

Tara, Group Study Tayo!: Peer Friendship and their role in the Study Habits and Academic Performance of Grade 12 at Mindanao State University-Sulu

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Abstract. This study examined the role of peer friendship in the study habits and academic performance among Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University-Sulu for the 2025–2026 academic year. Specifically, it aimed to determine the levels of peer friendship, study habits, and academic performance, and to identify whether significant relationships exist among these variables. A quantitative descriptive–correlational design was used. Using stratified random sampling, 166 Grade 12 students from the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and General Academic Strand (GAS) were selected from a total population of 290. Data on peer friendship and study habits were gathered through a survey questionnaire adapted from previous studies. Academic performance was measured using students' Grade Point Average (GPA). Descriptive statistics, including mean, were used to assess levels of peer friendship and study habits. Spearman's Rho correlation was employed to examine relationships among variables. Results showed high levels of both peer friendship and study habits. Students also demonstrated very satisfactory academic performance, with an average GPA of 89.8. While peer friendship was significantly correlated with study habits, it showed no significant direct relationship with academic performance. Based on these findings, schools should encourage positive peer interactions and collaborative learning activities to strengthen study habits and support students' academic development.

Keywords: Academic Performance; Correlational Study; Peer Friendship; Study Habits; Senior High School

Introduction

As Nelson Mandela once stated, "Education is the key to success." Education is a powerful weapon and a bridge for hope, dreams, and desires as it carries the key to a brighter future for everyone. However, academic achievement is not solely influenced by one's own effort, because with the unity with buddies or friends who support and celebrate one's academic achievements attained in life in terms of academic ground, it can strengthen and motivate them to strive for their goal as their friends show their support for them.

In the academic journey of students, friendships play a significant role in shaping their attitudes, motivation, and overall performance in school. Peer relationships often provide emotional support, encouragement, and a sense of belonging— all of which are important in fostering effective study habits. In senior high school, where academic pressure is a personal developmental aspect, students often rely on their peers not only for companionship but also for collaboration in learning activities such as group studies.

Friendship is distinguished as a key component of student life. According to a systematic review by Alotaibi et al. (2023), supportive peer relationships contribute to students' academic success by enhancing collaborative learning, building confidence, and motivating persistence in schoolwork. Similarly, the American Federation of School Administrators (2024) emphasizes that friendships can increase student engagement, and create a positive learning environment. Moneva and Legaspiño (2020) also observed that peer influence significantly affects the performance tasks and academic outcomes of senior high school students.

In spite of the growing body of literature highlighting positive effects of peer friendship in terms of academic success, there is still limited research focusing on the potential disadvantages of peer influence— such as distraction, neglecting study, or forgetting what students' role is. Moreover, few studies have particularly examined how peer relationships narrowly influence both study habits and academic performance

among senior high school in the context of Mindanao State University-Sulu. This gap suggests the claim for further investigation to better understand the dual role of peers in students' academic lives.

Thus, this study aims to explore the role of peer friendships in shaping the study habits and academic performance of senior high school students at Mindanao State University-Sulu. Through this, the researchers hope to provide insights that will help improve collaborative learning practices and strengthen positive peer dynamics in the academic environment.

Finally, this research focuses solely on senior high school students of Mindanao State University-Sulu. It will not cover college or junior high students. The study is limited to peer friendships and does not examine other factors such as family influence or socioeconomic background. Data collection will primarily rely on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to personal bias.

Research Question

This study focused on peer friendship and their role in the study habits and academic performance of Grade 12 Students in Mindanao State University-Sulu for the academic year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What is the level of peer friendship of Grade 12 students in Mindanao State University-Sulu?
2. What is the level of study habits of the students?
3. What is the level of academic performance of the students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between peer friendship and the study habits of the students?
5. Is there a significant relationship between peer friendship and the academic performance of the students?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examines the role of peer friendship in the study habits and academic performance of Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University-Sulu during the Academic Year 2025-2026. It focuses on students from the STEM and GAS strands, with 166 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. The study uses a quantitative descriptive-correlational design and gathers data through survey questionnaires and students' GPA. The research is limited to peer friendship, study habits, and academic performance only. Other factors such as family background, socioeconomic status, and motivation are excluded. Findings are limited to the selected respondents only.

Literature Review

Peer Friendships

Shao et al. (2024) showed how peer relationships affect junior high school students' academic achievement by learning motivation and engagement. The study found that students with supportive and friendly peers felt more included and emotionally safe, which boosted their motivation and participation in school activities. This, led to better academic performance. The researchers emphasized the importance of promoting collaboration, peer mentoring, and group learning to build positive peer connections and enhance academic success. Similarly, a study conducted by Kinjaga and Oyoo (2024) revealed that positive peer relationships strongly influence the students' academic performance. Supportive friendships encouraged cooperation, motivation, and emotional support, all of which contributed to improved peer learning outcomes. The researchers recommended that collaboration with teachers, parents, and schools can create learning environments that will lead to promote friendship, teamwork, and study habits among students. Supporting these findings, Alotaibi et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis titled "The Benefits of Friendships in Academic Settings," published in Cureus. They emphasize that friendships significantly contribute to academic success by fostering collaboration, providing emotional support, and increasing motivation, which collectively enhance students' GPA and overall educational experience. Despite variations across regions and methodologies, the evidence consistently shows a positive association between peer relationships and academic performance. Based on these findings, they recommend that educational institutions recognize the significance of employing supportive social environments. By promoting healthy friendships and diverse peer interactions, schools can enhance students' motivation and academic outcomes while managing potential distractions. The authors also suggest that further research should focus on the importance of friendship quality, gender differences, and cultural influences to inform policies that optimize the supportive role of peer relationships in academic setting. Likewise, Fudolin and Dioso (2025) emphasize that peer pressure significantly affects students' academic performance, social behavior, and emotional well-being. While intense peer pressure often led to negative outcomes such as skipping classes, students with high emotional intelligence managed peer influence better and maintained good academic performance. The study highlighted the dual nature of peer pressure, which can either motivate or discourage students. It is recommended that

schools foster emotionally supportive environments, promote positive peer interactions, and provide counseling programs that strengthen healthy relationships. Furthermore, Alsarrani et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review on the link between friendship quality and adolescents' well-being. Their results showed that good-quality friendships improve life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem, while poor friendships and loneliness contribute to depression and anxiety. The researchers emphasized the need for schools to develop programs that help students build strong social and friendship skills to promote mental health and emotional well-being. Consistent with the previous studies, Sholihah et al. (2024) conducted a study on "Analysis of Peer Friendship, Learning Interests, and Biology Learning Results of Class X Students at SMA Plus Bustanul Ulum Puger." The research examined the levels of peer friendship, learning interest, and biology learning outcomes among 86 tenth-grade students. The findings revealed that most students demonstrated high levels of peer friendship (74.4%) and strong interest in learning (69%), which were associated with high biology performance— 46.5% of students fell into the high group and 41.9% into the very high group. The study concluded that positive peer relationships and high learning interest significantly contribute to better academic results. The authors emphasized the influence of both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic social support on students' academic success. They recommended that schools promote positive peer interactions, strengthen students' interest in learning, and further explore the correlations among these factors to enhance academic achievement.

Study Habits

Abenes et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative-descriptive study to explore the study habits of senior high school students at LORMA Colleges who joined online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through thematic analysis of responses from twenty-five randomly chosen students, they found major changes in students' behavior before and during online learning. The results showed that students had lower motivation, altered study schedules, and needed to adjust to new learning materials. Despite these challenges, they developed coping strategies such as managing their time well, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, improving focus, and regularly reviewing lessons. The researchers concluded that online learning required students to develop self-discipline and flexible study habits to keep up with their academic performance. Similarly, Barcenas and Bibon (2022) used a quantitative-correlational study to examine how study habits affect the academic performance of 128 senior high school students from Cagraray Island, Philippines. The findings revealed that although students practiced some study habits like paying attention, memorizing lessons, and reviewing materials, the most effective ones— such as scheduled review, regular reading, and notetaking— were not commonly used. The weak correlation between study habits and academic performance suggested that other factors, such as the home environment and motivation, also influenced students' achievement. The authors recommended that teachers and schools encourage structured study routines and reading programs to improve learning outcomes. Adding to these studies, Garcia (2025) investigated how study habits and the learning environment together affect the academic performance of senior high school students in Statistics and Probability. Using a descriptive-correlational design with 129 Grade 12 students from two schools in Ilocos Sur, the study found that study habits had a stronger positive effect on academic performance than the learning environment. Students showed good motivation and time management but lacked strong note-taking skills and learning resources. Garcia concluded that while factors like classroom conditions and teacher support matter, effective study habits remain the main key to success. The study suggested offering workshops on study skills, better access to learning materials, and mentorship programs to help students manage their learning more effectively.

Academic Performance

Tus et al. (2020) conducted a study among 126 Grade 11 students in Bulacan to explore the relationship between study habits and academic performance. The results showed that most students had moderate study habits and achieved satisfactory to very satisfactory grades. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between study habits and academic performance, indicating that other factors such as motivation or learning environment might play a greater role. The researchers emphasized the need for programs that strengthen note-taking and reading comprehension skills while encouraging further exploration of other determinants of student achievement. Relatively, Almerino et al. (2020) examined the academic performance of K-12 students in Cebu, Philippines, using the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA). Findings indicated that students from STEM and ABM strands performed above average in reasoning, vocabulary, and mathematics, while HUMSS and GAS students performed at average levels, and TVL students scored below average. The study found significant differences among strands, suggesting unequal preparedness for college or work. The researchers recommend a continuous review of the K-12 curriculum to ensure balanced skill development and alignment between students' abilities and chosen academic tracks. In another study, Tus (2020) investigated the effects of academic

stress and motivation on academic performance among senior high school students. The findings revealed that while students experienced moderate academic stress and demonstrated high motivation, there was no significant relationship between these factors and their academic performance. The study suggested that students' satisfactory grades may be attributed to effective coping mechanisms, strong teaching practices, and supportive school programs that promote emotional well-being and engagement. Carroza-Pacheco et al. (2025) analyzed the relationship between resilience and academic performance among secondary education students. Their results showed a strong positive correlation between academic achievement and all dimensions of resilience, particularly internal resources and self-esteem. Resilience accounted for nearly 59% of the variance in academic success, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy, motivation, and self-concept. The researchers concluded that resilience is a critical determinant of academic performance and recommended that schools integrate resilience-building programs focused on emotional regulation and self-awareness. Likewise, Merano (2025) explored the effectiveness of peer study habits in improving the academic performance of Grade 3 Science students at Cabulisan Elementary School. The study, reported a notable increase in students' Mean Percentage Score (MPS) both at the school and district levels after implementing peer study groups. This improvement was linked to collaborative learning, parental involvement, and engaging teaching strategies. The researcher concluded that guided peer learning and teacher-parent collaboration significantly enhance both study habits and academic outcomes. Meanwhile, Brew, Nkietiah, and Koranteng (2021) conducted a narrative literature review examining multiple factors that affect the academic performance of senior high school students. The study found that truancy, poor parental education, and economic stability negatively impact achievement. Conversely, access to adequate learning resources, proper nutrition, and motivated teachers was shown to promote better outcomes. The researcher concluded that academic performance results from the interaction of personal, familial, and institutional factors. They recommended addressing truancy, improving school facilities, ensuring meal programs, and supporting teacher welfare to foster improved academic success. Collectively, these studies emphasize that academic performance is not determined by a single factor but rather by an interplay of cognitive, emotional, environmental, and social influences. Enhancing resilience, providing academic support, improving learning conditions, and fostering positive peer and teacher relationships are all essential strategies to promote student achievement.

Relationship between Peer Friendship and Study Habits

Kaur (2020) explored the various factors that affect academic success among secondary school students, focusing on variables such as study habits, peer influence, and school environment. The study focused on students from both government and private schools in the north zone of Delhi during the academic year 2020–2021, employing a descriptive survey method with a sample size of 600 students selected through multi-stage random sampling. The literature review highlighted the importance of reading habits and study skills in relation to academic performance, referring to studies that examined gender differences and the media's influence on reading interests. It emphasized that individual study habits, motivation, and environmental factors profoundly affect the students' academic success. The study aimed to clarify how these elements contribute to the students' social competence, study habits, and achievement, providing insights for educational strategies and further research in student performance. Similarly, Tikkanen et al. (2024) investigated the role of peer relationships affect study wellbeing among upper secondary students in Finland. Using latent profile analysis on data from 280 students, the researchers identified three distinct peer relationship profiles: one group with functional and supportive relationships, and smaller segments facing emotional or social isolation. Students with less functional peer relationships—characterized by lower empathy and sense of relatedness—were at higher risk of experiencing challenges such as reduced study engagement and increased burnout symptoms. The findings highlighted that peer relationships are complex, involving support, empathy, and relatedness, which all affect students' engagement and mental health. The researchers stressed the importance of fostering empathy skills and social connectedness in the educational environment to enhance students' study wellbeing. However, limitations such as the cross-sectional design and non-representative sample were noted, and further longitudinal research is needed to better understand causal relationships. This research contributed to our understanding of how different types of peer interactions affect the students' academic experiences and mental health, providing valuable insights for targeted support interventions in educational settings. Connectedly, Golsteyn et al. (2021) studied how peer personality traits influence students' academic achievement, focusing on the role of peer friendships and study behaviors. Through various empirical analyses, the researchers found that having peers with specific personality traits, especially persistence, positively impacted students' grades. Notably, students gained the most advantages when their friends displayed high levels of persistence and risk-taking, thereby enhancing their learning habits and academic achievement. These effects were found to be durable and potentially

induce long-term benefits by promoting better study routines and social networks. The study also noted that these peer influences remained significant even after controlling for factors such as peer gender, nationality, and original academic abilities. The findings suggested that peer friendships with persistent and risk-tolerant peers, can shape students' study habits and motivation, creating spillover effects that extend beyond immediate classroom interactions. Moreover, being around such peers may foster the development of valuable social and human capital, which sustains academic engagement over time.

Relationship between Peer Friendship and Academic Performance of Students

The study of Liu (2023) revealed that positive peer relationships, specifically supportive friendships and the academic success of peer are linked to improved academic outcomes among high school students. The study further revealed that female students are more likely to form stronger peer connections, which contribute to their improved academic performance. These findings emphasize the need to encourage healthy peer interactions to support both academic and emotional growth. However, Liu also suggests that further research is required to explore the environmental factors and the fundamental mechanisms influencing this relationship. Similarly, Guo et al. (2024) examined the effect of peer groups on college students' academic performance at Heze University in China. The research shows that strong peer relationship offers emotional and academic support, foster motivation, and create a positive learning environment, which will enhance the students' engagement and academic outcomes. Peer interactions facilitate knowledge sharing, critical thinking, and help lower the academic stress that students might deal with, by that way it supports improving the overall academic outcomes. Empirical analysis shows a positive relationship between strong peer relationships, increased academic engagement, and higher academic performance. The study also indicates the significance of promoting supportive peer environments through activities like group learning to improve academic success and encourage students. In a related study, Furo and Kagu (2020) explored how peer groups influence the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. Their findings showed that peer interactions significantly affect the students' behaviors and academic outcomes. Students who engaged in positive peer relationships generally excelled academically, while those who distanced themselves from supportive peer groups often experienced negative academic consequences, including social isolation and lack of motivation. The study highlighted the crucial role of guiding students toward constructive peer associations and suggested that parents, teachers, and counselors help students form friendships that foster academic success.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. according to Ghanad (2023), quantitative research focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to describe patterns, relationships, or trends within a population. The descriptive-correlational method was used to determine the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. This design that was applied is suitable for the study because it aims to identify the relationship of peer friendship with study habits and academic performance among senior high school students while offering a factual and objective analysis of the gathered data.

Sampling Design

The researchers applied stratified random sampling to make sure that the sample accurately represents the population of Grade 12 students in both strands; the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Strand and the General Academic Strand (GAS). This method assures that both strands are fairly proportionally represented in the study.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in a public senior high school institution located at Capitol Site, Patikul, Sulu. The school offers two academic strands, namely the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand and the General Academic Strand (GAS). The institution provides students with academic programs and learning environments that encourage collaboration, peer interaction, and the development of study habits, making it an appropriate setting for the conduct of this study.

Research Participants

The respondents of this study were Grade 12 Senior High School students from Mindanao State University-Sulu, particularly those enrolled in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

(STEM) strand and the General Academic Strand (GAS). They were chosen because they actively engage in peer friendships and study routines, which are central to the study's focus on peer friendship, study habits, and academic performance. The total population consisted of 290 Grade 12 students, from which 166 respondents were selected through random sampling. The participants included 25 students from GAS 1-12, 24 from GAS 2-12, 34 from GAS 3-12, 25 from STEM 1-12, 27 from STEM 2-12, and 31 from STEM 3-12. Only students who voluntarily gave their consent were included in the study.

Research Instruments

The researchers used survey questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire on peer friendship used a 5-point Likert scale with the following response options: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree. This instrument is adapted from Alaei, M., & Hossiennezhad, H. (2021). The Study Habits questionnaire applied a 5-point Frequency scale consisting of: 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Rarely, 1-Never. This instrument is adapted from Bibon M., & Barcenas J. (2022), while Academic Performance were measured with the used of students' Grade Point Average (GPA). These instruments were intended to gather the necessary data regarding students' peer friendships, study habits, and academic performance. The Grade 12 students of Mindanao State University-Sulu were provided with these questionnaires, which include carefully constructed items designed to determine the influence of peer friendships on their study habits and academic outcomes.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection began after getting permission from the Director of Mindanao State University-Sulu Senior High School and coordinating with the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand and General Academic Strand (GAS) coordinators for the schedule. On the set date, the researchers distributed the survey questionnaires to the Grade 12 students and explained the purpose of the study. After completing the questionnaires, the researchers collected and kept the instruments to ensure accuracy and integrity of the data.

Results and Discussions

Problem 1: What is the level of peer friendship of Grade 12 students in Mindanao State University-Sulu?

Table 1: Level of Peer Friendship of the Grade 12 Students

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. Peer Support enhances my level of knowledge and academic performance.	4.21	Very High
2. The motivation of my friends makes me actively engaged in my studies.	4.27	Very High
3. When I receive peer support, I am equipped with the required knowledge to overcome academic challenges.	4.13	High
4. With the support of my peers I am more likely to pursue further studies and achieve educational goals.	4.12	High
5. My peers help me increase my self-confidence in the classroom.	4.10	High
6. With the help of my classmates, I feel less anxious about my academic performance.	3.99	High
7. With my peers' support, my self-esteem increases.	4.09	High
8. My peers help me develop emotional security in learning.	3.87	High
9. My classmates mostly offer practical help which empowers me to obtain desirable educational outcomes.	3.89	High
10. My peers/classmates offer resources that improve my attention to the available learning materials.	3.96	High
11. When I am provided with my peers' advice, I become more prepared to use learning strategies.	4.09	High
12. My friends' motivation develops my academic performance.	4.11	High
13. My peers' support could create an intimate relationship with other classmates based on educational equality.	3.81	High
14. Peer support fosters a relationship of mutual learning.	3.92	High
15. Peer feedback enhances my critical thinking.	4.05	High
Grand Mean	4.04	High

Table 1 shows the level of peer friendship among Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University-Sulu. Based on the table, the overall mean obtained is 4.04, which corresponds to the interpretation "High". This indicates that the students have a high level of peer friendship inside the classroom. The results conclude that many students maintain good relationships with their peers and frequently engage in positive interactions within the school environment. This indicates that peer friendships play a vital role in strengthening the students' self-esteem, motivation, and involvement in classroom activities. This finding is supported by the study of Black, Warstadt, and Mamas (2025), which explains that friendships play an important role in the students' school experiences, shaping their behavior, attitudes, and engagement in learning. Relatively, Aydoğdu (2023) highlighted that positive peer relationships can significantly contribute to the students' social and academic development, emphasizing that supportive friendships help students feel a sense of belongingness in the school environment, increase their participation in classroom activities, and promote better learning outcomes. This suggests that strong peer friendships of the students can appreciatively influence their overall school experiences and academic engagement.

Problem 2: What is the level of study habits of the students?

Table 2: Level of Study Habits of the Students

Item	Mean	Description
1. How often do you read?	3.80	High
2. Do you take down notes?	3.90	High
3. How often do you review your lectures?	3.81	High
4. Do you memorize the important details in your lesson?	3.96	High
5. Do you scan or use the skimming method if you have a quiz?	3.71	High
6. Do you make a review schedule during your quarterly exam?	4.28	Very High
7. Do you review in advance before the quarterly exam?	3.78	High
8. Do you make a peer/group review?	3.51	High
9. Do you focus well on what the teacher is saying?	4.02	High
10. Do you prepare for classes beforehand and review what you've learned	3.74	High
Grand Mean	3.85	High

Table 2 shows how Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University-Sulu handle their study habits. Based on the table, the overall mean obtained is 3.85, which is interpreted as "High". This verifies that the students demonstrate a high level of study habits. The results imply that most students regularly practice effective study behaviors such as managing their time, reviewing lessons, taking notes, and preparing for examinations. This suggests that the respondents recognize the importance of good study habits, as it makes a difference when it comes to learning and getting good grades. This finding is supported by the study of Labrador et al. (2024), which revealed that good study habits such as time management, reading ability, note-taking, memory, and examination preparation influence students' academic performance. Similarly, Thompson, Vankayalapati, and Taliwal (2024), found that students with organized learning approaches and good study habits achieve better academic results because they can manage their learning tasks more effectively. These findings highlight the importance of developing consistent study habits to improve every student's academic performance.

Problem 3: What is the level of academic performance of the students?

Table 3: Level of Academic Performance of the Students

Academic Performance	Mean	Interpretation
GPA	89.8	Very Satisfactory

Table 3 lays out how Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University-Sulu did in their first semester. The average grade sits at 89.8, which falls into the "Very Satisfactory" category. This result emphasizes that students are achieving strong academic performance and meeting expected academic standards. This suggests that the students are competent when it comes to managing their academic

responsibilities efficiently, which may be influenced by their supportive learning environment and positive study habits. This finding is supported by the study of Monteño et al. (2026), which revealed that students who practice effective study habits such as taking notes, time management, and proper use of learning resources tend to help the students to achieve higher academic performance. Correspondingly, Natanawan (2025) emphasized that factors such as attitude and motivation, as well as the availability of learning resources, can significantly contribute to better academic performance among students. These findings highlight that students who are motivated and supported with effective learning strategies are more likely to perform well academically.

Problem 4: Is there a significant relationship between peer friendship and study habits?

Table 4: Relationship between Peer Friendship and Study Habits

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value	Interpretation
Peer Friendship and Study Habits	0.446***	<.001	Moderate Positive Correlation

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4 presents the relationship between peer friendship and study habits among students. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation analysis shows $r = 0.446$ with a p-value of less than 0.001, emphasizing a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between peer friendship and study habits. This result indicates that students with positive peer relationships may foster encouragement in terms of engaging in group studies, inspiring one another to study consistently, and sharing learning. Peer friendships therefore provide to create a collaborative and academically supportive ambience among students. These findings are supported by previous studies. Galoustian. (2024) highlighted that friends contribute to adolescents' academic behaviors, which can include study routines and engagement in school-related tasks. Similarly, Vit et al. (2024) found that adolescents often associate their academic, behaviors, and ambitions with their friends, emphasizing that peer friendships can improve causal motivation and study habits. Both studies suggest that fostering positive peer relationships can develop students' study behaviors and learning outcomes.

Problem 5: Is there a significant relationship between peer friendship and academic performance?

Table 5: Relationship between Peer Friendship and Academic Performance

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value	Interpretation
Peer Friendship and Academic Performance	0.141	0.070	Negligible Positive Correlation

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5 presents how peer friendship connects to the academic performance of the students. The Spearman's Rho analysis found a negligible positive link ($r = 0.141$), but it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.070$). This result indicates that students with higher levels of peer friendship tend to have slightly better academic performance. However, the relationship is weak and not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors may have a greater influence on students' and academic achievements. This finding is inconsistent with the study of Liu (2023), which reported a significant positive relationship, probably due to the school environment, or the measurement of peer relationships. However, even though the connection here was weak and did not reach significance, that does not mean that friendships do not matter. Instead, it points to other things like how they study, their motivation, or support from family, which may play a more substantial role in this sample.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researchers were determined to follow research ethics protocols, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents as well as the permission to gather data, and all ethical standards relevant to the conduct of the study were highly observed.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between peer friendships, study habits, and academic performance among Grade 12 students at Mindanao State University–Sulu. The findings

revealed that students generally demonstrate a high level of peer friendship, indicating the presence of positive and supportive relationships among peers. In addition, the results showed that both the study habits and academic performance of the students are at a high level, suggesting that the respondents practice effective learning behaviors and achieve satisfactory academic outcomes. The correlation analysis showed a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between peer friendship and study habits ($\rho = 0.446$, $p < .001$). This implies that students who maintain strong and supportive peer relationships are more likely to develop productive study habits, such as consistent review of lessons, active participation in learning activities, and effective preparation for examinations. These findings highlight the important role of peer interaction in shaping students' learning behaviors. On the other hand, the analysis indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between peer friendship and academic performance ($\rho = 0.141$, $p = 0.070$). Although a slight positive association was observed, it was not strong enough to establish a meaningful connection. This suggests that while peer friendships may provide emotional and academic support, they do not directly determine students' academic performance. Overall, the findings indicate that peer friendships significantly influence study habits but not academic performance, which may instead be shaped by factors such as individual effort, motivation, learning strategies, and external support systems.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that students cultivate positive and supportive peer relationships that encourage productive study habits, collaborative learning, and academic motivation. Participating in group study sessions, sharing learning resources, and maintaining healthy peer interactions may contribute to improved learning experiences and stronger academic engagement. Teachers are encouraged to integrate collaborative learning strategies such as peer tutoring, cooperative activities, and group discussions to strengthen both academic understanding and social interaction among students. School administrators may develop and implement student-centered programs, including mentoring initiatives, academic organizations, and guided peer-support activities that promote positive peer relationships and academic development. Parents are likewise encouraged to provide guidance and supervision regarding their children's peer associations while creating a supportive home environment that reinforces discipline, motivation, and effective study habits. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct broader and more comprehensive studies on peer relationships by examining additional variables such as peer pressure, emotional support, social influence, motivation, and mental well-being. Similar studies may also be conducted in different educational institutions and grade levels to generate more comprehensive findings regarding the influence of peer friendships on students' academic success.

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