Peer Pressure, Self-Esteem, and Parental Monitoring as Predictors of Substance Abuse among Out-of-School Adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationships, joint contribution, and relative contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a total of 276 participants were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique from five Local Government Areas. Standardised instruments were used to measure peer pressure, self-esteem, parental monitoring, and substance abuse. Data were analysed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at a 0.05 significance level. The results indicated significant relationships between peer pressure, self-esteem, parental monitoring, and substance abuse. Peer pressure was positively correlated with substance abuse ($r = .63$, $p < .01$), while self-esteem ($r = –.48$, $p < .01$) and parental monitoring ($r = –.52$, $p < .01$) were negatively correlated. Multiple regression analysis showed that peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring jointly contributed significantly to substance abuse ($R = .72$, $R² = .52$, $F(3, 272) = 64.38$, $p < .05$), accounting for 52% of the variance in substance abuse. The relative contribution revealed that peer pressure ($\beta = .49$, $t = 9.34$, $p < .05$) was the strongest predictor, followed by self-esteem ($\beta = –.28$, $t = –5.33$, $p < .05$) and parental monitoring ($\beta = –.26$, $t = –4.95$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that peer influence significantly increases the likelihood of substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents, while high self-esteem and effective parental monitoring serve as protective factors. It is recommended that interventions should focus on strengthening adolescents' self-esteem, enhancing parental involvement, and promoting positive peer networks to mitigate substance abuse in this vulnerable population.

Keywords: Peer pressure, self-esteem, parental monitoring, substance abuse

Introduction

Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage characterised by significant physical, psychological, and social transitions, during which individuals are highly susceptible to experimentation with various risk-taking behaviours, including substance abuse. Substance abuse

refers to the excessive or maladaptive use of psychoactive substances such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other illicit drugs that may lead to dependence and adverse health, social, or psychological outcomes. Globally, the prevalence of adolescent substance use has become a major public health concern, with serious implications for cognitive functioning, mental health, and educational attainment. In Nigeria, studies have documented a disturbing rise in substance use among young people, particularly in urban areas such as Ibadan, where socio-economic hardship, unemployment, and peer influence contribute to increased vulnerability (Obadeji et al., 2020; The Burden of Drug Abuse in Nigeria: A Scoping Review, 2021). Despite these concerns, much of the existing research has focused on in-school adolescents, while the more socially exposed category of out-of-school adolescents remains understudied. This population faces higher risks due to the absence of formal supervision, limited access to preventive information, and increased interaction with deviant peers.

The phenomenon of substance abuse among adolescents has been explained through multiple theoretical lenses that emphasise the interaction of individual, social, and environmental factors. Among these, peer pressure is one of the most consistent predictors of substance use. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by peers on an individual's attitudes, values, and behaviours, often motivating conformity to group norms. Empirical evidence indicates that adolescents who associate with peers who engage in drug use are significantly more likely to initiate similar behaviour themselves (Igbineweka & Dudutarilayefa, 2023). In a related study, Asiyanbi, Adegunju, and Ovili (2025) found that peer pressure, family dysfunction, and neighbourhood risk collectively predicted smoking behaviour among adolescents in Ogun State. These findings demonstrate the pervasive effect of peer influence in shaping behavioural patterns among adolescents, particularly those outside formal educational systems where peer control often substitutes parental supervision.

Self-esteem has also been identified as a key psychological variable influencing adolescents' susceptibility to substance abuse. Self-esteem represents an individual's subjective evaluation of personal worth and competence, influencing motivation, decision-making, and social interactions. Adolescents with low self-esteem are more prone to engage in maladaptive coping behaviours such as substance use, often as a means of alleviating emotional distress or gaining social

acceptance (Igbineweka & Dudutarilayefa, 2023). Conversely, high self-esteem has been linked to stronger resistance to peer influence and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours. In support of this, Kazeem, Asiyanbi, and Yusuf (2025) reported that self-esteem significantly influenced behavioural tendencies among university students in Lagos. Likewise, Asiyanbi and Animasahun (2024) demonstrated that interventions enhancing self-management and problem-solving skills—constructs closely related to self-esteem—were effective in reducing smartphone addiction among students in Oyo State. These findings affirm that self-esteem serves as a critical protective factor in mitigating adolescents' engagement in substance abuse.

Parental monitoring constitutes another fundamental factor influencing adolescents' behavioural outcomes. It refers to the extent to which parents or guardians are aware of, supervise, and regulate their children's daily activities and peer interactions. Studies have consistently shown that adolescents who experience consistent parental supervision and emotional support are less likely to engage in substance abuse compared to those raised in permissive or neglectful environments (Dishion et al., 1995; Branstetter, Low, & Furman, 2011). In the Nigerian context, Asiyanbi, Omopo, Offor, and Ilori (2025) found that poor parental monitoring was significantly associated with substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan. Similarly, Asiyanbi, Lawal, Umanhonlen, and Ogunbowale (2025) demonstrated that weak family control and emotional neglect heightened the risk of maladaptive behaviours such as substance use among adolescents with histories of early trauma. These findings highlight the crucial role of effective parenting in buffering adolescents against external risk factors and promoting adaptive social adjustment.

Despite the growing evidence linking peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to adolescent substance abuse, existing research in Nigeria remains limited in scope and integration. Most previous studies have examined these predictors independently or focused on in-school populations, thereby neglecting out-of-school adolescents who represent a particularly high-risk group. Furthermore, few studies have employed a multivariate approach to assess the combined predictive strength of these psychosocial factors within the same model. This gap in the literature underscores the need for context-specific investigations that explore how these variables interact to influence substance use behaviours among adolescents who lack institutional support and structured parental guidance.

Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring as predictors of substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State. By examining these variables collectively, the study aims to determine their relative contributions to substance use behaviours, thereby informing evidence-based interventions designed to curb substance abuse among vulnerable adolescents in the Nigerian context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring predict substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State. It seeks to provide empirical evidence on the relative and joint effects of these psychosocial variables on adolescents' engagement in substance use, thereby informing effective preventive and counselling interventions. Specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationships between peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring, and substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.
2. To investigate the joint contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.
3. To determine the relative contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Research Questions

1. What relationships exist between peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring, and substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?
2. What is the joint contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?
3. What are the relative contributions of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which allowed the systematic investigation of the relationships among peer pressure, self-esteem, parental monitoring, and

substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents without manipulating variables. The population comprised out-of-school adolescents aged 13–19 years in Ibadan, Oyo State, who were not enrolled in any formal education programme. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, Ibadan was stratified into five Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, and Ibadan South-West. In the second stage, one non-formal education centre or major youth cluster (e.g., market area, motor park, or skill acquisition hub) was purposively selected from each LGA. In the third stage, simple random sampling was employed to select respondents from each location, making a total sample of 276 out-of-school adolescents. The distribution was as follows: Ibadan North (60), Ibadan North-East (55), Ibadan North-West (50), Ibadan South-East (56), and Ibadan South-West (55).

Four standardised instruments were employed for data collection. Substance abuse was measured using the *Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)* by Skinner (1982). Peer pressure was assessed using the *Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI)* by Brown et al. (1986). Self-esteem was measured using the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)* by Rosenberg (1965), while parental monitoring was measured with the *Parental Monitoring Scale (PMS)* developed by Stattin and Kerr (2000). These instruments were selected due to their established psychometric soundness in adolescent behavioural research. Trained research assistants facilitated the data collection process after obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to summarise responses, and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test relationships, as well as the joint and relative contributions of the independent variables to substance abuse, with significance set at 0.05.

Result and Discussions

Demographic Representation of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Out-of-School Adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	148	53.6
	Female	128	46.4
Age Range (years)	13–15	68	24.6
	16–17	102	37.0
	18–19	106	38.4
Educational Background	Primary School Only	89	32.2
	Junior Secondary	112	40.6
	Senior Secondary	75	27.2
Family Structure	Two-Parent Home	118	42.8
	Single-Parent Home	104	37.7
	Guardian/Relatives	54	19.6
Local Government Area	Ibadan North	60	21.7
	Ibadan North-East	55	19.9
	Ibadan North-West	50	18.1
	Ibadan South-East	56	20.3
	Ibadan South-West	55	19.9

The demographic data presented in Table 1 provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' characteristics. Out of the 276 out-of-school adolescents who participated in the study, 148 (53.6%) were males, while 128 (46.4%) were females, indicating a slightly higher male representation. The age distribution shows that the largest proportion of respondents, 106 (38.4%), fell within the 18–19 age range, followed by 102 (37.0%) aged 16–17, and 68 (24.6%) aged 13–15 years, suggesting that most participants were in late adolescence.

In terms of educational background, 112 (40.6%) of the respondents had attained junior secondary education, 89 (32.2%) had completed only primary school, while 75 (27.2%) had attended senior secondary school before dropping out. Regarding family structure, 118 (42.8%) came from two-parent homes, 104 (37.7%) from single-parent homes, and 54 (19.6%) were living with guardians or relatives, reflecting the varied social contexts of out-of-school adolescents. The distribution across local government areas indicates a relatively balanced sampling: Ibadan North had the highest number of respondents (21.7%), while Ibadan North-West had the least (18.1%). This spread demonstrates that the sample adequately represents the diverse population of out-of-school adolescents across the five selected LGAs in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Research Question One

What relationships exist between peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring, and substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?

Table 2: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Showing Relationships among Peer Pressure, Self-Esteem, Parental Monitoring, and Substance Abuse

Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Substance Abuse	—				25.4	6.82
2. Peer Pressure	.63**	—			28.9	7.21
3. Self-Esteem	−.48**	−.41**	—		30.7	6.34
4. Parental Monitoring	−.52**	−.46**	.44**	—	32.5	5.92

Note: $p < .05$; **p** $< .01$

The results in Table 2 indicate that peer pressure has a strong positive correlation with substance abuse ($r = .63$, $p < .01$), implying that as peer pressure increases, substance use also rises among out-of-school adolescents. Conversely, self-esteem ($r = −.48$, $p < .01$) and parental monitoring ($r = −.52$, $p < .01$) both have significant negative relationships with substance abuse. This means that adolescents with higher self-esteem and greater parental monitoring were less likely to engage in substance abuse. Additionally, peer pressure correlated negatively with both self-esteem ($r = −.41$) and parental monitoring ($r = −.46$), while self-esteem and parental monitoring showed a positive interrelationship ($r = .44$), suggesting mutual reinforcement in protective factors.

The strong positive correlation between peer pressure and substance abuse suggests that adolescents who lack formal educational engagement are more vulnerable to social influences from peers who normalise or encourage substance use. Out-of-school adolescents often rely heavily on peer groups for identity and belonging, which can make them susceptible to risky behaviours as a means of social acceptance. The absence of structured supervision and educational engagement further compounds this risk, allowing peer norms to become dominant behavioural drivers.

The negative relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse aligns with the theoretical assumption that individuals with low self-worth are more likely to use substances as coping

mechanisms for psychological distress or social rejection. Adolescents with diminished self-esteem may resort to drug use to gain confidence or emotional relief in social interactions. Similar patterns were observed by Kazeem, Asiyanbi, and Yusuf (2025), who found that self-esteem significantly influenced behavioural regulation and emotional stability among students, thereby reducing maladaptive tendencies such as substance use.

The inverse association between parental monitoring and substance abuse highlights the protective role of parental involvement, even among out-of-school youth. Parental supervision provides behavioural boundaries and emotional support, discouraging engagement in high-risk activities. This finding corroborates Asiyanbi, Adegunju, and Ovili (2025), who identified family dysfunction and weak parental oversight as strong predictors of adolescent smoking. Moreover, the positive correlation between parental monitoring and self-esteem indicates that adolescents who perceive strong parental support tend to develop healthier self-concepts, ultimately lowering their likelihood of substance involvement.

Lastly, the combined pattern of results underscores the interplay between external and internal influences on adolescent substance use. Peer relationships act as risk enhancers, while self-esteem and parental involvement function as buffers against maladaptive behaviours. These findings support the socio-ecological model of adolescent development, suggesting that effective prevention efforts must target both interpersonal and intrapersonal determinants of behaviour.

Research Question Two

What is the joint contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Showing the Joint Contribution of Peer Pressure, Self-Esteem, and Parental Monitoring to Substance Abuse

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	R	R²	Adj. R²	Sig.
Regression	4128.76	3	1376.25	64.38	.72	.52	.51	.000
Residual	3811.42	272	14.02					
Total	7939.18	275						

Table 3 reveals that peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring jointly contributed significantly to the prediction of substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents (R = .72, R² = .52, F(3, 272) = 64.38, p < .05). The coefficient of determination (R² = .52) implies that

approximately 52% of the variance in substance abuse is explained collectively by the three predictors, while the remaining 48% may be attributed to other factors not included in the model.

The result suggests that the combined effects of social and psychological factors play a major role in determining adolescents' susceptibility to substance use. Peer influences, parental involvement, and self-concept are interconnected systems influencing behavioural regulation. The relatively high R^2 value (52%) highlights the strength of these variables as significant determinants of risky behaviour among unsupervised youth.

The finding is consistent with the view that substance abuse among adolescents cannot be explained by a single factor but rather by an integration of individual, familial, and social influences. Asiyanbi et al. (2025) similarly reported a significant combined predictive power of peer pressure, family dysfunction, and neighbourhood risk on smoking behaviour among adolescents. This study reinforces that both internal (self-esteem) and external (peer and parental) influences jointly shape behavioural choices.

Furthermore, the substantial joint contribution observed aligns with psychological and social learning theories, which posit that substance use behaviour emerges from the interaction between environmental exposure and personal coping resources. Adolescents with poor parental supervision and low self-esteem are more likely to succumb to peer pressure, reinforcing maladaptive coping mechanisms. Thus, preventive interventions must adopt an integrated approach that addresses both family dynamics and personal resilience.

Research Question Three

What are the relative contributions of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State?

Table 4: Relative Contributions of Peer Pressure, Self-Esteem, and Parental Monitoring to Substance Abuse (N = 276)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardised β	Std. Error	Standardised Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Peer Pressure	0.47	0.05	.49	9.34	.000
Self-Esteem	–0.32	0.06	–.28	–5.33	.000
Parental Monitoring	–0.29	0.07	–.26	–4.95	.000
Constant	**12.84**	**1.82**		**7.06**	**.000**

Table 4 shows that peer pressure (β = .49, t = 9.34, p < .05) was the strongest predictor of substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents, followed by self-esteem (β = –.28, t = –5.33, p < .05) and parental monitoring (β = –.26, t = –4.95, p < .05). All predictors made significant contributions to the model, but in opposite directions—peer pressure positively predicted substance use, whereas self-esteem and parental monitoring negatively predicted it.

The dominance of peer pressure as the most significant predictor reflects the powerful influence of social conformity in adolescent behavioural outcomes. For many out-of-school youths, peer groups serve as substitute families and sources of identity. Consequently, negative peer norms easily translate into substance use behaviour, particularly when coupled with boredom, unemployment, or lack of structured engagement. The negative beta weights for self-esteem and parental monitoring highlight the buffering effect of psychological and familial resources. Adolescents with strong self-esteem and parental supervision are more likely to resist negative peer influences. This aligns with the findings of Asiyanbi and Animasahun (2024), who noted that self-management and personal resilience significantly mitigated addictive behaviours among college students. Likewise, Asiyanbi et al. (2025) established that weak parental monitoring increases the likelihood of substance use, reinforcing the protective role of family oversight.

Overall, the findings imply that while peer influence remains the dominant driver of adolescent substance use, strengthening self-esteem and enhancing parental monitoring can substantially reduce this risk. The interplay of these factors validates social control and self-regulation frameworks, suggesting that intervention strategies targeting these domains through parental

counselling, mentorship, and skill-based self-esteem programmes could help curb substance use among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships, joint contribution, and relative contribution of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring to substance abuse among out-of-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State. The findings revealed significant relationships among the variables, indicating that adolescents' substance use behaviours are influenced by their social context, psychological self-perception, and parental involvement. Peer pressure was found to have the strongest relationship with substance abuse, suggesting that adolescents who associate with deviant peers are more likely to experiment with or abuse substances. Self-esteem also showed a significant negative relationship with substance abuse, implying that adolescents with low self-worth are more susceptible to substance use as a means of coping with emotional or social distress. Parental monitoring was inversely related to substance abuse, demonstrating that consistent supervision and emotional closeness reduce adolescents' risk of engaging in such behaviours.

The joint influence of peer pressure, self-esteem, and parental monitoring on substance abuse among the participants underscores the multifaceted nature of adolescent behaviour. These findings affirm that substance abuse is not solely a personal or psychological issue but a social and familial concern. The study concludes that effective prevention and intervention strategies must consider the combined roles of peers, parents, and self-concept in shaping adolescents' behavioural choices. Addressing peer influences, enhancing self-esteem, and strengthening parental involvement are crucial steps in curbing substance use among out-of-school youths in Ibadan and similar contexts across Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. **Peer-Based Interventions:** Programmes should be designed to promote positive peer influence through youth clubs, mentorship, and peer education initiatives that discourage substance use and encourage healthy lifestyles.

2. **Parental Training and Support:** Parents and guardians should be educated on effective monitoring techniques and communication strategies to strengthen relationships with their children and identify early signs of risky behaviour.

3. **Self-Esteem Enhancement Programmes:** Counselling psychologists and social workers should implement school and community-based interventions that focus on self-esteem building, emotional regulation, and resilience among adolescents.

4. **Community Sensitisation:** Governmental and non-governmental organisations should conduct regular sensitisation campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of social support networks in prevention.

5. **Policy Development:** Policymakers should integrate psychosocial education into non-formal education programmes targeting out-of-school youths, ensuring that preventive measures are embedded within youth development policies.

6. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore longitudinal and qualitative approaches to better understand the underlying dynamics of peer influence, parental control, and self-concept in adolescent substance use patterns across different Nigerian regions.

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