

Published by the Nigerian Psychological Association



Family Functioning, Self- Esteem and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Substance Abuse among In-School Adolescents in Lafia Metropolis, Nasarawa State

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Abstract

The prevalence of substance abuse among in-school adolescents has been on the increase thus causing concern to many health professionals. Studies have investigated this problem using different predictors with varying results. This study investigates family functioning, peer pressure and self-esteem as predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis, Nasarawa State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design while purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from 414 in-school adolescents using validated questionnaires. Data were analysed using t-test of independent samples and multiple regression analysis. Four hypotheses were generated and tested at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The result revealed that family functioning, peer pressure and self-esteem jointly predicted substance abuse among in-school adolescents ($R^2 = .037$, $F [3, 407] = 3.61$, $p < .05$). The result further showed that peer pressure significantly influenced substance abuse among in-school adolescents [$t (411) = 3.67$, $p < .05$] such that in-school adolescents with high peer pressure ($M = 23.67$, $SD = 12.55$) reported significantly higher in substance abuse than those with low peer pressure ($M = 19.10$, $SD = 12.10$). However, family functioning and self-esteem did not significantly influence substance abuse among study participants. The study concluded that peer pressure tends to be a strong predictor of substance abuse among in-school adolescents. Therefore, it is recommended that parents and other significant others should monitor their children with types of friends they are going out with to avoid being lured to substance abuse.

Keywords: *Family Functioning, Peer Pressure, Self-esteem, Substance Abuse, In-school Adolescents, Lafia Metropolis/Nasarawa State*

Author's History

Received: 20/08/2023
Revised: 24/09/2023
Accepted: 30/09/2023

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Introduction

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021) defined substance abuse as ‘the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances which includes alcohol and illicit drugs’. Substance abuse is also the "arbitrary" overdependence on or misuse of a single drug, whether or not there is a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners (Jumbe et al., 2021). Substance abuse includes the incorrect use of legal prescription drugs because a lot of individuals are involved in self-medication and overdose of prescribed drugs thinking it will facilitate the ‘healing effects’. Every year, millions of people worldwide are affected by problems related to substance abuse in many ways. It is estimated that 76.3 million people suffer from alcohol use disorders which cause 1.8 million deaths annually (Oladeji et al., 2020).

Substance abuse is one of the many global issues that the world is facing today. The burden of the direct and indirect consequences of substance use weighed heavily on the abusers, the family and the society at large in both the developed and developing worlds. With the exception of the North-West geopolitical zone which has 13.4% prevalence of substance abuse, other geopolitical zones are reported to have as high as 33.6% prevalence of substance abuse among in-school adolescents (Onigbogi et al., 2023).

In an online article published by the Punch Newspaper, Ojiego (2021) narrated how the use of Methamphetamine known in the Igbo language as *Mkpuru mmiri* has turned the South-eastern part of Nigeria into chaos. There are stories of killings, maiming and mental illness springing up everywhere as the result of the abuse of this drug. The prevalence of substance use such as tobacco, alcohol, and other illicit drugs among in-school adolescents aged 14 and 15 years have become a source of concern to many mental health practitioners in Nigeria. Some factors have been investigated as predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Nigeria.

One factor considered in this study as a likely predictor of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis is family functioning which is characterized by support, love and care for other family members (James, 2023). It is that which ensures protection and a sense of belonging. It gives good communication and makes each other in the family feel special, valued, appreciated, and highly respected. On the other hand, an unhealthy (dysfunctional) family is one that is characterized by inability of family members to express and communicate their feelings (James, 2023). It is associated with a general feeling of tension in the family which may be due to one or both parents having an addictive behaviour, problem with mental health, or a personality disorder (Zeng et al., 2021). Studies have indicated that in-school adolescents who scored high in family functioning scale comes from family that are involved in problem solving, that communicates very well, have affective involvement, responsiveness and very cohesiveness and in way are family that stay away from

substance abuse compared to those who scored low or are from dysfunctional family (James, 2023; Mandavia et al., 2016).

The second factor considered in this study as a likely predictor of substance abuse among in-school adolescents is self-esteem which is described as an individual overall evaluation of their own self-worth, which can manifest as either positive or negative attitude toward themselves and inversely affecting their attitudes towards others (Hepper, 2023). It is part of the self-concept defined by Rosenberg as a collection of personal thoughts and feelings about oneself. Furthermore, self-esteem is an unavoidable and automatic result of a person's choices that is a component of an individual's thoughts, feelings, and deeds (Hepper, 2023). Studies have reached different conclusions about the role of self-esteem in substance abuse among in-school adolescents. For example, studies have found that in-school adolescents with low self-esteem were more into substance abuse than those with high self-esteem (Hasan, 2019; Kitinisa, 2019). However, Elyamany et al. (2020) found that in-school adolescents who scored high in self-esteem tend to be involved in substance abuse.

The third factor considered in this study as a likely predictor of substance abuse among in-school adolescents is peer pressure which is described as the force of attraction to an adolescent by an individual's age mate or peer group towards a behaviour or action (Hartney, 2023). In-school adolescents' social and emotional behaviour is strongly affected by peer pressure (Allen, 2005). Peer pressure can have both positive and negative effects. The positive peer pressure is when youths are encouraged by their peers to engage in positive behaviours such as voluntary work for charity or excelling academically (Kelly, 2013). Negative peer pressure occurs when youths who are in the process of finding self-identity without parental or significant help are attracted to their peer groups with negative behavior (Kelly, 2013). Studies have indicated that in-school adolescents who scored high on peer pressure scale tended to be involved in substance abuse than those who scored low on peer pressure scale (Barton & Henderson, 2016; Whaley et al., 2016).

When family functioning, peer pressure and self-esteem are controlling in-school adolescents, what would likely be the effect on substance abuse? Therefore, this study aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Would family functioning significantly influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis?
2. Would self-esteem significantly influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis? .
3. Would peer pressure significantly influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis?

4. Would family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure jointly and independently predict substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis?

The main purpose of this study was to establish whether family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure would predict substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. In order to achieve this purpose, the following specific objectives were stated: (1) to determine whether family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure on substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis; (2) to examine the influence of family functioning on substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis; (3) to evaluate the influence of self-esteem on substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia local government; (4) to assess the influence of peer pressure on substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia local government.

This study would bring fresh perspectives on the family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure as predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia metropolis, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Also, the result of the study would help parents, guidance, teachers and significant others to guide their children and wards against peer pressure who would lure them to engage in substance abuse. Finally, the findings of this study would help government and NGOs to organise workshops, seminars and conferences to educate in-school adolescents on the menace of substance abuse.

Theoretical construct

Social learning theory The social learning theory (SLT) was developed by Bandura (1997). The theory posits that individuals learned from others by observing and imitating the behavior of interest, especially from significant others. SLT starts with an anticipated stimulus, followed by attention and a modeling stimulus, which eventually leads to symbolic coding, cognitive organisation, rehearsal, culminating in the formation of a behavioural response (Bandura, 1997). Three concepts are germane to effectiveness of this study theory: environment, behaviour, and personality traits of the individuals (Smith, 2020).

When applied to this study, it holds that substance abuse and dependence such as in tobacco, alcohol and drugs are associated with individuals' assessment of others' consumption and the subsequent beneficial effect. A child who continuously sees a parent drinking for leisure and better mood, for example, would in time to come affiliates drinking with a positive outcome and embraces the same behavioural pattern. As a result, when a child sees his parents drinking as a solution to a problem, he is more likely to drink and possibly abuse alcohol, which can lead to addiction (Smith, 2020).

Some studies have examined the influence of family functioning on substance abuse. For example, Papaleontiou et al. (2020) found that in-school adolescents' family functioning has an effect on their future substance abuse

behaviour. In another study, Zeng et al. (2021) found that in-school adolescents who have strong support from family have higher levels of family functioning which would allow them to cope effectively as well as relieve negative emotions, stress as well minimize their chances of being involved in substance abuse. Liu (2020) found family functioning to be a significant predictor of substance addiction among their study participants. In another study, family functioning was found to have a significant adverse effect on substance abuse among in-school adolescents (Habibi et al., 2017). In a longitudinal study on the importance of family functioning on substance abuse, Maehira et al. (2013) revealed that family encouragement and support were needed to prevent individuals from engaging in substance abuse and decrease addictive behaviour. The in-school adolescents' substance abuse is therefore closely related to family functioning. In-school adolescents are less likely to engage in problem behaviours such as substance abuse when they have interacted well with family members particularly their parents (Choi et al., 2005). This was also confirmed by Fagan et al. (2011) when they linked family functioning to an in-school adolescent delinquent behaviour such as substance use. Cordova et al. (2014) found that in-school adolescents with good family functioning are less likely to use drugs and have a lower risk of doing so than in-school adolescents with poor family functioning.

Studies on peer pressure on substance abuse have also been reported. For example, in a comprehensive study of the influence of peer pressure on deviant behaviours among youths, Iko et al. (2019) found peer pressure to have significant and positive effects on youths who had friends who did not abuse substances were less likely to use substances themselves. The rate of being involved in substance abuse because of peer pressure were 2.625 times higher (i.e., 63%) than those associated with peers who were not involved in substance abuse. The 'perceived benefits' of drug abuse also were evaluated. They found the correlation of substance abuse and peers 'Friends' acceptance' to be rated higher (0.68) than substance use as a 'pain reliever' and 'strength enhancer' (0.48). In-school adolescents also abused substances for the assumed reward of increasing boldness (0.45), being able to 'speak in public,' and 'feeling joy' (0.42). While substance abuse for sedative purposes (0.24) was rated rather low, the need to get out of depression as seen in 'euphoria and happiness' (0.36) and enhance memory (0.35) were rated to be moderate. Many young people were drawn to substance abuse by the presumed benefit of being 'self-confidence' and 'high' exuding (0.32). Also, Onoh et al. (2023) found that adolescents who were exposed to smoking teammates were more likely to smoke than those who were not exposed to smoking teammates. The influence of peer pressure tends to be pervasive when it comes to behavior modifications.

Finally, studies have been done on the influence of self-esteem and substance abuse. For example, Kounenou (2010) found that individuals with high self-esteem predict non-substance abuse compared to individuals who have low self-esteem. Furthermore, Khan (2007) reported that low self-esteem is linked to an increased likelihood of committing certain crimes and engaging in substance abuse. In a seminal study, Akbari et al.

(2008) found a link between crime and low self-esteem leading to the conclusion that low self-esteem is the root cause of abnormal behavior including substance abuse.

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. In-school adolescents with high family functioning would report significantly lower substance abuse than in-school adolescents with dysfunctional families.
2. In-school adolescents with low self-esteem would significantly report higher substance abuse than in-school adolescents with high self-esteem.
3. In-school adolescents who report high levels of peer pressure would significantly score higher on substance abuse than in-school adolescents with low peer pressure..
4. Family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure would jointly and independently predict substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA, Nasarawa state.

Method

Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design where data were collected using validated questionnaires. Three independent variables family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure while the dependent variable was substance abuse

Settings

The research was carried out in Lafia, which is also the capital of Nasarawa State in North Central, Nigeria. Lafia LGA has 18 public secondary schools. Some of the schools have only junior secondary classes, while others have both junior and senior classes. Four schools were selected from the government secondary schools located in different parts of Lafia using a simple balloting method. The schools were: Government Secondary School Tudun Kauri, Government Secondary School Tudun Gwandara, Government Secondary School Mararaba Akunza and Government Secondary School Ombi.

Sampling technique

urposive sampling technique was used to select Lafia Local Government Area (LGA) while simple random sampling technique was used to select four out of 18 public secondary schools in Lafia (LGA). Because SSS3 students were writing their School Certificate Examination, only SSS1 and SSS2 students were randomly selected for this study. Students were assembled in their long halls where each student was asked to pick number 1, 2 or 0. Students that picked 1 were selected from SSS1. The same was repeated for SSS 2 students. Students that picked 2 were selected for inclusion and those who picked zero (0) overall were excluded. This method was executed in all the four schools to allow for randomly selection of all the participants for the study.

Instruments

Family Functioning

The McMaster Family Assessment Device (MFAD, Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop 1983) which has been designed to capture seven key dimensions of family functioning was used. It allows for the assessment of problem solving, communication, roles, affective involvement, affective responsiveness, behavioral control, and general functioning of a family. In this study, only the General functioning scale was used in which a 12-item scale is presented on a 4-point Likert's format that ranges from 1 – strongly agree to 4 – strongly disagree to rate items. Sample items are: 'In times of crisis we can turn to each other for support' and 'We cannot talk to each other about the sadness we feel'. The scale has been used with robust psychometric properties including its use among in-school adolescents (Boterhoven de Haan et al., 2015; Juliusdottir & Olafssdottir, 2015). FAD 12-item General Functioning (GF) has a Chronbach's alpha of 0.92. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.75.

Self-esteem

This was assessed using the Self-Esteem Scale (SES) developed by Rosenberg (1965). It is a 10-item self-esteem scale which assesses an individual's overall sense of self value. The scale is presented in a 4-point Likert's format that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Examples of items include: 'I feel that I have a number of good qualities' and 'I take a positive attitude toward myself'. The RSE has been found to have Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 and for the current study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.85.

Peer Pressure

This was measured using the Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) developed by Krejcie, Robert, Morgan, and Daryle (1970). The scale is a 22-item which is rated on a four-point Likert format which ranges from 4= a lot to 1= no pressure. Sample items include: 'How strong is the pressure from your friends to...' 'Study hard, do your homework,' etc' and 'Make out "kissing or petting"'. The author reported the scale of Cronbach's alpha as 0.72 and in this present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.65.

Substance Abuse

This was evaluated using the Adolescent Drug Involvement Scale which was developed by Mayer and Filstead (1979) for the measurement of the drug or illicit substance involvement level in in-school adolescents. It is a 12-item presented on a 4-point Likert's format that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Sample items include: 'Who do you use drugs with? How do others see' and 'You in relation to your drug use?' The authors reported the scale of Cronbach's alpha as 0.85) and in this study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.86.

Procedure

A formal letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan which was presented to the respective school principals for the permission to carry out this study. The content of the questionnaires were shown to the principals and based on their permission, the researchers were directed to the respective class teachers who assisted the researchers to administer the questionnaires to the participants and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. They were told they can discontinue from filling the questionnaires if they wish to. Both printed thank you and verbal thank you were expressed to the participants after the administration of the questionnaires. It took less than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. A total of 420 copies of the questionnaires were administered across the selected schools and were collected on the spot. When the questionnaires were screened, six questionnaires were incompletely filled and were removed, thus left with 414 which was used for the analysis.

Statistical analysis

Data collected were analysed using SPSS version 23. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Hypothesis 1 was tested using multiple regression analysis while hypotheses 2- 4 were tested using t-test of independent samples. All hypotheses were accepted at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

The consent of the participants was sought before the questionnaires were administered. There was full assurance from the researchers to the participants of confidentiality on the information given on the questionnaires. All the information supplied by the participants were to be used only for the purpose of the research and not for any other purpose that may inflict any personal either physical or emotional hurts on the participants.

Results

Participants

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic data. Based on the analysis, 176 (42.5%) of the participants were males while 238 (57.5%) were females. The age bracket of the participants showed that 54 (13.1%) were between 12 and 14 years, 258 (62.3%) were between 15 and 17 years, 97 (23.4%) were between 18 and 20 years, while 5 (1.2%) were between 21 and 25 years. Many of the participants 299 (72.2%) were from Nasarawa State, 29 (7.0%) were from Enugu state, 26 (6.3%) were from Kogi state, 20 (4.8%) were from Benue state, 13 (3.1%) were from Taraba state, 11 (2.7%) were from Imo state, 7 (1.7%) were from Plateau state, while 9 (2.2%) were categorized as others state. Also, many of the participants 230 (55.6%) were from SSS1, were in SS1, while 184 (44.4%) were in SS2. Lastly, a high number of the participants 337 (81.4%) were living with their parents while 77 (18.6%) were not living with their parents.

H1: Hypothesis two states that in-school adolescents with functioning families would report significantly low substance abuse than those with dysfunctional families. This was tested with a t-test of independent samples and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Independent T-test showing the Effect of Family Functioning on Substance Abuse among In-School Adolescents in Lafia LGA

Family Functioning	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Functioning	222	21.32	13.60			
				411	-.224	>.05
Dysfunctioning	191	21.60	11.91			

DV = Substance abuse

Table 1 presents a t-test on the influence of family functioning on substance abuse. The result revealed that family functioning did not influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA of Nasarawa State [$t(411) = -.224, p > .05$]. This finding implied that there was no significant family functioning difference in substance abuse of the sampled participants. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected.

H2: Hypothesis two states that in-school adolescents with low self-esteem would report significantly higher substance abuse than those with high self-esteem. This was tested using a t-test of independent samples and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent T-test showing the Effect of Self-esteem on Substance Abuse among In-School Adolescents in Lafia LGA

Self-esteem	N	M	SD	df	t	p
High	184	21.69	13.44			
				411	.38	>.05
Low	229	21.21	112.40			

DV= Substance abuse

Table 2 shows the influence of self-esteem on substance abuse. As displayed in Table 2, the result indicated that self-esteem did not significantly influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA, Nasarawa State [$t(411) = .38, p > .05$]. This finding implied that there was no significant self-esteem difference in substance abuse among sampled participants. Therefore, hypothesis two was rejected.

H3: Hypothesis three states that in-school adolescents who reported high levels of peer pressure would significantly score higher on substance abuse than those with low peer pressure among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA. This was tested using a t-test of an independent sample and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent T-test showing the Influence of Peer Pressure on Substance Abuse among In-School Adolescents in Lafia LGA

Peer-pressure	N	M	SD	df	t	p
High	206	23.67	12.55	411	3.67	<.05
Low	207	19.10	12.78			

DV=Substance abuse

Table 3 presents the influence of peer pressure on substance abuse among study participants. The result indicated that peer pressure had significant influence on substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA, Nasarawa State [$t(411) = 3.67, p < .05$] such that those with high peer pressure reported significantly higher in substance abuse ($M = 23.67, SD = 12.55$) than those with low influence of peer-pressure ($M = 19.10, SD = 12.10$). Therefore, the hypothesis was confirmed.

H4: Hypothesis four states that family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure would jointly and independently predict substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA in Nasarawa State. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis of Family Functioning, Self-esteem and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Substance Abuse among In-School Adolescents in Lafia LGA

Predictors	β	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Family Functioning	.020	4.0	>.05	.193	.037	5.28	< .05
Self-Esteem	.019	3.4	>.05				
Peer-Pressure	.20	4.0	<.05				

DV- Substance abuse

Table 4 shows the multiple regressions analysis of the predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents. The result revealed that family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure jointly predicted substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA of Nasarawa State [$R^2 = .037, F [3, 407] = 3.61, p < .05$]. This suggests that all the predictor variables accounted for 3.7 percent of the proportion of variance in substance abuse while the remaining 96.3% could be attributed to unexplained variables not considered in this

study. Further analysis showed that only peer pressure ($\beta = .20, t = 4.0, p < .05$) had significant independent influence on substance abuse. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported.

Discussion

This study investigated family functioning, self-esteem, and peer pressure as predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA of Nasarawa State. Four hypotheses were generated, tested and accepted at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

The hypothesis that in-school adolescents with functioning families would report significantly low in substance abuse than those with dysfunctional families was not supported. The result shows that family functioning did not significantly influence substance abuse among in-school adolescents in Lafia LGA, Nasarawa State. In-school adolescents from functioning families tend to stay together and be satisfied with themselves. Deviant behaviours such as substance abuse are not accepted in the family. This finding corroborated with the result obtained by Cordova et al. (2014) that a family that is dysfunctional will predispose an adolescent to substance abuse. Substance use and addiction, according to Bowen Family Systems, are the result of a system having exhausted its capacity to manage anxiety and stressors. In-school adolescents with good family functioning have a lower probability and potential danger of substance abuse compared to in-school adolescents with poor family functioning (Cordova et al., 2014).

The hypothesis that in-school adolescents with low self-esteem will report significantly higher substance abuse than those with high self-esteem among in-school adolescents was not confirmed. This supported previous findings by (Hasan, 2019; Kitinisa, 2019) that individuals with low self-esteem were not guaranteed to be involved in substance abuse at this age. However, this study contradicted Elyamany et al. (2020) finding which indicated that low self-esteem among in-school adolescents predicts their involvement in substance abuse. Self-esteem was significant in the use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances.

The hypothesis that in-school adolescents with high peer pressure would report significantly higher substance abuse than those with low peer pressure was supported. The findings revealed that peer pressure had a significant pressure on substance abuse among the study population. This finding supported the result by Chen et al. (2007) that in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours are influenced by peer pressure. It tends to imply that a good relationship with peers becomes a focal point of in-school adolescents' lives as they require a sense of belonging and integration into the society. In-school adolescents who are unable to resist peer pressure and negative pressures may be more prone to delinquent behaviour or the use of psychoactive substances. This is because in-school adolescents may seek to conform to the behavioural norms of the peer group with which they identify (Stewart-Knox et al., 2005). A peer group not only provides emotional support for in-school adolescents, but also the social status required for identity development (Nawaz, 2011). Finally, this finding

supported the study conducted in Lafia metropolis by Iko et al. (2019) which found that peer groups had a significant beneficial impact on other adolescents. This indicates that those who have friends who do not use substances are less likely to use substances.

The hypothesis that family functioning, self-esteem, and peer pressure would jointly predict substance abuse among in-school adolescents was confirmed. This suggests that all the predictor variables accounted for 3.7% of the variance explained in substance abuse among the study participants. Further analysis showed that only peer pressure had significant independent influence on substance abuse. This finding supported previous results that peer pressures outside the home are not only more important than parental pressures but are the only important relational pressures on adolescent behaviour that matter in the long run (Iko et al., 2019; Yule et al., 2018)). This finding contradicted the nurture assumption, which states that parents are the most important part of the child's environment and can determine how the child turns out to a large extent (McCabe et al., 2016). The socialization theory contends that people are socialised and their normative behaviours are shaped by their experiences outside the home. The study clearly shows that only peer pressure is significant based on the study's multiple regression analysis results.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations are proffered: Because peer pressure has a significant role in substance abuse among in-school adolescents, parents and guardians should be sensitive and know those that their children call friends and hang out with. Parents should also ensure that their home provides the emotional needs that the child requires to grow into a law-abiding citizen who will not easily succumb to the pressure of substance abuse. Since self-esteem was found to be related to peer pressure and family functioning, parents and other significant others should educate in-school adolescents on the importance of developing healthy self-esteem which could prevent them from being pressured by those peer groups who are involved in substance abuse. Based on the high prevalence of substance abuse reported in this study and in similar studies within Narasawa State in particular and Nigeria in general, there is a need for the government and the Non-Governmental Organisations to be involved in organising and sensitisation programmes on the effects of substance abuse on their academic and future lives. This would help to prevent and save many that would have been lured to substance abuse.

Limitations and suggestions for further studies

This study has some limitations that need to be mentioned. This study was a cross-sectional survey design where data were collected using self-reported questionnaires in which response bias could not be ruled out. Further studies should include focus group interviews to validate the data collected. Second, only five public secondary schools were used in this study with a sample size of 414 in-school adolescents which would allow for generalisation of the study findings. Further studies should use both private and public secondary schools, use

more LGAs and increase sample size to foster generalization of the study findings. Three independent variables were investigated in this study. Further studies should include learned helplessness and social support.

Conclusion

The results of this study have empirically confirmed that family functioning, self-esteem and peer pressure tend to be strong predictors of substance abuse among in-school adolescents in the study population. Also, peer pressure was found to be a significant independent predictor of substance abuse among study participants. Surprisingly, family functioning and self-esteem were not independent predictors of substance among the study participants

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