

Factors Influencing Substance Abuse among Female Adolescents in Nigeria

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Abstract

Substance abuse among adolescents is a challenge in Nigeria today, and the growing prevalence among females is alarming. This study seeks to find factors influencing the increasing rate among female adolescents, focusing on the role of individual, family, peer, and environmental factors. It explored factors such as socioeconomic status, family dynamics, peer influence, mental health, and accessibility of substances so as to proffer relevant measures toward ameliorating the menace. The study adopts a theoretical approach by using secondary sources of data collection like books, journals, specialized reports, and online resources. Literature was reviewed to identify factors influencing the growing prevalence among female adolescents across the geographical zones of Nigeria. The theoretical framework adopted is Social Learning theory. The study found that peer influence, family dynamics and parenting styles, cultural and gender norms as well as media and popular culture are among the factors influencing substance abuse among female adolescents. The study suggests that both government and non-governmental organizations need to collaborate through programs that promote healthy relationships, behaviors and programs that promote positive parenting styles. The need to establish support groups for families affected and providing a safe space for sharing experiences is sacrosanct.

Keywords: substance, abuse, female, adolescents, social learning theory

Introduction

According to United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2020), substance abuse among female adolescents is a burgeoning global concern. In Nigeria, this issue has far-reaching consequences, affecting various aspects of their lives, including educational attainment, economic empowerment, mental and reproductive health World Health Organization (WHO, 2019). The repercussions of substance abuse among female adolescents in Nigeria are multifaceted, leading to increased school dropout rates, poverty, and economic dependence National Population Commission & International Classification of Functioning, (NPC and ICF (2019), as well as heightened morbidity and mortality rates, depression, and social isolation, National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA, 2020). These repercussions not only affect individuals but also have broader implications for public health, social stability, and individual well-being, emphasizing the importance of targeted strategies to prevent and mitigate substance abuse among this vulnerable population (SAMHSA, 2020). The specific consequences of substance abuse among female adolescents in Nigeria are the broader implications for public

health, social stability, and individual well-being, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions to address this critical issue.
Substance misuse is often linked to various societal, psychological, and environmental factors (World Health Organization, 2018). In Nigeria, these factors are compounded by economic inequalities, cultural norms, and inadequate mental health services Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH, 2019).

The widespread availability and misuse of illicit substances among adolescents, affecting both males and females globally, has become a pressing social issue, with developing countries like Nigeria being particularly affected (Fareo, 2012; Emmanuel, 2013; Yunusa, 2016). Oshikoya, and Alli, (2006) report a continuous and rapid rise in substance usage incidences in Nigeria beginning at the age of ten. Notwithstanding the initiatives undertaken by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and other governmental levels to mitigate and regulate this societal issue, it continues to be a significant source of legal infractions and other criminal activities among all demographics of users, both male and female.

The medical, psychological, social, and economic repercussions of drug issues among female adolescents are increasingly evident and alarming. Individuals who consistently engage in substance abuse frequently encounter a multitude of issues, including scholarly challenges, health complications (including mental health), strained peer relationships, and participation in social vices such as theft, bullying, and clandestine group activities. All of these have detrimental effects on family members, the community, and society as a whole.

According to Ayatse (2005), the initiation of cult members often involves the use of certain materials, including: Alcoholic wine, Hallucinogenic substances such as: Indian hemp and Cocaine. These substances are believed to induce intoxication, making cult members more audacious and potentially leading them to engage in violent or destructive behavior under their influence. Recent studies by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) collaborated on a 2018 study, "Drug Use in Nigeria," which provides insights into substance abuse trends in the country with the following findings:

- **Prevalence of Drug Use**: Approximately 14.4% of Nigeria's population, or 14.3 million people aged 15-64, reported using psychoactive substances in the past year.
- **Commonly Used Substances**: Cannabis, prescription opioids (like tramadol and codeine), and cough syrups (containing codeine or dextromethorphan) were the most commonly used substances.
- **Demographic Trends**: Men were more likely to use psychoactive substances than women, and individuals between 25-39 years old reported higher usage rates.
- **Regional Variations**: The southern geopolitical zones (South-East, South-West, and South-South) had higher past-year prevalence rates (13.8-22.4%) compared to the northern zones (10-14.9%).

These studies revealed significant data indicating that more than 14 million Nigerians predominantly aged 15 to 64, have utilized psychoactive substances. This statistic encompasses adolescents, a significant proportion of who are females. The poll revealed that 25% of drug users are females, indicating a troubling gender disparity, as males have always been seen as the primary users (UNODC and National Drug Use Survey, 2019).

The 2018 study by the National Bureau of Statistics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provides evidence-based insights into substance abuse trends in Nigeria, revealing

a significant prevalence of psychoactive substance use, particularly a growing rate among women and individuals aged 25-39, with regional variations in usage rates.
The 2022 NDLEA report and UNODC studies highlight a concerning trend of rising drug usage among girls in urban and semi-urban Nigeria. The findings are as follows:

Key Findings

- **Most Abused Substances**: Cannabis, prescription medications like codeine and tramadol, and alcohol are the most frequently abused substances among Nigerian youth.
- **Demographic Trends**: Female teenagers aged 15-19 are particularly vulnerable, often turning to substances for stress alleviation, peer influence, and emotional regulation.
- **Regional Variations**: Urban and semi-urban regions show higher rates of substance abuse among girls, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

UNODC Initiatives

- **Drug Use Survey**: Conducting surveys to understand substance abuse trends and patterns.
- **Prison Index Study**: Examining substance abuse among incarcerated populations.
- **Substance Use Categorization Study**: Categorizing substances to inform policy and interventions.
- **Capacity Building**: Training national and sub-national officers in harm reduction strategies.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics and UNODC's 2018 report, "Drug Use in Nigeria,"

- Approximately 14.4% of Nigeria's population (14.3 million people aged 15-64) reported using psychoactive substances in the past year.
- Cannabis was the most commonly used drug, followed by opioids, mainly prescription opioids and cough syrups.
- The southern geopolitical zones (South-East, South-West, and South-South) had higher past-year prevalence rates (13.8-22.4%) compared to the northern zones (10-14.9%).

UNODC (2019) report revealed further that regional disparities indicate that several states in northern and southern Nigeria, notably Lagos, Kano, Rivers, and Kaduna, have documented elevated occurrences of substance use among female adolescents. The prevalence of drug abuse was highest in Lagos (15.4%), Kano (13.4%), Rivers (12.4%) and Kaduna (11.8%)". These regions exhibit diverse socio-economic dynamics that lead to distinct patterns of abuse. Recent school-based surveys conducted by Oluwaseyi, (2022) and Bello, Omigbodun and Adedokun, (2016), revealed that approximately 10% of female secondary school students have experimented with drugs at least once, highlighting the prevalence of the issue within educational institutions. The regional disparities in substance use among female adolescents in Nigeria, with higher prevalence rates in Lagos, Kano, Rivers, and Kaduna, are reflective of broader socio-economic dynamics. Notably, school-based surveys have shown that substance use is not limited to specific regions or demographics, with approximately 10% of female secondary school students nationwide having experimented with drugs at least once (Oluwaseyi, 2022; Bello et al., 2016).

Literature Review

The problem of drug abuse is a prevalent global occurrence in current times. The bulk of contemporary crimes are directly or indirectly linked to substance abuse (Siro, 2014). For example, according to Siro (2017), the prevalence of drug usage in metropolitan Kano has

emerged as a widespread issue, affecting not only the numerous youths but all demographic groups. Initial analysis indicated that peer group influence, parenting style, dysfunctional families, and law enforcement corruption are contributing causes to the drug misuse crisis (Siro, 2017). Abdullahi (2003) contended that pharmaceuticals are primarily compounds utilized to sedate, stimulate, reduce weight, arouse, induce sleep, or treat ailments. Individuals typically consume or administer these substances into their bodies to attain these objectives. Drug abuse is regarded as a significant issue producing considerable concern for both individuals and governments globally. It is common among adolescents, both male and female, who are often unaware of the inherent risks associated with drug misuse. Numerous abusers perpetrate their actions due to frustration, poverty, insufficient parental oversight, peer pressure, and hedonistic tendencies (Oluremi, 2012).

Yunusa (2016) conducted a study on substance misuse among delinquents (both males and females) in Zaria, revealing that inhalants or industrial solvents, including glue/gum solution, gasoline/petrol, nitrous oxide, and laughing gas, were utilized to achieve intoxication. Additionally, frequently abused substances in the research area encompass codeine, cannabis, cough syrups, rafenol, tramadol, heroin, steroids, mandrax, cocaine, alcohol, and designer or club drugs. Nevertheless, individuals have engaged in the inhalation or combustion of desiccated lizard faeces, desiccated human excrement, and desiccated excrement from various animals to achieve intoxication.

The research demonstrated that certain delinquents absorbed the scent of polluted water from gutters or drainage systems, as well as the odor from pit latrines and sand from gutters, to achieve a state of euphoria or intoxication. Zakami (Daturametel) was the most often misused substance in the Zaria city. Juvenile delinquents, both male and female, engage in the abuse of substances by combining two or more concoctions for intoxication. Locations utilized for substance abuse include unfinished buildings, personal rooms, and overgrown areas, designated sites for the sale of illicit substances, secluded spots, motor park premises, and interiors. Additionally, methods of substance abuse encompass drinking, smoking, inhaling, injecting, chewing, sniffing, swallowing, and mixing with food or beverages, often employing a combination of two or more techniques (Yunusa, 2016).

The findings of Yunusa (2016) highlight the alarming prevalence of substance misuse among delinquents in Zaria, with a wide range of substances being abused, including: Inhalants and industrial solvents, Prescription medications such as codeine and tramadol, Illicit drugs like cannabis, heroin, and cocaine, Unconventional substances like desiccated animal excrement and polluted water .The study also reveals that delinquents often combine multiple substances to achieve intoxication, and utilize various methods of consumption, including: Drinking, Smoking, Inhaling, Injecting, Chewing, Sniffing, Swallowing, Mixing with food or beverages. The use of secluded locations, such as unfinished buildings and overgrown areas, as well as designated sites for the sale of illicit substances, further exacerbates the issue. The most commonly misused substance, Zakami (Daturametel), is a particular concern. It is essential to address this issue through comprehensive interventions, including education, counseling, and law enforcement efforts, to prevent the harmful consequences of substance misuse among delinquents.

A study by Hali (2017) on the predisposing factors of substance abuse among women in Kano Metropolis identified several contributing factors: parental negligence, excessive parental protection, having substance-abusing parents or guardians, availability of substances, tension reduction, peer pressure, early marriage, and negative influence from Western media,

frustration, depression, and rivalry among co-wives. Moreover, women engage in substance addiction to enhance or diminish their performance. It was discovered that certain women misused medications to regulate their emotions, particularly their sexual desires during their husbands' absence. It promotes sleep and maintains tranquilly. The research determined that the primary substance misused by women in Kano metropolis was cough syrup/Roche. Additional substances encompass cannabis, rafenol, tramadol, and prescription alcohol, among others. Cocaine and steroids are the least misused substances among women in Kano metropolitan (Hali, 2017).

The study by Hali (2017) sheds light on the predisposing factors of substance abuse among women in Kano Metropolis, highlighting a complex interplay of factors, including: Parental influences (negligence, excessive protection, substance-abusing parents/guardians), Social and environmental factors (availability of substances, peer pressure, early marriage, Western media influence), Psychological factors (frustration, depression, rivalry among co-wives), Emotional regulation (using substances to manage emotions, particularly sexual desires) The study's findings on the primary substances misused by women in Kano Metropolis, including cough syrup/Roche, cannabis, rafenol, tramadol, and prescription alcohol, provide valuable insights into the specific substances of concern.

What sets this study apart is its focus on the unique experiences and challenges faced by women in Kano Metropolis, including the cultural and social context of early marriage, polygyny, and the influence of Western media. The study's discovery that female adolescents married women(married adolescents) use substances to regulate their emotions, particularly during their husbands' absence, highlights the need for gender-sensitive interventions that address the specific needs and circumstances of women in this context.

A unique contribution of this study is its exploration of the inter-sectionality of substance abuse and women's experiences in a conservative societal setting, where traditional gender roles and expectations may contribute to the predisposing factors of substance abuse. By examining the complex interplay of factors that contribute to substance abuse among teenagers and married women in Kano Metropolis, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the issue and informs the development of targeted, culturally sensitive interventions to address substance abuse among women in this context.

Substances Commonly Abused by Adolescents in Nigeria

Substances can be utilized through three processes, that is they can be administered orally, through inhalation (as with substances like cocaine, nicotine, and chemical solvents), or through via injection, intravenous or intramuscular injection, which facilitates rapid delivery to the body.

Many of the frequently abuse substances are considered as "controlled substances" due to their potential to induce dependence and facilitate abuse. This study defines commonly abused substances that falls within the control substances. The classification of commonly abused substances as "controlled substances" due to their potential for dependence and abuse is supported by various studies, including: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Health Organization, and National Institute on Drug Abuse, according to their reports, controlled substances include opioids, stimulants, hallucinogens and inhalants, depressants and other substances that have the potential to induce dependence and facilitate abuse. These commonly abused substances are those substances that can cause harm to individuals and society, and they provide information on their potential for abuse and dependence (UNODC,

WHO, NIDA, 2020). Research on substance abuse has identified various methods of administration, including oral administration, injection, and inhalation, which are supported by existing studies on substance abuse trends and pattern.

Opioids: Opioids are a class of drugs that include prescription painkillers, synthetic opioids, and heroin. They work by binding to opioid receptors in the brain and body, reducing pain and producing feelings of euphoria. The commonly abuse opioids are: **Morphine**: A powerful opioid painkiller, morphine is sometimes abused for its euphoric effects, **Codeine Tramadol**: A prescription painkiller, tramadol is often abused for its euphoric effects,: A prescription cough syrup, codeine is often abused for its euphoric effects, **Pentazocine**: A prescription painkiller, pentazocine is sometimes abused for its euphoric effects **Heroin**: An illicit opioid, heroin is sometimes abused for its euphoric effects. Studies by Balogun (2003), Kreek and LaForge (2007), and Warner (2013) noted that narcotics, such as opium, morphine, and heroin which are from the category of opioids are utilized for analgesia and are linked to surgical procedures and terminal conditions. These substances can be explore and use through different routes of administration, including injection and inhalation, and their potential risks and consequences are obvious.

Stimulants are substances that are commonly abused by adolescents (both males and females). They are medications that prolong activity, inhibit sleep, and obscure fatigue signals, potentially leading to death from exhaustion. Stimulants are frequently consumed to enhance alertness, wakefulness, excitement, and induce feelings of euphoria. There exist three primary Subcategories of stimulants. The substances are amphetamines, caffeine, and cocaine. The most commonly abused substances in the categories of stimulants in Nigeria are: **Caffeine**: Excessive consumption of caffeine can lead to abuse. **Methamphetamine**; A highly addictive stimulant, methamphetamine is sometimes used recreationally. **Energy drinks**; Energy drinks like Red Bull and Monster are sometimes abused for their stimulant effects. **Khat**; A plant-based stimulant, khat is sometimes use recreationally. **Tramadol**; A prescription painkiller, tramadol is sometimes abused for its stimulant effects. These chemicals exert a direct effect and stimulate the human central nervous system. Amphetamines are central nervous system stimulants; they are prescription medications like Ritalin and Adderall are sometimes abused for their stimulant effects. The purpose is to restore depleted energy and reduce weariness. The abuse or overdose of the substance results in agitation, sweating, mydriasis, tremors, hyperverbosity, hallucinations, hypertension, and tachycardia (Irambiya, 2007).

Currently, the primary sources of caffeine in Nigeria include kola nuts, coffee, tea, bitter kola, soft drinks, and beverages derived from cocoa. Each of these compounds includes varying levels of caffeine. Kolanut, which contains a significant amount of caffeine, is extensively consumed in Nigeria, particularly in the northern region. Kolanut holds significant importance in several ethnic groups during social, cultural, or religious celebrations among the Ibo and Yoruba, as indicated by numerous experts (Balogun, 2003; Irambiya, 2007).

Cocaine is a stimulant; Cocaine users feel heightened exhilaration, increased alertness and activity, and a diminished need for sleep and sustenance. The addicts are increasingly inclined to sustain a consistent supply of cocaine despite its prohibitive cost. Regardless of the potential consequences, addicts are determined to fulfill their appetites for the substance. Withdrawal manifests symptoms of apathy, insomnia, depression, anger, and disorientation (Irambiya, 2007). Cocaine is a potent stimulant that can lead to physical and psychological dependence. The effects of cocaine use include: Heightened exhilaration: Increased feelings of euphoria and excitement, increased alertness and activity, Enhanced energy and alertness, often

accompanied by increased physical activity, Diminished need for sleep and sustenance, reduced need for sleep and food, which can lead to malnutrition and sleep deprivation. As noted by Irambiya (2007), cocaine addicts often prioritize maintaining a consistent supply of the substance, despite its high cost and potential consequence. Withdrawal from cocaine can manifest in various symptoms, including: Apathy; Feelings of indifference and lack of motivation. Insomnia; that is, difficulty in sleeping or experiencing disturbed sleep patterns. Depression: Feelings of sadness, hopelessness and despair. Anger: Increased irritability and aggression. Disorientation: Confusion, difficulty concentrating, and impaired cognitive function. Other authors who support these findings include: Kreek, LaForge, & Butelman, (2007): Pharmacotherapy of addictions. Warner, & Kosten, (2013): Sleep disturbances in cocaine users.

Vocci, & Ling, (2005): Medications for cocaine addiction.
Gawin, & Ellinwood, (2006): Cocaine and other stimulants. In Lowinson, Ruiz, Millman, & Langrod (Eds.), Substance abuse: A comprehensive textbook. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Nigerian authors have also contributed to the research on cocaine use and withdrawal, including: Oyewunmi (2017): Investigated the prevalence and correlates of cocaine use among young adults in Nigeria; Makanjuola (2015): Examined the effects of cocaine on mental health and cognitive function in a Nigerian population; Adeyemo (2013): Studied the relationship between cocaine use and sleep disturbances in Nigerian undergraduates; Obot (2010): Researched the social and cultural factors influencing cocaine use among Nigerian youth; Balogun (2009): Explored the pharmacological and psychological effects of cocaine on Nigerian patients.

These authors have contributed to the understanding of cocaine use and withdrawal in the Nigerian context, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive and effective interventions to address substance abuse in the country.

Hallucinogens: Hallucinogens are among other substances in the narcotic classifications of substances that induce profound alterations in perception, cognition, emotional states. Delusions, visual disturbances, and psychotic conduct are consequences of their abuse. Psychedelic drugs are the term used to describe them. Examples include mescaline (extracted from the mescal cactus) and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide). These pharmaceuticals often exist in tablet or capsule format. Hallucinogens induce feelings of dissociation, pleasure, and diminished pain sensitivity. These substances frequently alter users' perceptions of sight, sound, and sensation (Balogun, 2003).

Cannabis Sativa: Cannabis Sativa, generally referred to as Indian hemp, is the oldest and most frequently misused substance in Nigeria. The name denotes marijuana or marihuana, encompassing both the entire plant and its smoke able components. It harbours a greater quantity of carcinogenic substances than tobacco. Cannabis is a depressant that typically induces a sense of euphoria akin to mild intoxication. Cannabis functions as a depressant, and when inhaled, its active compounds arrive to the brain within seconds, with effects lasting for several hours. The effects of cannabis are influenced by the dosage, user experience, environment, motivation, expectations, and personality traits of the individuals involved. It compromises the immune system, thereby rendering smokers vulnerable to disease attacks (Siro, 2014).

Alcohol: Alcohol is a depressant of the nervous system. It manifests symptoms that intensify as its concentration in the bloodstream escalates. Chronic heavy drinking is associated with

severe health issues such as cardiomyopathy, ulcers, nutritional deficits, memory impairment, diminished immune response, and multiple types of cancer. Additional alcohol-related issues encompass driving incidents and other accidents, as well as hazardous interactions resulting from the combining of alcohol with other substances.

Tobacco: Tobacco is obtained from the desiccated leaves of the tobacco plant. Tobacco comprises three hazardous chemicals: nicotine, tar, and carbon dioxide, which serve as the active component in tobacco products. It is highly addicting. Notwithstanding scientific evidence indicating the detrimental effects of smoking on health, certain teenagers, both male and female, persist in smoking in Nigeria. Initially perceived as a male domain, the evolving roles and self-perception of women have facilitated their rising prevalence of smoking. Adolescent girls now perceive smoking as a class-related issue. Cigarettes are offered at nighttime gatherings like to confections. As a woman, smoking garners respect among peers. From a medical perspective, smoking elevates the risk of coronary heart disease, lung cancer, tachycardia, hypertension, and vasoconstriction. Tobacco is a substance that is frequently subjected to abuse by numerous individuals. It may manifest in several forms, including smoke able, chewable, and snuff able options. Osu in Piwana and Haggai (2007) indicates that tobacco is a narcotic that stimulates the neurological system. Inhalants: individuals inhale specific gases or vapours from volatile substances, resulting in central nervous system depression that induces euphoria or hallucinations.

Inhalants: Inhalants are substances that are inhaled to produce a sense of euphoria, relaxation, or altered perception. They are one of the commonly abused substances in Nigeria, and they can be found in various products such as: **Fuel**: Petrol (gasoline) and diesel are sometimes inhaled for their intoxicating effects. **Glue**: Various types of glue, such as contact cement or model glue are inhaled for their euphoric effects. **Paint thinner**: Paint thinner and other solvents are inhaled for their intoxicating effects. **Aerosol sprays**: Aerosol sprays, such as hairspray or spray paint, are inhaled for their euphoric effects. **Nitrous oxide**: Also known as laughing gas, nitrous oxide is sometimes used recreationally.

Cigarette lighter fluid: Butane and other lighter fluids are inhaled for their intoxicating effects. Some inhalants can be addictive, leading to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. This encompasses petrol, adhesive, correction fluid; paint thinner, nail polish remover, rubber solvent, aerosol propellants, and nitrous oxide. They are often breathed via the nasal passages or orally. These compounds induce intoxicating effects, causing abusers to experience a state of euphoria (Balogun, 2003 and Soyemi, 2003). Studies have reported the misuse of numerous native floras among the youth and the unemployed. This encompasses the smoking of pawpaw leaves and zakami seeds, which are prevalent in the majority of the North Western and North Central regions of Nigeria. The age of initial use and abuse patterns indicate that individuals aged 10 to 29 constitute the most susceptible demographic for drug misuse in Nigeria (UNDCP Information Series No.7, 2000). Minor tranquillizers are a class of medications that induce tranquilly without causing sedation; they are primarily derived from substances such as Librium and Valium.

Sedatives: These substances are among the most commonly misused. This is primarily attributable to their capacity to alleviate tension and anxiety. Certain members of this pharmacological class promote sleep, alleviate tension, and induce relaxation. They also offer amnesia (temporary memory loss) to enable people to forget their issues. Their sources are valium 5/10, alcohol, promethazine, chloroform, and cannabis (Siro, 2017). **Codeine**, also known as 3-methylmorphine, is the most widely utilized opiate globally. It is extensively

utilized for its analgesic, antitussive, and antidiarrheal effects Derry, Karlin, & Moore, (2013). Codeine is available as a base and various salts, but is primarily utilized in hydrated forms Braun, Griesser, McKenzie, Hickey, Price, & Morissette, (2014). Its applications and formulas varied among countries, as do the regulations governing its distribution. In numerous nations, the regulation of "over-the-counter" supplies ranges from complete prohibition to little oversight of community pharmacies.

Over-the-counter codeine-based products generally contain between 8 and 15 mg of codeine per tablet and may be available as a single-ingredient medication or, more frequently, in combination with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents such as ibuprofen (e.g., Nurofen Plus®), aspirin, paracetamol, caffeine, and buclizine to augment the synergistic effects of the drug compounds Tremlett, Anderson, & Wolf, (2010). Codeine-containing cough syrups (CCCS) are among the most used opiate medications and are purportedly beneficial in treating specific coughs. Nonetheless, it possesses a significant potential for misuse and may induce severe unfavourable effects in the user. Consequently, access to CCCS has been limited in Nigeria and various other nations. The Federal Government of Nigeria prohibited the sale and importation of codeine-containing cough syrup due to the rising prevalence of abuse, effective April 2018. The responsibility for ensuring compliance lies with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC, 2022).

In summary, based on review of related literatures, previous studies had identified that substance abuse has numerous consequences that contribute to its prevalence, including: health, social, economic and prevalence impact. For example, in the area of health, substance abuse can lead to physical dependence and abuse; it increases the risk of over dose; it is linked to mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and psychosis. Socially, Substance abuse can damage relationships with family and friends; it can lead to social isolation and decreased social support; and it is often linked to increased crime rates including theft and violence. From the economic point of view, Substance abuse can lead to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism; Substance abuse is associated with increased healthcare costs, including emergency department visits and hospitalizations; it places a significant economic burden on individuals, families, and society as a whole. It places a significant economic burden on individuals, families, and society as a whole.

The consequences of substance abuse can contribute to its prevalence by creating a cycle of addiction and increasing the likelihood of substance use. Substance abuse can create barriers to treatment, including stigma, lack of access to care, and financial constraints. As such, addressing the consequences of substance abuse requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, treatment, and support services.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory: A Paradigm for Comprehending Substance Abuse

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory asserts that individuals acquire behaviour by seeing and imitating others, especially those they regard as role models. The theory posits that the probability of behaviour adoption escalates when individuals witness role models receiving rewards for specific behaviour (vicarious reinforcement) or when they themselves obtain reinforcement for such behaviour (Bandura, 1977).

Social Learning Theory serves as an effective framework for examining the societal, familial, and peer forces that lead to substance abuse among female adolescents in Nigeria. Adolescents are more vulnerable to external influences due to their focus on identity building and social acceptance as primary developmental objectives (Erikson, 1968; Hill & Williams, 2018; UN Women. 2020; World Health Organization. 2019). Female teenagers may be particularly susceptible to these influences due to gender-specific societal expectations and pressures, rendering Social Learning Theory an essential framework for comprehending the intricacies of substance misuse among female adolescents.

Methodology

This research took a theoretical approach, drawing extensively from secondary sources like books, academic journals, specialized reports, and online resources. The existing literature was carefully reviewed to identify studies with objectives that matched the current paper's goals.

Findings

Determinants of Substance Abuse among Female Adolescents in Nigeria shows Peer pressure is a major factor contributing to substance usage among teenagers, including girls in Nigeria. Adolescence is characterized by a pronounced yearning for social acceptance, with peers significantly influencing behaviours, including the consumption of substances like alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. A study by Osasuna and Eferakeya (2021) identified peer influence as a significant predictor of substance abuse among female teenagers in Nigeria. The research indicated that female teenagers were more predisposed to substance addiction when they associated with peers who abuse drugs or alcohol. The compulsion to adhere to group standards frequently compels adolescents to engage in substance experimentation, despite their awareness of the associated risks.

The family significantly influences adolescent behaviour. Dysfunctional family settings, marked by inadequate communication, insufficient emotional support, or the prevalence of substance addiction among family members, can elevate the risk of substance abuse in female adolescents.

Oginni. Ajayi, & Femi-Akintoye, (2019) examined the influence of family structure on substance abuse in Nigerian teenagers. The research indicated that teenagers from disrupted homes or single-parent households exhibited a higher propensity for substance misuse than their counterparts from intact families. Furthermore, teenagers indicating inadequate parental monitoring or communication had an elevated risk of substance misuse.

Socioeconomic factors significantly influence substance usage among female adolescents in Nigeria. Adolescents from economically disadvantaged homes may exhibit increased vulnerability to substance abuse due to several stresses, such as financial hardships, inadequate educational access, and restricted social mobility chances.

Eze, Nduagubam, & Onuigbo, (2022) conducted a study revealing a high correlation between socioeconomic deprivation and substance abuse among Nigerian teenagers. The research indicated that teenagers from economically deprived households were more prone to utilize substance use as a coping strategy for stress, anxiety, and emotions of despair. Female adolescents from low-income families are particularly at heightened risk of substance misuse due to their increased susceptibility to stressors, including gender-based violence, early marriage, and restricted access to reproductive health services.

Cultural norms and gender expectations significantly influence substance use behaviours among female teenagers in Nigeria. In numerous Nigerian communities, such as **Hausa-Fulani communities** (Northern Nigeria): Known for their conservative Islamic values. These communities place significant emphasis on female modesty and humility. **Yoruba communities** (Southwestern Nigeria): Yoruba culture values female respectability and moral integrity, with expectations around dressing, behavior, and social interactions. **Igbo communities** (Southeastern Nigeria): Igbo culture emphasizes female humility and obedience, with expectations around domestic roles and responsibilities. **Kanuri communities** (Northeastern Nigeria): Kanuri culture, influenced by Islamic traditions, places significant emphasis on female modesty and Seclusion; and **Efik communities** (South-South Nigeria): emphasizes on Efik culture which values female respectability and moral integrity, with expectations around dressing, behavior, and social interactions.

These communities are not exhaustive, and cultural expectations can vary within each community. However, they are examples of Nigerian communities where traditional gender norms may impact female teenagers' experiences and behaviors. Gender norms prescribe that women need to be humble, modest, and accountable for upholding the moral integrity of society. Such expectations can impose considerable pressure on female teenagers, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, rebellion, or an urge to flee. Adekeye, Adeusi, & Afolabi, (2020) conducted a study examining the correlation between cultural expectations and substance addiction in female teenagers in Nigeria. The researchers discovered that teenagers perceiving limitations imposed by conventional gender norms exhibited a higher propensity for substance addiction as a means of rebellion or as a coping mechanism for the stresses of societal conformity.

The stigma surrounding female substance use frequently results in secrecy, hindering these girls from seeking assistance. The researchers found that: Teenagers who perceived limitations imposed by conventional gender norms were more likely to engage in substance use as a means of rebellion or as a coping mechanism for the stresses of societal conformity; Stigma surrounding female substance use: Frequently resulted in secrecy, hindering these girls from seeking assistance.

Cultural factors contributing to substance abuse among female teenagers in Nigeria includes:

- **Polygamy:** In some Nigerian cultures, polygamy is practiced, leading to a lack of attention and support for female children, increasing their vulnerability to substance use (Okoro, 2018)
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** The practice of FGM can lead to physical and emotional trauma, increasing the risk of substance use as a coping mechanism (Okeke, 2017)
- **Early Marriage:** Early marriage can lead to a lack of education and economic opportunities, increasing the risk of substance use among female teenagers (Adeyemo, 2019)
- **Cultural Beliefs about Mental Health:** In some Nigerian cultures, mental health issues are stigmatized, leading to a lack of seeking help and an increased risk of substance use (Gureje, 2015)
- **Social Media Influence:** Social media can influence substance use behaviors among female teenagers in Nigeria, particularly in urban areas (Oyewunmi, 2020)
- **Peer Pressure**: Peer pressure can play a significant role in substance use among female teenagers in Nigeria, particularly in schools and social settings (Makanjuola, 2018)

- **Lack of Parental Involvement:** A lack of parental involvement and supervision can increase the risk of substance use among female teenagers in Nigeria (Balogun, 2016)
- **Poverty and Economic Hardship:** Poverty and economic hardship can increase the risk of substance use among female teenagers in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas (Obot, **2017**).
- **Higher Prevalence of Substance Use** compared to those from monogamous families;
- **Lack of Attention and Support:** The study revealed that female adolescents from polygamous families often received less attention and support from their parents, leading to increased vulnerability to substance use;
- **Emotional Distress:** The study found that female adolescents from polygamous families experienced higher levels of emotional distress, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which increased their risk of substance use;
- **Limited Access to Education:** The study showed that female adolescents from polygamous families had limited access to education, which increased their risk of substance use;
- **Cultural Norms:** The study found that cultural norms and values in polygamous families often perpetuated the abuse of substances as a way to cope with stress and emotional distress.

The statistics for the above are: Higher Prevalence of substance abuse by female adolescents from polygamous families; **65%** of female adolescents from polygamous families reported using substances, compared to **35%** from monogamous families; **70%** of female adolescents from polygamous families reported experiencing emotional distress, compared to **40%** from monogamous families; **60%** of female adolescents from polygamous families reported having limited access to education, compared to **30%** from monogamous families.

For the lack of attention and support, the result showed: **72.1%** of female adolescents in polygamous families reported receiving less attention from their parents compared to **31.4%** in monogamous families; **61.5%** of female adolescents in polygamous families reported receiving less emotional support from their parents compared to **25.7%** in monogamous families; **56.2%** of female adolescents in polygamous families reported receiving less financial support from their parents compared to **20.5%** in monogamous families; **45.6%** of female adolescents in polygamous families reported feeling neglected by their parents compared to **15.6%** in monogamous families; **38.4%** of female adolescents in polygamous families reported having a poor relationship with their parents compared to **12.1%** in monogamous families.

The prevalence of emotional distress experienced by female adolescents from polygamous families in a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that 71.4% of female adolescents from polygamous families in Nigeria experienced emotional distress, compared to 41.1% of their counterparts from monogamous families (Adebowale, & Adelekan, 2020). Another study conducted in Kenya reported that 61.2% of girls from polygamous families had symptoms of anxiety, while 55.6% showed signs of depression (Odhiambo, & Mwangi, 2018). Research conducted in Ghana revealed that female adolescents from polygamous families were more likely to experience emotional distress (56.7%) than those from monogamous families (34.6%) (Ofori-Atta, Sarfo, & Asante, 2017). A study in Tanzania found that girls from polygamous families had lower self-esteem (mean score = 23.4) compared to those from monogamous families (mean score = 26.5) (Mwita ,& Mwimbe, 2019).

The study concludes that polygamy is a significant risk factor for substance abuse among female adolescents in Nigeria. The lack of attention and support, emotional distress, limited access to education, and cultural norms in polygamous families all contributed to the increased vulnerability of female adolescents to substance use.

The impact of media and popular culture on teenage behaviour is significant. The depiction of substance use in films, music, and social media frequently romanticizes these behaviours, rendering them appealing and coveted. For female adolescents, media portrayals of substance use as a pathway to success, popularity, or independence can be especially impactful.
A study conducted by Odukoya, Akinyemi, & Oreagba, (2021) investigated the influence of media exposure on substance use behaviours in Nigerian teenagers. The researchers discovered that teenagers frequently exposed to media content that romanticized substance use were more inclined to partake in such behaviours. The research emphasized the importance of social media personalities in advocating the consumption of substances like alcohol and smokes among youth.

Discussion
The repercussions of substance abuse among female adolescents in Nigeria are extensive, affecting not just the individuals but also their families, communities, and society as a whole. Several significant repercussions encompass:

Health Implications: Substance abuse correlates with numerous health hazards, encompassing mental health illnesses, reproductive health issues, and a heightened propensity for engaging in unsafe sexual behaviours. Female adolescents who engage in substance addiction are at an increased risk of encountering gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.

Educational Disruption: Adolescents involved in substance abuse are more prone to academic challenges, such as subpar performance, absenteeism, and school dropout. This may restrict their future employment prospects and social mobility.

Social Stigmatization: In Nigerian society, female substance abuse is frequently stigmatized, resulting in social isolation and discrimination. This stigma may inhibit female teenagers from pursuing assistance or utilizing rehabilitation facilities, hence intensifying the issue.

Legal and Criminal Ramifications: Substance abuse may result in engagement in criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, theft, and various forms of delinquency. Female adolescents who partake in substance abuse may encounter legal repercussions, so constraining their future opportunities.

In summary, substance abuse among female teenagers in Nigeria is a complex issue shaped by multiple factors, including peer pressure, familial relationships, socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and media influence. Social Learning Theory offers a significant framework for comprehending the interaction of these factors in influencing substance abuse behaviours within this community. Identifying the primary factors contributing to substance addiction in female adolescents enables policymakers, educators, and healthcare practitioners to formulate tailored programs for prevention and rehabilitation.

Conclusion
Addressing substance abuse among female teenagers in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the intricate interplay of factors influencing this issue. By

recognizing the significant role of peer pressure, familial relationships, socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and media influence, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions that cater to the unique needs of this population. By leveraging the insights provided by Social Learning Theory, policymakers, educators, and healthcare practitioners can design effective prevention and rehabilitation programs that empower female adolescents to make informed choices and cultivate healthier lifestyles. Ultimately, a multifaceted strategy that addresses the root causes of substance abuse can help mitigate its devastating consequences and promote a brighter future for Nigeria's young women.

Recommendations

A multifaceted strategy is necessary to tackle the complexities of substance aabuse among female adolescents. This strategy should encompass a blend of preventive education, policy reforms, enhanced access to treatment, community involvement, and the establishment of gender-sensitive services. Presented below are various options that may alleviate the issue:

i. There is need for government and non -governmental collaboration, to expand access to gender-sensitive drug treatment and rehabilitation services is a crucial step in treating substance abuse among female adolescents. Rehabilitation centres ought to provide female-exclusive environments where young women can pursue therapy free from judgment or exploitation. Furthermore, services ought to be rendered more accessible to teenagers in rural and marginalized regions.

ii. Community-based initiatives that involve local leaders, parents, and adolescents are essential for preventing the onset of substance abuse. Community leaders, encompassing religious and traditional authorities, should participate in these initiatives to guarantee that prevention messages are culturally pertinent and align with local norms.

iii. Parenting courses and support groups should be expanded to provide parents with the necessary tools to assist their children and identify early indicators of substance usage. Engaging parents in preventive initiatives can foster a supportive atmosphere for adolescents and diminish the likelihood of substance abuse.

iv. Nigeria's drug policy ought to transit from a punitive framework to one that emphasizes treatment and rehabilitation. This entails amending legislation that penalizes adolescent drug use and prioritizing the diversion of young drug users to rehabilitation programs. Law enforcement agencies ought to collaborate with healthcare practitioners to guarantee that female teenagers apprehended for drug use are directed to rehabilitation centres instead of being subjected to jail.

v. The government should invest additional resources for the execution of national drug policies, including the National Drug Control Master Plan, and assure their implementation at both state and municipal levels. Enhancing collaboration among several sectors, such as education, health, and law enforcement, is crucial for attaining sustainable transformation.

vi. Although, social media and popular culture have facilitated the normalization of drug use, they can also serve as effective instruments for prevention. Non-governmental organizations, governmental agencies, and community entities ought to utilize social media channels to disseminate affirmative messages regarding drug prevention and mental health. Campaigns that incorporate sympathetic influencers, peer educators, and youthful role models might mitigate the glamorization of drug use and offer teenagers healthy coping mechanisms for stress and peer pressure.

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