

A Correlational Study of Peer Influence and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students in District Rawalpindi. The research employed a quantitative approach using a correlational design grounded in the positivist research paradigm. A sample of 360 students was selected through a multistage sampling technique from 12 public secondary schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring peer influence on a Likert scale, while academic achievement was obtained from students' examination records. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.82. Data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a statistically significant moderate to strong positive relationship between peer influence and academic achievement ($r = .612, p < .05$). The results further indicated that peer influence serves as a meaningful predictor of academic performance. Additionally, a stronger positive relationship ($r = .645, p < .05$) was observed between positive peer influence and academic achievement, highlighting the greater impact of supportive and academically oriented peer groups. The study concludes that peer influence plays a significant role in shaping students' academic outcomes, particularly at the secondary school level. Positive peer interactions enhance motivation, engagement, and academic performance, whereas negative peer pressure may hinder achievement. The findings suggest that educational institutions should promote constructive peer environments through collaborative learning, peer mentoring, and structured group activities. This study contributes to the understanding of social determinants of academic achievement and provides a foundation for future research in similar contexts.

Keywords: Peer Influence, Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students, Correlational Study, Positive and Negative Peer Influence, Social Interaction, Educational Outcomes

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INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is widely regarded as a fundamental indicator of students' success within formal educational systems. It reflects the extent to which learners attain educational objectives and competencies, often measured through grades, examinations, and standardized assessments. In recent years, researchers have increasingly emphasized the role of social and psychological factors in shaping academic outcomes, moving beyond purely cognitive explanations. Among these factors, peer influence has emerged as a critical determinant, particularly at the secondary school level where students undergo significant developmental and social transitions.

Peer influence refers to the impact that individuals of similar age groups exert on each other's behaviors, attitudes, and academic engagement. During adolescence, students tend to spend more time with peers, and these relationships become central to their social identity and decision-making processes. As a result, peer groups significantly shape students' academic orientations, either fostering positive learning behaviors or contributing to disengagement. Empirical studies indicate that peer influence operates through mechanisms such as modeling, reinforcement, and social comparison, all of which affect students' motivation and performance (Shao et al., 2024).

The theoretical underpinning of peer influence is grounded in social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation and interaction. In educational contexts, students often imitate the academic behaviors of their peers, including study habits, classroom participation, and attitudes toward learning. Positive peer influence, such as collaborative learning and academic support, has been shown to enhance students' engagement and achievement. Conversely, negative peer pressure may lead to reduced academic effort and increased involvement in non-academic activities, ultimately affecting performance (Wollega & Asefa, 2023).

Recent empirical research highlights the complexity of peer influence by demonstrating both direct and indirect effects on academic achievement. For instance, peer relationships have been found to significantly enhance academic outcomes through increased motivation and engagement (Shao et al., 2024). Similarly, social network-based studies suggest that students tend to align their academic behaviors with those of their peers, reinforcing group norms related to achievement (DeLay et al., 2016). These findings underscore the importance of examining peer influence not only as a direct predictor but also as a contextual factor shaping students' academic experiences (Mehmood et al., 2022).

In secondary school settings, peer influence becomes particularly pronounced due to developmental changes associated with adolescence. Students seek acceptance, identity, and belonging, often prioritizing peer approval over other influences such as teachers or parents. This shift increases the likelihood that peer norms will shape academic behaviors (Mahnaz et al., 2023). Studies have shown that students who associate with academically motivated peers tend to perform better, while those influenced by peers with low academic aspirations are more likely to exhibit poor academic outcomes (Bassey, 2020).

In the Pakistani educational context, peer influence is further intensified by the collectivist nature of society, where group affiliations and social relationships play a central role in shaping behavior (Mahnaz et al., 2025). Secondary school students often form close peer networks that influence their academic decisions, study patterns, and future aspirations. Despite this, limited empirical research has systematically examined the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement using correlational designs in this context (Mahnaz et al., 2022).

The scholarly contributions of Wajid Mahnaz provide relevant empirical grounding for understanding factors affecting academic achievement. His recent studies primarily focus on psychological, technological, and social determinants of students' learning outcomes. For instance, Mahnaz and Kiran (2024a) examined the relationship between personality traits, social media usage, and academic achievement, finding that personality factors significantly predict students' academic performance. Similarly, another study demonstrated that the use of social networking platforms for educational collaboration is significantly associated with students' academic performance, highlighting the role of social interaction in learning processes (Mahnaz, 2023).

Furthermore, Mahnaz (2025) contributed to research on social and cognitive influences of social media, reporting a significant positive correlation between students' engagement in social networks and their academic-related activities. In another study, Mahnaz et al. (2022) explored the influence of classroom enjoyment on academic motivation, emphasizing the importance of psychological and social classroom environments in shaping students' academic engagement. Additionally, research on flipped classroom pedagogy highlighted the mediating role of social network sites in improving academic achievement, reinforcing the importance of peer-supported and technology-mediated learning environments.

These studies collectively indicate that social interaction—whether through peer groups, classroom environments, or digital platforms—plays a significant role in influencing academic achievement. Although Mahnaz's work does not directly focus on "peer influence" as an isolated variable, it consistently demonstrates that social and collaborative contexts are strongly linked with students' academic outcomes. This provides a strong conceptual basis for examining peer influence as a key variable in academic achievement research.

Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a gap in understanding the specific relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students, particularly through correlational approaches. Most existing studies focus on broader social or psychological variables without isolating peer influence as a primary factor. Therefore, a correlational study is appropriate to examine the degree and direction of the relationship between these variables without manipulation.

The present study aims to address this gap by investigating how peer influence relates to academic achievement among secondary school students. By employing a correlational research design, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can inform educational practices and policies aimed at improving student outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students.
2. To determine the predictive role of peer influence on academic achievement among secondary school students.
3. To analyze the differences in academic achievement based on the nature of peer influence (positive vs. negative).

Hypotheses of the Study

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students.
2. H_{02} : Peer influence does not significantly predict academic achievement among secondary school students.

3. H_{03} : There is no significant difference in academic achievement between students experiencing positive and negative peer influence.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on social determinants of academic achievement. By focusing specifically on peer influence, the study provides a more targeted understanding of how social interactions shape students' learning outcomes. The findings will be valuable for educators in designing instructional strategies that promote positive peer interactions, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring. Additionally, the study has implications for policymakers in developing school-based interventions that foster supportive peer environments. Programs aimed at enhancing peer collaboration and reducing negative peer pressure can be informed by the results of this research. The study also provides insights for parents, highlighting the importance of monitoring peer associations and encouraging positive social interactions.

Finally, the study contributes methodologically by employing a correlational design, offering a basis for future experimental and longitudinal research. It also opens avenues for exploring additional variables such as gender, socioeconomic status, and school type in relation to peer influence and academic achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is a key indicator of students' success within formal educational systems and reflects the extent to which learners meet educational objectives. It is typically measured through examination scores, grades, and standardized assessments. Contemporary educational research conceptualizes academic achievement as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and application of knowledge in real-life contexts. Scholars argue that academic achievement is influenced by a combination of cognitive, psychological, and environmental factors, making it a complex and dynamic outcome variable (Shao, Kang, Lu, Zhang, & Li, 2024).

In secondary education, academic achievement holds particular importance as it determines students' progression to higher education and future career opportunities. Studies have shown that students' academic success is shaped not only by individual abilities but also by contextual factors such as school environment, teaching practices, and peer interactions. Research further indicates that students embedded in supportive academic environments tend to perform better compared to those in less structured settings (DeLay, Zhang, Hanish, Fabes, Martin, & Updegraff, 2016). Thus, academic achievement must be examined within a broader socio-educational context.

Concept of Peer Influence in Education

Peer influence refers to the impact that individuals of similar age or social status exert on each other's attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. In educational settings, peer influence plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic engagement, study habits, and motivation. During adolescence, students spend significant time interacting with peers, making peer relationships a dominant factor in their social and academic lives.

Peer influence operates through mechanisms such as modeling, imitation, and reinforcement. Students tend to adopt behaviors and attitudes that are prevalent within their peer groups. Positive peer influence encourages academic engagement, collaborative learning, and goal-oriented behavior, whereas negative peer pressure may lead to disengagement, absenteeism, and poor academic performance (Wollega & Asefa, 2023).

Moreover, peer influence is not limited to direct interactions but extends to indirect social comparisons. Students often evaluate their academic abilities in relation to their peers, which can influence their self-esteem and motivation. This dynamic nature of peer influence makes it a significant variable in understanding academic achievement at the secondary school level.

Theoretical Perspectives on Peer Influence

The relationship between peer influence and academic achievement is supported by several theoretical frameworks. Social learning theory posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation of others. In classroom settings, students observe their peers' academic behaviors and replicate them, particularly when such behaviors are associated with positive outcomes.

Social cognitive theory further explains that learning occurs through reciprocal interactions between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Peer influence contributes to shaping students' self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn affect their academic performance. Students who interact with high-achieving peers are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities and adopt effective learning strategies.

Additionally, the theory of peer socialization suggests that individuals adjust their behaviors to align with group norms. In academic contexts, this means that students may adopt study habits and attitudes that are consistent with their peer group. DeLay et al. (2016) demonstrated that students' academic performance tends to converge with that of their peers over time, highlighting the significance of peer socialization processes.

Empirical Evidence on Peer Influence and Academic Achievement

A substantial body of empirical research has examined the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement. Studies consistently indicate that peer relationships significantly affect students' academic outcomes. DeLay et al. (2016) found that peer influence plays a critical role in shaping students' academic behaviors through social network interactions. Their findings revealed that students tend to align their academic performance with that of their peers, resulting in either improvement or decline depending on peer group characteristics.

Similarly, Shao et al. (2024) reported that peer relationships have both direct and indirect effects on academic achievement. The study found that positive peer interactions enhance students' motivation and engagement, which subsequently improve academic performance. This highlights the mediating role of psychological factors in the relationship between peer influence and achievement.

Research conducted in different educational contexts also supports these findings. Wollega and Asefa (2023) found that peer pressure significantly influences students' academic performance, with positive peer influence leading to better outcomes and negative peer influence resulting in lower achievement. Bassey (2020) further emphasized that peer group characteristics, such as shared academic goals and study habits, are strong predictors of students' performance.

Role of Social Interaction in Academic Achievement

The work of Wajid Mahnaz provides important insights into the role of social and psychological factors in academic achievement. His research consistently highlights the significance of social interaction, collaboration, and technological engagement in shaping students' academic outcomes (Kiran et al., 2025; Kiran et al., 2022).

Mahnaz and Kiran (2024b) examined the relationship between personality traits and the use of social networking platforms for educational collaboration. The study found that

personality traits significantly predict students' academic performance and their engagement with digital learning tools, emphasizing the role of social interaction in academic success.

In another study, Mahnaz, Mehmood, and Umar (2022) investigated the impact of classroom enjoyment on students' academic motivation. The findings indicated that positive classroom environments and social interactions significantly enhance students' motivation, which is a key determinant of academic achievement. Furthermore, Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2021) explored the role of social network sites during the COVID-19 pandemic and found a significant relationship between social media usage and students' academic performance. This study highlights the importance of peer interaction in digital environments. Mahnaz, Gulzar, Bibi, and Ullah (2024) investigated the influence of flipped classroom pedagogy on academic achievement and identified social network sites as a key mediator. The study demonstrated that peer-supported learning environments enhance students' academic outcomes by promoting collaboration and engagement.

Additionally, Mahnaz, Zia ul Haq, Qurat ul Ain, Uzma Batool, and Muhammad Safdar (2024) examined the influence of leadership and management on school effectiveness and emphasized that supportive school environments, including peer and teacher interactions, play a significant role in improving academic performance.

These studies collectively demonstrate that social interaction—whether through peers, classroom environments, or digital platforms—is a critical determinant of academic achievement. Although Mahnaz's research does not isolate peer influence as a single variable, it provides strong empirical support for the role of social factors in shaping students' academic outcomes.

Digital Peer Interaction and Academic Achievement

The advancement of technology has transformed the nature of peer influence by extending interactions beyond traditional classroom settings. Social networking sites and online learning platforms enable students to collaborate, share information, and support each other academically. These digital interactions have become an integral part of modern education.

Research indicates that the use of social networking platforms for educational purposes enhances students' engagement and academic performance. Mahnaz and Kiran (2024c) found that students who actively use platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook for academic collaboration demonstrate higher levels of achievement. Similarly, studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of digital peer interaction in maintaining academic continuity and performance (Mahnaz et al., 2021).

Digital peer interaction facilitates collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, all of which contribute to improved academic outcomes. However, it also presents challenges, such as distractions and misuse of technology, which can negatively affect academic performance. Therefore, the impact of digital peer influence depends on how these platforms are utilized by students (Sarfranz et al., 2025).

Positive and Negative Dimensions of Peer Influence

Peer influence can be categorized into positive and negative dimensions based on its impact on students' academic behaviors. Positive peer influence involves encouragement, support, and collaboration among students, leading to improved academic engagement and performance. Students who are part of academically oriented peer groups are more likely to adopt effective study habits and achieve higher academic outcomes.

In contrast, negative peer influence involves behaviors that discourage academic engagement, such as absenteeism, lack of interest in studies, and involvement in non-academic activities.

Studies have shown that students exposed to negative peer pressure are more likely to experience lower academic achievement (Wollega & Asefa, 2023).

The distinction between positive and negative peer influence is crucial for understanding the overall impact of peer relationships on academic achievement. Educational interventions should focus on promoting positive peer interactions while minimizing negative influences (Shaheen et al., 2022).

Peer Influence in Secondary School Context

The secondary school stage is a critical period for examining peer influence due to the developmental characteristics of adolescence. During this stage, students experience significant social and emotional changes that increase their susceptibility to peer influence. Peer groups become a primary source of support, identity, and motivation (Ibrahim et al., 2025; Batool et al., 2025).

Research indicates that students who associate with academically motivated peers are more likely to achieve higher academic outcomes. Conversely, those influenced by peers with low academic aspirations may exhibit disengagement and poor performance. In collectivist societies such as Pakistan, peer influence is further amplified due to the cultural emphasis on social relationships and group cohesion (Haq et al., 2023; Abbasi et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, there is limited research focusing specifically on peer influence in secondary school settings using correlational designs. This gap highlights the need for studies that systematically examine the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement in this context.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that peer influence is a significant determinant of academic achievement, particularly at the secondary school level. Theoretical frameworks such as social learning theory and social cognitive theory provide a strong foundation for understanding how peer interactions shape academic behaviors. Empirical studies consistently show that peer influence affects academic achievement both directly and indirectly through factors such as motivation and engagement (Mehrukh et al., 2022).

The contributions of Wajid Mahnaz further emphasize the importance of social and collaborative environments in enhancing academic outcomes. His research highlights the role of digital platforms, classroom environments, and institutional factors in shaping students' academic performance .

Overall, the literature suggests that peer influence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires careful examination. While positive peer interactions can enhance academic achievement, negative peer pressure can have detrimental effects. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of peer influence is essential for developing effective educational strategies and interventions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research approach using a correlational research design. The correlational design was considered appropriate as it enables the researcher to examine the degree and direction of the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement without manipulating the variables. This design facilitates the identification of patterns and associations among variables in their natural setting. The study specifically utilized a cross-sectional survey method, where data were collected from respondents at a single point in time to analyze the relationship between the variables.

Research Philosophy

The study was grounded in the positivist research philosophy, which emphasizes objectivity, measurement, and empirical analysis. Positivism assumes that reality is observable and can be measured through quantitative methods. In this study, peer influence and academic achievement were treated as measurable variables, and statistical techniques were used to analyze their relationship. The adoption of this philosophy ensured that the findings were based on empirical evidence and could be generalized to a larger population.

Population (Total Number of Schools and Respondents of District Rawalpindi)

The population of the study comprised all secondary school students enrolled in public sector schools in District Rawalpindi. According to the records of the District Education Authority, there are approximately 220 public secondary schools in the district, including both boys' and girls' schools.

The total number of students enrolled at the secondary level in these schools is estimated to be approximately 18,000. These students constituted the target population for the study. The selection of District Rawalpindi was based on accessibility and its representation of diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 360 students was selected from the target population. The sample size was considered adequate to ensure representation and statistical reliability.

A multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. In the first stage, 12 secondary schools (6 boys' and 6 girls' schools) were selected using simple random sampling. In the second stage, 30 students were randomly selected from each school, resulting in a total sample of 360 respondents.

This sampling technique ensured that the sample was representative of the population and minimized sampling bias.

Research Tool

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

Section A: Demographic information of respondents (gender, age, class).

Section B: Items related to peer influence and academic achievement.

Peer influence was measured using a Likert scale consisting of statements related to peer support, peer pressure, collaboration, and academic interaction. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Academic achievement was measured using students' recent examination scores obtained from school records.

Validity and Reliability of Research Tool

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in the field of education and educational psychology. Their feedback was incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items.

A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 30 students from a school outside the selected sample. Based on the pilot data, necessary modifications were made.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The reliability value for the peer influence scale was found to be 0.82, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This value is considered acceptable for social science research.

Data Collection Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from the District Education Authority Rawalpindi and the heads of selected schools. The researcher personally visited the schools to administer the questionnaires.

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and instructions were provided on how to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were given sufficient time to respond to the items.

Academic achievement data were collected from school records with the permission of school authorities. All questionnaires were collected on the same day to ensure a high response rate.

Data Analysis (Coefficient of Correlation)

The collected data were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the data.

To examine the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. This statistical technique measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables.

The value of the correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to $+1$, where:

- $+1$ indicates a perfect positive relationship
- -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship
- 0 indicates no relationship

The level of significance was set at 0.05 to test the hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were ensured by not collecting any identifying information. The data were used solely for research purposes.

Respondents were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Permission was obtained from school authorities before collecting academic records.

Demographic Tables

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	50%
Female	180	50%
Total	360	100%

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Class Level

Class	Frequency	Percentage
9th	180	50%
10th	180	50%
Total	360	100%

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students

Table 1: Correlation between Peer Influence and Academic Achievement

Peer_Influence	Pearson Correlation	.612**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N		360
Academic_Achievement	Pearson	.612

Correlation

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	360

The results presented in Table 1 indicate a significant positive relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students. The Pearson correlation coefficient value ($r = .612$) suggests a moderate to strong positive relationship between the two variables. The significance value ($p = .000$) is less than the alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. This implies that as peer influence becomes more positive, students' academic achievement also tends to increase. The sample size ($N = 360$) reflects adequate representation of the population, strengthening the reliability of the results. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that peer influence plays a meaningful role in academic achievement.

Objective 2: To determine the extent to which peer influence predicts academic achievement among secondary school students

Table 2: Correlation and Predictive Association between Peer Influence and Academic Achievement

Peer_Influence Pearson Correlation	.612**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	360
Academic_Achievement Pearson Correlation	.612
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	360

The correlation value ($r = .612$) indicates that peer influence accounts for a considerable proportion of variation in academic achievement. Although correlation does not establish causation, the strength of the relationship suggests that peer influence is an important contributing factor in students' academic outcomes. The statistically significant p-value (.000) confirms that the observed relationship is not due to chance. This moderate to strong positive correlation implies that students who experience positive peer influence are more likely to achieve higher academic results. The findings suggest that peer environments should be considered as a key factor in academic development. Thus, peer influence serves as a meaningful predictor in understanding academic achievement patterns among secondary school students.

Objective 3: To analyze differences in academic achievement based on the nature of peer influence (positive vs. negative)

Table 3: Correlation between Types of Peer Influence and Academic Achievement

Peer_Influence Pearson Correlation	.645**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	360
Academic_Achievement Pearson Correlation	.612
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	360

The results in Table 3 reveal a stronger positive correlation ($r = .645$) between positive peer influence and academic achievement compared to the overall peer influence variable. This indicates that students who are influenced by supportive, academically oriented peers tend to perform better academically. The significance value ($p = .000$) confirms that this relationship

is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The findings suggest that positive peer influence plays a more substantial role in enhancing academic achievement than general peer interactions. Students exposed to constructive peer groups are more likely to adopt effective study habits and maintain higher academic performance. These results highlight the importance of fostering positive peer environments within secondary school settings to improve academic outcomes.

Findings with Respect to Objectives

Finding 1: There is a significant positive relationship between peer influence and academic achievement among secondary school students ($r = .612, p < .05$).

The first finding of the study indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between peer influence and academic achievement. This suggests that students who are positively influenced by their peers tend to perform better academically. Similar findings have been reported by DeLay et al. (2016), who found that peer relationships significantly predict academic performance through social network effects. Likewise, Shao et al. (2024) reported that peer relationships positively influence academic achievement by enhancing motivation and engagement. Wollega and Asefa (2023) also concluded that peer pressure has a significant impact on students' academic outcomes, where positive peer interactions contribute to higher achievement levels. These consistent findings across studies reinforce the conclusion that peer influence is an important social determinant of academic success (Nazir et al., 2025).

Finding 2: Peer influence shows a meaningful predictive relationship with academic achievement among secondary school students.

The second finding reveals that peer influence plays a substantial role in shaping students' academic outcomes. Although correlation does not imply causation, the strength of the relationship suggests that peer influence is a key contributing factor. This aligns with the study conducted by Shao et al. (2024), which demonstrated that peer relationships indirectly predict academic achievement through academic motivation and engagement. Similarly, DeLay et al. (2016) found that students tend to align their academic performance with their peers over time, indicating a predictive social influence. Bassey (2020) also reported that peer group characteristics significantly influence students' academic performance. These studies collectively support the notion that peer environments contribute meaningfully to predicting academic achievement (Noreen et al., 2025)

Finding 3: Positive peer influence has a stronger positive relationship with academic achievement compared to general peer influence ($r = .645, p < .05$).

The third finding indicates that positive peer influence is more strongly associated with academic achievement than general peer influence. This suggests that academically oriented peer groups significantly enhance students' performance. Mahnaz and Kiran (2024b) found that collaborative social environments, including peer-supported digital interactions, improve students' academic engagement and outcomes. Mahnaz, Mehmood, and Umar (2022) also reported that supportive classroom environments and positive social interactions enhance students' motivation, which contributes to better academic performance. Additionally, Wollega and Asefa (2023) emphasized that positive peer pressure encourages students to adopt effective study habits. These studies collectively confirm that positive peer influence plays a critical role in improving academic achievement (Nasir & Mahnaz, 2026).

Recommendation 1 (Based on Finding 1):

Educational institutions should promote structured peer interaction activities such as group discussions, peer tutoring, and collaborative learning to strengthen positive peer influence among students.

Recommendation 2 (Based on Finding 2):

Teachers and school administrators should monitor peer group dynamics and encourage formation of academically oriented peer groups, as peer influence significantly contributes to students' academic performance.

Recommendation 3 (Based on Finding 3):

Schools should develop programs that encourage positive peer behavior, including mentoring systems and cooperative learning strategies, to maximize the beneficial effects of positive peer influence on academic achievement.

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