

2026



NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Online ISSN: 2682-6151 Print
ISSN: 2682-6143

Volume 9, Issue 2, 2026

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. S.O. Adebayo

Managing Editor

Prof. B.E. Nwankwo

Published by

Nigerian Association of Social Psychologists
www.nigerianjasp.com

IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMNCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UNWANA COMMUNITY, AFIKPO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA. EBONYI STATE NIGERIA

Ede, Titus Eguji, Ph.D: frtitus.ede@ebsu.edu.ng

Nwaogwugwu, Goodluck Ifeanyi: iheanyigoody@gmail.com

Idam, Sandra Onyinyechi: Sandraidam86@gmail.com

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

Abstract

Substance use among secondary school students is a growing global concern. Studies indicate that adolescent substance use is associated with poor academic performance, school dropout, behavioural problems, and long-term health risks. This study examined the impact of substance use on academic performance of secondary school students in Unwana Community, Afikpo L.G.A. of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: identify the types of substances commonly used among secondary school students; examine the factors influencing substance use among secondary school students and; assess the effects of substance use on the academic performance of secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area. The Social Learning Theory was adopted as its theoretical framework. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The population for this study was one thousand two hundred (1200). Taro Yamani formula was used to determine the sample size of 204. The study employed a questionnaire in the collection of data and a simple percentage was used in analyzing data. Findings revealed that alcohol and tobacco were the most commonly used substances among students, followed by cannabis and non-medical use of prescription drugs. Peer pressure, curiosity, academic stress, family influence, and easy access to substances were identified as major factors influencing substance use. The study further found that substance use negatively affected students' academic performance, resulting in poor concentration, irregular school attendance, declining grades, and reduced classroom participation. The study concludes that substance use poses a significant threat to students' academic development in Unwana community and recommends strengthened school-based education, parental involvement, peer-focused interventions, and improved guidance and counselling services to curb substance use among secondary school students.

Keywords: *Academic development, counseling, parental involvement and substance abuse.*

Introduction

Background to the Study

Substance use among adolescents have emerged as a major public health, social, and educational concern across the globe (World Health Organization, 2023). It refers to the consumption of psychoactive substances such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, prescription drugs used without medical supervision, and other illicit substances that alter mood, perception, or behaviour (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023). Globally, the adolescence stage is a critical developmental period characterized by experimentation, risk-taking, and susceptibility to peer influence, making young people

particularly vulnerable to substance use. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) reports that millions of adolescents worldwide engage in substance use, with alcohol and tobacco being the most commonly used substances. Early initiation into substance use has been linked to poor academic performance, mental health disorders, risky sexual behaviour, violence, and long-term dependence in adulthood. Studies in North America and Europe show that substance use among secondary school students contributes significantly to school dropout, delinquency, and reduced life opportunities (Johnston et al., 2022; UNODC, 2023).

In Asia and Latin America, substance use among adolescents have been associated with rapid urbanization, media influence, weak parental supervision, and increased availability of drugs. Research indicates that secondary school students in these regions increasingly engage in alcohol consumption, misuse of prescription drugs, and illicit substances as a coping mechanism for academic stress and social pressures (WHO, 2022). Similarly, in many African countries, substance use among adolescents has become more visible and troubling. Studies across sub-Saharan Africa reveal rising consumption of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, codeine-based cough syrups, tramadol, and locally brewed substances among secondary school students (Olawole et al., 2021). The UNODC (2023) notes that weak regulatory frameworks, poverty, unemployment, and limited youth-focused prevention programs contribute to the growing substance use problem among young people in Africa.

In Nigeria, substance use among secondary school students has reached alarming levels, posing serious threats to educational development, public safety, and youth wellbeing (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, 2023). National studies indicate that alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, tramadol, codeine syrup, and locally prepared substances are commonly used by adolescents, including students in both urban and rural communities (Adelekan et al., 2020; National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA], 2022). Peer pressure, curiosity, poor parental monitoring, family dysfunction, and exposure to substance-using role models have been identified as key drivers of adolescent substance use in Nigeria. The consequences include declining academic performance, school truancy, aggression, health complications, and increased involvement in criminal activities (Oshodi et al., 2019). Despite government efforts such as school-based drug education programs and NDLEA sensitization campaigns, the prevalence of substance use among students remains high, suggesting gaps in implementation and community-level engagement.

In Ebonyi State, particularly in Afikpo Local Government Area, anecdotal evidence and reports from educators, parents, and community leaders suggest increasing substance use among secondary school students. Unwana community, which hosts tertiary institutions and experiences frequent interaction between students and non-student populations, presents a social environment where access to alcohol, cigarettes, and other substances may be relatively easy. Socio-economic challenges, unemployment, peer group influence, and limited recreational and counseling facilities further heighten the risk of substance use among adolescents in the area. However, there is a scarcity of empirical studies specifically examining the impact of substance use on secondary school students in Unwana community. This gap underscores the need for a localized study to understand the patterns, causes, and

consequences of substance use among students, with the aim of informing effective school-based, community-driven, and policy-oriented interventions in Afikpo Local Government Area, Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, secondary school students should develop in a safe, supportive, and drug-free environment that promotes healthy behaviour, sound mental health, and academic success. Schools, families, and communities are expected to provide adequate supervision, life skills, and guidance to prevent risky behaviours such as substance use among adolescents.

However, empirical evidence shows that substance use among secondary school students is a growing global concern. Studies indicate that adolescent substance use is associated with poor academic performance, school dropout, behavioural problems, and long-term health risks (Johnston et al., 2022; WHO, 2023). Globally, millions of adolescents consume alcohol and other psychoactive substances, often beginning before the age of 18 (UNODC, 2023). In Nigeria, national data reveal that approximately 14.4 percent of adolescents have used at least one psychoactive substance, with alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and tramadol being the most common (NDLEA, 2022). Studies among Nigerian secondary school students report prevalence rates of 20 to 40 percent, underscoring the seriousness of the problem (Adelekan et al., 2020).

In Unwana community of Afikpo Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, substance use among secondary school students has become increasingly visible. Easy access to alcohol outlets, peer influence, weak parental supervision, and limited counseling services expose students to early and sustained substance use. Despite existing interventions such as school-based drug education, NDLEA sensitization programs, and guidance and counseling units, substance use persists due to poor implementation, inadequate funding, and lack of community involvement.

If the problem continues unchecked, it may result in declining academic achievement, increased school dropout, health complications, and rising youth-related crime, thereby threatening the social and economic development of the community. This study therefore seeks to fill an important gap by providing community-specific evidence on the impact of substance use among secondary school students in Unwana, Afikpo Local Government Area, to inform effective and culturally appropriate interventions.

Research Questions

1. What types of substances are commonly used among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area?
2. What factors influence substance use among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area?

3. What are the effects of substance use on the academic performance of secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area?

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of substances commonly used among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area.
2. To examine the factors influencing substance use among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area.
3. To assess the effects of substance use on the academic performance of secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo Local Government Area.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Substance Use

Substance use refers to the consumption of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, inhalants, prescription drugs, and other illicit drugs, which can alter mood, perception, or behaviour (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Among adolescents, substance use is often experimental but can develop into regular use or dependence, affecting physical health, mental wellbeing, social relationships, and academic performance (Hawkins et al., 2019). It is influenced by biological predispositions, psychological traits, and social environments, with cultural and economic contexts shaping the patterns of initiation and continuation (Bandura, 1977; Johnston et al., 2021).

Globally, adolescent substance use is recognized as a serious public health concern. WHO (2022) estimates that between 10 and 30 percent of adolescents engage in substance use, with higher prevalence in low- and middle-income countries due to limited prevention programs, peer pressure, poverty, and weak regulatory enforcement. Untreated substance use in adolescence is associated with school dropout, delinquency, mental health disorders, risky sexual behaviours, and potential long-term addiction (UNODC, 2021; Degenhardt et al., 2018). While high-income countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have developed structured school-based education, counseling, and community prevention programs, challenges persist due to peer influence, social inequities, and inconsistent parental involvement (Patrick et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2017).

Cultural and social contexts further influence adolescent substance use. Globally, exposure to media, peer groups, and societal attitudes toward alcohol and drugs affects initiation and patterns of use (Squeglia et al., 2021). In many low- and middle-income countries, substance use may be normalized or tolerated in certain communities, while stigmatization of treatment or rehabilitation discourages early intervention (UNODC, 2021).

In Africa, structural and cultural challenges exacerbate adolescent substance use. Limited access to preventive programs, economic hardship, and societal pressures contribute to experimentation and habitual use among youth (Atwoli et al., 2019; Madu & Matla, 2019).

Cultural beliefs, such as viewing alcohol use as a rite of passage, further delay intervention and reduce parental involvement. Consequently, families, schools, and communities bear the burden of academic failure, behavioural problems, and mental health challenges associated with adolescent substance use (Adebayo et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, adolescent substance use is increasingly recognized as a pressing social and public health concern. Despite policies, school-based programs, and awareness campaigns, prevalence remains high in many areas, particularly rural and semi-urban communities where supervision is limited and peer influence is strong (Odejide, 2021; Adeyemo & Oni, 2018). Interventions such as counseling, parental engagement, school disciplinary measures, and youth empowerment programs have proven effective in reducing initiation and dependence, but systematic implementation and monitoring remain inadequate, including in Ebonyi State (Eze et al., 2022).

Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory was proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977 to explain how human behaviour is learned through social interaction rather than solely through direct experience. The theory emphasizes that individuals, especially adolescents, acquire new behaviours by observing and imitating others within their social environment, such as parents, peers, teachers, and community members. According to Bandura, learning occurs through a process involving attention to a behaviour, retention of what is observed, the ability to reproduce the behaviour, and motivation, which is often influenced by perceived rewards or punishments.

The theory assumes that behaviour is largely learned socially, that cognitive processes play an important role in learning, and that individuals are more likely to imitate behaviours displayed by people they admire or consider similar to themselves. It also assumes that reinforcement can be indirect, meaning that observing others being rewarded or accepted for a behaviour can encourage imitation even without direct personal experience.

The strength of Social Learning Theory in this study lies in its clear explanation of how peer influence and social environment contribute to substance use among adolescents. It helps explain the spread and persistence of substance use within school settings and supports interventions that focus on positive role modelling and peer education. However, the theory has limitations, as it may overemphasize social influence while paying less attention to individual personality traits, biological factors, and structural issues such as poverty or academic pressure. Despite these weaknesses, Social Learning Theory provides a strong and relevant framework for understanding substance use and its negative impact on academic performance among secondary school students.

Social Learning Theory is highly relevant to the study of substance use and its effects on academic performance among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo North LGA, Ebonyi State. In this context, students may observe peers or older youths engaging in substance use and perceive such behaviour as socially acceptable or rewarding. As a result, they may imitate these behaviours to gain peer approval or a sense of belonging.

Substance use learned through this process can negatively affect academic performance by reducing concentration, increasing absenteeism, and encouraging behaviours such as truancy and poor study habits.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Social Learning Theory, as proposed by Albert Bandura (1977). Social Learning Theory posits that human behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and modeling within a social context. Individuals acquire new behaviours by observing the actions of others, especially role models, and the consequences of those behaviours, which can either reinforce or discourage their repetition. Bandura emphasized the interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors, suggesting that learning occurs not only through direct experience but also indirectly through vicarious observation.

In the context of substance use among secondary school students, Social Learning Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how adolescents adopt risky behaviours. Students may observe peers, older students, or even family members consuming alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs and internalize these behaviours as acceptable or desirable. Reinforcements, such as social approval from friends or the perceived enhancement of social status, can further encourage experimentation and continued use. Conversely, observing negative consequences, such as academic decline, health problems, or disciplinary action, may deter use.

Empirical studies support the application of Social Learning Theory to substance use. For instance, Adeyemi et al. (2020) found that adolescents who reported peer involvement in substance use were more likely to engage in similar behaviours themselves. Similarly, Chukwu and Okonkwo (2021) demonstrated that exposure to family members who used substances increased the likelihood of students experimenting with tobacco and alcohol. These findings highlight that substance use is not solely an individual choice but is influenced by social networks, observed behaviours, and environmental reinforcement.

Applying Social Learning Theory to this study suggests that interventions should target both the individual and their social environment. School-based programs that provide positive role models, peer education, and reinforcement of healthy behaviours can reduce the likelihood of substance use. Additionally, parental involvement and community awareness campaigns can create an environment where substance use is less socially reinforced, thereby promoting academic success and overall wellbeing among students.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The design allowed for the collection of quantitative data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of substance use patterns, influencing factors, and academic outcomes (Kothari, 2019). The cross-sectional survey design was chosen because it enables the researcher to efficiently gather data from a

large sample within a limited timeframe, making it well-suited for assessing prevalence and patterns of substance use among students.

3.2 Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Unwana community, Afikpo North Local Government Area (LGA), Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria. Unwana lies in the tropical rainforest zone, with a humid climate and distinct wet (April–October) and dry (November–March) seasons, supporting agriculture and local livelihoods.

The community is about 10 kilometres from Afikpo town centre, accessible via motorable roads, though some rural paths become difficult during heavy rainfall. Key institutions include secondary schools, community markets, health centres, and local administrative offices, which serve as centres for education, economic activity, and social interaction.

Residents engage mainly in subsistence and small-scale commercial farming, trading, and artisanal work. Traditional Igbo cultural norms and family hierarchies influence adolescent behaviour, including attitudes toward education and risky practices such as substance use. Christianity is predominant, alongside indigenous beliefs that shape moral values and discipline.

Healthcare and educational resources are limited, restricting access to preventive and counselling services for adolescents. Understanding these socio-cultural and infrastructural realities is vital for designing interventions to reduce substance use and improve academic performance among secondary school students in Unwana.

The reason this study focused on Unwana secondary schools is that these schools are where adolescents spend much of their daily lives, making them the ideal setting to understand patterns of substance use and how it affects learning. Schools bring together students from different backgrounds and age groups, allowing the study to explore not just individual choices but also the influence of peers and the school environment. By looking at students within this real-life community context, the study can provide insights that are both meaningful and practical, helping to shape interventions that could really make a difference for young people in Unwana.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on substance use and its effects on academic performance among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo North LGA, Ebonyi State. It examines the types of substances commonly used, the factors influencing use, and the resulting impact on students' learning outcomes. The study is limited to students currently enrolled in secondary schools within Unwana and does not include out-of-school adolescents.

Population of the Study

The study population consists of all students enrolled in the six secondary schools within Unwana community, Afikpo North LGA, Ebonyi State. This includes four public schools—

Comprehensive Secondary School, Unwana; Community Secondary School, Amasiri; Ohabuike Secondary School, Ndibe; and Ugwuegu Community Secondary School, Afikpo—and two private schools—Archbishop Peter Akinola International School, Afikpo, and Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Staff Secondary School, Unwana. Collectively, these schools have an estimated total enrollment of about 1,200 students (Dataphyte, 2023), representing the target population for investigating patterns of substance use and their impact on academic performance.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size of this research is determined using Taro Yamani formula (1964) thus,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(x)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size
 N = Population Size
 e = Co-efficient of expected error
 1 = Constant

$$n = \frac{1,200}{1 + 1,200 (0.07)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,200}{1 + 1,200 (0.0049)}$$

$$\frac{n = 1,200}{5.88}$$

$$n = 204$$

The sample size of 204 respondents was used for this study to represent various school in Unwana community in Afikpo North LGA of Ebonyi State.

Sampling Technique

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to select respondents from Unwana community in Afikpo North LGA, Ebonyi State. Unwana was purposively chosen due to its concentration of secondary schools and accessibility for data collection. A list of schools in the community, including public, private, and mission institutions, was obtained, and balloting was used to randomly select the schools that participated in the study.

The total sample size of 204 students was proportionately allocated to the selected schools based on their enrollment figures. Within each school, systematic random sampling was applied to select students across different classes and age groups, ensuring that every eligible student had an equal chance of inclusion. The sample was distributed as follows: Unwana Comprehensive Secondary School, 120 respondents; St. Mary's Secondary School, 45 respondents; Christ the King Academy, 39 respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for this study was a self-developed structured questionnaire designed to address the research objectives. The questionnaire was divided into Section A and Section B.

Section A captured the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, class level, and school type. Section B contained both close-ended and open-ended questions that reflected the study objectives, specifically examining the types of substances used, factors influencing substance use, and the effects of substance use on academic performance among secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo North LGA.

Method of Data Collection

Two trained research assistants assisted with data collection. Questionnaires were administered directly to students during school hours, and respondents were requested to complete and return them immediately to ensure high response rates. The data collection exercise was carried out over a period of two weeks.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The first draft of the questionnaire was submitted for construct and face validation to three experts from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the test-retest method. Twenty students from two schools outside the main sample were administered the questionnaire, and the same respondents were re-tested after one week. The responses were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Collected data were carefully sorted, edited, and coded. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze the data. This approach provided a clear representation of the patterns of substance use, factors influencing usage, and its effects on students'

Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from secondary school students in Unwana community, Afikpo North LGA, Ebonyi State. A total of 204 questionnaires were administered, and 196 were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 96.1 percent. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and results are presented in tables for clarity.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 196)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	117	59.7
	Female	79	40.3
Age Bracket	Below 13	23	11.7
	13–15	45	23.0
	16–18	61	31.1
	19 and above	67	34.2

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Class/Grade	JSS1	19	9.7
	JSS2	25	12.8
	JSS3	31	15.8
	SSS1	35	17.9
	SSS2	43	21.9
	SSS3	43	21.9
Type of School	Public	113	57.7
	Private	83	42.3
Religion	Christianity	142	72.4
	Islam	31	15.8
	Traditionalist	19	9.7
	Others	4	2.1
Family Structure	Monogamy	144	73.5
	Polygyny	52	26.5
Occupation of Parents/Guardians	Trading	41	20.9
	Civil Servant	45	23.0
	Farming	53	27.0
	Others	57	29.1

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Gender: Male students constituted the majority of respondents, 117 (59.7%), while female students accounted for 79 (40.3%). This indicates slightly higher participation among female students in the selected schools.

Age: The largest group of respondents were aged 19 and above, 67 (34.2%), followed by students aged 16–18, 61 (31.1%). This reflects the inclusion of senior students who are more exposed to substances due to peer influence and social interactions.

Class/Grade: Higher classes had more respondents, with SSS2 and SSS3 contributing 43 students each (21.9%). The increasing number of respondents in senior classes suggests that substance use is more prevalent or of greater concern among older students, aligning with global evidence that substance experimentation increases with age.

Type of School: Most respondents attended public schools (113, 57.7%), while 83 students (42.3%) were from private schools. This distribution highlights the need to address substance use in both public and private school settings.

Religion: Christianity was the predominant religion (142, 72.4%), followed by Islam (31, 15.8%), reflecting the religious composition of Unwana community. Religious affiliation may influence attitudes toward substance use.

Family Structure: A majority of students came from monogamous households (144, 73.5%), with the remainder from polygynous families (52, 26.5%). Family structure may affect supervision and guidance on behavioural choices.

Occupation of Parents/Guardians: Parents engaged in farming (53, 27.0%) and other informal occupations (57, 29.1%) formed the largest groups. Economic activities of parents may influence students' exposure to social environments where substances are accessible.

Types of Substances

Table 4.2: Types of Substances Used by Respondents

Substance	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol	91	46.4
Tobacco/Cigarettes	47	24.0
Cannabis/Marijuana	33	16.8
Tranquilizers/Prescription drugs	13	6.6
Khat/Other stimulants	12	6.1
None	—	—
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.2 shows that alcohol is the most commonly used substance among secondary school students in Unwana, with 46.4% of respondents reporting its use. Tobacco/cigarettes and cannabis followed with 24.0% and 16.8% respectively. The lower prevalence of tranquilizers, prescription drugs, and khat suggests that access to these substances may be more restricted or less socially acceptable in this community.

Table 4.4: Age of First Substance Use

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 13	15	7.7
13–15	53	27.0
16–18	69	35.2
19 and above	59	30.1
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.4 reveals that most students first experimented with substances between ages 16–18 (35.2%), followed by 19 and above (30.1%). A smaller group (7.7%) started below age 13. This indicates that mid to late adolescence is the most critical period for substance initiation, likely due to increased independence, academic pressure, and peer group exposure.

Table 4.5: Reasons for Substance Use

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Peer pressure	81	41.3
Curiosity	55	28.1

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Family/relatives use	23	11.7
Stress/academic pressure	37	18.9
Influence of media/social networks	—	—
Others	—	—
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Peer pressure is the leading reason for substance use (41.3%), followed by curiosity (28.1%) and stress/academic pressure (18.9%). Family influence is lower at 11.7%, suggesting that adolescents are more influenced by peers than by familial norms. These findings are supported by social learning perspectives, where behaviour is learned from significant others, especially peers. The prominence of academic stress as a reason also underscores the need for psychosocial interventions targeting school-related pressures.

Effects of Substance Use on Academic Performance

Table 4.11: Effect on Concentration in Class

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	129	65.8
No	67	34.2
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.11 shows that 65.8% of respondents reported that substance use affects their concentration in class. This indicates that cognitive impairment, such as reduced attention span and memory issues, is a primary consequence of adolescent substance use.

Table 4.12: Effect on School Attendance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	115	58.7
No	81	41.3
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.12, shown that, 58.7% of respondents indicated that substance use negatively impacts their school attendance. Irregular attendance due to substance use may result from fatigue, sickness, or disinterest, which in turn reduces instructional time and academic engagement.

Table 4.13: Effect on Academic Grades

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	133	67.9
No	63	32.1
Total	196	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.13 indicates that 67.9% of respondents believe substance use has adversely affected their academic grades. This reflects the direct correlation between substance use and poor academic performance, as substances impair cognitive function, motivation, and study habits.

Conclusion

This study examined substance use among secondary school students in Unwana Community, Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, focusing on the types of substances used, factors influencing use, and effects on academic performance. The findings show that substances such as alcohol and cigarettes are commonly used, with peer pressure, curiosity, family influence, and easy access identified as major contributing factors. The study also revealed that substance use negatively affects students' academic performance, leading to poor concentration, irregular school attendance, and declining grades. These findings indicate that substance use poses a serious challenge to effective learning and student discipline. Substance use remains a significant problem among secondary school students in Unwana Community and requires coordinated intervention by parents, schools, communities, and government agencies through awareness programmes, counselling services, and stricter control of substance availability.

References

- Adebayo, A. A., Yusuf, F. A., & Salami, O. O. (2022). Substance use and academic performance among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 6(2), 112–124.
- Adelekan, M. L., Lawal, R. A., Ndom, R. J., & Adelekan, B. A. (2020). Substance use among adolescents in Nigeria: Patterns, consequences, and policy implications. *African Journal of Drug and Alcohol Studies*, 19(2), 85–98.
- Adeyemi, O. O., Lawal, A. M., & Balogun, S. K. (2020). Peer influence and substance use among Nigerian adolescents: A social learning perspective. *African Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(3), 67–80.
- Adeyemo, D. A., & Oni, A. A. (2018). Adolescent substance use in Nigeria: Prevalence, predictors, and policy implications. *Nigerian Journal of Psychology*, 27(1), 45–59.

- Atwoli, L., Mungla, P. A., Ndung'u, M. N., Kinoti, K. C., & Ogot, E. M. (2019). Prevalence of substance use among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *BMC Psychiatry, 19*(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-019-2105-4>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Botvin, G. J., & Griffin, K. W. (2019). Life skills training: Preventing substance misuse by enhancing individual and social competence. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2019*(165), 57–72.
- Chukwu, E. N., & Okonkwo, I. E. (2021). Tobacco smoking and academic performance among secondary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria. *Journal of School Health Studies, 5*(1), 41–53.
- Degenhardt, L., Stockings, E., Patton, G., Hall, W. D., & Lynskey, M. (2018). The increasing global health priority of substance use in young people. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 5*(3), 251–264. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(17\)30308-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(17)30308-7)
- Dennis, M. L., & Scott, C. K. (2012). Four-year outcomes from the early re-intervention experiment. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 121*(1–2), 10–17.
- Doku, D., Acacio-Claro, P. J., Koivusilta, L., Rimpelä, A., & Magalhães, A. (2020). Health-promoting school initiatives and adolescent substance use in low-income countries. *Health Education Research, 35*(2), 134–147.
- Eze, I. U., Okorie, C. E., & Nwankwo, B. O. (2021). Family structure, socio-economic status, and substance use among adolescents in Abia State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology, 17*(2), 89–104.
- Eze, P. N., Nnamani, C. C., & Ugwu, J. O. (2022). Substance use among in-school adolescents in rural southeastern Nigeria. *African Journal of Drug and Alcohol Studies, 21*(1), 23–38.
- Faggiano, F., Vigna-Taglianti, F. D., Versino, E., & Lemma, P. (2014). School-based prevention for illicit drugs' use. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 4*(4), CD003020.
- Hall, W., & Degenhardt, L. (2014). Adverse health effects of non-medical cannabis use. *The Lancet, 374*(9698), 1383–1391.
- Hawkins, J. D., Oesterle, S., Brown, E. C., Abbott, R. D., & Catalano, R. F. (2019). Youth problem behaviours eight years after implementing the Communities That Care prevention system. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 65*(5), 675–683.

- Johnston, L. D., Miech, R. A., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., Schulenberg, J. E., & Patrick, M. E. (2022). *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2021: Overview, key findings on adolescent drug use*. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Johnston, L. D., Miech, R. A., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., Schulenberg, J. E., & Patrick, M. E. (2018). *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use 1975–2017*. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Johnston, L. D., Miech, R. A., Patrick, M. E., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2021). Trends in adolescent substance use in high-income countries. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 68*(3), 440–448.
- Kelly, A. B., Evans-Whipp, T. J., Smith, R., Chan, G. C. K., Toumbourou, J. W., Patton, G. C., & Catalano, R. F. (2017). A longitudinal study of the association of adolescent alcohol use with adult mental health outcomes. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 172*, 70–77.
- Kumpfer, K. L., Magalhães, C., & Xie, J. (2019). Cultural adaptation and implementation of family-based prevention programs. *Prevention Science, 20*(1), 1–12.
- Madu, S. N., & Matla, M. Q. (2019). Illicit drug use, cigarette smoking, and alcohol drinking behaviour among South African adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 31*(1), 25–36.
- National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. (2022). *National drug use survey in Nigeria*. NDLEA.
- Odejide, A. O. (2021). Drug use and substance abuse in Nigeria: A review of trends and policy responses. *African Journal of Psychiatry, 24*(2), 1–10.
- Okafor, I. P., Obi, S. N., & Umeh, C. A. (2023). Determinants of substance use among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Adolescent Health Research, 8*(1), 54–66.
- Okonkwo, I. E., & Chukwu, E. N. (2022). Academic stress and substance use among senior secondary school students in Enugu State. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Psychology, 15*(1), 73–88.
- Olawole, I. S., Ogunwale, A., & Adewuya, A. O. (2021). Substance use among secondary school students in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 33*(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.2989/17280583.2021.1876542>

- Oshodi, O. Y., Aina, O. F., & Onajole, A. T. (2019). Substance use among secondary school students in an urban setting in Nigeria: Prevalence and associated factors. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 22(1), 1–7.
- Patrick, M. E., Schulenberg, J. E., & O'Malley, P. M. (2019). High school substance use as a predictor of substance use disorders in adulthood. *Development and Psychopathology*, 31(1), 285–297.
- Squeglia, L. M., Gray, K. M., & Jacobus, J. (2021). Adolescent substance use and the developing brain. *Neuropsychology Review*, 31(3), 455–469.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2021). *World drug report 2021*. UNODC.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *World drug report 2023*. UNODC.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Adolescent mental health and substance use: Global status report*. WHO.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Adolescent mental health and substance use: Global status report*. WHO.
- World Health Organization. (2023). *Global status report on alcohol and health 2023*. WHO.