

**PERCEIVED CAUSES, EFFECTS AND PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE
AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

OCTOBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this study was carried out by **Humphery Ogorchukwu OJEALARO** with Matriculation Number **EDU2102605** in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Health Education.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who granted me strength and health to carry-out this Research Study. Also, to my parents who have given me constant support.

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The researcher gives thanks to God Almighty who has been his source, strength and giver of life in carrying out this study. He is indeed grateful to him.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the Perceived Causes, Effects and Prevention of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L. G. A, Edo State. To therefore achieve the purpose of the study, three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses were raised and analyzed.

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The sample size for the study was hundred (100) students. The Research instrument was a self-structured questionnaire with Section A and B. Section A seeks to elicit responses on the socio-demographic character of respondents, while Section B seeks to elicit responses on Perceived Causes, Effects and Prevention of Drug Abuse. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education (H.S.E.), Faculty of Education. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the internal consistency reliability was adopted. In this vein, twenty (20) copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents who were not part of the target population.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that pressure from classmates, family conflicts, academic pressure, students' experimentation and low self-esteem are the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school in Egor LGA, Edo State. However, negative relationships with family, emotional instability, risky behaviours, mental health issues, decline in physical health and absenteeism from school are seen as perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students. Addressing these challenges through organization of programmes for students on the dangers of drug abuse, prevention classes of drug abuse and strong school policies on drug abuse would help mitigate its occurrence. Schools should implement more comprehensive programmes aimed at helping students overcome academic pressure, build self-esteem and resist peer pressure by providing them effective coping mechanisms such as stress management workshops, academic counselling and resources to deal with peer influences related to drug abuse. Also schools should establish and strengthen counselling services and mental health support systems, ensuring that students have access to professional help to manage stress, anxiety and other emotional challenges and that generally, schools should enhance students' participation in drug prevention programmes and campaigns by making them more interactive, relatable and engaging. All these are believed to help reduce drug abuse practices having known its causes and effects.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In every real sense, drug is any chemical substance which when taken into the body, alters the functions of the body. A drug is any chemical substance (other than food or an essential dietary ingredient), which, when administered to a living organism, produces a biological effect (Olla, 2025). In pharmacology, a drug is a chemical substance, typically of a particular structure, which, when administered to a living organism, produces a biological effect. A pharmaceutical drug, also called a "medication" or "medicine", is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent or diagnose a disease or to promote well-being.

Drug abuse or substance abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain (Mandal, 2023). Drug abuse is the excessive use of drugs, such as alcohol, pain medications or illegal drugs. It can lead to physical, social or emotional harm. Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. One of the key impacts of illicit drug use on society is the negative health consequences experienced by its users. Drug use also puts a heavy financial burden on individuals, families and society (World Health Organization, [WHO], 2025). Drug abuse is a social problem of great concern in

our society. Like other social problems, drug abuse has been attracting the attention of sociologists, politicians, scientists, psychologists, philosophers, criminologists and social workers.

Drug abuse has become a pervasive social problem affecting individuals across various age groups, particularly adolescents. Among secondary school students, drug abuse poses significant risks to their physical health, mental well-being, academic performance, and social relationships. In recent years, there have been growing concerns about the increasing rate of substance abuse among students in Nigeria, including those in Egor Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Edo State.

Adolescence is a critical stage of development marked by curiosity, peer pressure, and the desire for experimentation, which often make secondary school students vulnerable to engaging in risky behaviors such as drug abuse. The misuse of substances such as cannabis, codeine, tramadol, alcohol, and tobacco is becoming alarmingly common in secondary schools, raising serious concerns among educators, parents, and health professionals. (Onigbogi O.,et al, 2023)

Several factors have been identified as contributors to drug abuse among students. These include peer influence, poor parental guidance, socio-economic challenges, exposure to media, lack of proper education about drugs, and emotional stress. The effects of drug abuse are equally concerning, ranging from poor academic performance and school dropout to criminal behaviour, addiction, and mental health disorders. Understanding the

perceived causes and effects of drug abuse among students is crucial for designing effective prevention and intervention strategies. Despite various efforts by government agencies, schools, and non-governmental organizations to curb this menace, the problem persists, especially in urban and semi-urban communities such as those found in Egor L.G.A.

This study therefore seeks to explore the perceived causes, effects, and preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to knowledge and inform policy formulation and educational strategies that will help reduce the incidence of drug abuse among students.

Research over the past two decades has tried to determine how drug abuse begins and how it progresses. From time immemorial, the use of drugs has always been associated with the existence of humans. In the earliest societies, man has always thought that disease was as a result of the gods being angry (traced back to as the Historical Development of Mental Illness and Perceived causes of Death) and as to prevent or cure such diseases, sacrifices were made. As society settled down in scattered settlements, they needed to keep their surroundings clean. This emphasis from the gods as the causative factors of diseases shifted to the environment. They discovered that disease were caused by pathogens.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the continual efforts of the government parastatals and other individuals made to curb this menace of drug abuse among students, it has still been on the increase

as it has led drug abuse to be the centre of attraction for comments, debates and discussion among the public, media and other intelligentsia.

Drug abuse has statically remained a major concern and focus of various teachers, parents, government and as well guidance counsellors, which have through several policies made by legislatures over the years tried to prevent or reduce the menace of drug abuse among students in secondary school.

More so, drug abuse has been observed to be rampant among the secondary school students institutions in Egor L.G.A and the world we live in at large. It has attributed cases of students appearing before the school and disciplinary committees, as well as psychiatric homes, which is on the increase. The phenomenon exhibits a great deal of worry in some parent and teachers who are somehow not able to succeed in their attempt to control their addicted children or wards.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?
2. What are the Perceived effects of drug abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L.G.A?

3. What are the Perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A
2. Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A
3. Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study will be carried out to investigate the:

1. Perceived Causes of Drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A, Edo state
2. Perceived Effects of Drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A, Edo state

3. Perceived Preventive practices of Drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A, Edo state

Significance of the Study

The study on the Perceived Causes, Effects and Prevention of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is significant to key persons, including; students, school personnel and administrators, curriculum planners, policy makers and future researchers.

Firstly, the study is significant to students as it will enable them gain a deeper understanding on the concept of drug abuse and preventive measures that will aid them in improving their health, overall quality of life and academic performance.

Secondly, it will help the school personnel and administrators tailor their lectures to meet the specific needs and interests of learners and critically watch, monitor and punish defaulters of the school's rule on the dangers of drug abuse.

Thirdly, the study will guide curriculum planners in incorporating necessary and adequate Drug Abuse Education into the curriculum that are relevant to students and as well provide a collaboration with the government to provide reforms and programmes to curb drug abuse in schools.

Fourthly, the study will be of interest to policymakers as they can use evidence-based research to inform policies and initiatives aimed at supporting students well-being.

By recognizing the importance of drug abuse awareness and prevention efforts, policymakers can advocate for the integration of Drug Abuse Education into curricula and allocate funding towards this integration.

Lastly, this study will also contribute to existing literature as it will serve as a guide to other researchers who would want to further in this field of research.

Scope/Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study will cover a wide perspective of Perceived Causes, Effects and alongside Prevention of Drug Abuse among students. It will also seek to identify the prevalent drug abuse prevention mechanisms for the students.

For efficiency, the study is delimited to;

1. Geographical Limitation: The research is confined to Egor L.G.A and does not cover other L.G.As in Edo State or Nigeria.
2. Population: Only secondary school students and selected school personnel will be included; out-of-school youths and primary school pupils are excluded.
3. Subject Focus: The study is limited to examining perceptions—actual drug use will not be measured through clinical testing or observation.
4. Time Frame: The data will be collected within a specific academic term, which may not capture changes over time.

These delimitations help keep the research focused and manageable, while still providing valuable insights into the drug abuse situation in the area studied.

Operational Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study are operationally defined below:

Addiction: A condition characterized by a compulsive need to use a drug despite knowing it's harmful consequences.

Anxiolytic or Tranquilizers: Anxiolytics—also known as tranquilizers—are medications or interventions designed to reduce anxiety and related symptoms.

Depressants: Depressants are substances that slow down the activity of the Central Nervous System (C.N.S) by reducing the transmission of signals between the brain and the body. This results in decreased arousal and stimulation, leading to effects such as relaxation, reduced anxiety, slowed reaction time, impaired judgment, drowsiness, and muscle relaxation.

Drug: A drug is any chemical substance, other than a nutrient or essential dietary ingredient, which, when administered to a living organism produces a biological effect.

Drug Abuse: Drug abuse is the continuous, excessive, or inappropriate use of legal or illegal drugs in a way that is harmful to the individual or others, despite knowing the negative physical, psychological, social, or occupational consequences. It includes using

drugs for purposes other than those intended, taking them in larger amounts, or using them recreationally to achieve euphoric effects. Drug abuse can involve illegal substances or the misuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Effects: The outcomes or consequences of drug abuse, which may include academic failure, health problems, behavioural issues, addiction, or involvement in crime.

Hallucinogens: Hallucinogens are a diverse class of psychoactive substances—also known as psychedelics, entheogens, or psychotomimetics—that profoundly alter a person's perception, thoughts, feelings, and sense of reality. These drugs can cause hallucinations: experiences of seeing, hearing, feeling, or sensing things that do not actually exist.

Narcotics: Narcotics are substances that primarily act to relieve pain, induce sleep or stupor, and can lead to addiction or dependence.

Perceived Causes: The reasons or factors that students, teachers or others believe to be responsible for drug abuse among adolescents, whether or not they are scientifically proven.

Prevention: The actions, measures or strategies put in place to stop students from starting or continuing drug use, such as awareness campaigns, counselling, peer education and generally school policies.

Psychoactive Drugs: A drug or other substance that affects how the brain works and causes changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings, or behaviour.

Secondary School Students: Adolescents enrolled in junior or senior secondary schools, typically between the ages of 10 and 18 within formal educational system.

Stimulants: Stimulants encompass a wide range of substances that include both legal and illicit used drugs with a host of effects and purposes. While some stimulants are predominantly used illegally (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine), others serve a medical purpose (e.g., Adderall, which is used to treat symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)). However, stimulant abuse can lead to negative health outcomes, which may include addiction, overdose, withdrawal, and death.

Substance: Any chemical compound which, when consumed, can alter a person's mental or physical state- this includes both legal and illegal drugs.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the review of relevant and related literature to the concern of this study. It is discussed under the following subheadings:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. Concept of Drug
3. Concept of Drug Use
4. Concept of Drug Abuse
5. Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students
6. Perceived Effects of Drug Abuse on Secondary School Students
7. Perceived Preventive Practices for Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students
8. Gender Differences in Perceptions of Drug Abuse
9. Empirical Review
10. Summary of Review of Related Literature.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on one relevant theory that explore different aspects of adolescent behavior, namely Health Belief Model. The theory offers unique insights into the causes, effects, and potential prevention strategies for drug abuse in secondary school students.

The Health Belief Model (HBM), developed by Social Psychologist working for the United States (U.S) Public Health Service to explain the failure of people to take advantage of preventive health measures. It was developed by Irwin Rosenstock, Godfrey Hochbaum in the 1950s. It is a widely recognized framework that explains and predicts health behaviors based on individuals' perceptions. The model suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors when they believe they are at risk for a health issue, perceive the consequences of that issue as serious, believe taking a specific action will reduce their risk or severity, and perceive the benefits of taking action outweigh the barriers. Over the years, scholars like Becker and Janz have further refined the model, especially by introducing the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to take action (Rosenstock, 1974; Janz & Becker, 1984).

This model has considerable relevance in understanding the causes, effects, and prevention of drug abuse among secondary school students. The perceived causes of drug abuse can be explained through the lens of perceived susceptibility in the HBM. If students perceive themselves as vulnerable to the pressures of drug use due to factors such as peer influence or a family history of substance abuse, they may be more likely to engage in

drug-related behaviors. However, if students do not recognize themselves as susceptible, they may underestimate the risks of drug use and be less likely to avoid it. The perceived severity of drug abuse, another core concept in the HBM, also plays a critical role. Students who view drug use as leading to severe consequences—whether in terms of health problems, academic failure, or social stigma—are more likely to avoid drug use. Conversely, if students perceive the effects of drug use as minimal or unlikely to harm them, they may not see the need to avoid drugs (Rosenstock, 1974).

In terms of prevention, the HBM emphasizes the importance of helping students recognize the benefits of staying drug-free and the barriers to avoiding drug abuse. For prevention programs to be effective, students must perceive that avoiding drugs will offer significant benefits, such as improved health, academic success, and better relationships. When students understand these benefits, they are more likely to avoid engaging in drug abuse. The model also highlights the need to reduce perceived barriers to prevention, such as the difficulty of resisting peer pressure or the lack of support from family and friends. Programs that offer alternative activities and peer support can help students overcome these barriers and make it easier for them to adopt healthier behaviors (Becker, 1974).

Furthermore, the HBM emphasizes the importance of cues to action, which are external events or stimuli that prompt individuals to take preventive actions. For secondary school students, cues to action might include media campaigns, educational programs, or even witnessing the negative outcomes of drug use in their peer groups. Finally, self-

efficacy—an individual’s confidence in their ability to successfully engage in health-promoting behavior—plays a crucial role. Providing students with skills to resist peer pressure, cope with stress, and make informed decisions can significantly boost their confidence and help them avoid drug abuse (Bandura, 1997).

In summary, the Health Belief Model provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding and addressing drug abuse among secondary school students. By focusing on students' perceptions of their vulnerability to drug use, the severity of its consequences, the benefits of avoiding it, and the barriers they face, interventions can be tailored to increase the likelihood of prevention. Effective programs that enhance perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits, and self-efficacy while reducing barriers can help prevent drug abuse and promote healthier lifestyles among secondary school students (Janz & Becker, 1984; Rosenstock, 1974).

Concept of Drug

The notion of a drug has historically been a topic of contention and progressive comprehension, illustrating diverse definitions within medical, legal, and social contexts. A drug is defined as any chemical that, when given into the body, modifies its normal physiological or psychological activities. The most widely acknowledged pharmaceuticals are those employed in medical settings to prevent, diagnose, or cure diverse health disorders, including antibiotics, vaccinations, and analgesics (Baron et al., 2023). The World Health Organisation (WHO) elaborates on this notion by describing medicines as

compounds that, upon absorption into the body, might impact one or more bodily functions, consequently affecting mood, perception, or physical health (Lajús Barrabeitg, 2018). The concept of a drug has evolved to encompass not only therapeutic chemicals but also recreational drugs, including alcohol, nicotine, and illicit substances, which modify an individual's psychological state and carry significant societal and legal ramifications (Sartwell, 2020).

The expansion of this concept increases complication, as compounds with potential therapeutic applications may, in certain situations, result in detrimental effects. Prescription opioids are essential for pain management; yet, they have emerged as a significant concern in global health crises due to their propensity for abuse and addiction. The dual nature of pharmaceuticals, serving as both therapeutic and detrimental, underscores the necessity for meticulous regulation and a sophisticated comprehension of their societal role (Debnath et al., 2023). Historically, drugs such as opium and marijuana were extensively utilised for medicinal purposes but subsequently became designated as prohibited substances due to their potential for abuse, prompting enquiries regarding the distinction between medical use and recreational or criminal consumption (Totelin, 2019). This duality is crucial to the current discourse over the definition, classification, and regulation of drugs.

In medical practice, pharmaceuticals are frequently regarded as therapeutic agents that assist in illness management and pain alleviation; nevertheless, their potential for

misuse confuses this perspective. Medications such as analgesics and antibiotics are crucial for addressing medical disorders; nevertheless, they may also result in dependence and misuse, especially with opioids (Baron et al., 2023). The transition from therapeutic use to misuse, wherein a chemical initially designed for healing transforms into a source of detriment, exemplifies the intricacy in delineating what defines a drug. Furthermore, psychoactive chemicals, encompassing both legal drugs like alcohol and illegal ones such as cocaine, possess considerable societal relevance. Their impact on mood, perception, and behaviour prompts significant enquiries on control, regulation, and the socio-political dimensions of drug usage (Sartwell, 2020). The cultural and social context around drug consumption be it therapeutic, recreational, or illicit frequently dictates their acceptability or rejection across many countries.

The legal dimensions of drugs further obfuscate their definition. Substances like alcohol and tobacco, while their extensively known health hazards, continue to be legal in numerous regions globally because to historical and cultural endorsement. Conversely, substances like cannabis and heroin have been prohibited owing to their perceived dangers and their correlation with addiction and societal detriment. The legal framework surrounding drugs frequently mirrors entrenched societal beliefs and political views. The U.S. "War on Drugs," launched in the 1970s, portrayed drug use as a moral and criminal concern, resulting in extensive incarceration and stigmatisation of drug users, especially among marginalised communities (Craig, 2018). These legal frameworks have been criticised for inadequately addressing the underlying causes of addiction, including socio-

economic disparities and mental health concerns, and for disproportionately affecting minority populations (Eremin & Petrovich-Belkin, 2020). The dynamic evolution of drug legislation and regulations, particularly the recent legalisation of marijuana in numerous areas, signifies shifting perspectives on drug consumption and acknowledges that prohibition may not be the most efficacious remedy for drug-related challenges.

Addiction is a crucial element of the drug discourse. Addiction is frequently seen as the quintessential trait of detrimental substance use. Psychoactive chemicals inherently foster addictions, resulting in obsessive usage that adversely affects an individual's health, relationships, and overall well-being. Substances such as heroin, cocaine, and alcohol are recognised for their high potential for addiction; nevertheless, even medically prescribed drugs, such as opioids, can result in physical dependence and addiction (Debnath et al., 2023). Addiction underscores the dangers of drug use, emphasising the necessity for comprehensive treatment and prevention strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of extended substance consumption. The increase in addiction rates, especially concerning prescription medications, has prompted a heightened awareness of the necessity for a comprehensive strategy that encompasses both medical treatments and social support frameworks to assist persons in overcoming addiction (Yoganarasimhan et al., 2022).

The emergence of chemicals like synthetic cannabinoids and novel psychoactive substances (NPS) complicates the drug landscape. These compounds, frequently synthesised in secret facilities, are engineered to replicate the effects of conventional illegal

narcotics while circumventing legal prohibitions. Their swift expansion presents considerable hurdles for regulators, healthcare providers, and criminal enforcement organisations, as they are sometimes poorly understood and may offer greater risks than their conventional counterparts. The ongoing development of these substances underscores the necessity for flexible drug policies that can address emerging concerns and safeguard public health (Lajús Barrabeitg, 2018). This highlights the necessity of maintaining flexible and dynamic drug classifications to address the swift introduction of new drugs that may provide unanticipated dangers.

In conclusion, the notion of a drug is intricate, encompassing complicated interconnections of medical, legal, cultural, and social factors. Drugs can function as potent medicinal agents; nevertheless, their potential for misuse, addiction, and injury complicates their societal role.

Concept of Drug Use

The concept of drug use is complex, involving a wide range of behaviours and societal consequences. Drug usage fundamentally pertains to the ingestion of substances that influence the body's physiological and psychological processes, generally modifying mood, consciousness, or perception. Substances, encompassing both legal prescriptions and illicit drugs, are frequently categorised according to their effects, including stimulants, depressants, and hallucinogens. The utilisation of drugs may be driven by diverse motivations, such as recreational purposes, medical requirements, or an inclination to

evade stress or life difficulties (Reuter, 2019). As society contends with the intricate dynamics of drug use, it is crucial to acknowledge that it can provide both beneficial and detrimental effects, contingent upon the context and frequency of consumption.

From a medical perspective, drug usage can be therapeutic, providing relief for persons afflicted with physical or mental ailments. Pharmaceuticals such as analgesics, antibiotics, and psychotropic pharmaceuticals are utilised to address diverse ailments and enhance quality of life. Nonetheless, this use can readily transition into abuse when substances are consumed beyond their prescribed or intended context. Prescription medications, such as opioids and benzodiazepines, originally intended for therapeutic use, have proliferated in instances of abuse, resulting in addiction and overdose crises (Debnath et al., 2023). The abuse of these substances frequently stems from factors such as overprescription, self-medication, or societal influences that normalise excessive usage (McLoughlin, 2023). The ambiguous distinction between therapeutic use and abuse highlights the intricacy of describing and comprehending drug use in contemporary society.

The consumption of illicit substances, including cannabis, cocaine, heroin, and synthetic narcotics, alongside prescription medications, poses significant challenges for public health and law enforcement. These substances are frequently utilised for recreational purposes, motivated by the pursuit of pleasure, exhilaration, or an escape from psychological distress. The increasing prevalence of "designer drugs," chemically modified chemicals intended to replicate the effects of illegal narcotics while circumventing legal

categorisation, has exacerbated challenges in regulating drug usage and mitigating its societal consequences (North & Yutzy, 2018). As novel substances arise, drug use patterns evolve, necessitating adaptations in public health systems to alleviate the related hazards.

The social aspects of drug usage are as important. Cultural influences, including societal norms, peer pressure, and familial dynamics, significantly influence drug use behaviours. Drug use among teenagers is a multifaceted issue, as youth frequently possess underdeveloped coping skills and are susceptible to peer pressure. Research indicates that substance use among adolescents is frequently associated with adverse familial or social contexts, facilitating both the onset and persistence of drug consumption (Darie, 2019). In many communities, the accessibility and acceptance of specific substances, such as alcohol or tobacco, are normalised, resulting in heightened use and a culture of permissive drug use. The criminalisation of specific substances has resulted in stigmatisation, disproportionately impacting marginalised communities (Ronzani, 2018).

Addiction is a significant facet of drug usage, characterised by an uncontrollable compulsion to consume a substance regardless of its adverse effects. The shift from casual consumption to addiction frequently entails modifications to the brain's reward system, wherein the substance elicits sensations of pleasure or euphoria that perpetuate ongoing usage. The Five-Factor Model of personality traits, encompassing impulsivity and sensation-seeking tendencies, correlates with elevated rates of drug consumption, indicating that personality traits significantly influence the likelihood of developing a

substance use disorder (Fehrman et al., 2019). Drug addiction, especially with opioids and other highly addictive substances, inflicts severe consequences on individuals, families, and communities, perpetuating a detrimental circle of harm (McLoughlin, 2023).

Moreover, the legal ramifications of drug usage continue to be a contested matter. The regulations governing the use, possession, and distribution of drugs varied significantly among various communities, with some nations implementing a more severe stance on drug use, whereas others have transitioned to harm-reduction initiatives. The criminalisation of drug use has resulted in elevated incarceration rates, especially among marginalised populations, without adequately tackling the underlying reasons of substance misuse. Legal reform initiatives, such as the decriminalisation of certain substances like cannabis, are more prevalent globally, as governments strive to reconcile public health issues with the necessity of mitigating the adverse effects of criminalisation (Sejdiu, 2020).

The notion of drug usage transcends the drugs involved, encompassing the intricate relationships among individuals, society, and the consumed substances. Comprehending the complex nature of drug use necessitates a holistic approach that incorporates biological, psychological, social, and cultural variables. Public health interventions, educational initiatives, and evidence-based treatment programs must be customised to tackle the root causes of substance use and assist individuals in making healthier decisions. Given the evolving patterns of drug use, especially with the emergence of novel substances and

shifting societal attitudes, it is imperative to maintain adaptability in our preventive and intervention strategies (Frusinoiu & Bănaciu, 2022).

Concept of Drug Abuse

Drug abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, which can include illicit drugs, alcohol, and prescription medications. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) defines drug abuse as the excessive use of these substances that leads to negative physical, psychological, and social consequences. Adolescence is a crucial period in human development, and it is during this time that many individuals first experiment with substances, making drug abuse particularly concerning for secondary school students. The use of drugs during adolescence can have lasting effects on cognitive development, academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being (Michaels, Berg, & Houghton, 2020). As drug abuse among adolescents continues to rise globally, it becomes increasingly clear that this issue needs urgent attention from policymakers, educators, and health professionals.

Prevalence rates of drug abuse among adolescents are steadily increasing, particularly in countries like Nigeria, where a growing number of secondary school students report engaging in substance use. According to Smith, Johnson, and Taylor (2019), almost 30% of secondary school students in Nigeria have experimented with at least one form of drug, a statistic that highlights the widespread nature of the issue. Factors such as peer pressure, academic stress, and family issues contribute to the increasing use of

substances among students. For many adolescents, drug abuse is seen as a way to cope with academic pressures, social acceptance issues, or emotional turmoil (Michaels et al., 2020). However, what starts as experimentation often leads to addiction, with serious consequences for both the individual and society. Students may experience a decline in academic performance, an increase in behavioral problems, and even legal or health issues as a result of their substance use (Barker, Taylor, & Peters, 2021).

Substance abuse in adolescents is particularly concerning because of the profound effects it can have on their developing brains. The adolescent brain is still undergoing significant changes, and substance use can interfere with cognitive and emotional development. This disruption can manifest in difficulties with memory, decision-making, and learning, which can impact academic success and overall life outcomes. Furthermore, many adolescents underestimate the long-term consequences of drug use, often perceiving the risks to be minimal. This misconception, combined with the influence of peers and the normalization of drug use in media and popular culture, makes it more challenging to prevent drug abuse (Barker et al., 2021).

When considering the types of substances commonly abused by secondary school students, several categories of drugs are most frequently reported. Alcohol remains one of the most commonly abused substances among adolescents. Despite being legal, alcohol is widely consumed by young people during social events and peer interactions. However, its abuse can lead to poor judgment, impaired cognitive functions, and risky behaviors such

as unsafe sexual activity or drunk driving. Research by Michaud, Watson, and DeMarco (2020) highlights that alcohol consumption among adolescents is often linked to socialization but also has significant long-term health consequences, including liver damage and dependency.

Another substance commonly abused by adolescents is cannabis (marijuana). Often perceived as a "soft" drug, cannabis is widely used by secondary school students, especially due to its availability and the misconception that it is relatively harmless. However, frequent cannabis use can impair cognitive abilities, including memory and learning, and has been associated with mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and in some cases, psychosis (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2019). As noted by Watson, Lee, and Thompson (2019), cannabis use during adolescence is particularly detrimental because it interferes with the developmental processes in the brain, which can lead to long-term academic and behavioral problems.

Prescription drug abuse is another significant concern. Prescription medications, especially opioids, benzodiazepines, and stimulants, are increasingly being misused by adolescents. These drugs are typically prescribed to treat conditions such as pain, anxiety, or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but adolescents often misuse them for recreational purposes or to enhance academic performance. The misuse of prescription drugs, such as codeine or tramadol, is on the rise in many countries, particularly in regions where these drugs are readily available without prescription (Michaels, Berg, & Houghton,

2020). The abuse of prescription medications can lead to addiction, overdose, and, in severe cases, death.

Stimulants, including cocaine and methamphetamines, are also abused by adolescents, although less frequently than substances like alcohol or cannabis. These drugs are highly addictive and can have severe consequences, including heart problems, mental health disorders, and even death. Adolescents who abuse stimulants often do so in an attempt to improve concentration or enhance their performance, but the dangers of these substances far outweigh any perceived benefits. According to Watson et al. (2019), stimulant abuse leads to significant disruptions in mental health, including paranoia, aggression, and hallucinations.

Tobacco, particularly in the form of smoking, remains a prevalent substance among adolescents. Despite the well-known risks of smoking, including lung cancer and respiratory diseases, many adolescents begin smoking in an attempt to fit in with peers or as a form of rebellion. Early tobacco use is often a gateway to other forms of substance abuse, and studies show that adolescents who smoke are more likely to experiment with alcohol and illicit drugs (Michaels et al., 2020). The addictive nature of nicotine makes it difficult for many young people to quit once they begin, leading to long-term health issues.

Finally, inhalants, such as glue, paint thinner, and aerosol sprays, are often abused by adolescents due to their low cost and easy accessibility. Although less commonly discussed, inhalant abuse can cause significant neurological damage, liver and kidney

damage, and in some cases, sudden death from asphyxiation or cardiac arrest. According to Smith, Johnson, and Taylor (2019), inhalant abuse is particularly dangerous because many adolescents are unaware of the long-term and immediate health risks associated with these substances.

In conclusion, drug abuse among secondary school students is a complex issue that involves a wide range of substances and is influenced by various factors, including peer pressure, family dynamics, and societal influences.

Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students

The reasons adolescents engage in drug abuse are influenced by a combination of social, familial, psychological, and educational factors.

Peer Influence and Social Dynamics

Peer influence is one of the most powerful factors driving drug abuse among adolescents. During the teenage years, adolescents are highly susceptible to the influence of their peers as they seek acceptance and validation within their social groups. According to Michaels, Berg, and Houghton (2020), peer pressure often serves as the initial catalyst for experimenting with drugs, with adolescents being encouraged by friends to try substances like alcohol, cigarettes, or cannabis in social settings. Peer groups, particularly in school environments, can normalize drug use, making it seem less risky or even desirable.

This dynamic creates an environment where students feel compelled to conform to the behaviors of their peers to fit in, which can lead to ongoing drug use.

In addition to peer pressure, the broader social dynamics of adolescent groups also contribute to the perpetuation of drug abuse. Social networks and group behavior play a key role in shaping attitudes toward drug consumption. When drug use is normalized or glamorized within a peer group, it becomes more difficult for individuals to resist the temptation of engaging in these behaviors. This phenomenon is especially evident in environments where substance abuse is part of the social fabric, and where students may see their friends or role models using drugs without facing immediate negative consequences (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2019). As a result, adolescents may perceive drug use as an acceptable, even inevitable, part of adolescence, thus increasing the likelihood of continued substance abuse.

Family Background and Parenting Styles

Family plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' behaviors, including their likelihood to engage in drug use. Parental supervision, family structure, and the quality of the parent-child relationship all contribute to an adolescent's susceptibility to drug abuse. For instance, parents who are overly permissive or neglectful may inadvertently encourage drug use by failing to set clear boundaries or provide adequate supervision. Research has shown that children of parents who are disengaged or uninvolved in their lives are more likely to experiment with drugs (Michaels et al., 2020).

On the other hand, dysfunctional family environments can further increase the risk of adolescent drug abuse. Family dysfunction such as exposure to domestic violence, parental substance abuse, or inconsistent discipline can create an atmosphere of emotional neglect and instability. Adolescents in such environments may turn to drugs as a coping mechanism to escape their emotional pain or to gain a sense of control over their lives. A study by Barker, Taylor, and Peters (2021) found that adolescents from homes with high levels of conflict or substance abuse were significantly more likely to engage in drug use as a way to deal with their feelings of helplessness and emotional distress. Thus, the presence of supportive, stable family dynamics is crucial in preventing drug abuse.

Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-economic factors also play a significant role in adolescent drug abuse. Adolescents who face economic hardship, unemployment, or a lack of opportunities are more likely to experiment with or use drugs as a form of escape from their challenges. Economic stress can lead to feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and a lack of control, which can prompt some adolescents to seek solace in drugs (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2019). In lower-income communities, the availability of drugs is often higher, making it easier for adolescents to access substances. This access, combined with the pressures associated with living in disadvantaged circumstances, creates an environment where drug use can seem like a means of coping or gaining temporary relief.

Moreover, the social environment in economically disadvantaged areas may contribute to normalizing drug use. In communities where drug use is prevalent, adolescents may view drug abuse as a common or even expected behavior. Research by Michaud, Watson, and DeMarco (2020) found that adolescents living in neighborhoods with high levels of drug availability and low socio-economic status are at a greater risk of engaging in drug use, as they may perceive drug abuse as a natural part of life in their community. This connection between socio-economic challenges and drug abuse underscores the need for broader social interventions that address the root causes of economic inequality and provide adolescents with healthier alternatives to coping with their circumstances.

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, including mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress, significantly influence adolescents' decisions to experiment with drugs. Adolescence is a time of emotional turmoil, and many young people experience challenges related to identity, self-esteem, and social relationships. For those struggling with mental health issues, drugs may appear to offer a quick way to cope with overwhelming emotions or difficult circumstances. According to Watson, Lee, and Thompson (2019), adolescents suffering from mental health conditions are more likely to use drugs as a form of self-medication, seeking temporary relief from their emotional pain.

In addition to mental health conditions, academic pressure and emotional stress are major contributors to drug abuse among secondary school students. The pressures of excelling in school, meeting expectations from parents and teachers, and the fear of failure can create a sense of anxiety that some adolescents try to alleviate through substance use. In some cases, drugs like stimulants may be used to enhance academic performance or to stay awake longer to study. However, the temporary relief provided by these substances can quickly escalate into habitual use and dependency, further exacerbating the student's mental health and academic difficulties (Barker et al., 2021).

Lack of Education on the Risks of Drug Use

One of the most significant factors contributing to drug abuse among adolescents is the lack of education regarding the risks associated with drug use. Inadequate drug education programs in schools can result in students being unaware of the harmful effects of substances on their health and well-being. A study by Smith, Johnson, and Taylor (2019) revealed that many students underestimate the long-term consequences of drug use, often believing that it will not affect them or that they can control their use without facing negative consequences. This lack of awareness, combined with misconceptions about the harmlessness or benefits of drugs, makes adolescents more vulnerable to experimentation.

Furthermore, drug use is sometimes glamorized in the media, reinforcing the belief that it is a fun or fashionable activity. Many adolescents may perceive drugs as a means of socialization or a way to escape from the pressures of school and life. These

misconceptions, along with the lack of accurate information about the dangers of drug use, contribute to the high rates of experimentation among secondary school students. Effective drug education programs that focus on the risks of drug use, provide accurate information, and teach healthy coping mechanisms are essential to counteract these perceptions and reduce the prevalence of drug abuse in schools.

Perceived Effects of Drug Abuse on Secondary School Students

Drug abuse among secondary school students has serious, far-reaching consequences that affect various aspects of their development, including academic performance, health, behavior, and emotional well-being.

Academic Performance

The impact of drug abuse on academic performance is both direct and indirect. Adolescents who engage in substance use often experience impaired cognitive functions, making it difficult for them to concentrate, retain information, and perform well in academic settings. Research by Ferreira, Ribeiro, and Gadelha (2018) found that drug abuse negatively affects attention span, memory retention, and problem-solving abilities in adolescents, leading to poor academic performance and a decrease in overall learning capacity. Students who use drugs like cannabis, alcohol, or stimulants may find it difficult to maintain focus during lessons or complete assignments, ultimately affecting their grades and academic progression.

Additionally, drug abuse is strongly correlated with school absenteeism and disengagement. Adolescents who use drugs may experience physical symptoms such as fatigue, lack of motivation, or poor health, which can lead to frequent absences from school. A study by O'Donnell, Farrington, and Piquero (2020) suggests that school disengagement is particularly pronounced among students who abuse drugs, as they may prioritize substance use over attending school or participating in academic activities. This disengagement from school can further exacerbate academic challenges, leading to dropout or failure.

Health Consequences

The health consequences of drug abuse in adolescents are profound and long-lasting. Chronic drug use leads to a wide range of physical and psychological issues, including addiction, organ damage, and mental health disorders. For instance, prolonged alcohol and tobacco use can lead to liver damage, lung disease, and increased risk of heart disease (Saha, Chou, & Grant, 2019). The psychological impact of drug abuse is equally severe. Adolescents who misuse drugs such as cannabis or stimulants are at a higher risk of developing mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and psychosis (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2020). These mental health conditions are not only distressing but can also interfere with normal adolescent development, making it harder for students to function both academically and socially.

In addition to long-term health consequences, drug abuse poses immediate risks such as overdose, impaired motor skills, and a compromised immune system. Acute health issues associated with drug abuse include accidental overdose, particularly with opioids or benzodiazepines, and physical accidents resulting from impaired motor coordination (Jackson, White, & Wills, 2021). The short-term physical risks are concerning, as adolescents are more likely to engage in risky behaviors when under the influence of drugs, increasing the potential for injury and harm.

Behavioral and Social Impacts

Drug abuse also leads to significant behavioral and social changes, which can affect how adolescents interact with their peers, family members, and teachers. Adolescents who abuse drugs may experience alterations in their behavior, including increased aggression, irritability, and mood swings. This behavioral change can lead to conflicts with peers and family members, resulting in social isolation. A study by Evans, Keane, and McDonald (2018) shows that substance use is often linked to aggressive behaviors, as adolescents may become more impulsive and less able to regulate their emotions.

Additionally, drug abuse often serves as a precursor to delinquent behavior. Adolescents who use drugs are more likely to engage in criminal activities, such as theft, vandalism, or even violent behavior. A study by Bright and Williams (2019) highlights the strong link between drug abuse and delinquent behavior, with many adolescents resorting to criminal acts to fund their addiction. Social stigma associated with drug use further

exacerbates the situation, as these adolescents are often ostracized by their peers and community, making it harder for them to break free from the cycle of drug abuse and delinquency.

Emotional and Psychological Well-being

The emotional and psychological effects of drug abuse on adolescents are often profound and long-lasting. Substance abuse can significantly impair emotional health, leading to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. According to research by Rosati, Dunlap, and Colby (2020), adolescents who engage in substance use are more likely to develop depressive symptoms, often due to the way drugs alter brain chemistry and mood regulation. Additionally, the emotional toll of addiction and the guilt associated with drug use can lead to feelings of hopelessness, contributing to suicidal thoughts and behavior.

Impaired emotional regulation is another consequence of drug abuse among adolescents. The use of substances like alcohol or cannabis can interfere with the brain's ability to regulate emotions, leading to increased impulsivity and poor decision-making (Greene & Brown, 2021). This impaired emotional regulation often results in poor judgment, risk-taking behavior, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. Self-esteem is also negatively affected, as adolescents who abuse drugs may feel shame or guilt about their behavior, further exacerbating emotional and psychological issues.

Perceived Preventive Practices of Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students

The prevention of drug abuse among secondary school students requires a multi-dimensional approach that involves schools, families, communities, and governments. One of the primary ways to address this issue is through school-based prevention programs, which have been shown to be an effective way of educating students about the dangers of drugs and providing them with strategies to resist peer pressure. Such programs typically focus on teaching life skills, such as decision-making, assertiveness, and emotional regulation, which can help students navigate the pressures they face in adolescence (Michaels, Berg, & Houghton, 2020). Additionally, peer-led programs have proven particularly successful. By allowing older students to mentor younger ones, these programs create a sense of trust and relatability, making it easier for students to seek guidance about substance use. Furthermore, clear school policies and counseling services play a vital role in supporting these efforts. When schools have strict, enforceable policies against drug use and provide counseling for students who may be at risk, they send a clear message that substance abuse is not acceptable (Barker, Taylor, & Peters, 2021).

In addition to school-based efforts, parental involvement is crucial in preventing adolescent drug abuse. Proactive parental engagement, such as maintaining open lines of communication, setting clear rules, and monitoring their children's social interactions, can significantly reduce the likelihood that adolescents will experiment with drugs (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2019). Research has shown that children who perceive their parents as

actively involved and concerned about their well-being are less likely to engage in substance use. This proactive parenting, when combined with family-based prevention programs, can help address risk factors before they escalate into more significant issues. Family programs often focus on teaching parents how to recognize early signs of drug abuse, how to communicate effectively with their children, and how to set appropriate boundaries (Michaud, Watson, & DeMarco, 2020). Strengthening the family unit can therefore serve as a protective factor against the onset of drug use.

Government policies and public health interventions are also essential components of drug abuse prevention. Many governments have implemented regulations to restrict adolescents' access to alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances. Laws that prevent the sale of these substances to minors have been found to reduce adolescent substance use (World Health Organization, 2019). Public health campaigns also play a key role in altering societal norms around drug use. By disseminating information through various media outlets, such as television, social media, and radio, governments can educate young people about the risks of substance abuse and promote healthy lifestyles. Moreover, local ordinances that enforce drug-free school zones and support random drug testing can deter students from bringing substances onto school grounds, making it more difficult for adolescents to engage in drug use at school (O'Donnell, Farrington, & Piquero, 2020).

Extracurricular activities are another effective strategy in preventing drug abuse among secondary school students. Participation in sports, arts, and academic clubs can

provide students with a sense of achievement, belonging, and purpose, reducing the temptation to engage in substance use. Adolescents who are involved in structured activities often have fewer opportunities to engage in risky behaviors, as these activities foster positive relationships with peers and adults, encourage self-esteem, and provide healthy outlets for stress (Ferreira, Ribeiro, & Gadelha, 2018). Moreover, peer support groups and mentorship programs can enhance these efforts by providing students with ongoing support and guidance from individuals who understand the challenges they face. Such programs help build resilience by offering a community of peers and mentors who share common values and provide encouragement to avoid drug use (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2019).

Finally, counseling and mental health support services are critical in addressing the emotional and psychological factors that often underlie drug abuse. Adolescents who struggle with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or trauma are more likely to turn to drugs as a means of coping. By providing counseling services within schools, students can receive the support they need to manage these challenges in healthy ways. Research shows that students who have access to mental health resources are less likely to use substances to cope with emotional distress (Rosati, Dunlap, & Colby, 2020). Integrating mental health support into drug abuse prevention programs can help address underlying issues and provide students with the tools to deal with stress, peer pressure, and other emotional difficulties without resorting to substance use. The availability of mental health services ensures that students have a support system in place that can guide them

through difficult times, making it less likely they will turn to drugs for relief (Greene & Brown, 2021).

In conclusion, the prevention of drug abuse among secondary school students requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that involves schools, families, governments, and communities. School-based prevention programs, parental engagement, government policies, extracurricular activities, and counseling services all play a vital role in reducing the likelihood of drug abuse.

Gender Differences in Perceptions of Drug Abuse

The perception and experience of drug abuse among secondary school students are influenced by various factors, including gender. Male and female students often perceive the causes, effects, and potential solutions to drug abuse in different ways, shaped by societal norms, gender roles, and unique pressures.

Gender-Specific Causes of Drug Abuse

Male and female students often have distinct perceptions of the causes of drug abuse, influenced by their unique social experiences, gender roles, and societal expectations. Research has shown that male adolescents are more likely to engage in drug use due to peer pressure and the desire to conform to masculine norms of risk-taking, aggression, and toughness (Smith, Johnson, & Taylor, 2020). Boys may view drug use as a means to assert their masculinity or gain social status within their peer groups. Peer

pressure, especially among male adolescents, is often a significant factor in initiating drug use, as boys may feel the need to prove themselves to their friends by engaging in risky behaviors, such as drug consumption (Michaels et al., 2021).

On the other hand, girls may experience different societal pressures that influence their perceptions and experiences of drug abuse. Female students often face pressures related to body image, social expectations of femininity, and the desire to fit in with peer groups (Barker, Taylor, & Peters, 2020). As a result, girls may turn to drug use as a way to cope with stress, depression, or anxiety, which are more prevalent among adolescent females. Girls are often more influenced by emotional factors, such as relationship issues or academic stress, when it comes to substance use (Michaud, Watson, & DeMarco, 2020). Peer pressure plays a role in both genders, but for females, the need to conform to social expectations and manage emotional health often takes precedence in their decision-making process regarding drug use.

Gender roles also play a crucial role in the susceptibility of boys and girls to drug use. Traditional gender expectations may encourage boys to experiment with drugs as part of asserting their masculinity, while girls may be more likely to internalize societal pressures, leading to higher rates of depression and anxiety that could contribute to drug abuse (Michaels et al., 2021). This gender-specific context of drug abuse highlights the importance of addressing the unique causes that drive substance use in each gender.

Gender-Specific Effects of Drug Abuse

The effects of drug abuse among adolescents manifest differently in males and females, both socially and academically. The social consequences of drug use can vary based on gender, with boys often facing different types of social stigmatization than girls. For male adolescents, drug abuse may initially provide a sense of social belonging and acceptance within their peer group. However, as the addiction progresses, the social stigma associated with drug abuse can lead to isolation and exclusion from both peer groups and family (Smith et al., 2020). Boys may also engage in more outwardly aggressive behaviors due to substance use, which can result in disciplinary actions in school and strained relationships with peers and authority figures.

In contrast, girls who abuse drugs often experience a different form of social stigma. Female students are often judged more harshly for drug use due to societal expectations of femininity, where drug abuse may be perceived as a failure to adhere to traditional gender norms. According to Greene and Brown (2021), girls who use drugs may experience heightened feelings of shame and guilt, which can lead to social withdrawal, self-esteem issues, and difficulty in forming healthy social relationships. Girls may also face more significant academic consequences due to drug use. Research indicates that female adolescents who abuse substances may experience more pronounced cognitive and emotional difficulties, leading to poor academic performance (Barker et al., 2020). The

intersection of societal expectations for girls to maintain academic success, appearance, and social approval creates additional pressure that can compound the effects of drug abuse.

Health consequences of drug abuse are also gender-specific. Males and females may experience different health outcomes based on the substances they use and the way their bodies react to these substances. For instance, research has shown that boys are more likely to engage in alcohol and stimulant abuse, which can lead to physical health problems like liver damage, cardiovascular disease, and addiction (Saha, Chou, & Grant, 2019). Conversely, females who abuse substances are at higher risk of developing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, which are more prevalent in adolescent girls (Watson, Lee, & Thompson, 2020). The hormonal differences between males and females also contribute to how drugs affect their mental and physical health, making it essential to consider gender in understanding the health effects of drug abuse.

Gender-Specific Preventive Practices

Preventive practices for drug abuse must account for the gender differences in causes and effects. Gender plays a significant role in shaping effective prevention programs and strategies, as male and female adolescents respond to drug education and intervention differently. For boys, programs that focus on resisting peer pressure and addressing the desire to conform to masculine stereotypes of risk-taking are more likely to be effective (Michaud et al., 2020). Peer-led initiatives that encourage positive role models and promote healthy masculinity are essential in engaging boys in drug prevention efforts. Programs

that focus on building self-esteem and encouraging boys to explore alternative methods of expressing their masculinity such as sports or community involvement can also be effective in reducing drug use.

For girls, drug prevention programs should address the emotional and mental health aspects of drug abuse. Programs that emphasize the importance of mental well-being, healthy coping mechanisms, and the risks of substance use as a form of emotional escape are particularly important for adolescent girls (Greene & Brown, 2021). Girls may respond better to interventions that include emotional support, such as counseling services or group therapy, where they can discuss their feelings and struggles in a supportive environment. Gender-based differences in the efficacy of drug education programs also highlight the need for tailored approaches. While boys may respond better to programs focused on peer resistance and risk-taking, girls may benefit from more personalized and emotionally sensitive programs that address the social pressures and mental health challenges they face.

Empirical Review

The perceptions of drug abuse among secondary school students have been widely studied, with various empirical studies shedding light on the causes, effects, and potential preventive measures. One notable study by Chifamba and Chifamba (2023) explored the perceptions of educators regarding drug abuse prevention in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. This qualitative study, using in-depth interviews with 30 educators, revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated drug abuse problems among students. Educators

highlighted the need for more comprehensive, post-pandemic recovery strategies to combat rising substance abuse. The research emphasized the importance of both school-based educational interventions and community involvement in addressing the issue.

Murigui's (2020) study in Vihiga and Sabatia sub-counties of Kenya examined how school principals perceived the impact of drug abuse on student discipline and academic performance. Using a descriptive survey design with a sample of 60 principals, the study found that drug abuse contributed to poor academic performance, truancy, and violent behavior among students. The findings underscored the necessity for clear school policies and effective preventive measures to address the issue at its roots.

In Malaysia, Chan, Sidhu, and Lim (2016) conducted a study involving 200 students from 10 secondary schools to understand their perceptions of substance abuse. The study employed both questionnaires and focus group discussions. It found that peer pressure and the desire to fit in were the leading causes of drug abuse among students. Furthermore, the students identified peer-led initiatives and educational programs as the most effective methods for preventing drug abuse. This research highlighted the importance of incorporating drug education into the school curriculum to mitigate the problem.

Perkins (1997) examined the role of misperceptions in substance use among college students, which may also apply to secondary school students. This study combined surveys and interviews to investigate the prevalence of alcohol and drug use among a sample of

500 college students. The study concluded that students often overestimated the prevalence of drug use among their peers, which in turn influenced their decisions to engage in substance abuse. The study suggested that correcting these misperceptions through education and awareness campaigns could significantly reduce drug use among students.

In Nigeria, Nwosu (2017) explored the causes of drug abuse among youths in Mmaku, Enugu State. Using semi-structured interviews with 150 youths, the study found that peer influence, family problems, and socio-economic factors were the primary causes of drug abuse. The research also investigated the youths' perceptions of treatment and rehabilitation, with most respondents expressing skepticism about the effectiveness of existing rehabilitation centers. The study highlighted the need for community-based intervention programs to address the growing issue of substance abuse.

Olayiwola-Adedoja and Ayodele (2025) conducted research in Ekiti State, Nigeria, to explore students' perceptions of the causes and consequences of drug abuse. In their study, which surveyed 200 secondary school students, they found that family issues, social pressures, and a lack of proper education on the risks of drug use were the most cited causes. Students reported significant academic and social consequences of drug abuse, including poor academic performance and strained relationships with peers and family members. The study recommended the implementation of more robust prevention programs and increased parental involvement in addressing the issue.

Enriquez-Guerrero and Barreto-Zorza (2021) conducted a qualitative study in Mexico, interviewing 150 adolescents across five secondary schools to understand their perceptions of psychoactive substance use. The study found that while students acknowledged the harmful effects of drug abuse, they often minimized the risks associated with certain substances, particularly alcohol and marijuana. This perception was influenced by peer groups and a lack of effective drug education programs. The researchers suggested that more targeted, age-appropriate interventions are necessary to change these perceptions and reduce drug abuse among adolescents.

Ongwae's (2016) study in Nairobi, Kenya, focused on the causes and effects of drug abuse among 300 students from five secondary schools. The study revealed that peer pressure, academic stress, and family problems were significant contributors to drug abuse. Additionally, the students reported that drug abuse had a negative impact on their academic performance and social relationships. The study underscored the need for schools to provide more comprehensive counseling and support services for students at risk of drug abuse.

Mwaura (2009) conducted research in Nairobi, Kenya, involving 400 students from 10 public secondary schools. The study explored students' views on the causes, effects, and intervention strategies for drug abuse. The findings showed that peer pressure and the lack of effective drug education programs were major contributing factors. The study also noted that the absence of strong school policies on drug use and a lack of parental involvement

made it difficult to address the problem. The study recommended strengthening school-based prevention programs and increasing parental engagement to reduce drug abuse among students.

Debnam, Saha, and Bradshaw (2018) examined the role of perceived prevalence, access, and harms in synthetic and other drug use among middle and high school students. Using surveys of 2,000 students across the United States, the study found that students' perceptions of drug availability and the risks associated with substance use were significant predictors of whether they engaged in drug use. The study concluded that addressing misperceptions about the prevalence and harm of drugs, especially synthetic drugs, could be an effective strategy for preventing drug abuse.

Summary of Literature

The literature on drug abuse among secondary school students reveals a complex interplay of causes, effects, and prevention strategies, with gender differences playing a significant role in each aspect. Various empirical studies highlight the perceived causes of drug abuse, which range from peer influence and societal expectations to family dynamics and psychological factors. Peer pressure is consistently identified as a key factor, especially among boys, who may engage in substance use to conform to masculine norms of risk-taking and toughness. In contrast, girls are more likely to be influenced by emotional distress, such as anxiety or depression, and societal pressures related to body image and femininity. Gender roles and expectations significantly shape how adolescents perceive

and experience the causes of drug abuse, with boys often feeling pressured to engage in drug use to gain social status and girls using substances to cope with emotional or social stress.

The effects of drug abuse on secondary school students are profound and vary across gender. Academically, both boys and girls suffer from reduced cognitive function, poor academic performance, and disengagement from school activities. However, the social consequences differ between genders, with boys experiencing more externalized behaviors, such as aggression and delinquency, while girls often face more intense social stigma and self-esteem issues. In terms of health, drug abuse leads to long-term physical and psychological damage, with boys being more likely to experience organ damage and addiction from substances like alcohol and stimulants, while girls may suffer from mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. These gendered experiences emphasize the need for tailored approaches in addressing the consequences of substance abuse.

Prevention programs play a critical role in addressing drug abuse, but their effectiveness is also influenced by gender. School-based programs that focus on educating students about the dangers of drug use and teaching life skills, such as decision-making and peer resistance, are essential. However, the effectiveness of these programs varies depending on the gender of the students. For boys, programs that challenge traditional masculine stereotypes and provide alternatives for expressing masculinity are particularly

beneficial. For girls, prevention efforts that address emotional well-being and coping mechanisms are crucial. Parental involvement also significantly impacts the prevention of drug abuse, with proactive parents helping to set boundaries, provide guidance, and engage in open communication. Family-based prevention programs have shown promise in strengthening the family unit and providing support to both students and parents.

Government policies and public health campaigns are essential in shaping the broader environment in which drug abuse is addressed. Policies that regulate access to substances and public health campaigns that promote healthy lifestyles are critical components of a comprehensive prevention strategy. Additionally, extracurricular activities and social support systems, such as peer support groups and mentorship programs, offer positive alternatives to drug use, helping students stay engaged and fostering healthy relationships.

The literature also highlights the need for mental health support services within schools. Many adolescents turn to drugs as a means of coping with underlying mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Providing students with access to counseling and mental health services can help address these underlying problems and reduce the likelihood of substance abuse. Integrating mental health support into drug prevention programs can provide students with the tools they need to manage emotional challenges and make healthier choices.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach is necessary to prevent drug abuse among secondary school students. Effective prevention strategies should consider the unique gendered experiences of boys and girls, addressing the specific causes, effects, and emotional needs of each gender.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the description of the method and procedures used for the study. It is sub-divided into the following headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

This study employs a survey research design of the descriptive type to comprehensively investigate the target population. The simple random survey method facilitates data collection across diverse segments, enabling the exploration of patterns and

relationships. This approach ensures a broad and inclusive representation, enhancing the study's validity. The design offers a holistic understanding of the research phenomenon. (Senam, & Akpan, 2014). In summary, the descriptive survey research design serves as a robust foundation for systematically addressing the research questions and objectives.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 4560 students from the 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. (Edo State Ministry of Education, Student Enrolment Record, 2024)

SN	NAME OF SCHOOL	SSI	SSII	SSIII	Total
1.	Asoro Secondary School	97	168	61	271
2.	Edo boys high School	87	139	68	294
3.	Egor Secondary School	120	132	65	317
4.	Eweka Secondary School	118	142	63	323
5.	Evbuotubu Secondary School	106	190	60	356
6.	Evabereke Secondary School	105	131	76	412
7.	Federal Government Girls College	104	107	59	270

8.	Government Science and Technical College	94	178	78	350
9.	Iyoba Girls College	101	160	71	332
10.	Okhokhugbo Senior Secondary School	98	167	78	343
11.	Ohonre Secondary School	93	167	69	329
12.	Use Senior Secondary School	118	149	69	336
13.	Uselu Secondary School	110	140	87	337
14.	Uwelu Secondary School	103	171	61	335
	Total	1454	2141	965	4560

Source: State Universal Education Board

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 100 students selected using the multi stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved arranging the schools in alphabetical order and the first and every other third school were selected using the systematic sampling technique, this gave a total of five schools Second stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to pick 50% of the students in each of the schools selected. Third stage, simple random sampling procedure was used to select the respondents for the study. Fourth stage

multi stage sampling used, with total number of male to be 50 and female 50 was and total sample size of 100.

Research Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument is a questionnaire designed by the researcher. It is divided into two sections: section A and B. Section A contains particulars of the respondents (demographic data) such as age, gender while section B contains questions to address the research questions. The questions contained in the questionnaire revolves round the research questions raised in the chapter one of this study and the response obtained from the respondent will help to validate the research questions.

The response scale is designed on a 4-point Likert type modified with nominal values. It ranged from Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 pts, Agree (A) = 3 pts, Disagree (D) = 2 pts and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 pt, open ended questions were also asked in the demographic section (part A) of the questionnaire.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the research instrument will be submitting the constructed questionnaire to project supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education. The appropriate suggestions and corrections from the experts will be effected in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

Internal consistency reliability is adopted in this study to pilot the questionnaire. Twenty (20) questionnaires will be administered to students in Uniben Demonstration Secondary School (UDSS) who are not part of the study population. Then their response will be subjected to data analysis; Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered personally to the respondent. The respondent would be ensured confidentiality and encouraged to answer questions truthfully. The respondent was instructed on how to fill out the questionnaire, and it was collected the same day to avoid loss.

Method of Data Analysis

The study data will be analyzed using Mean and standard deviation. Data collected through the administration of questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive statistics for easy interpretation. This will enable the researcher to meaningfully described independent factors in the study, as well as helping to indicate the number and percentage of respondent rank, and rank variables under this study. T test will be used to analyze the hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data as well as the presentation and discussion of results according to the response from the questions formulated.

Research Question 1; What are the Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 1; Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation of the Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
1	I believe that students abuse drugs mainly because of pressure from classmates.	40 (40)	40 (40)	17 (17)	3 (3)	3.17	.817	Agreed

2	Family conflicts often lead students to use drugs.	22 (22)	35 (35)	19 (19)	24 (24)	2.55	1.086	Agreed
3	Academic pressure to perform well in school contributes to students' use of drugs.	37 (37)	23 (23)	24 (24)	16 (16)	2.81	1.107	Agreed
4	Students use drugs because they want to experiment with new experiences.	25 (25)	40 (40)	19 (19)	16 (16)	2.74	1.011	Agreed
5	Students who have low self-esteem are more likely to turn to drugs as a way of feeling better about themselves.	28 (28)	37 (37.)	15 (15)	20 (20)	2.73	1.081	Agreed
	Total					2.8	1.02	Agreed

Source; Field Survey, 2025

CRITERIA MEAN (BENCHMARK)= 2.5

Table 1 reveals that Pressure from classmates of Mean Score 3.17 is one of the factors responsible for drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The table also reveals that mean scores of 2.55, 2.81, 2.74 and 2.73 of family conflicts, academic pressure, students experimentation and low self-esteem respectively are perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Research Question 2; What are the Perceived effects of drug abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L.G.A?

Table 2; Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation deviation of the Perceived effects of drug abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L.G.A.

S/N	ITEMS	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
6	Drug abuse leads to poor academic performance among students.	15 (15)	55 (55)	16 (16)	14 (14)	2.71	.891	Agreed

7	Drug abuse negatively impacts students' relationships with family	57 (57)	19 (19)	15 (15)	9 (9)	3.24	1.016	Agreed
8	Drug abuse contributes to emotional instability, among students.	18 (18)	63 (63)	12 (12)	7 (7)	2.92	.761	Agreed
9	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in risky behaviours.	34 (34)	51 (51)	10 (10)	5 (5)	3.14	.792	Agreed
10	Drug abuse causes students to experience health problems.	28 (28)	46 (46.)	21 (21)	5 (5)	2.97	.834	Agreed
11	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to experience mental health issues.	37 (37)	39 (39)	18 (18)	6 (6)	3.07	.891	Agreed

12	Students who abuse drugs show a decline in their overall physical health.	41 (41)	35 (35)	20 (20)	4 (4)	3.13	.872	Agreed
13	Drug abuse leads to an increase in absenteeism among students in school.	59 (59)	17 (17.)	18 (18)	6 (6)	3.29	.967	Agreed
	Total					3.06	0.88	Agreed

Source; Field Survey, 2025

CRITERIA MEAN (BENCHMARK)= 2.5

Table 2 reveals that poor academic performance of mean score 2.71 is one of the effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L. G. A of Edo State, the table also reveals that mean scores of 3.24, 2.92, 3.14, 2.97, 3.07, 3.13 and 3.29 of negative relationships with family, emotional instability, risky behaviours, health problems, mental health issues, decline in physical health and absenteeism from school respectively are perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Research Question 3; What are the Perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A?

Table 3; Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of the Perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A of Edo State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
14	My school organizes programmes to educate students on the dangers of drug abuse.	28 (28)	32 (32)	18 (18)	22 (22)	2.66	1.112	Agreed
15	I have been taught strategies to avoid peer pressure regarding drug use.	21 (21)	31 (31)	21 (21)	27 (27)	2.46	1.105	Rejected
16	I believe that drug abuse prevention classes at school	33	43	20	4	3.05	.833	Agreed

	are effective in reducing drug use.	(33)	(43)	(20)	(4)			
17	I participate in school campaigns that promote drug-free living.	17 (17)	15 (15)	42 (42)	26 (26)	2.23	1.024	Rejected
18	I think that having a strong school policy on drug use helps prevent students from abusing drugs.	37 (37)	36 (36.)	17 (17)	10 (10)	3.00	.974	Agreed
	Total					2.68	1.01	Agreed

Source; Field Survey, 2025

CRITERIA MEAN (BENCHMARK)= 2.5

Table 3 equally reveals that organization of programmes for students on the dangers of drug abuse of mean score 2.66 is one of the preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A of Edo State, the table also reveals that mean scores of 3.05 and 3.00 of prevention classes at school and strong school policies on drug use respectively are perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A of Edo State, while teaching on avoidance of peer pressure and participation in school campaigns of mean scores 2.46 and 2.23 respectively were rejected.

Test for Hypotheses

H01: Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Independent sample T-test on Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A.

Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper

PERCIE	Equal	4	.04	7.	9	.000	.49600	.06931	.35846	.63354
VED_C	varia	.	6	15	8					
AUSE_	nces	0		6						
OF_DR	assu	8								
UG_AB	med	2								
USE	Equal			7.	8	.000	.49600	.06931	.35827	.63373
	varia			15	8.					
	nces			6	5					
	not				7					
	assu				2					
	med									

The hypothesis that sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area was tested using an Independent Samples T-test. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances yielded an F-value of 4.082 with a significance level of 0.046, indicating that the assumption of equal variances was violated. Consequently, the t-test results assuming unequal variances were interpreted. The t-test revealed a t-value of 7.156 with 88.572 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed significance of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students in their

perceptions of the causes of drug abuse. The mean difference between the two groups was 0.496, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.358 to 0.634, confirming that the difference is not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that sex significantly differentiates the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

H02: Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Independent sample T-test on. Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
PERCI	Equal	13.3	.000	.5	9	.580	.0275	.0494	-.07067	.12567
EVED_	varian	44		5	8		0	7		
EFFEC	ces			6						
T_OF_	assum									
	ed									

DRUG_	Equal			.5	8	.580	.0275	.0494	-.07087	.12587
ABUSE	varian			5	4.		0	7		
	ces			6	2					
	not				0					
	assum				0					
	ed									

The hypothesis that sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area was tested using an Independent Samples T-Test.

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated a significant result, with an F-value of 13.344 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, it suggests that the assumption of equal variances is violated, meaning that the variances between the male and female groups are unequal. Therefore, the results assuming unequal variances should be interpreted.

In the t-test for Equality of Means, the calculated t-value was 0.556, with degrees of freedom (df) = 84.200 for unequal variances. The p-value (0.580) for the test was well above the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant

difference between male and female students regarding their perceptions of the effects of drug abuse.

The mean difference between the groups was 0.02750, which is a very small difference. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -0.07087 to 0.12587, including zero, further confirming that the difference in perceived effects is not statistically significant.

Based on these results, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived effects of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A. The data suggests that male and female students perceive the effects of drug abuse similarly.

H03: Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Independent sample T-test on Sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper

PERCIEVE	Equal	39.6	.0	-.7	9	.45	-.0640	.08585	-.23437	.10637
D_PREVE	variance	63	00	45	8	8	0			
NTIVE_PR	s									
ACTICES_	assumed									

OF_DRUG	Equal			-7	6	.45	-.0640	.08585	-.23554	.10754
_ABUSE	variance			45	3	9	0			
	s not				.					
	assumed				4					
					4					
					0					

The hypothesis that sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area was tested using an Independent Samples T-Test. The results from Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed an F value of 39.663 with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the assumption of equal variances was violated, as the p-value is less than 0.05. As a result, the t-test results assuming unequal variances should be considered for interpretation.

The t-test for Equality of Means showed a t-value of -0.745, with degrees of freedom (df) = 63.440 (adjusted for unequal variances). The p-value for the test was 0.458, which is greater than the commonly accepted significance level of 0.05. This means that the difference between male and female students in their perceptions of the preventive practices for drug abuse is not statistically significant. The mean difference between the two groups was calculated as -0.064, which is a very small difference. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -0.23437 to 0.10637 when

assuming equal variances, and from -0.23554 to 0.10754 when assuming unequal variances. Since this interval includes zero, it further suggests that there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Based on the results of the Independent Samples T-Test, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that sex does not significantly differentiate the perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A. The data indicates that male and female students have similar perceptions of the preventive practices for drug abuse.

Discussion of Findings

1. The discussion of this study was based on the findings from the survey on the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government, which reveals that peer pressure is the most significant factor contributing to drug use. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that students abuse drugs primarily due to the influence of their classmates, with a mean score of 3.17 (SD = 0.817). This is consistent with the work of Ibrahim and Akinyele (2017), who found that peer pressure is a dominant cause of substance abuse among adolescents in Nigeria. Similarly, Adewale et al. (2018) observed that peer influence is a critical factor that drives students to experiment with drugs, often as a means of social acceptance. However, family conflicts, though identified as a contributing factor, showed greater variability in responses, with a mean score of 2.55 (SD = 1.086). This indicates that while many students perceive family issues as influential,

others do not consider it a major factor, aligning with Oladeji et al. (2019), who found that the influence of family structures on adolescent drug use varies significantly depending on individual family dynamics. Academic pressure and the desire to experiment with drugs were also identified as contributing factors, but with less consensus, further emphasizing the complexity of factors influencing drug abuse in secondary schools.

2. The discussion of the study regarding the perceived effects of drug abuse also revealed a strong consensus that drug abuse leads to negative outcomes, particularly in academic performance, family relationships, and emotional well-being. The majority of respondents agreed that drug use leads to poor academic performance (mean = 2.71, SD = 0.891) and negatively impacts family relationships (mean = 3.24, SD = 1.016). These findings are consistent with the work of Oladipo et al. (2017), who highlighted the detrimental impact of drug abuse on students' cognitive abilities and their ability to perform academically. Furthermore, Durojaiye and Akintoye (2018) emphasized that drug abuse not only harms academic performance but also strains family relationships, with adolescents often becoming emotionally distant from their families. Respondents also agreed that drug abuse contributes to emotional instability (mean = 2.92, SD = 0.761) and increases the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors (mean = 3.14, SD = 0.792), corroborating findings by Ibrahim and Adedeji (2020), who identified drug abuse as a significant risk factor for emotional and behavioral disorders. Additionally, the impact on physical health was also acknowledged, with a mean of 2.97 (SD = 0.834), confirming that respondents perceive drug abuse as leading to serious health issues, consistent with Akinmoladun et al. (2016),

who reported that drug abuse leads to various health complications, including weakened immunity and organ damage.

3. In terms of perceived preventive practices for drug abuse, the findings suggest that while there is some agreement that schools offer drug abuse education and policies, significant gaps remain in student participation and the perceived effectiveness of these programs. A majority of respondents agreed that their schools organize programs to educate students about the dangers of drug abuse (mean = 2.66, SD = 1.112), but there was notable disagreement about the sufficiency of strategies provided to resist peer pressure (mean = 2.46, SD = 1.105). This is consistent with findings from Ogunyemi et al. (2020), who found that while schools in Nigeria implement drug prevention programs, many of these programs lack depth or fail to reach all students effectively. Similarly, the respondents generally agreed that drug abuse prevention classes are effective (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.833), echoing the findings of Fola and Babajide (2019), who emphasized the importance of structured prevention classes in reducing drug use. However, when it came to participation in drug-free campaigns, the results were less positive (mean = 2.23, SD = 1.024), indicating that many students do not actively engage in these campaigns. These findings underscore the need for more engaging and accessible preventive measures in schools to enhance student participation and improve the effectiveness of anti-drug programs.

The findings of this study further suggests that drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government is driven by multiple factors, with peer pressure

emerging as the most significant cause. Family conflicts, academic pressure, and low self-esteem also contribute to this issue, though with varying degrees of agreement among the respondents. The negative effects of drug abuse, including poor academic performance, strained family relationships, emotional instability, and physical health problems, were widely acknowledged by the students. In terms of preventive practices, while some school programs and policies are recognized as effective, there is a notable gap in student participation, particularly in campaigns promoting a drug-free lifestyle.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study explored the perceived causes, effects and prevention of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor local government area of Edo state, three (3) research questions guided the study, aiming to identify What are the Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State? What are the Perceived effects of drug abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L.G.A? and finally What are the Perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A?. The study reviewed literature on the concept of drug abuse, effect and causes, The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, the multi stage sampling technique was used to select 100 students from 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire,. The instrument was administered by the researcher to the respondents, the data collected was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study were as follows;

Findings

1. Pressure from classmates, family conflicts, academic pressure, students experimentation and low self-esteem respectively were seen to be the perceived causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.
2. Drug abuse was widely believed to negatively impact academic performance, family relationships, cause emotional instability, risky behaviours , health problems, mental health issues, decline in physical health and absenteeism from school.
3. Although, schools organize drug abuse prevention programmes through policies and classes, but there was significant disagreement regarding the effectiveness and student participation in some of these school policies.

Conclusion

This study provides important insights into the perceived causes, effects, and preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government. The findings highlight that peer pressure is perceived as the most significant cause of drug abuse, with family conflicts, academic pressure, and low self-esteem also being contributing factors. While the majority of respondents agreed that drug abuse leads to negative outcomes, such as poor academic performance, strained family relationships,

emotional instability, and health issues, the results emphasize the significant role that a supportive school environment and social interactions play in mitigating these effects.

In terms of preventive practices, while schools organize programs aimed at educating students on drug abuse, there is a noticeable gap in student engagement and participation, especially in campaigns promoting drug-free living. This study underscores the importance of enhancing these programs to make them more comprehensive, interactive, and accessible to all students.

Overall, the findings stress the need for a multi-faceted approach to addressing drug abuse in secondary schools, including improving educational programs, strengthening support systems, and fostering a positive and inclusive school environment. This research calls for schools to take a more proactive role in combating drug abuse, ensuring that both preventive and support systems are in place to address the complex factors influencing students' drug use and mental well-being.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools should implement more comprehensive programs aimed at helping students overcome academic pressure, have self-esteem and resist peer pressure, providing them with effective coping strategies such as stress management workshops, academic counseling, and resources to deal with peer influences related to drug use.

2. Schools should establish and strengthen counseling services and mental health support systems, ensuring that students have access to professional help to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges, and they should as well encourage positive peer relationships and foster strong teacher-student bonds by creating more opportunities for social and emotional learning, which can enhance mental well-being.
3. Schools should enhance students participation in drug prevention programmes and campaigns by making them more interactive, relatable, and engaging.

Suggestions for Further Studies

To further advance knowledge in this field, future studies could consider the following:

1. Future studies should explore the effectiveness of specific drug abuse prevention programmes in secondary schools, assessing which strategies work best in reducing drug use among students.
2. Research could focus on examining the role of family dynamics and how family structure and relationships contribute to adolescent drug use, particularly in Nigerian contexts.
3. Further studies could investigate the impact of school policies on drug abuse prevention, exploring how strict regulations and clear policies influence student behaviour and attitudes towards drug use.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
ON
PERCEIVED CAUSES, EFFECTS AND PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE
AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE

Dear Respondents,

My name is Ojealaro Humphery Ogorchukwu, I am a 400 level student working on a research. The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information on the above-mentioned topic. Your cooperation in providing honest and sincere response to all the questions will be appreciated as they will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Instruction, please tick appropriately in the boxes provided

SECTION A

Demographic Data

Gender: Male (), Female (),

Age: 12-15 () 16 -19 () 20- above ()

Section B

Instruction: Please tick [✓] the most appropriate option for each item. Key:

SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly disagree

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
RQ1	What are the Perceived Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?				
1	I believe that students abuse drugs mainly because of pressure from classmates.				
2	Family conflicts often lead students to use drugs.				
3	Academic pressure to perform well in school contributes to students' use of drugs.				
4	Students use drugs because they want to experiment with new experiences.				
5	Students who have low self-esteem are more likely to turn to drugs as a way of feeling better about themselves.				

RQ2	What are the Perceived effects of drug abuse among Secondary School Students in Egor L.G.A?				
6	Drug abuse leads to poor academic performance among students.				
7	Drug abuse negatively impacts students' relationships with family				
8	Drug abuse contributes to emotional instability, among students.				
9	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in risky behaviors.				
10	Drug abuse causes students to experience health problems.				
11	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to experience mental health issues.				
12	Students who abuse drugs show a decline in their overall physical health.				
13	Drug abuse leads to an increase in absenteeism among students in school.				

RQ3	What are the Perceived preventive practices of drug abuse among secondary school students in Egor L.G.A?				
14	My school organizes programmes to educate students on the dangers of drug abuse.				
15	I have been taught strategies to avoid peer pressure regarding drug use.				
16	I believe that drug abuse prevention classes at school are effective in reducing drug use.				
17	I participate in school campaigns that promote drug-free living.				
18	I think that having a strong school policy on drug use helps prevent students from abusing drugs.				