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PERCEIVED CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EKITI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to investigate and analyze the various factors contributing to drug abuse, explore the specific substances most abused, investigate the perceived consequences of drug abuse, and examine the differences in the perceived effects of drug abuse between male and female students. A descriptive research design was adopted, allowing for a detailed examination of the prevailing conditions, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug abuse within this population. The study encompassed all secondary school students in Ekiti State. A sample size of 200 students were selected through a random sampling technique to ensure representation of diverse perspectives. Primary data were collected directly from participants using structured questionnaires designed based on the Likert scale. The validity of the instrument was ensured through expert review and a pilot study, while reliability was tested using the test-retest method. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics summarized the main features of the dataset, and inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVA, examined relationships and differences between variables. Findings revealed that the most abused substances included marijuana, cocaine, cannabis, nicotine, inhalants, barbiturates, alcohol, psychedelics, amphetamines, stimulants, tranquilizers, depressants, methamphetamine, heroin, steroids, opiates, sedatives, narcotics, Percocet, Valium, and prescription drugs. The primary factors contributing to drug abuse were peer pressure, societal pressure, lack of support, environmental influence, and a desire for self-medication. The consequences included mental health issues, poor academic performance, family breakdown, financial instability, and social stigma. No significant difference was found between male and female students in the perceived effects of drug abuse, but age was a significant factor. The study concluded that drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State is influenced by multiple factors and has severe consequences. It recommends that educational authorities, counselors, and parents implement targeted interventions and awareness programs to mitigate these issues

Keywords: Causes and Consequences, Drug Abuse, Secondary School Students

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Introduction

Every drug is a potential poison depending on its usage. Drugs are helpful when they are properly used and destructive when they are misused or abused. Most individuals are guilty of drug abuse since one finds many walks into the shop to buy drugs without any physician's prescription (Kundwei & Mbwire, 2020). Drug abuse has been a menace in Nigeria since the 1960s. During the period, various professionals such as drivers, farmers, armed robbers, and hardened criminals abuse drugs such as Marijuana, Indian hemp and Alcohol etc. Ishaku, (2018) reported that the use of drugs and other pharmacologically active substances dates to the time of our forefathers, several centuries ago whose uses of drugs have been on preventive and curative grounds and for social and recreational purposes. In the past, the choice of substances was limited to those easily available in the environment of the users, but in the present era, the use of various types of drugs has gone beyond those drugs produced and available in the immediate environment. Adekunle (2023) noted that Alcohol use has reached an alarming stage of abuse by all and sundry. In recent times, apart from alcohol, hard drugs which include Barbiturates, valium, pethidine, Narcotics, Cocaine, and heroin have become rampant.

In the recent past, many Nigerians were not conscious of narcotic drugs until during the regime of Buhari/Idiagbon when the first set of narcotic barons were publicly executed in Lagos. Nigeria was only a courier of narcotic drugs but that cannot be said of today. They are both couriers and consumer of these dangerous drugs (Dubey & Bakhshi, 2019). According to Isah (2007) all hands must be on deck to stop the menace. The term 'drug' relates to any substance that when taken by a living organism, may modify one or more of its functions. William (2007) sees drugs as those substances intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, or prevention of disease, Imran and Yusuf, (2022) noted that the word drug is any substance natural or artificial other than food, that by its chemical or physical nature alters structure or function in the living organism. To a physician, drug is a medicine administered to treat physical or mental disease.

However, Thilagaraj and Karthikeyan (2019) ascertained that drug abuse as the use of any drug to the point where it interfered with an individual's health or with his economic and social adjustment Sizer-Webb, (1999), asserts that the abuse of drug is the taking of drug for non-medical purpose and in a manner that can affect or damage a person's health. Drug abuse is the use of a substance in a manner, amounts or situations such that the drug abuse causes problems or greatly increases the chances of problems to occur. The problem could be social, occupational, psychological or physical. Drug abusers are viewed by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), (2020) as potentially harmful to the society because abusers can be hostile, maladjusted immature and dependents, because of the involvement rate of the youths in drug abuse and drug related crimes, there is urgent need to check this habit because of the impact it has on

academic achievement of the youths as leaders of tomorrow (Oladimeji et. al. 2018).

Drug addiction is a complex and multifaceted issue encompassing emotional, psychological and physical dimensions (Omoohu, 2019). Individuals grappling with addiction often experience both emotional and psychological hooks, creating a powerful craving for the substance, whether it be a legal or illegal drug. The desire to repeatedly use the drug becomes compulsive, leading to a pattern of behavior that is difficult to control. Notably, drug addiction is not a universal outcome for all substance users; however, a substantial number of individuals find themselves entangled in its grip. The manifestation of physical dependence is a characteristic feature of drug addiction, particularly with substances like narcotics and cocaine. Ogunjemilua (2020) suggest that certain drugs are more prone to instigating physical dependence, underscoring the varying risk profiles associated with different substances. Withdrawal from the addictive substance often elicits unpleasant physical reactions, contributing to the perpetuation of the addictive cycle. This intricate interplay of psychological, emotional and physical factors underscores the complexity of drug addiction, necessitating a comprehensive understanding for effective prevention and intervention strategies (Kanmodi et. al. 2020).

Drug abuse among adolescents and young adults, which embrace university students increased, significantly in the United States of America in the late 60s and early 70s (Eason, 1976) Little was known about hard drug and their usage in Nigeria in the 60s. However, as far back as 1973, an expatriate staff at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, reported a substance purported to be cocaine, which some students used, but the authenticity of the substance was not precisely established (Sujan et al. 2021). Although the law-enforcement agencies and the government, were not aware of the development, because of the rampant use of an emphasis on Indian hemp, it was not until May 1983, when the guardian newspaper of Nigeria, first related the story of the arrival of the drug known variously in the United States as 'snow' or 'angel-dust' that awareness began to rise and this was a crescendo between 1984 and 1985, when the federal government of Nigeria promulgated a decree (Decree number. 20 of 1984), which prescribes death penalty for possession of hard drugs.

Presenting a paper on the social origins of drug abuse, (Alabi et. al. 2021) blamed the society for the phenomenon noting that drug abusers and traffickers are made and created by society and are sustained by the social conditions of the society. Apart from the tragic consequences to the individual, drug trafficking has other serious effects such as disruption of family life, corruption of government and government agencies, poor academic achievement, contribution to industrial and road accidents and indulgence in serious criminal activities. Adeyemo et al. (2016) added that a nation that struggles to meet the world economic development must joint hands together with other nations in fighting against drug abuse. Nigerians in the

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past were aware of drug addiction as being witnessed today (Chukwu et. al. 2017). This could be attributed to many factors, and it has several consequences on individuals, students and Nigeria as a whole.

Despite various interventions from the government and community, the rate of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State seems to be increasing. Although there have been initiatives such as awareness campaigns and school-based programs, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how students themselves view the reasons and effects of drug abuse. Investigating these perceptions is essential as it sheds light on the lived experiences of youth and guides the creation of culturally appropriate and effective prevention measures. This research, therefore, aims to investigate the perceived reasons and effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State. By concentrating on the viewpoints of students, the study intends to reveal the fundamental social, psychological, and environmental influences that lead to drug misuse and to determine the immediate and long-term effects on their academic, emotional, and social wellbeing.

Statement of the Problem

The escalating trend of drug and substance abuse among Nigerian youths presents a critical societal challenge, mirroring a global phenomenon. Extensive literature highlights Nigeria's alarming position among the highest consumers of dangerous substances such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and cocaine (Okafor, 2011; Chukwu et. al. 2017). Over the last three decades, the prevalence of this issue and its associated consequences has shown a steady increase, accentuated by research from sources like (Teshome & Gupta, 2017; Adibelli & Olgun, 2017). The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) identifies Nigerian youths as a high-risk group for drug trafficking and abuse, with peer influence accounting for approximately 90% of the sources prompting substance use (NDLEA, 2011). Adolescents, motivated by various factors such as relief from pain, enhanced mood, self-confidence and the pursuit of excitement, engage in substance abuse (Paulus, Ohmann, Von-Gontard, & Popow, 2018). Consequently, these behaviors contribute to academic failures among students (Sawni & Breuner, 2017), with cannabis emerging as the most prevalent illicit drug, significantly impacting about 4% of the global population (Adibelli & Olgun, 2017).

Despite these alarming trends, the adverse effects of drug abuse on the health and academic development of students remain inadequately addressed. Poor academic performance, increased dropout rates and the potential link between substance abuse and criminal activities highlight the urgent need for comprehensive intervention strategies (Dankano & Garba, 2017). In Ekiti State, reports from educators, counselors, and community leaders suggest a complex relationship between factors such as peer influence, parental neglect, poverty, media exposure, and psychological stress that may contribute to drug abuse among students. However, these assertions have not been systematically examined from the students' perspectives. There is a pressing need to

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investigate how adolescents in secondary schools perceive the triggers and consequences of their substance use, and how these perceptions influence their attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the existing gap by examining the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria, to contribute valuable insights for effective prevention and intervention programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study sought to

i. investigate and analyze the various factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria
ii. explore the specific substances commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria
iii. investigate the perceived consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria
iv. examine the significant difference in the perceived effects of drug abuse between male and female secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on investigating the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The geographical scope is limited to Ekiti State, ensuring a concentrated examination of the local context and facilitating the development of targeted interventions specific to the region's dynamics. The study encompasses both public and private secondary schools within the state to capture a representative sample of the students' population.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

i. What are the primary factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
ii. Which specific substances are commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
iii. What are the perceived consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
iv. Is there a significant difference in the perceived effects of drug abuse between male and female secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H_0: Is there a significant difference in drug abuse engagement among male and female secondary school students?

H_1: Is there a significant difference in the level of drug abuse engagement of

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secondary school students based on age?

Research Methods

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study to comprehensively explore and present the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State. This design allowed for a detailed examination of the prevailing conditions, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug abuse within the specified population. Through surveys and questionnaires, the study gathered rich, firsthand information about the experiences and perceptions of students, providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. The descriptive research design was deemed appropriate for its ability to provide a detailed snapshot of the current

The study encompassed all secondary school students in Ekiti State, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the target population. This inclusive approach allowed for a thorough examination of the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse, providing insights applicable to the entire secondary school student demographics in the state. The study involved a sample size of 200 secondary school students from Oye Local Government selected through a random sampling technique. This method ensured the representation of diverse perspectives within the secondary school student population in Oye Local Government area of Ekiti State, enhancing the generalizability of findings. Random sampling minimizes bias, promoting an unbiased and fair representation of students across different schools and backgrounds. To carry out this study, a self-structured questionnaire was designed to generate information based on the research. The questionnaire was divided into four sections "A", "B", "C" and "D". Section "A" contained the personal information of the respondents while sections B and C contained questions that were raised to elicit responses from the respondents. The 4-point Likert scale was adopted. (Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagreed). The face and content validity of the research instrument (questionnaire) was validated by some experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti. The instrument was ascertained to be clear in scope, content, and relevance of the items was validated to measure what is supposed to measure. The researchers ensured that the instrument represents the entire range of possible items to be tested in the study. The questionnaire was modified in line with their recommendation. In determining the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was employed, and the questionnaire was administered to the same sample of respondents twice. The Pearson Product Correlation Matrix (PPCM) was used to test the reliability of the instrument, which yielded a coefficient of 0.86, which was adjudged reliable. The research instrument, a structured questionnaire, was administered in person to participants, prioritizing flexibility and optimizing response rates. Each questionnaire was accompanied by clear and comprehensive instructions to ensure uniformity in participant responses. The data collection

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process was meticulously organized to minimize biases and errors, thereby enhancing the overall rigor of the study. This approach was designed to foster a conducive environment for reliable and accurate data acquisition.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics will provide a summary of the main features of the dataset, while inferential statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVA, was employed to examine relationships and differences between variables. This comprehensive approach ensures a robust analysis, facilitating meaningful insights into the perceived causes and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State.

Results

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	98	49.0
Female	102	51.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 1 above shows the gender distribution of the respondents. It shows that 98 respondents are male which represent the 49.0% of the entire population while female are 102 in number which represent 51.0% of the total respondents.

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
12 – 14 years	68	34.0
14-17 years	80	40.0
18 and above	52	26.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 2 reveals the frequency distribution of the respondent's age. It shows that the respondents between the age ranges of 12-14 years are 68 in number which represent 34.0%. Those between age ranges of 15-17 years are 80 which represent 40.0%, while the respondents between 18 years and above are 52, which represent 26.0% of the entire sample.

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Table 3: Class Distribution of the Respondents

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SS 1	108	54.0
SS 2	86	43.0
SS 3	6	3.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 3 above reveals the distribution of the respondents into different classes. It shows that 108 representing 54.0% respondents are from SS1, 86 respondents representing 43.0% are from SS2 while 6 respondents representing 3.0%. There is no equal representation for each of the class.

Table 4: Family Type Distribution of the Respondents

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Monogamy	143	71.5
Polygamy	57	28.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 4.4 above reveals the distribution of the respondents into different family types. It shows that 143 representing 71.5% of respondents are from monogamy, while 57 respondents representing 28.5% are from polygamy.

Table 5 Religion of the Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	106	53.0
Islam	90	45.0
ATR	4	2.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of the respondent's religion. It reveals that 106 respondents practiced Christian religion representing 25.0%, 90 participants practiced Islam representing 45.0%, while 4 respondents practiced African traditional religion representing 2.0%. This shows that most of the respondents practiced Christianity.

Research Question One: What are the substances commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 6: Mean and Rank Order Analysis of the specific substances that are commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Substances that are commonly abused	Mean	Rank Order
1	Marijuana (pot, weed, hashish)	3.18	1st

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2	Cocaine	3.13	2nd
3	Cannabis	3.11	3rd
4	Nicotine	3.10	4th
5	Inhalants (sniff glue, aerosols, laughing gas)	2.99	5th
6	Barbiturates (downer, goofballs, reds, yellow, et.c.)	2.96	6th
7	Alcohol beverages (liquor, beer, wine)	2.94	7th
8	Psychedelics (mescaline, peyote, PCP)	2.92	8th
9	Amphetamines (upper, pep pills, bennies, speed)	2.92	8th
10	Stimulants	2.92	8th
11	Tranquilizers	2.91	9th
12	Depressants	2.90	10th
13	Qualudes (quads, methaqualone)	2.89	11th
14	Methamphetamine (uppers, pep pills, bennies, speed)	2.88	12th
15	Heroin	2.82	13th
16	Steroids	2.82	13th
17	Opiates	2.81	14th
18	Sedatives	2.81	14th
19	Narcotics (methadone, opium, codeine, paregoric)	2.78	15th
20	Percocet	2.75	16th
21	Valium	2.74	17th
22	Prescription abuse	2.66	18th

Table 6 revealed the specific substances that are commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Marijuana (pot, weed, hashish) with a mean score of 3.18 was ranked 1st, Cocaine with a mean score of 3.13 was ranked 2nd, Cannabis with a mean score of 3.11 was ranked 3rd, Nicotine with a mean score of 3.10 was ranked 4th, Inhalants (sniff glue, aerosols, laughing gas) with a mean score of 2.99 was ranked 5th, Barbiturates (downer, goofballs, reds, yellow, etc.) with a mean score of 2.96 was ranked 6th, Alcohol beverages (liquor, beer, wine) with a mean score of 2.94 was ranked 7th, Psychedelics (mescaline, peyote, PCP), Amphetamines (upper, pep pills, bennies, speed), Stimulants with a mean score of 2.92 each were ranked 8th, Tranquilizers with a mean score of 2.91 was ranked 9th, Depressants with a mean score of 2.90 was ranked 10th, Qualudes (quads, methaqualone) with a mean score of 2.89 was ranked 11th, Methamphetamine (uppers, pep pills, bennies, speed) with a mean score of 2.88 was ranked 12th, Heroin and Steroids with a mean score of 2.82 each were ranked 13th, Opiates and Sedatives with a mean score of 2.81 each were ranked 14th, Narcotics (methadone, opium, codeine, paregoric), with a mean score of 2.78 was ranked 15th, Percocet with a mean score of 2.75 was ranked 16th, Valium with a mean score of 2.74 was ranked 17th, Prescription abuse with a mean score of 2.66 was ranked 18th.

This result further revealed that all the twenty-two (22) items had mean scores above the cut-off point (2.5). Therefore, it can be deduced that the substances that are commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria are Marijuana

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(pot, weed, hashish), Cocaine, Cannabis, Nicotine, Inhalants (sniff glue, aerosols, laughing gas), Barbiturates (downer, goofballs, reds, yellow, et.c.), Alcohol beverages (liquor, beer, wine), Psychedelics (mescaline, peyote, PCP), Amphetamines (upper, pep pills, bennies, speed), Stimulants, Tranquilizers**,** Depressants, Qualudes (quads, methaqualone), Methamphetamine (uppers, pep pills, bennies, speed), Heroin, Steroids, Opiates, Sedatives, Narcotics (methadone, opium, codeine, paregoric), Percocet, Valium and Prescription.

Research Question Two: What are the primary factors contributing to drug abuse as perceived
by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 7: Mean and Rank Order Analysis of the primary factors contributing to drug abuse as perceived by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Consequences of premarital sex	Mean	Rank Order
1	Peer pressure	3.41	1st
2	Experimentation	3.33	2nd
3	Societal pressure	3.17	3rd
4	Problems	3.15	4th
5	Lack of support	3.10	5th
6	Attention	3.02	6th
7	Environmental influence	3.02	6th
8	To feel good	3.01	7th
9	Competition	2.99	8th
10	Addiction	2.98	9th
11	Lack of love	2.97	10th
12	Ignorance	2.95	11th
13	To feel better	2.92	12th
14	Abandonment	2.87	13th
15	Self-medication	2.80	14th

Table 7 revealed the primary factors contributing to drug abuse as perceived by secondary school students in Ekiti State. Peer pressure with a mean score of 3.41 was ranked 1st, experimentation with a mean score of 3.33 was ranked 2nd, societal pressure with a mean score of 3.17 was ranked 3rd, divers problems with a mean score of 3.15 was ranked 4th, lack of support with a mean score of 3.10 was ranked 5th, attention and environmental influence with a mean score of 3.02 each were ranked 6th, feeling good with a mean score of 3.01 was ranked 7th, competition with a mean score of 2.99 was ranked 8th, addiction with a mean score 2.98 was ranked 9th. Lack of love with a mean score of 2.97 was ranked 10th, ignorance with a mean score of 2.95 was ranked 11th, feeling better with a mean score of 2.92 was ranked 12th, abandonment with a mean score of 2.87 was ranked 13th, and self-medication with a mean score of 2.80 was ranked 14th.

This result further revealed that all the fifteen (15) items had mean scores above the cut-off point (2.5). Therefore, it can be deduced that

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the primary factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State are Peer pressure, experimentation, societal pressure, diverse problems, lack of support, attention, attention, environmental influence, feeling good, competition, addiction, Lack of love, ignorant, feeling better, abandonment and self-medication.

Research Question Three: What are the consequences of drug abuse as perceived by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics the perceived consequences of drug abuse by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Perceived consequences of drug abuse	Mean	Rank Order
1	Mental health issues	3.45	1st
2	Liver dysfunction	3.36	2nd
3	Depression	3.27	3rd
4	Frustration	3.13	4th
5	Criminal activities	3.12	5th
6	Irritability	3.11	6th
7	Poor academic performance	3.10	7th
8	Family breakdown	3.10	7th
9	Financial problems	3.07	8th
10	Mood swing	3.06	9th
11	Suicidal thought	3.05	10th
12	Fatigue	3.02	11th
13	Hopelessness	3.00	12th
14	Shame	2.98	13th
15	Anxiety	2.97	14th
16	Drop out of school	2.97	14th
17	Financial instability	2.97	14th
18	Frequent forgetting	2.95	15th
19	Child abuse	2.94	16th
20	Death	2.94	16th
21	Stigma	2.94	16th
23	Lack of energy	2.93	17th
24	Disease	2.90	18th

Table 8 reveals the perceived consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Mental health issues with a mean score of 3.45 was ranked 1st, liver dysfunction with a mean score of 3.36 was ranked 2nd, depression with a mean score of 3.27 was ranked 3rd, frustration with a mean score of 3.13 was ranked 4th, criminal activities with a mean score of 3.12 was ranked 5th, irritability with a mean score of 3.11 was ranked 6th, poor academic performance and family breakdown with a mean score of 3.10 each was ranked 7th, financial problems with the mean score of 3.07 was ranked 8th, mood swings with the mean score of 3.06 was ranked 9th, suicidal thought with the mean score of 3.05 was ranked 10th, fatigue with the mean score of

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3.02 was ranked 11th, hopelessness with the mean score of 3.00 was ranked 12th, shame with a mean score of 2.98 was ranked 13th, anxiety, drop out of school and financial instability with the mean score of 2.94 each were ranked 14th. Frequent forgetting with a mean score of 2.95 was ranked 15th, child abuse, death, and stigma with a mean score of 2.94 was ranked 16th, lack of energy with a mean score of 2.93 was ranked 17th, and disease with a mean score of 2.90 was ranked 18th.

This result further revealed that the twenty-four (24) items had mean scores above the cut-off point (2.5). Therefore, it can be deduced that the perceived consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria are Mental health issues, liver dysfunction, depression, frustration, criminal activities, irritability, poor academic performance, family breakdown, financial problems, mood swing, suicidal thought, fatigue, hopelessness, shame, anxiety, drop out from school, financial instability, frequent forgetting, child abuse, death and stigma, lack of energy and disease.

Research Question Four: What is the prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school
Students' in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 9: Descriptive statistics showing prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Prevalence of drug abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Low	90	45.5
Average	96	48.5
High	14	7.0

Table 9 revealed that 90 participants representing 45.5% scored low in prevalence of drug abuse, 96 participants representing 48.5% scored average and 14 participants indicated high engagement in drug abuse. This implies that most secondary school students do not engage in drug abuse. Hence, there is a low prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: Is there a significant difference in drug abuse engagement among male and female secondary school students?

Table 9: T-test showing the significant difference in drug abuse engagement among male and female secondary school students

Variable	N	X	SD	T	Df	P	Remark
Male	98	1.65	.660	4.643	198	.032	NS
Female	102	1.56	.538				

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The result from Table 9 above shows that, the value of (t = 4.643 df = 198, p>0.05). Since p>0.05, therefore, there is no significant difference in drug abuse engagement among male and female secondary school students. This result indicates that gender is not a factor affecting drug abuse as the female mean score is not significantly different from the male mean score.

Hypothesis Two: Is there a significant difference in the level of drug abuse engagement of secondary school students based on age?

Table 4.10: Analysis of Variance showing the significant difference in the level of drug abuse engagement of secondary school students based on age

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Remark
Between Groups	18.425	2	9.212	33.991	.000	S
Within Groups	52.848	195	.271			
Total	71.273	197				

From the analysis of variance in Table 10, there is a significant difference in the level of drug abuse engagement of secondary school students based on age. The F-ratio (F (2,197) = 33.991, P<.05) further affirms the significance of the finding. Hence there is a significant difference in drug abuse engagement of secondary school students based on age.

Summary of Findings

From the foregoing results, the following are the findings from this study

1. The substances that are most commonly abused by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria are Marijuana (pot, weed, hashish), Cocaine, Cannabis, Nicotine, Inhalants (sniff glue, aerosols, laughing gas), Barbiturates (downer, goofballs, reds, yellow, et.c.), Alcohol beverages (liquor, beer, wine), Psychedelics (mescaline, peyote, PCP), Amphetamines (upper, pep pills, bennies, speed), Stimulants, Tranquilizers, Depressants, Qualudes (quads, methaqualone), Methamphetamine (uppers, pep pills, bennies, speed), Heroin, Steroids, Opiates, Sedatives, Narcotics (methadone, opium, codeine, paregoric), Percocet, Valium and Prescription.
2. The primary factors contributing to drug abuse as perceived by secondary school students in Ekiti State are Peer pressure, experimentation, societal pressure, diverse problems, lack of support, attention, environmental influence, feeling good, competition, addiction, Lack of love, ignorant, feeling better, abandonment and self-medication.
3. The perceived consequences of drug abuse as perceived by secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria are Mental health issues, liver dysfunction, depression, frustration, criminal activities, irritability, poor academic performance, family

breakdown, financial problems, mood swings, suicidal thought, fatigue, hopelessness, shame, anxiety, drop out from school, financial instability, frequent forgetting, child abuse, death and stigma, lack of energy and disease.

4. There is a low prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant difference in the level of drug abuse among male and female secondary school students in Ekiti State.
6. There is a significant difference in the level of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State based on age.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study on substance abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria, align with the broader literature on the topic. The discussion integrates these findings with the reviewed empirical studies to justify and elaborate on the observed patterns and implications.

The study found that secondary school students in Ekiti State commonly abuse substances such as marijuana, cocaine, cannabis, nicotine, inhalants, barbiturates, alcoholic beverages, psychedelics, amphetamines, stimulants, tranquilizers, depressants, methamphetamine, heroin, steroids, opiates, sedatives, narcotics, Percocet, Valium, and various prescription drugs. This broad spectrum of abused substances is consistent with Imran and Yusuf (2022), who found a high prevalence of alcohol, cigarettes, and cannabis among students in Osun State, Nigeria. The accessibility of these substances through small shops and bars further supports the findings of widespread availability and usage among students.

The primary factors contributing to drug abuse among the students included peer pressure, experimentation, societal pressure, various personal problems, lack of support, environmental influences, a desire to feel good, competition, addiction, lack of love, ignorance, a desire to feel better, abandonment, and self-medication. These factors resonate with the findings of Zemba (2022), who identified peer pressure, low self-esteem, and availability of drugs as significant contributors to substance abuse in Kitwe, Zambia. Additionally, Kundwei and Mbwire (2020) highlighted peer pressure, family problems, and exposure as major causes of drug abuse among adolescents in Zimbabwe. The consistency across studies underscores the pervasive nature of these influences across different contexts and regions.

The consequences of drug abuse perceived by the students in Ekiti State included mental health issues, liver dysfunction, depression, frustration, criminal activities, irritability, poor academic performance, family breakdown, financial problems, mood swings, suicidal thoughts, fatigue, hopelessness, shame, anxiety, dropping out of school, financial instability, frequent forgetfulness, child abuse, death, stigma, lack of energy, and disease. These findings align

with those of Dankano and Garba (2022), who found that drug abuse led to poor academic performance and increased dropout rates due to memory impairment in Taraba State. Similarly, Okari (2018) noted that drug abuse resulted in school dropouts, strained relationships, truancy, low concentration spans, and health problems such as anxiety and headaches among students in Kenya. The recurring theme of negative academic and health outcomes highlights the severe and multifaceted impact of substance abuse on students.

The study found a low overall prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, with no significant difference in drug abuse levels between male and female students. This finding contrasts with some studies, such as Chibuike et al. (2020), which found gender to be a significant factor influencing substance abuse in Imo State. However, it is important to note that the context and specific demographics of each study might account for these differences. The lack of significant gender difference in this study suggests a need for gender-neutral interventions and preventive measures.

The significant difference in drug abuse levels based on age observed in this study aligns with findings from Chibuike et al. (2020), who reported age as an important factor influencing substance abuse. Older students may have more access and exposure to substances, highlighting the need for age-specific preventive strategies.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the complex dynamics of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It reveals that substances like marijuana, cocaine, and cannabis are prevalent among students, driven primarily by peer pressure, societal influences, and experimentation. The consequences of drug abuse, including mental health issues, academic decline, and strained relationships, underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions. Despite a predominantly low prevalence overall, significant age-related variations indicate the need for nuanced strategies tailored to different student demographics. Effective interventions should emphasize education, parental involvement, and supportive school environments to mitigate risk factors and promote healthier behaviors. By addressing these challenges collaboratively across education, policy, and community sectors, Ekiti State can enhance prevention efforts and support mechanisms, ensuring a safer and more supportive environment for its secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are made to address the issues of drug abuse among secondary school students in Ekiti State.

First, there is a critical need for enhanced education and awareness programs within schools. These programs should be tailored to different age groups and should focus on educating students about the dangers of drug abuse, identifying commonly abused substances, and developing skills for making healthy choices.

Secondly, the establishment of strengthened peer support and counseling services is essential. Schools should create safe spaces where students can seek guidance and support from trained counselors and peers. These services should address not only substance abuse issues but also the underlying psychological and emotional factors that may contribute to drug use.

Furthermore, parental and community involvement is crucial in combating drug abuse among students. Schools should actively engage parents and guardians through workshops and seminars that educate them about the signs of drug abuse, effective communication strategies with their children, and the importance of parental supervision and support. Community partnerships can also play a vital role in providing resources and support for school-based prevention efforts.

Additionally, there is a need for robust policy development and implementation. Schools should develop clear and comprehensive policies that prohibit drug use on campus and outline disciplinary measures for offenders. These policies should be consistently enforced, and regular reviews should be conducted to ensure their effectiveness and relevance in addressing evolving trends in substance abuse.

Finally, investing in ongoing research and monitoring programs is essential. By continuously monitoring the prevalence and patterns of drug abuse among students, schools can tailor their interventions and strategies to effectively address emerging issues. Research-based insights can also inform policy decisions and resource allocation aimed at reducing substance abuse rates and promoting a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

Suggestions for Further Study

To build on this research, future studies could consider employing mixed methods approaches that combine qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys to gain deeper insights into the socio-cultural factors influencing drug abuse among students. Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial to track changes in drug use patterns over time and assess the effectiveness of interventions. Additionally, expanding the study to include a wider geographic area or different demographic groups could provide a more comprehensive understanding of regional variations and specific risk factors. Finally, exploring the role of school policies and community interventions in mitigating drug abuse could offer practical recommendations for stakeholders aiming to improve prevention and support strategies in educational settings.

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