



# Social Conformity among Peer Groups in Educational Institutions

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present review article investigates the phenomenon of social conformity among peer groups in educational institutions. Social conformity refers to the tendency of individuals to conform to the behaviour and attitudes of their peers, in order to fit in and be accepted by the group. Educational institutions provide a unique context for studying social conformity, as students spend a significant amount of time with their peers in an environment that emphasizes socialization and learning. Studies indicate that social conformity is a pervasive phenomenon in educational institutions, with students often feeling pressure to conform to the norms and expectations of their peer group. The study identifies a range of factors that contribute to social conformity, including the desire for acceptance and belonging, fear of rejection and isolation, and the influence of peer pressure. The review article also highlights the potential negative consequences of social conformity, including the suppression of individuality and creativity, and the reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudice. The implications of these findings are discussed in relation to educational practice and policy, with suggestions for strategies to promote individuality and critical thinking, and to mitigate the negative effects of social conformity in educational institutions.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Social Conformity, Peer Relationships, Conformity Behaviour.*

## INTRODUCTION

Extensive research in the literature has delved into the impact of social interactions on the behaviour of children and adolescents. Researchers have explored the effects of parents, teachers, and peers on children's behaviour, including their compliance with and conformity to the norms of their social groups. The inclination of youths to be swayed by their peers has prompted scholars to explore the concept of behavioural conformity across a spectrum of domains, such as despair, impulsiveness, and irritability.

Several studies have shown that children and adolescents may adjust their behaviour to match the aggressive conduct of their peers over time. For instance, a longitudinal study conducted on preschool and kindergarten Females who were young and exhibited high levels of externalizing behaviours at first became even more aggressive over time as they spent more time with aggressive peers (Hanish et al., 2005). Similarly, experiments involving Male youths in their teenage years, who are pursuing secondary education and have been exposed to the audacious and perilous conduct of their fellow male classmates have shown that boys tend to conform to such behaviours, especially if the peers have a high social status and exhibit impulsive behaviours (Cohen and Prinstein, 2006). The effects of social conformity are not limited to externalizing behaviours. Internalizing behaviours, such as depression, can also be influenced by social interactions. A longitudinal study conducted on middle school students

found that individuals who have best friends with depression and are associated with them report experiencing more depression over a period of time. (Stevens and Prinstein, 2005).

Asch (1956) first introduced conformity behaviour, which depicts the inclination of individuals to comply with the viewpoints of the majority when faced with group pressure or significant risks. Under such circumstances, people tend to place less reliance on their own convictions and evaluations, and more on the beliefs and judgments of the group. Even if the majority's assertion is incorrect, individuals may still conform to it. However, research on this topic in the field of education has been limited. Studies have shown that gender conformity pressure may lead to higher academic achievement for female adolescents compared to male adolescents (Egan & Perry, 2001; Heyder et al., 2021;) Asch's (1956) experiment found that college students exhibited conformity when comparing bus routes. Additionally, Grown-ups are predisposed to conform when presented with the opportunity to acquire monetary rewards. (Bhanot & Williamson, 2020). Hence, the desire of undergraduates to seek employment or pursue postgraduate studies after obtaining a degree may encourage them to embrace conformity. Thus, further exploration of the factors that may affect college students' conformity behaviours is necessary in the field of education.

Although certain scholars contend that conformity could stifle creativity, (Van Hook & Tegano, 2002). It is irrefutable that a considerable number of contemporary students display conformity behaviour, a trend that has typified students in the past as well in relation to their cognitive engagement and educational processes (Trent & Craise, 1967). The adherent behaviour exhibited over the course of learning is referred to as "learning conformity behaviour." The impact of peer influence on childhood behaviour extends beyond negatively-valenced domains, as research has shown that peers can also play a significant role in shaping academic achievement and motivation. During middle childhood, children tend to Create companionships and peer associations grounded on academic motivation, which then predicts their own level of determination at the conclusion of the educational year, even after regulating for their initial level of academic drive. This process involves both a selection effect, where children choose friends and peers with similar levels of academic motivation, and a socialization effect, where children are susceptible to the impact of academic involvement and motivation demonstrated by their peer companions (Altermatt and Pomerantz, 2003). Interestingly, these effects endure over time even as peer groups experience changes in their membership. Throughout the duration of the academic year. Despite the fact that the constitution of every peer association may change, the motivational profile of each group remains relatively stable, indicating that the effects of socialization are still apparent. (Kindermann, 1993, 2007). Additionally, empirical studies have revealed that conversing with a friend regarding academic choices can enhance similarity in decision-making among friends (Berndt et al., 1990). Collectively, they demonstrate a substantial impact on academic accomplishments, involvement, and drive. This underscores the importance of considering peer relationships and their potential impact when designing educational interventions aimed at promoting academic success.

*What is "social conformity"?*

Social conformity concerns the behaviour of adjusting one's conduct or convictions to conform with those of a faction or populace. It involves the pressure to conform to social norms, values, and expectations that are prevalent within a particular social context. This can include anything from the way individuals dress, speak, or even think. Social conformity can manifest in a variety of ways, ranging from subtle to more overt forms of pressure. Peer pressure, for instance, is a common example of social conformity in which individuals feel the need to conform to the attitudes and conduct of their peers to be accepted or avoid disapproval. Social

conformity can also occur through socialization, where individuals learn and internalize norms and values that are prevalent in their social environment. There are several factors that can contribute to social conformity. One such factor is the need for social acceptance and belongingness. Humans are social beings and have a natural tendency to seek out social connections and relationships. This can lead to a desire to conform to social norms and values that are prevalent within a particular social context in order to gain acceptance and a sense of belonging.

Another factor is the influence of authority figures or opinion leaders. Individuals may conform to the attitudes and behaviours of these figures as they are seen as credible and knowledgeable sources of information. Similarly, conformity can also be driven by the desire to be perceived as competent or knowledgeable, particularly in situations where individuals are unsure of how to behave or what is expected of them. While social conformity can be beneficial in promoting social cohesion and facilitating communication and understanding within a group, it can also have negative consequences. In some cases, conformity can lead to "groupthink," a phenomenon wherein group members prioritize conformity over independent decision-making and critical thinking, leading to poor decisions and outcomes. Additionally, conformity can stifle individual creativity and self-expression, leading to a lack of diversity and innovation within a society or group.

Overall, social conformity is a multifaceted phenomenon that is influenced by various factors, such as the desire for social acceptance, the influence of authority figures, and the desire to be perceived as competent or knowledgeable. Understanding social conformity is crucial in promoting social cohesion and individual autonomy while avoiding the negative consequences that can arise from conformity pressures.

#### *The process of conformity*

The reinforcement hypothesis has been widely used by researchers to explain why individuals adhere to the beliefs and conduct of their peers. According to this theory, individuals conform because engaging in normative behaviours is often associated with rewards, whether real or perceived (Bandura, 1986). Research in social psychology involving adult populations suggests that people conform to satisfy three primary goals: accuracy, affiliation, and self-concept, and accomplishing these objectives is intrinsically gratifying. (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In essence, behaviours that are executed by the majority of one's circle of peers are deemed fitting and right. since they represent the consensus among the group. Adopting this behaviour based on consensus is satisfying as it implies that the conduct is socially approved.

Moreover, people may choose to emulate the behaviour of their circle of peers to reinforce their affiliation with the group. In such cases, conforming to the attitudes and behaviours of peers reduces the likelihood of disapproval by other members of the group and increases one's sense of belonging. Finally, individuals may conform to specific behaviours and attitudes to sustain a positive self-evaluation. Self-assessment is partly influenced by the groups with which individuals identify. Hence, engaging in behaviour that aligns with the norms and expectations of the peer group, and conforming to their actions, as suggested by previous research (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Cialdini et al., 2005). The existing body of research on conformity behaviour in college students suggests that the learning process has a significant impact on their behaviour. According to Yuan et al. (2017), the process of learning adaptation is believed to play a significant role in shaping negative behaviour among college students. Furthermore, Chagnon (2017) found that learning adaptation is positively and significantly related to conformity behaviour. During the learning process, how students respond to different situations can impact their ability to learn, their contentment, and their personal fulfillment. It can also improve their relationships with teachers and classmates, leading to a positive and harmonious

environment between students and their schools. During the learning process, Students have a proclivity to comply with the beliefs and conduct of their group of companions. during their college years (Piaget, 1964). Learning from peers can also be considered a form of conformity. This behaviour is crucial for students as it enables them to gain knowledge and behaviour from their peers and instructors, and conform to the expectations of their academic environment.

Furthermore, attachment plays a significant role in determining behaviour, as indicated by Buist et al.'s (2004) study. Smith et al. (1999) found that attachment has an impact on how individuals behave in group settings. Previous studies have highlighted. The correlation between personal attachment characteristics and social behaviour. Research has shown that individuals with different attachment styles exhibit distinct behaviours in their relationships. Specifically, people who possess an assured attachment manner are more inclined to engage in harmonious interactions with others and Feel more content with their interpersonal connections. (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy et al., 1998; Main et al., 1985; McCormack et al., 2005). According to Bowlby's attachment theory, the cognitive and emotional factors present in an affectionate relationship have a significant impact on the way individuals behave (Collins, 1996). When college students establish relationships with their peers, they are more likely to adopt conformist behaviour while studying, which results in better academic performance and a stronger commitment to their chosen profession.

Manheim (1998) argues that as children move through their school years, they are grouped with peers who are of the same age as them, amplifying the restrictions and possibilities for each age group. Taiwo (2004) suggests that children often choose peer groups outside of their homes that do not conform to adult standards, and they may strive to adhere to the group's ethics to avoid rejection, which can negatively impact their learning. Grulund (1990) proposed that being accepted by a peer group can have a positive impact on a child's social relationships and reduce the emotional tension associated with learning. This, in turn, can enable them to concentrate more on their academic tasks and feel more secure in their learning environment.

These perspectives suggest that being accepted by a peer group can have a positive impact on a child's learning. Even a child who may not excel academically can benefit from being part of a group that is inclined to study. Furthermore, children often learn more easily within their peer groups, preferring to be corrected by their peers rather than their teachers. Ezewu (1992) stresses the importance of schools. Utilizing the energies of peer groups to facilitate rather than hinder positive learning outcomes This involves helping students understand the importance of choosing their friends wisely, as their attitudes toward learning can be influenced by the peer group they belong to, both positively and negatively. Peer groups are critical to adolescent development, providing a supportive cushion during the fragile time of identity formation. The boundaries set by peer groups enable children to internalize values that shape their character.

Research conducted with children indicates that conformity to peer group behaviour may also be driven by appreciation. In particular, children tend to exhibit practices that are appreciated by their group of companions, while avoiding behaviours that are reprimanded by the group (Brown et al., 1986). The theory is particularly attractive because a lot of current research concentrates on adherence with adverse contexts, like dangerous or aggressive behaviour. Studies suggest that children are particularly prone to conforming to the adverse actions of high-status peers (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006; Shi & Xie, 2012). The assumption is that children who have influential social standing offer more social esteem and serve as positive examples of acceptable social demeanour, boosting the attractiveness of replicating their conduct. Children may opt to conform, even when engaging in risky or unfavourable behaviours, to gain the approval of socially dominant peers. This behaviour could be attributed to a desire for acceptance and a sense of belonging, even at the cost of potential negative consequences. In

the academic domain, children may conform to gain positive reinforcement. This behaviour may be motivated by the desire to please authority figures or receive recognition and rewards for academic achievements. As an example, Sage and Kindermann (1999) found that children who exhibit on-task behaviours within academically-oriented peer groups are rewarded with approval contingencies from their peers. In contrast, groups that are less focused on academics, there may not be positive reinforcement for on-task behaviours from other members of the group.

### *Vulnerability to Peer Pressure*

Despite the extensive evidence supporting the reinforcement hypothesis, not all peer interactions lead to behavioural conformity. In other words, the interactions between peers may be influenced by a variety of factors that could determine whether or not behaviour change takes place. These factors could include the nature of the group, the behaviour in question, and the characteristics of the individuals involved. Exposure to high-status peers may not necessarily result in all children conforming to the behaviours of influential others. For instance, studies show that social apprehension in a target child influences the level to which they follow the conduct of their group companions. Compared to children with low social anxiety, those with high social anxiety are more prone to displaying aggressive and impulsive behaviours (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006) and exhibiting thinking that could lead to depression (Prinstein, 2007). Depression has the capacity to function as a moderating factor, altering the association between social anxiety and behaviours like risk-taking and aggression. The effect of depression may be influenced by factors like self-esteem, cognitive biases, and coping strategies (Prinstein et al., 2001). Conformity to positive peer behaviours is not well understood in the literature, as much of the research has focused on reducing negative attitudes and behaviours. However, it is believed that the same social rewards that motivate conformity to negative behaviours may also motivate conformity to positive behaviours. Nonetheless, various factors may moderate the relationship between conformity and positive behaviours.

Academic motivation is a potential moderator of conformity to positive behaviours. This means that the level of motivation that a child has towards academic pursuits could influence their likelihood to conform to positive behaviours exhibited by their peers. Children who have a low perception of their academic ability or do not prioritize academic achievement may exhibit less conformity towards positive academic behaviours demonstrated by their peers. (Durik et al., 2006; Eccles et al., 1998). This is because children who lack confidence in their academic abilities may believe that they are not capable of emulating their peers' behaviours, even if they would result in social rewards. In addition to academic motivation, other factors may moderate conformity to positive behaviours. For example, a child's cultural background and values may impact their willingness to conform to certain behaviours (Mao & Huang, 2013). Studies have indicated that conformity to positive behaviours may be influenced by the gender makeup of peer groups, with females being more inclined than males to comply with a positive mindset for better educational conduct (Eccles et al., 1998).

In addition to the reinforcement hypothesis, social identity theory suggests that the quality of relationship between the individual and their respective peer group is a moderating variable for conformity behaviour. According to this theory, the strength of an individual's relationship to a specific group of peers is a crucial determinant of whether or not they conform to peer group behaviour. The level of adherence to peer group norms is influenced not only by the norms themselves, but also by the extent to which the individual identifies with the group on a social level. Therefore, the social context in which the behaviour occurs and the individual's relationship to the group are both relevant factors to consider. Previous studies have supported this proposition with adolescents as the focus. Their research revealed that children who

possess a stronger sense of group identification are more inclined to comply with the misconduct actions of their friends throughout the academic year, compared to children who have weaker levels of group identification.

#### *Adapting and Conforming: How Peer Groups Shape Learning Behaviours*

As per Piaget's theory of cognitive development, adaptation refers to modifying an individual's initial behavioural tendencies to meet the demands of the environment (Piaget, 1964). The cognitive learning process involves two interrelated processes: assimilation and accommodation, which together constitute the process of adaptation (Flavell, 1985). The term "learning adaptation" used in this study pertains to the self-regulating learning behaviours of individuals who are conscious of their internal and external surroundings, and make adjustments accordingly during the learning process. This type of behaviour assists individuals in maintaining a mutually beneficial and interactive relationship with their surroundings, promoting a state of harmony (Tian & Lu, 2018).

The term "learning conformity behaviour" pertains to the conduct of persons during the school learning process, which is influenced by the behaviour of their peer group and leads to the individual aligning their behaviour with that of the group. Lascu and Zinkhan (1999) proposed a model of conformity influence factors that suggests that various group-related factors, such as the degree of interdependence and interaction among members, the attractiveness of the group, and the previous success of the group, can have an impact on conformity. Rifik and Mullan (2007) note that an optimal group would facilitate learning among pupils of diverse ethnicities and abilities, while also encouraging individual responsibility towards the group. As a result, college students often search for groups that encourage and motivate their learning style, which promotes good adaptability and enhances assimilation-based learning. Conversely, Academic behaviour that does not conform to the instructional model during the learning experience, and does not result in changes to one's learning approach, is regarded as maladaptive (Piaget, 1964).

According to Collins' (1996) attachment theory model, an individual's internal working model has a direct impact on their cognitive and emotional responses, which in turn affect their behaviour. The internal working model represents an individual's efforts to seek comfort and security and reflects their interactions with the environment. As such, attachment plays a crucial role in learning adaptation and conformity behaviour, which refer to an individual's ability to adjust their learning behaviour to suit their environment and their tendency to conform to group behaviour. Studies have demonstrated that attachment characteristics have a moderating impact on learning adaptation and conformity behaviour. For instance, La Flair et al. (2015) discovered that avoidant attachment had a favourable influence on intimate violence during periods of depression, while Busuito et al. (2014) noted that insecure attachment subsequent to childhood abuse had a favourable impact on disorders related to the expression of emotions during adulthood. Meanwhile, according to Lavy (2017), attachment insecurities were linked to negative associations with students' performance in project groups. This suggests that higher levels of attachment have a positive impact on group learning. The current study proposes that peer attachment serves as a moderator in the association between college students' adaptability in learning and their tendency to Adapt to the learning patterns of their group companions.

More specifically, strong emotional ties between an individual's personal beliefs and those of their peers can increase their capacity to adapt to new learning situations while also promoting adherence to group learning behaviours. Conversely, weak peer attachment may impede both adaptability and conformity to group learning behaviours. Peer attachment plays a crucial role in shaping conformity in learning behaviours among college students. The stronger the

emotional bond between peers, the more likely they are to engage in conformist learning behaviour, a finding supported by previous research (Neuhaus et al., 2020; Wang, 2017; de Guzman & Carlo, 2004; Oldfeld et al., 2015;). Collins' (1996) attachment theory model highlights the importance of cognitive and emotional factors in determining behaviour in attachment relationships. Conformity-learning behaviour is more likely to occur with a stronger attachment bond. Positive peer relationships serve as a foundation for students, motivating them to pursue their goals (Jin et al., 2019). When students share similar objectives, they are more likely to engage in conformity learning behaviours.

According to research studies such as Neuhaus et al. (2020) and Wang (2017), peer attachment can have a significant impact on behaviour, including learning and risk-taking behaviour. Peer attachment has been found to have an impact on youth behaviour, as shown in studies by de Guzman and Carlo (2004), Oldfeld et al. (2015), and Walters (2020). According to Collins' (1996) attachment theory model, attachment relationships can influence individuals' cognition and emotions, which can subsequently affect their stimulus to a particular situation. The stronger the bonded relationship, the more likely individuals are to conform to learning behaviours. Having a good social connection with peers can act as a secure foundation that motivates folks to work towards achieving their goals (Jin et al., 2019).

As Asch (1956) suggested, adherence to group norms may not necessarily result in favourable outcomes in all situations. In situations where learning is particularly challenging or risky, individuals may rely less on their own beliefs and judgments and instead conform to the incorrect decisions of the majority. This can decrease their independence in learning and result in an over-reliance on peer attachment. Therefore, It is crucial to instill in college students the capability of independent thinking and striking a balance between reliance on peers and individuality, which are fundamental skills of successful individuals in the modern era. (Prensky, 2014; Silva, 2009; Tirri, 2016).

According to the findings of this study, students who have good learning adaptation skills and have established strong communication and trusting relationships with their peers are more likely to conform to the group's learning behaviour. The study results indicate that students with superior learning adaptation and robust connections based on trust and communication with their peers tend to display more conformity in their learning. This can enhance their ability to tackle academic challenges, instill them with greater self-confidence, and enable them to finish academic assignments within deadlines. However, the trend of people following investment decisions and blindly imitating Internet celebrities, resulting in excessive consumption, calls for a careful approach towards promoting conformity in society.

### **INFLUENCE OF PEER PRESSURE ON LEARNING CONFORMITY**

Neuhaus et al. (2020): This research investigated how attachment affects behaviour and found that attachment can impact behaviour. Particularly, the research revealed that individuals with stronger attachment to peers tend to conform in their learning behaviour. This finding aligns with the principles of attachment theory, which propose that an individual's cognition and affect in attachment connections have a considerable impact on their behavioural reactions.

- Wang (2017): This study explored how peer attachment affects risk-taking behaviour. The study discovered that individuals with stronger peer attachment are less likely to engage in risky behaviour. This aligns with attachment theory, which suggests that individuals with stronger attachment relationships tend to seek stability and security.
- De Guzman & Carlo (2004): This research examined how peer attachment impacts youth behaviour. The study found that individuals with stronger peer attachment tend

to exhibit positive behaviours, such as academic achievement and prosocial behaviour. This supports attachment theory, which suggests that attachment relationships provide a secure base from which individuals can explore and engage with the world.

- Oldfield et al. (2015): This study investigated how peer attachment affects mental health and well-being. The research found that individuals with stronger peer attachment tend to experience fewer mental health problems and report higher levels of well-being. This supports attachment theory, which proposes that attachment relationships provide a sense of support and security.
- Walters (2020): This study explored how peer attachment affects substance use among adolescents. The study found that individuals with stronger peer attachment are less likely to engage in substance use. This aligns with attachment theory, which suggests that individuals with stronger attachment relationships tend to seek security and stability.

### **THE IMPACT OF PARENTS ON STUDENTS' PEER RELATIONSHIPS**

- Taiwo (1996) asserts that parents are a child's initial point of contact and play a vital role in instilling their morals and ethics. The initial upbringing provided by the family establishes the kind of community a child will belong to, and a child from a well-regulated household will find it difficult to associate with a group consisting of delinquents. Parents should prioritize getting to know their child's friends both inside and outside the home, and increase their availability to their children to facilitate this.
- Hake (2006) recommends that parents need to be educated on appropriate discipline, as being overly permissive or strict can pose risks. Proper education for parents should incorporate knowledge on how to handle adolescents and their specific needs. Parents of secondary school students should be informed that their child is undergoing a new level of consciousness and is striving to find their place not only among their peers but also in the broader society. Parents should continue to set a good example and be role models for their children. Offspring from broken homes are commonly linked with severe disagreement and disharmony and are inclined to imitate their parents by engaging in incessant disputes and altercations with their companions, peers, and kin at their domicile. They may also form bad gangs at school, and this can lead to juvenile delinquency.
- According to Anderson (2002), a commonly reported outcome of extensive research on the causes of delinquent behaviour is that children who engage in delinquent behaviour are more likely to come from homes that have experienced divorce compared to those who do not engage in such behaviour. Nonetheless, the crucial factor associated with the emergence of delinquent behaviour is the lack of sufficient parental supervision.

### **INFLUENCE OF EDUCATORS ON THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF STUDENTS' PEER GROUPS**

Working with students in small groups has been found to be a crucial factor in the success of academic achievement in schools, as it goes beyond individual instruction. Teachers must assist work groups in building their own cohesion and continually resolving internal problems. Teachers are tasked with the responsibility of assisting each student in reaching their maximum potential, despite the numerous challenges and ever-changing circumstances that may impede their progress. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for teachers to establish a conducive learning environment, comprehend group dynamics, and employ effective teaching strategies.



- Bocook (2006) argues that teachers can establish strong relationships with their students by gathering information about their abilities, home life, environmental problems, and emotional issues, and using this information to plan their work.
- According to Getzels (2009), indirect influence is a more effective way to facilitate group action than direct influence, as it allows teachers to shape the group's behaviour without imposing their will on the group. Teachers who are flexible, innovative, and knowledgeable can motivate students to engage actively in both academic and non-academic activities. The level of effectiveness in learning is determined by the teacher's guidance. It is important for teachers to recognize that not all students are equally effective when working in groups and may not actively contribute to the group's work.
- Aldridge (2011) posits that there are students who join groups not to contribute but to evade accountability and conflicts in real-life situations, banking on their fellow group members to handle the tasks. In such cases, interactive teaching influence and dialogue/discussion can be used as antidotes.
- Ceane (2009) argues that successful teaching depends on accepting, applauding, and attending to students' needs. If a teacher notices a talented student in a less motivated group, it's crucial to encourage and support them to enhance their learning and reduce the teacher's controlling role.

Exploring the relationship between social conformity and real-life impact through various experiments.

Asch conformity experiments (1951): In this classic experiment, participants were asked to compare a standard line to three comparison lines and indicate which comparison line was most similar in length to the standard line. In some trials, confederates intentionally gave incorrect responses, and the study found that participants were more likely to conform to the incorrect responses when in a group setting. This experiment demonstrates the power of social influence and the tendency to conform to group norms even when they conflict with one's own judgment.

Milgram obedience experiments (1961): In this series of experiments, participants were instructed to administer electric shocks to a confederate when the confederate answered questions incorrectly. The study found that participants were willing to administer painful shocks even when they believed it could cause harm to the confederate, suggesting a willingness to conform to the perceived authority of the experimenter.

- Sherif's autokinetic effect experiment (1935): Participants in this study were instructed to observe a single point of light in a dark room and provide an estimation of the distance that the point of light traveled. The study found that when participants were tested individually, they gave a wide range of estimates. However, when tested in a group, participants began to conform to the group's estimate, suggesting the influence of social norms.
- Crutchfield's conformity experiment (1955): This experiment involved presenting participants with a series of visual stimuli and asking them to identify which stimulus matched a target stimulus. Participants were tested individually but were led to believe they were part of a group. The study found that participants conformed to the group's responses even when they were clearly wrong, demonstrating the power of group influence.
- Moscovici's blue-green colour perception experiment (1969): In this experiment, participants were shown a series of blue-green colour slides and asked to identify the color. In some trials, confederates intentionally gave incorrect responses, identifying the slides as green rather than blue. The study found that participants were more likely

to conform to the incorrect responses when in a group setting, highlighting the power of social influence to affect perception.

## **CONCLUSION**

Interacting with peers is one of the many elements that aid learning, and it does not happen in isolation. Hence, it can be stated that the peer group with whom a child associates has a significant impact on their learning. The peer group can either promote or impede the learning process of a student. This research examines the extent to which the peer group influences the academic performance of students, and it reveals that a student who struggles academically may improve their performance when they belong to a group that fosters effective learning. Additionally, the study shows that unsupervised students are more likely to fall in with bad groups. However, the research also reveals that students tend to associate with peers who share their age and ethnicity. Furthermore, it indicates that students tend to prioritize their relationships with friends over those with their parents and teachers, which may be due to the attitudes of the latter. As revealed by the findings, teachers can effectively use the peer group to enhance classroom interaction and participation, and peers can also serve as a source of motivation for academic achievement.

The educational implications of this study are as follows:

1. To bring about positive changes in students' performance, it is necessary to pay more attention to their relationships with their peers both inside and outside the classroom.
2. If a student who is not proficient in academics is welcomed into a study-oriented peer group, their academic performance can improve.
3. Students from high and middle socioeconomic status families generally have higher academic standards, and It is recommended that children from wealthier families are prompted to socialize with peers from underprivileged backgrounds to enable them to have equal access to resources and reap academic benefits.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be proposed:

1. Educators must comprehend the significance of peer groups in a child's learning process and utilize it as a tool to promote learning.
2. Teachers should utilize peer groups as study groups to foster productive classroom interactions. Teachers should strike a balance between being too strict or too permissive to promote healthy teacher-student relationships.
3. It is recommended that students endeavor to establish or become part of communities that prioritize learning to enhance the efficiency of their education.
4. Parents must make sure their children are well-monitored and motivate them to interact with peers who can positively influence their education, both within and outside the school setting. The influence of peer groups is a vital aspect of learning, and all stakeholders, including educators, parents, and students, must make additional efforts to utilize it effectively to enhance education.

Overall, while conformity to positive peer behaviors is not as well studied as conformity to negative behaviors, it is clear that various factors can impact the extent to which children conform to their peers' positive behaviors. Further research is needed to better understand these moderating factors and how they influence children's social and academic behaviors.

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