

## Social Factors and Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study from Dai Nam University



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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates the impact of peer pressure on students' academic performance, aiming to elucidate the multifaceted nature of peer influences within educational settings. Peer pressure can be categorized into various types, but Moldes et al. (2019) identify four main categories: social belongingness, curiosity, the cultural-parenting orientation of parents, and education. In this study descriptive correlation was used. The study was conducted at Dai Nam University. The results show the relationship between the anticipated level of peer pressure concerning social belongingness, curiosity, the cultural-parenting orientation of parents, and education. The findings of this study indicate a significant relationship between peer pressure and academic performance, with both positive and negative influences observed. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of the social dynamics in educational contexts and offer practical implications for educators, policymakers, and parents in enhancing student academic success.

**KEYWORDS:** Academic Performance, Peer Pressure, Social Belongingness, Curiosity, Cultural-Parenting Orientation

### I. INTRODUCTION

This scientific research investigates the influence of peer pressure on the academic performance of college students at a university. In today's society, the impact of individual peers or entire peer groups is more pronounced compared to the past (Christakis & Fowler, 2009; Adeniyi & Kolawole, 2015). Consequently, individuals often modify their behavior to align with group norms.

A peer is someone of the same age or similar social standing within a group. According to K. Deepika and Dr. N. Prema (2017), individuals with similar interests and backgrounds can also form peer groups. Afolabi (2022) share this view and further explain that a peer group consists of people of the same age or social status. Sarkar, Das, and Banik (2022) agree, noting that people with analogous interests often belong to the same peer group. Both studies by K. Deepika and Dr. N. Prema (2017) and Sarkar, Das, and Banik (2022) identify these peer groups as primary social groups composed of like-minded individuals with shared aesthetic values.

Peer pressure in adolescents is particularly strong towards peer involvement, while pressures against misconduct are ambivalent and vary across communities (Clasen, D., & Brown, B, 1985).

Peer pressure among university students has been a topic of interest in various studies. Ukwayi et al. (2012) found that peer pressure was associated with an increase in tobacco smoking among undergraduate students at the University of Calabar in Nigeria. Reis et al. (2021) focused on peer-to-peer health promotion in higher education, emphasizing the role of student leaders in supporting campus well-being. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2023) examined the moderating role of peer pressure and a positive learning environment in reducing academic procrastination among Chinese medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies collectively shed light on the significant influence of peer pressure on students at university, particularly in relation to substance use, academic performance, and mental health.

Peer pressure has been shown to have a significant impact on students' academic performance at university. Cheatham et al. (1979) found that peer group ratings of performance can be as reliable and valid as ratings from trained observers in academic settings. Xiao et al. (2008) compared the effects of two peer assessment methods on university students' academic writing performance, emphasizing the role of peer evaluation in student satisfaction. This underscores the importance of understanding the impact of peer pressure on students' academic performance.

Lars Lefgren (2004) noted a significant positive impact of educational peer effects on students in Chicago public schools, and this influence becomes more substantial after controlling for group selection bias. Chambel et al. (2005) assessed the relationship between work characteristics, student well-being, and performance, highlighting the importance of peer support in academic life. Hideki, Yoshinori, and Mark (2020) observed that the GPA of friends positively correlates with student GPA and that extracurricular

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activity members also influence academic performance. Fujiyama, Kamo, and Schafer (2020) emphasized the critical role of peer relationships in adolescent development and academic outcomes.

Conversely, some studies highlight the negative impact of peer pressure on academic performance. K. Deepika and Dr. N. Prema (2017) reported that peer pressure contributes to deviant behavior and lower academic performance. Oguntunde et al. (2018) emphasized the need to monitor students' performance in tertiary institutions due to factors such as peer pressure that may lead to a loss of focus. Gs et al. (2021) explored the relationship between student alienation and organizational culture in an educational institution, indicating the potential negative effects of peer pressure on students' well-being and academic success.

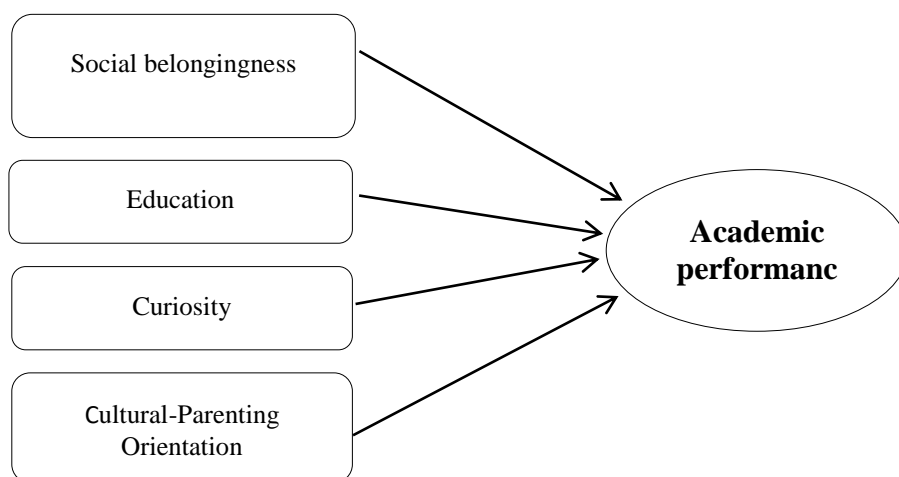
Maqsood et al. (2022) and other similar studies support the notion that peer pressure negatively impacts academic performance. Laidee Dianne Dayanap and Marilou Y. Limpot (2023) found that peer pressure reduces students' motivation, but cooperative learning mitigates this negative effect. Dr. Subhash Sarkar, Goutam Das, and Chaitali Banik (2023) identified differences between private and government schools in terms of peer pressure and academic achievement, although this conclusion is debated.

Overall, the literature suggests that peer pressure can play a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance at university. Understanding the dynamics of peer influence and implementing strategies to support students in navigating peer pressures could be essential for promoting academic success and well-being among university students.

## II. MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

This study explored the relationship between four factors and academic performance in college students. These factors were social belonging, curiosity, cultural parenting styles, and education itself (Moldes et al., 2019). The study used a combination of methods: small surveys and student interviews. The findings of the study suggest that while the influence of peers on grades isn't clear-cut (positive or negative), peer pressure can actually be beneficial. College students may find support from their peers in tackling academic challenges, leading to a more positive outlook.

The model:



Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were developed to guide the investigation of factors influencing peer pressure and student academic performance:

- H1: The level of students' social belongingness impacts college students' academic performance.
- H2: The level of students' curiosity affects college students' academic performance.
- H3: The level of students' cultural-parenting orientation influences college students' academic performance.
- H4: The level of students in education affects college students' academic performance.

## III. PAGE STYLE

The study conducted a survey on 500 students of Dai Nam University. The results obtained 473 qualified questionnaires.

**Table 1. Percent of Gender and Region**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
GENDER		
Male	246	52

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Female	227	48
Total	473	100.0
REGION		
Central VietNam	159	33.6
Northern	239	50.5
Southern	75	15.9
Total	473	100.0

*Source: Compiled from survey results, 2024*

The percent of gender and part of the country table shows that out of 473 people who took part in survey, 48 percent of them are female, and 52 percent are male. This balance is important as it ensures that the study's findings are not biased towards a particular gender and can more accurately reflect the overall student population at Dai Nam University. The near-equal representation of both genders helps in drawing more generalized conclusions about the impact of peer pressure on academic performance. Moving to part of the country, almost all students come from cities and provinces in the north and the central VietNam; in addition, a small minority of individuals come from the south. The survey was conducted at Dai Nam University, located in Hanoi; understandably, most of the people here come from neighboring provinces and from the central region to the north.

**Table 2. GPA**

<i>GPA</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
< 2.00	13	2.8
2.00 - 2.49	11	2.3
2.50 - 3.19	203	42.9
3.20 - 3.59	195	41.2
3.60 - 4.00	51	10.8
Total	473	100.0

*Source: Compiled from survey results, 2024*

The GPA distribution in Table 2 highlights the varying levels of academic performance among students at Dai Nam University. The majority of students fall within the middle to high GPA ranges, suggesting that while many students are performing well, there is a notable group that could benefit from additional academic support.

**High achievers (3.60 - 4.00 GPA):** The top 10.8% of students exemplify academic excellence. These students likely engage in effective study habits, seek help when needed, and perhaps participate actively in class and extracurricular activities that support their learning.

**Moderate performers (2.50 - 3.59 GPA):** The majority of students (84.1%) fall within this range, indicating generally satisfactory to good academic performance. These students might benefit from targeted interventions to help them achieve higher academic success, such as tutoring programs, study groups, and workshops on effective study techniques.

**Students needing support (< 2.50 GPA):** The 5.1% of students with a GPA below 2.50 are at risk of academic failure and could benefit from intensive academic advising, mentoring, and possibly remedial classes to address their learning gaps and improve their performance.

Understanding the GPA distribution is crucial for developing academic policies and support systems that address the needs of all students. By identifying the students who are struggling, the university can implement targeted support measures to help these students improve their academic outcomes. Additionally, recognizing the achievements of high-performing students can provide insights into effective practices and strategies that can be shared with the broader student body to enhance overall academic performance at Dai Nam University.

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**Table 3. Family's monthly income**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Below 10,000,000 VND	57	12.1
10,000,000 to below 15,000,000 VND	90	19
15,000,000 to below 20,000,000 VND	142	30
20,000,000 to below 30,000,000 VND	117	24.7
30,000,000 to below 40,000,000 VND	54	11.4
40,000,000 VND and above	13	2.8
Total	473	100.0

*Source: Compiled from survey results, 2024*

The distribution of family monthly income among students at Dai Nam University reveals a diverse economic background, which can have significant implications for their academic performance and university experience.

Students from lower-income families (below 15,000,000 VND) may face financial pressures that could affect their academic performance. These students might benefit from financial aid, scholarships, or part-time job opportunities offered by the university to help alleviate their economic burdens.

The largest group of students comes from middle-income families (15,000,000 to below 20,000,000 VND). These students generally have a balanced financial situation, which can positively influence their academic success and allow them to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students from higher-income families (above 20,000,000 VND) have fewer financial worries, enabling them to concentrate more on their studies and take full advantage of the educational resources and opportunities available at the university.

**Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation**

<i>Independent and Dependent Variables</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Academic performance (GPA encoded on 1 - 5)		3.54	0.821
Social Belongingness			
	SB1	3.24	0.883
	SB2	3.4	0.901
	SB3	3.63	0.846
	SB4	3.15	0.879
	SB5	3.57	0.868
Curiosity			
	C1	3.4	0.917
	C2	3.73	0.851
	C3	2.58	0.85
	C4	3.42	0.878
	C5	3.37	0.893
	C6	3.31	0.862
Cultural-Parenting Orientation			
	CPO1	3.15	0.855
	CPO2	3.04	0.9
	CPO3	2.53	0.82
	CPO4	3.05	0.884
	CPO5	3.08	0.861
Education among Peers			
	EP1	3.66	0.911
	EP2	3.52	0.893
	EP3	3.6	0.845

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	EP4	3.2	0.851
	EP5	3.34	0.889

Source: Compiled from SPSS, 2024

Academic performance is the dependent variable in this study. It measures the overall academic success of the students, with a mean of 3.54, suggesting that on average, students rate their academic performance relatively high. The standard deviation of 0.821 indicates a moderate variation in the academic performance scores among the students. The mean scores reflect that students perceive a strong sense of social belongingness and educational support from peers, high levels of curiosity, and moderate influence from cultural-parenting orientations. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of peer pressure and its significant role in shaping academic outcomes.

**Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha**

<i>Dependent variables</i>		<i>Corrected Item - Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted</i>
Social Belongingness		Cronbach's Alpha = 0.902	
	SB1	0.739	0.883
	SB2	0.725	0.885
	SB3	0.724	0.886
	SB4	0.746	0.882
	SB5	0.788	0.876
Curiosity		Cronbach's Alpha = 0.928	
	C1	0.786	0.916
	C2	0.784	0.916
	C3	0.778	0.917
	C4	0.788	0.915
	C5	0.765	0.918
	C6	0.842	0.908
Cultural-Parenting Orientation		Cronbach's Alpha = 0.884	
	CPO1	0.737	0.855
	CPO2	0.746	0.851
	CPO3	0.753	0.849
	CPO4	0.755	0.848
	CPO5	0.681	0.892
Education among Peers		Cronbach's Alpha = 0.852	
	EP1	0.704	0.807
	EP2	0.698	0.81
	EP3	0.682	0.817
	EP4	0.688	0.815
	EP5	0.675	0.822

Source: Compiled from SPSS, 2024

The results of Cronbach's Alpha test show that the coefficients of all 4 factors are greater than 0.6 and the total correlation coefficients of the scales are all greater than 0.3, so no variables are eliminated, the scales are suitable for further analysis.

**Table 6. Summary of Result**

<i>Regression results table (linear model)</i>				
Independent variables	SB	C	CPO	EP
Standardized Coefficients	0.282***	0.17***	0.216**	0.328***
Adjusted R Square: 0.711				
			**	Sig. 5%
			***	Sig. 1%

Source: Compiled from SPSS, 2024

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Table 6 presents the results of a linear regression analysis examining the relationship between independent variables (social belongingness, curiosity, cultural-parenting orientation, and education among peers) and the dependent variable (academic performance). The standardized coefficients, significance levels, and adjusted R-square value are provided to indicate the strength and significance of these relationships.

Social belongingness has a positive and significant impact on academic performance, with a standardized coefficient of 0.282. This indicates that as the sense of social belongingness increases, academic performance also improves. The significance level at 1% shows a strong and reliable relationship, highlighting the importance of peer connections and feeling accepted within a group for academic success.

Curiosity also positively and significantly influences academic performance, with a standardized coefficient of 0.17. This suggests that students who are more curious and eager to learn tend to perform better academically. The significance level at 1% confirms that this relationship is statistically robust, emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation and the desire to explore new ideas in academic achievement.

Cultural-parenting orientation has a positive effect on academic performance, with a standardized coefficient of 0.216. Although the relationship is slightly weaker than social belongingness and curiosity, it is still significant at the 5% level. This indicates that the influence of cultural and parenting styles contributes to students' academic outcomes, albeit to a lesser extent than peer-related factors.

Education among peers has the strongest positive impact on academic performance, with a standardized coefficient of 0.328. This indicates that educational interactions and support from peers significantly enhance academic performance. The significance level at 1% reinforces the critical role of peer academic support and collaborative learning in promoting student success.

The adjusted R-square value of 0.711 indicates that approximately 71.1% of the variance in academic performance can be explained by the four independent variables (social belongingness, curiosity, cultural-parenting orientation, and education among peers). This high adjusted R-square value demonstrates a strong overall fit of the regression model, suggesting that these variables collectively provide a substantial explanation for differences in academic performance among students at Dai Nam University.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a summary result of the research, it is possible to conclude that the educational experience and social networks have a direct effect on college students. Social belongingness and education among peers are the most influential factors, underscoring the importance of peer support and a sense of community in academic success. Curiosity is also a significant predictor, emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation and a desire to learn in enhancing academic outcomes. Cultural-parenting orientation contributes positively to academic performance, though its impact is relatively moderate compared to peer-related factors.

The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in academic performance, confirming the relevance of these factors in understanding student success. These insights can inform strategies for educators and policymakers to create supportive academic environments that leverage positive peer influences and foster curiosity, ultimately promoting better academic outcomes.

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