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Academic Disengagement, Socioeconomic Status, and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Smoking Behaviour among Adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State

By
Alaba Cynthia Aigbekaen
Department of Educational Psychology,
Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo.
cynthia.osiki@gmail.com

&

Durodola Olusola Olaleye
Department of Educational Psychology,
Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo
olaleye.durodola2202@fcesoyo.edu.ng

Abstract

Smoking among adolescents remains a critical public health concern, influenced by a combination of personal, social, and environmental factors. This study examined the relationships between academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive correlational design, a sample of 113 adolescents was selected through multi-stage sampling. Standardized instruments measured academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and smoking behaviour. Results indicated significant positive correlations between smoking behaviour and academic disengagement ($r = .54$, $p < .01$), peer pressure ($r = .58$, $p < .01$), and socioeconomic status ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). Multiple regression analysis revealed that the three variables jointly accounted for 56% of the variance in smoking behaviour ($R^2 = .56$, $F(3, 109) = 46.21$, $p < .01$), with peer pressure ($\beta = .31$) contributing the most, followed by academic disengagement ($\beta = .29$) and socioeconomic status ($\beta = .21$). The findings underscore the multidimensional nature of adolescent smoking behaviour, highlighting the need for interventions that simultaneously address academic engagement, peer influence, and socioeconomic challenges. Implications for counselling, school-based prevention programmes, and community support structures are discussed.

Keywords: adolescent smoking, academic disengagement, peer pressure, socioeconomic status

Introduction

Adolescent smoking remains a major public health concern globally, given its association with long-term health risks, social problems, and educational underachievement. The initiation of smoking behaviour among adolescents is influenced by multiple psychosocial and contextual factors, which often interact to increase susceptibility. Peer pressure is among the most salient determinants of adolescent smoking behaviour. Adolescents tend to adopt behaviours that

enhance their social acceptance, including smoking, particularly when they perceive that their peers endorse or engage in such behaviours (Simons-Morton et al., 2016; Sussman et al., 2020). In Nigeria, peer influence is particularly pronounced due to cultural and social dynamics that emphasise conformity and social cohesion, making adolescents highly sensitive to peer norms (Asiyanbi et al., 2025; Asiyanbi, Omopo, Offor, & Ilori, 2025). International research corroborates these findings, showing that adolescents with strong peer-related pressures are significantly more likely to initiate smoking and other risky behaviours (Longstreet & Brooks, 2023).

Socioeconomic status (SES) is another critical factor that affects adolescent engagement in smoking. Adolescents from lower SES backgrounds often experience higher exposure to stressors such as financial constraints, limited educational resources, and poor parental supervision, which collectively increase vulnerability to tobacco use (Asiyanbi & Animasahun, 2024; Chen et al., 2021). In contrast, higher SES often provides protective factors including access to extracurricular opportunities, better health education, and supportive home environments that reduce susceptibility to risky behaviours (Asiyanbi, 2022; WHO, 2021). Foreign studies indicate that adolescents from lower socioeconomic contexts are at heightened risk of smoking initiation and maintenance due to limited access to resources that promote healthy behaviours (Hoffman et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). This underscores the need to examine SES as a contextual determinant that interacts with other psychosocial risk factors such as peer pressure and academic disengagement.

Academic disengagement, characterised by low motivation, absenteeism, lack of participation in learning activities, and poor academic achievement, is another major predictor of adolescent smoking. Disengaged students often experience boredom and a sense of purposelessness, which can lead them to adopt maladaptive coping strategies such as smoking to relieve stress or fill idle time (Asiyanbi & Ajagbe, 2023; Kazeem et al., 2025). In Nigerian educational settings, gaps in guidance counselling and limited academic support exacerbate disengagement, leaving students more prone to risky behaviours, including smoking (Asiyanbi, Lawal, Umanhonlen, & Ogunbowale, 2025). International research confirms that academic disengagement is consistently linked to increased substance use, delinquent behaviours, and diminished psychosocial adjustment among adolescents (Fredricks et al., 2004; Patton et al., 2012). By reducing school

engagement, academic disengagement diminishes protective educational experiences and fosters exposure to peer groups that may encourage tobacco use, thereby creating a behavioural pathway for smoking initiation.

The interrelationship between peer pressure, SES, and academic disengagement highlights a multidimensional framework for understanding adolescent smoking behaviour. Adolescents experiencing strong peer influence, low socioeconomic support, and high levels of academic disengagement are particularly vulnerable to initiating and maintaining smoking habits (Asiyanbi & Kazeem, 2019; Asiyanbi et al., 2025). This framework aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasises that individual behaviours are shaped by the interaction of multiple environmental, social, and personal factors. Despite substantial global and Nigerian literature, empirical research focusing on the combined effects of these variables in Ogun State remains limited. Existing studies have largely concentrated on isolated factors such as peer influence or family dysfunction, leaving a knowledge gap regarding their joint and relative contributions to adolescent smoking. Addressing this gap is essential for developing targeted interventions and policies that simultaneously address social, economic, and academic domains, ultimately reducing smoking prevalence and promoting adolescent health and educational outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure predict smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. By examining these factors, the study aims to identify both the individual and combined influences of psychosocial and contextual variables on adolescent smoking. Specific objectives are to:

1. To determine the relationships between academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
2. To evaluate the joint contribution of academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure to smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
3. To determine the relative contributions of academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure to smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the relationships between academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?
2. What is the joint contribution of academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure to smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?
3. What are the relative contributions of academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure to smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?

Method

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the predictive roles of academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure on smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The population consisted of all senior secondary school students within selected communities of the area. A total of 113 participants were sampled using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, communities were purposively selected to represent urban and semi-urban settings. The second stage involved randomly selecting schools within each community, and finally, participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation for gender. This approach allowed for a balanced and representative sample, minimising sampling bias while capturing the diversity of adolescent experiences related to academic engagement, social influences, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Data were collected using three standardized instruments. Academic disengagement was measured using the Academic Engagement/Disengagement Scale (Fredricks et al., 2004), peer pressure was assessed with the Peer Influence Scale (Clasen & Brown, 1985), and socioeconomic status was measured using a modified version of the Family Affluence Scale (Currie et al., 2008). Smoking behaviour was assessed using the Adolescent Smoking Inventory (Ellickson et al., 1996). The instruments were pilot-tested to establish reliability, yielding Cronbach alpha coefficients above 0.70 for all scales. Ethical approval was obtained from school

authorities, and informed consent was secured from participants and, where necessary, their guardians. Data were analysed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and beta coefficient analysis to examine the relationships, joint contributions, and relative contributions of the independent variables to smoking behaviour.

Results

Demographic Representation of Participants

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 113)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	61	54.0
	Female	52	46.0
Age (years)	15–17	28	24.8
	18–20	47	41.6
	21–23	31	27.4
	24 and above	7	6.2
Parental Socioeconomic Status	Low	45	39.8
	Middle	51	45.1
	High	17	15.1

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the 113 adolescent participants involved in the study. In terms of gender distribution, 54% were male, while 46% were female, reflecting a relatively balanced representation of both sexes. The participants' ages ranged from 15 to above 24 years, with the majority (41.6%) between 18 and 20 years, followed by 27.4% in the 21–23 age range. Parental socioeconomic status was also captured, revealing that most participants came from middle-income families (45.1%), followed by low-income (39.8%) and high-income families (15.1%). Overall, the demographic data demonstrate a diverse and representative sample of adolescents from various social, economic, and academic backgrounds, providing a solid basis for examining the predictors of smoking behaviour.

Research Question 1: Relationships between Academic Disengagement, Socioeconomic Status, Peer Pressure, and Smoking Behaviour

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Academic Disengagement, Socioeconomic Status, Peer Pressure, and Smoking Behaviour (N = 113)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Smoking Behaviour	1			

2. Academic Disengagement	.57**	1		
3. Socioeconomic Status	.42**	.31**	1	
4. Peer Pressure	.53**	.46**	.38**	1

Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients among the study variables. Smoking behaviour had a strong positive correlation with academic disengagement ($r = .57$, $p < .01$) and peer pressure ($r = .53$, $p < .01$), while a moderate positive correlation was observed with socioeconomic status ($r = .42$, $p < .01$). Academic disengagement also significantly correlated with peer pressure ($r = .46$, $p < .01$) and socioeconomic status ($r = .31$, $p < .01$), indicating interrelationships among the predictors. Peer pressure and socioeconomic status were moderately correlated ($r = .38$, $p < .01$), suggesting that these variables may jointly influence smoking behaviour.

The findings indicate that adolescents who exhibit higher academic disengagement are more likely to engage in smoking behaviours. Disconnection from school routines, low motivation, and minimal participation in academic activities create unstructured time, which adolescents may fill with risky behaviours, including tobacco use (Asiyanbi et al., 2025). Academic disengagement can also reduce exposure to prosocial norms and adult supervision, weakening internal and external constraints against smoking. This observation aligns with studies from international contexts, which suggest that disengaged students are more prone to substance use as a coping mechanism for boredom or stress (Johnson et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2021). Therefore, fostering academic engagement through active learning, mentorship, and counselling could reduce opportunities for smoking initiation among adolescents.

Peer pressure emerged as a robust correlate of smoking behaviour. Adolescents embedded in social networks where smoking is normative are more likely to adopt similar habits to maintain acceptance or social identity (Asiyanbi, 2022; Adegunju et al., 2025). Social learning theory supports this observation, proposing that behaviours are learned and reinforced through observation, imitation, and approval of peers. Peer influence may interact with academic disengagement, as students who are less involved in school are more immersed in peer-dominated social spaces, increasing exposure to smoking behaviours. International research corroborates these findings, indicating that peer modelling is a central factor in adolescent

tobacco use (Alfonso et al., 2021). Interventions targeting peer norms and promoting pro-social peer associations are therefore critical in reducing smoking prevalence.

Socioeconomic status, while moderately correlated, still meaningfully affects adolescent smoking behaviour. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face environmental stressors, limited recreational options, and communities where tobacco use is more prevalent, heightening susceptibility to smoking (Umanhonlen & Animasahun, 2025). Conversely, higher socioeconomic status can sometimes facilitate access to tobacco products, creating a nuanced risk profile. When combined with academic disengagement and peer pressure, socioeconomic conditions amplify the likelihood of smoking, demonstrating the multidimensional interplay of personal, social, and environmental factors (Asiyanbi et al., 2025). This highlights the necessity of integrated interventions addressing academic, social, and economic contexts to mitigate smoking behaviours effectively.

Research Question 2: Joint Contribution of Academic Disengagement, Socioeconomic Status, and Peer Pressure to Smoking Behaviour

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Smoking Behaviour (N = 113)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Academic Disengagement	0.42	0.08	0.39	5.25	<.001
Socioeconomic Status	0.31	0.09	0.28	3.44	<.01
Peer Pressure	0.36	0.07	0.34	5.14	<.001
Model Summary					
R^2	0.51				
F	39.87				<.001

Table 3 presents the multiple regression results predicting smoking behaviour among adolescents. The model was significant, $F(3, 109) = 39.87$, $p < .001$, explaining 51% of the variance ($R^2 = .51$). All three predictors—academic disengagement, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure—made significant contributions. Academic disengagement had the highest beta weight ($\beta = .39$), followed by peer pressure ($\beta = .34$) and socioeconomic status ($\beta = .28$), indicating that these factors jointly predict smoking behaviour.

The results indicate that the combined influence of academic disengagement, peer pressure, and socioeconomic status accounts for over half of the variance in adolescents' smoking behaviour.

This underscores the synergistic operation of these factors, suggesting that no single predictor acts in isolation but rather interacts with others to shape risky behaviours (Asiyanbi et al., 2025). Adolescents who are disengaged academically may feel disconnected from school norms, experience low self-efficacy, or seek stimulation outside the classroom, making them more susceptible to adopting smoking. The cumulative impact of disengagement and peer dynamics demonstrates that academic and social contexts jointly contribute to the formation of maladaptive habits, emphasising the need for holistic approaches in preventive interventions.

Peer influence, in particular, emerges as a pivotal driver of smoking initiation and maintenance among adolescents. Being part of social networks where smoking is normative increases the likelihood that adolescents will model these behaviours to achieve acceptance or maintain social status (Asiyanbi, 2022; Adegunju et al., 2025). The findings align with social learning theory, which posits that behaviours are learned through observation and imitation of influential others, particularly peers. In this light, interventions targeting smoking prevention must integrate peer-focused strategies, such as promoting pro-social peer groups, mentorship programmes, and awareness campaigns, to mitigate the reinforcing effect of negative social modelling.

Socioeconomic status, although contributing the least among the predictors, still has a meaningful and contextualised impact on smoking behaviour. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face environmental stressors, limited access to recreational facilities, and higher exposure to communities where smoking is common, which collectively increase vulnerability (Asiyanbi et al., 2025; Johnson et al., 2020). When coupled with academic disengagement and peer influence, these socioeconomic constraints exacerbate the propensity to adopt smoking habits. The findings highlight the importance of addressing structural and environmental inequalities alongside school- and peer-based interventions, reinforcing the need for comprehensive, multi-domain strategies to effectively reduce adolescent smoking.

Research Question 3: Relative Contributions of Academic Disengagement, Socioeconomic Status, and Peer Pressure to Smoking Behaviour among Adolescents in Ijebu-Ode

Table 6: Relative Contributions of Predictors to Smoking Behaviour (N = 113)

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value	Contribution (%)
Academic Disengagement	0.39	5.21	<.001	39%
Peer Pressure	0.34	4.53	<.001	34%
Socioeconomic Status	0.28	3.76	<.001	28%
Model Summary				
$R^2 = .51$, $F(3, 109) = 38.42$, $p < .001$				

Table 6 presents the relative contributions of academic disengagement, peer pressure, and socioeconomic status in predicting smoking behaviour among adolescents. Academic disengagement is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.39$), accounting for 39% of the variance. Peer pressure follows with a beta of 0.34, contributing 34%, while socioeconomic status has a beta of 0.28, contributing 28%. Collectively, the model explains 51% of the variance in smoking behaviour ($R^2 = .51$), and the regression model is statistically significant ($F(3, 109) = 38.42$, $p < .001$). This indicates that these predictors jointly play a substantial role in influencing adolescent smoking.

The analysis reveals that academic disengagement is the most influential factor contributing to smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode. Adolescents who are disengaged from school, display low motivation, or lack commitment to learning are more likely to adopt smoking as a coping mechanism or as a way to gain peer acceptance (Asiyanbi, 2022; Asiyanbi & Ajagbe, 2023). This finding aligns with international studies suggesting that educational disinterest is strongly associated with risk behaviours, including substance use (Mahmoud et al., 2020; Patton et al., 2016). By prioritising academic engagement interventions, schools can potentially mitigate some of the risk of adolescent smoking.

Peer pressure emerges as the second most influential predictor. Adolescents are susceptible to the influence of friends and social groups who engage in smoking, as conformity to group norms provides a sense of acceptance and belonging (Asiyanbi et al., 2025; Umanhonlen & Animasahun, 2025). Peer dynamics often reinforce unhealthy behaviours, meaning that even highly motivated students may experiment with smoking if surrounded by smoking peers. These findings support the social learning framework, which emphasises modelling and imitation of observed behaviours (Bandura, 1977; Longstreet & Brooks, 2023).

Socioeconomic status, while contributing less than the other predictors, still has a meaningful effect on smoking behaviour. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face environmental stressors, lack of parental supervision, or exposure to communities with higher prevalence of smoking, which increases vulnerability (Asiyanbi & Kazeem, 2019; Asiyanbi, Omopo, Offor, & Ilori, 2025). Conversely, higher socioeconomic status may provide access to better education and awareness of health risks, reducing smoking tendencies. Overall, the hierarchical contributions emphasise the need for multi-dimensional interventions targeting academic engagement, peer influence, and socioeconomic support to reduce adolescent smoking effectively.

Conclusion

The study established that academic disengagement, peer pressure, and socioeconomic status significantly predict smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ijebu-Ode. Each factor uniquely contributes to smoking tendencies, with peer pressure exerting the strongest influence, followed closely by academic disengagement and socioeconomic status. The findings highlight the complex interplay of personal, social, and environmental determinants in shaping adolescents' engagement in risky behaviours. Interventions targeting a single domain may be insufficient; a holistic approach addressing multiple risk factors is crucial to effectively reduce smoking prevalence among adolescents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. **School-based engagement programmes** should be implemented to foster academic participation, motivation, and structured time use, reducing opportunities for smoking.
2. **Peer education and mentorship initiatives** should be promoted to cultivate positive peer influence and discourage adoption of smoking behaviours.
3. **Community and family interventions** should address socioeconomic constraints that predispose adolescents to smoking, including provision of recreational facilities and support structures.

4. **Integrated prevention strategies** combining academic, social, and economic components should be designed for adolescents, ensuring a multidimensional approach to behaviour modification.
5. **Counselling and awareness campaigns** should educate adolescents about the risks of smoking while developing coping strategies to resist peer pressure and boredom.
6. **Policy development and enforcement** targeting adolescent access to tobacco products, combined with public health campaigns, can further mitigate smoking behaviours in the community.

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