to which the peer group determines the academic ability of pupils had been investigated in this study and revealed that a dull student may become study inclined when he finds himself in a group that encourages effective learning. The study also revealed that when pupils are not well monitored they fall in bad groups. However, the study has revealed the fact that pupils associated in groups with other pupils of the same age and background. The study has also shown that a high percentage of the pupils are more interested in relating to their friends than to their teachers and parents.

This may be as a result of the attitude of the parents and teachers. It is indicated in the finding that teachers may be able to use the peer group effectively for classroom interaction and participation. The peer group could also be used in a group to motivate pupil's class achievements.

The findings of this study further show that peer group forms the main basis through which the child learns lot of empirical facts about his physical and social environment, acquisition of skills and value as well as attitude for a better future. It is therefore, concluded that peer group has a significant influence on the academic performance of adolescent pupils.

Peer group influence have a relationship with pupils' academic performance, as pupils whose friends engage in negative activities such as use of drugs, sneaking out of school and being absent from school chronically are likely to have lower academic performance. "Vice versa".

Therefore, this researcher would like to further stress the point that not all peer influence is negative. Peer groups are, in essence, necessary for adolescent growth and development. As such, educators should praise the positive choices that students make in regards to peers and work to combat the negative ones. It is obvious that peer groups are not a fad or a trend, they are around to stay. For this reason, peer influence is a phenomenon that will be studied throughout time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations/suggestion based on the findings was put forward:

Teachers and other educational practitioners and those in related professional training, need to have knowledge of the effects of peer group pressure and understanding of the issues surrounding negative peer influence to prevent negative peer influence and be more adequately prepared to help a teenager facing negative aspects of peer pressure.

Teachers should understand that the peer group is an important factor in child's learning and therefore should use it encourage learning.

Pupils should be encouraged to choose their friend wisely as some have negative influence on their academic performance, especially those who sneak out of school, use drugs and those who do not attend school regularly.

Parent/guardian should be aware of friends their children keep to reduce the chances of peers influence on their children.

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

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## APPENDECES

### Appendix A:QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondents

The aim of this questionnaire is to obtain information on the Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in Selected Schools of Lusaka District. You have been selected to take part in this research project. The research assures you of strict confidentiality.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Indicate your response by ticking (√) in the appropriate space(s) and by writing the response(s) in the spaces provided where applicable.

#### SECTION A: **Bio Data**

1. Sex:  Male  
 Female
2. Age:  21 – 30 years  
 30 Years and above
3. Years of service:  1 – 10 years  
 11 years and above

**SECTION B: Questions on Teachers' views towards peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance.**

4. Do peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

5. If your answer to question 4 is 'yes' is such influence positive or negative?

Negative

Positive

6. Give reasons for your answer in question 5.

.....

.....

.....

7. Has the school administration and teachers ever sat together to discuss way of stopping or reducing negative peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

8. If your answer to question 7 is 'yes' what ways were suggested?

.....

.....

.....

9. Is it important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

10. As a teacher, how would you like peer-group influence on pupils' academic

Performance is addressed?

.....  
.....

**SECTION C:**

**Questions on factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance.**

11. Are there factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance?

Yes

No

12. If your answer to question 11 is 'yes', list the factors.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. What do you think should be done to prevent pupils from being vulnerable to these

factors?.....  
.....  
.....

***THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR YOUR TIME***

# Appendix B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondents

The aim of this questionnaire is to obtain information on the Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in Selected Schools of Lusaka District. You have been selected to take part in this research project. The research assures you of strict confidentiality.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Indicate your response by ticking (√) in the appropriate space(s) and by writing the response(s) in the spaces provided where applicable.

### SECTION A: Bio Data

1. Sex:  Male  
 Female
2. Age:  21 – 30 years  
 30 Years and above

### SECTION B: Questions on parents' views towards peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance.

3. Do peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance?
- Yes  
 No

4. If your answer to question 3 is 'yes' is such influence positive or negative?

Negative

Positive

5. Give reasons for your answer in question 4.

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Has the school and parents ever sat together to discuss way of stopping or reducing negative peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

7. If your answer to question 6 is 'yes' what ways were suggested?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Is it important to involve parents in discussing peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

9. As a parent, how would you like peer-group influence on pupils' academic

Performance addressed?

.....  
.....

**SECTION C:**

**Questions on factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance.**

10. Are there factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance?

Yes

No

11. If your answer to question **10** is 'yes', list the factors.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. What do you think should be done to prevent pupils from being vulnerable to these

factors?.....  
.....  
.....

***THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR YOUR TIME***

## **Appendix C:**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

1. Do you have children that you look after in your home?
2. Do they have friends?
3. Do you like them? Why?
4. Do you think your children's friends influence their academic performances? How?
5. Does peer group influence have negative or positive effects on pupils' academic performance? Why?
6. What is your attitude towards these effects? Why?
7. What are some of the factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on academic performance?
8. What are some of the measures that you should take to minimize negative effects of peer group influence on pupils' academic performance?

## Appendix D:

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondents

The aim of this questionnaire is to obtain information on the Peer-Group Influence on Pupil Academic Performance: Perspective of Teachers, Parents and Pupils in Selected Schools of Lusaka District. You have been selected to take part in this research project. The research assures you of strict confidentiality.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Indicate your response by ticking (√) in the appropriate space(s) and by writing the response(s) in the spaces provided where applicable.

### SECTION A: Bio Data

1. Sex:  Male  
 Female
2. Age:  10 – 15 years  
 15 Years and above

### SECTION B: Questions on Teachers' views towards peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance.

3. Do peer-groups have influence on pupils' academic performance?

- Yes  
 No

4. If your answer to question 3 is 'yes' is such influence positive or negative?

Negative

Positive

5. Give reasons for your answer in question 4.

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Has the school administration and pupils ever sat together to discuss way of stopping or reducing negative peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

7. If your answer to question 6 is 'yes' what ways were suggested?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Is it important to involve pupils in discussing peer-group influence on pupils' academic performance?

Yes

No

9. As a pupils, how would you like peer-group influence on pupils' academic

Performance is addressed?

.....  
.....

**SECTION D:**

**Questions on factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance.**

10. Are there factors that make pupils vulnerable to peer-group influence on their academic performance?

Yes

No

11. If your answer to question **10** is 'yes', list the factors.

.....  
.....  
.....

12. What do you think should be done to prevent pupils from being vulnerable to these factors?.....

.....  
.....

***THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR YOUR TIME***

## AppendixE:Time Line for Carrying Out the Research:

ACTIVITIES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017
Problem formulation						
Writing the proposal						
Preparation & procurement of research instruments						
Research trial of instruments						
Field work (data collection)						
Data processing and analysis						
Writing of the research paper						
Binding, presentation & submission of the paper.						

## Appendix E:

### Research Budget

<u>Stationary</u>	<u>ZMK</u>
3 Reams of white paper	180.00
6 Pens	20.00
1 Stapler	50.00
1 Staples	50.00
1 Perforator	50.00
3 Writing pads	120.00
Secretarial Service	600.00
Printing three copies	1000.00
Binding of three copies	900.00
 <b><u>Field Work</u></b>	
Trial of instruments	400.00
Transport- To and from the schools (100 x 3)	300.00
Lunch allowance	400.00
 <b><u>Monitoring Instruments</u></b>	
Video Recorder	500.00
 <b>Grand Total</b>	 <b><u>K 4,570.00</u></b>