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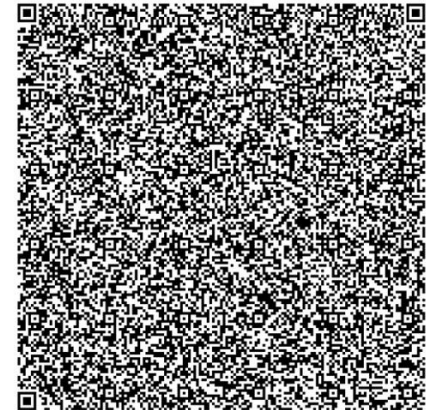
Influence of Peer Group on Academic Motivation among Undergraduate Students

Rebati Das¹

Abstract

Academic motivation plays a significant role in determining students' learning engagement and overall academic success. Among the various factors influencing motivation, peer group influence on academic motivation of students is considered one of the most significant during the undergraduate stage. Students spend considerable time with peers in academic and social settings, which may influence their attitudes toward learning, study habits, and academic aspirations. The present study aims to review existing literature on the influence of peer groups on academic motivation among undergraduate students, the relationship between peer group and academic motivation and also the positive and negative effects of peer group influence on academic motivation. Relevant research articles were collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar and peer-reviewed journals, e-books in the fields of education and psychology. The review indicates that peer groups can exert both positive and negative influences on students' academic motivation. Positive peer relationships promote collaborative learning, academic support, and which enhance students' motivation and academic engagement. Conversely, negative peer pressure may lead to decreased motivation, distraction, and poor academic outcomes. The findings highlight the importance of creating supportive peer learning environments in higher education institutions to foster students' academic motivation and achievement.

Keywords: Peer group, Academic motivation, Peer influence, Undergraduate students.



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Introduction:

Nowadays inadequate information in real and pressing problem among several undergraduate students. Over the years, undergraduate students are being motivated through several methods and strategies such as prize giving, rewards, instant job opportunities, etc. Through these methods students have gotten great results, but because of overuse, some students are being demotivated. (Allen Mendler 2009). It refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate students to participate in academic activities and strive toward educational goals. In the context of higher education, academic motivation is influenced by several factors like psychological, social, and environmental, among which peer group influence is considered one of the most significant. Peer groups consist of individuals of similar age or status who interact frequently and share experiences, attitudes, and behaviors that may shape students' academic attitudes and motivation (Lu, 2025). Their interpersonal connections often influence their academic behavior, aspirations, and willingness to learn. Positive peer interactions can enhance collaborative learning, increase academic interest, and foster constructive study habits. In contrast, negative peer pressure may result in decreased academic motivation and poor academic performance. (Sen, I. & et.al, 2025) Motivation refers to the factors that contribute to human behavior and decision-making. This term describes any phenomenon that motivates people to pursue specific goals. The importance of early motivation to future academic success among undergraduates' is becoming remarkable because academic motivation may have influence on

¹ Student, Kanyashree University, Krishnagar, Nadia, West Bengal, India

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academic achievement. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated do so for the pleasure of learning, instead of external rewards (Slavin, 2006). In contrast, those who are extrinsically motivated to learn, are motivated to learn for external rewards that learning will bring (Slavin, 2006).

In contemporary higher education environments, peer interaction has become increasingly significant due to collaborative learning strategies, group activities, and social networking platforms. Studies have shown that peer influence contribute significantly to students' academic motivation, engagement, and academic achievement.

Review of Related Literature:

Several researchers have examined the influence of peer groups on students' academic motivation and performance. Online peer interaction enhances student motivation; barriers such as technological limitations and communication constraints significantly mediate this effect. Therefore, demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic level do not significantly moderate this relationship, challenging conventional assumptions about digital learning engagement. (Kulal & et.al, 2025). Peer influence generally has a positive impact on students' academic motivation, leading to improved learning outcomes and performance. The authors emphasized that supportive peer environments encourage collaboration, enhance motivation, and foster positive learning behaviors. (Ahmed & et al, 2024). Peer academic norms and peer support significantly predict students' academic motivation. The study reported that supportive peer relationships contribute positively to students' interest in learning, whereas excessive social activities with peers may negatively affect academic motivation. (Bamidele, A., 2026). Peer influence is not simply positive or negative but depends on the nature of interactions within the group. According to the study, peers can indirectly influence academic motivation by increasing students' confidence, engagement, and sense of belonging in academic settings. (Lu, Y., 2025). Peer relationships significantly influence both academic motivation and personal development. The study highlighted that positive peer interactions can improve students' academic outcomes, while negative peer pressure may lead to stress, reduced motivation, and poor academic performance. (Sen & et al., 2025). A significant relationship between peer group influence and academic performance among undergraduate students. The findings indicated that students often adopt behaviors and attitudes exhibited by their peer groups, which may either enhance or hinder their academic engagement and motivation (Filade & et al. ,2019).

Need of the Study:

At the undergraduate stage, students spend a considerable amount of time interacting with their peers, which can influence on their academic motivation either positively or negatively. Supportive peer groups may enhance collaborative learning, goal setting, and persistence in academic tasks, while negative peer influence may lead to reduced interest in studies and poor academic engagement. In the present scenario, where social interaction and peer influence are increasingly prominent, it becomes important to understand how peer groups affect motivation towards students learning outcomes. So the present study aims to examine the influence of peer groups on academic motivation among undergraduate students, so that educators and institutions can develop strategies to promote positive peer interaction and enhance students' academic motivation and achievement.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1.To examine the concept of peer group influence in the context of undergraduate education.
- 2.To find out the relationship between peer groups and academic motivation.
- 3.To analyze the positive and negative effects of peer group influence on academic motivation among undergraduate students.

Methodology:

The present study adopts a review-based research methodology. Relevant research articles were collected from various academic databases, e- books and research journals including Google Scholar, Research Gate, and peer-reviewed educational and psychological journals.

Objective wise analysis:

1.Understanding the concept of peer group influence in higher education:

Peer group influence refers to the impact that individuals of similar age and social status have on each other's attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes. In the context of higher education, peer groups play a significant role in shaping students' academic attitudes, study habits, and motivational levels.

According to Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci (2020), social environments, including peer interactions, significantly affect students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by influencing their sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. A study by Filade & et al. (2019) found that peer groups strongly influence students' attitudes toward



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education and academic engagement. Students often imitate the behaviors and values of their peers, which may positively or negatively affect their academic motivation. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2024) highlighted that peer relationships serve as an important social context in which students develop academic aspirations and learning behaviors. Their review emphasized that positive peer interactions encourage academic participation and strengthen students' motivation to achieve educational goals.

2. Relationship between peer groups and academic motivation:

Several studies have explored the relationship between peer group influence and academic motivation among students. These studies indicate that peer relationships significantly affect students' motivation.

According to Ryan and Deci (2020), supportive social relationships, including peer interactions, contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation. Students who experience encouragement and academic support from peers tend to show greater interest in learning and stronger persistence in academic tasks. Lu, Y. (2025) examined the relationship between peer relationships and academic motivation among college students and found that peer interactions positively influence students' sense of belonging and academic engagement. Students who participated in academically oriented peer groups demonstrated higher levels of motivation and better learning outcomes. Sen, S., Roy, S., & Chakraborty, P. (2025) conducted a study among university students and reported that peer influence plays a significant role in shaping students' academic motivation and personal development. Peer influence has a significant role on academic motivation of undergraduate students; this means that group project and participation in classroom activities could predict academic motivation of the students. It can be deduced that students who contributed in classroom activities, group discussions, group readings, etc. would have better performance academically as they are motivated academically. (Okeowo, 2021). Ahmed & et al. (2024) also reported that peer learning environments promote knowledge sharing, collaboration, and mutual encouragement among students. Such environments enhance academic motivation and improve learning outcomes.

These studies collectively demonstrate that peer groups serve as an important factor influencing students' academic motivation and active engagement in academic activities.

3. Positive and negative effects of peer group influence on academic motivation:

Peer group influence can have both positive and negative effect on students' academic motivation depending on the nature of peer interactions and group dynamics.

Positive peer influence often encourages collaborative learning, academic support, and healthy competition. Filade & et al. (2019) found that peer group has significant influence on academic performance of undergraduate students and also suggests to provide preventive counselling services and modify the behaviors of students who perchance have been negatively influenced by peers.

Sen & et al. (2025) observed that excessive social interaction and peer pressure toward non-academic activities may reduce students' academic motivation and focus. Students may become distracted from their studies if their peer groups prioritize social activities over academic responsibilities. Bamidele (2026) found that while supportive peer relationships can improve motivation, negative peer pressure may lead to reduced academic commitment and lower motivation levels. Negative peer pressure can reduce students' motivation toward academic activities. Peers who display low interest in education or engage in non-academic activities may discourage others from focusing on their studies. Negative peer influences may contribute to demotivation of students, decreased academic performance and more stress & anxiety (Tinto 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Conclusion:

The reviewed studies indicate that peer groups influence significantly predicted the academic motivation of undergraduates. Students who contributed in classroom activities, group discussions, group readings, etc. would have better performance academically as they are motivated academically. Peer group influence can have both positive and negative effect on academic motivation of students. Negative peer pressure can reduce students motivation and on the other side positive peer influence can encourage active engagement with learning, enhance academic motivation.

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