



Relationship Among Sex Behaviour, Peer Pressure and Drug Use Behaviour among Secondary School Adolescents in Delta State

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between sex behaviour, peer pressure and drug use behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. This study adopted the correlational survey research design, with a population of 50,000 students in secondary school. The sample for this study consists of 150 students in secondary school. A stratified sampling technique and a simple random sampling technique were used to select the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was titled Sex Behaviour, Peer Pressure and Drug Use Behaviour, Questionnaire (SBPPDUBQ). The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and coefficient of determination. On the other hand, the hypotheses were tested using Linear and Multiple linear regressions at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicate that there was a connection between peer pressure and drug use behaviour and there was a connection between sex behaviour and Drug Use Behaviour. The study concluded that peer pressure contributes to drug use behaviour, and sex behaviour among adolescents in secondary school. Recommendations include that educators, parents, and caregivers should teach skills to adolescents to be able to resist peer pressure.

Keywords: Sex behaviour; Peer Pressure; Drug Use Behaviour; Adolescents



Introduction

Adolescent culture and values are often shaped and passed down through peer interactions within various social groups such as crowds, cliques, and gangs. These groups form distinct cultures with their norms and behaviours, influencing how adolescents perceive themselves and others (Tuoyo-Olulu & Oghounu, 2024). Peer pressure plays a significant role within these groups, exerting influence ranging from subtle encouragement to participate in certain activities to more direct coercion to conform. Individuals who are critical of group norms and choose to stay outside cliques or gangs are less likely to succumb to peer pressure. Patterson & Dishion (2020) stated that by maintaining independence and individuality, they can make decisions based on personal values rather than group influence. This independence acts as a protective barrier against engaging in risky behaviours that may be promoted within certain peer groups. Adolescents who do give in to peer pressure within cliques or gangs may find themselves participating in behaviours such as substance use, delinquency, or unsafe activities. The desire for acceptance and belonging within these groups may overshadow personal judgment, leading to decisions that have potential long-term consequences.

Chu, *et al.* (2020) believe that the values and behaviours adopted during adolescence can shape future development and decision-making. Those who resist negative peer influence and develop a strong sense of self are more likely to make informed, independent choices as they mature into adulthood. Thus, fostering critical thinking and resilience in adolescents is crucial as they navigate their social environments and form their identities.

Peer Pressure and Drug Use Behaviour

Peer pressure may significantly influence drug use behaviour among adolescents, shaping their attitudes, decisions, and actual engagement with substances. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer influence due to their developmental stage and the importance they place on social acceptance and belonging. Peer groups often establish norms and expectations regarding substance use, creating environments where drug use may be perceived as normal or even desirable to maintain social status or fit in. According to Schofield and Lynskey (2020), adolescents are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure due to their developmental stage and the desire for social acceptance. Peer groups can exert influence through direct encouragement or by creating social norms that endorse substance use as a means of fitting in or gaining popularity. Peer networks and social dynamics within schools and communities contribute to the normalization of drug use behaviours among adolescents. Adolescents who perceive drug use as common or acceptable within their peer groups are more likely to engage in such behaviours themselves, driven by the desire to conform to group norms and avoid social exclusion (Mason, *et al.*, 2021). The influence of peer pressure on drug use behaviour is further elucidated by studies examining the psychological mechanisms at play. For instance, Jones, *et al.* (2020) suggest that adolescents may use drugs as a coping mechanism in response to peer pressure, seeking to manage stress or anxiety related to social interactions or fitting in with their peers. However, it is important to note that not all adolescents succumb to peer pressure equally, and individual factors such as personality traits, family dynamics, and resilience play significant roles in shaping responses to peer influence. Protective factors such as strong parental support and positive peer relationships can mitigate the impact of peer pressure on drug use behaviours, promoting healthier choices and behaviours among adolescents (Bahr, *et al.*, 2020).

Sex Behaviour and drug use behaviour

The relationship between sexual behaviour and drug use behaviour has been widely studied, with research indicating a complex interplay between the two. According to Smith and Johnson (2021), substance use is often linked to risky sexual behaviours, as drugs and alcohol can impair judgment, lower inhibitions, and increase the likelihood of engaging in unprotected sex. This connection is particularly evident among adolescents and young adults, where experimental drug use frequently coincides with increased sexual activity. Furthermore, according to Miller, *et al.* (2022), the use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and stimulants is associated with higher rates of multiple sexual partners and inconsistent condom use. This relationship is attributed to the disinhibitory effects of these substances, which can lead individuals to make impulsive decisions regarding sexual encounters. Additionally, individuals who engage in frequent drug use may seek out social environments where both substance use and high-risk sexual behaviour are normalized, further reinforcing the association between the two behaviours (Oyibo & Oghounu, 2023).

According to Thompson and Rivera (2020), drug use and sexual behaviour are also influenced by psychological and social factors, such as peer pressure, stress, and mental health issues. For instance, individuals experiencing depression or anxiety may engage in both drug use and risky sexual behaviour as coping mechanisms, leading to an increased vulnerability to negative health outcomes, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. Moreover, the type of substance used plays a crucial role in shaping sexual behaviour. According to Chen and Patel (2023), stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamine are particularly associated with heightened sexual arousal and compulsive sexual behaviours, whereas depressants like alcohol can lead to impaired decision-making and increased vulnerability to coercion or sexual assault. This suggests that the relationship between drug use and sexual behaviour varies depending on the pharmacological effects of the substance involved (Obi & Oghounu, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Drug use behaviour refers to the habitual consumption of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs, which can have profound physical, psychological, and social consequences. Among students in secondary school, drug use is particularly concerning as it can impair cognitive development, reduce academic performance, and increase the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours. The use of substances at an early age has been linked to long-term addiction, delinquency, and health complications, making it a critical public health issue.

Sex behaviour and peer pressure may play significant roles in influencing drug use behaviour among adolescents. Many secondary school students are at a developmental stage where they seek social validation and experiment with new experiences. Peer pressure, defined as the influence exerted by friends or social groups to conform to certain behaviours, can be a powerful factor leading students to engage in drug use. Adolescents who associate with peers who consume drugs are more likely to adopt similar behaviours due to a desire for acceptance or fear of social exclusion. In many cases, drug use becomes a gateway to other risky behaviours, including early sexual activity, unprotected sex, and multiple sexual partners.

Furthermore, engagement in risky sexual behaviour is often intertwined with substance use, as drugs and alcohol can lower inhibitions and impair judgment. Adolescents who use

drugs may be more likely to participate in unprotected sex, increasing their vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. The interplay between drug use, peer influence, and sexual behaviour creates a cycle of risky decision-making that can have lasting consequences on students' health and well-being.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour
2. What is the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of Students in secondary school in drug use behaviours
2. There is no gender difference in the influence of sex behaviour on secondary school adolescent students' drug use behaviour

Methods

This study adopted the correlational survey research design, with a population of 50,000 students in secondary school in Delta State. The sample for this study consists of 150 students in secondary school drawn from an entire population size of 50,000. A stratified sampling technique and a simple random sampling technique were used to select the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire which is titled: sex behaviour and Peer Pressure and Drug Use Behaviour Questionnaire (SBPPDUBQ). The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and coefficient of determination. On the other hand, the hypotheses were tested using Linear and Multiple linear regressions at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1 What is the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour?

Table 1: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation and coefficient of determination of the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour*

Variables	N	R	r^2	$r^2\%$	Decision
Peer pressure	150	.0.58 ^a	.0.33	.32.8	Positive relationship
Drug use behaviour					

Table 1 shows the r-value of 0.58 on how the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour. The coefficient

of determination (r^2) was 0.33, and the amount of contribution of the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour was 33.0%. The result showed a positive relationship between peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour

Research Question 2: What is the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour?

Table 2: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation and coefficient of determination of the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour*

Variables	N	R	r^2	$r^2\%$	Decision
Sex behaviour	150	.0489 ^a	.025	.24.8	positive relationship
Drug use behaviour					

Table 2 shows the r-value of 0.49 on how the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.25, and the amount of contribution of the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour was 24.8%. The result showed a positive relationship between sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour

Table 3: *Regression analysis of the relationship between the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour.*

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	1559.348	1	1559.348	73.827	.000 ^b
Residual	3125.985	148	21.122		
Total	4685.333	149			

Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	20.012	2.073		9.651	.000
Drug use behaviour	.307	.036	.577	8.592	.000

a. **Dependent Variable:** Peer pressure

b. **Predictors (Constant):** Drug use behaviour

Table 3 presents a regression analysis examining the relationship between the influence of peer pressure and the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour. The model's regression analysis shows a connection between the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour. This is indicated by a significant F-statistic ($F = 73.827$) with a p-value of .000, which is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, suggesting the relationship between the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour. is statistically significant.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour

Table 4: *Regression analysis of the relationship between the influence of sex behaviour on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in drug use behaviour*

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	26866.386	1	26866.386	3.997	.000
Residual	81498.190	148	81.662		
Total	108364.576	149			
Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	42.916	2.044		20.993	.000
Drug use behaviour	.663	.037	.498	18.138	.000

- a. **Dependent Variable:** sex behaviour
b. **Predictors (Constant):** drug use behaviour

Table 4 presents a regression analysis examining the relationship between the influence of peer pressure on the involvement of adolescent students in secondary school in sex behaviour. The regression analysis reveals a connection between sexual behaviour and drug use behaviour among adolescent students in secondary school. With an F-value of 3.997 and a p-value of 0.000, the model is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.663$) indicates that an increase in drug use behaviour is associated with a corresponding rise in sexual behaviour. Additionally, the standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.498$) and t-value of 18.138 confirm a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables. These findings suggest that adolescents involved in substance use are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, highlighting the need for targeted intervention programs addressing both issues simultaneously.

Discussion

The research highlights a link between peer influence and the engagement of adolescent students in secondary school with drug use behaviours. This connection is emphasized by various factors and mechanisms that demonstrate how peers affect adolescents' choices and actions regarding substance use. Peer pressure operates through social interactions that lead adolescents to feel a need to conform to the behaviours and norms set by their peer groups in order to achieve acceptance, avoid exclusion, or improve social standing. During their developmental stage, adolescents are especially vulnerable to peer influence due to their urge for social belonging and sensitivity to social approval. The results show that adolescents who believe their peers support or partake in drug use are more likely to try substances themselves. This influence can manifest as direct encouragement to use drugs or through more subtle social cues observed in peer behaviours and group dynamics. Furthermore, peer pressure can shape adolescents' decision-making regarding drug use. The inclination to adhere to peer norms can overshadow personal judgment, leading to participation in risky behaviours like substance experimentation or ongoing drug use. The effect of peer pressure on drug use behaviour is also intensified by the social environments where adolescents interact. Social events and parties, where drug use might be normalized or promoted by peers looking to enhance social



experiences, can greatly shape adolescents' attitudes and actions concerning substance use, aligning with the findings of Mason, *et al.* (2021) and Bahr, *et al.* (2020).

The results indicated a link between the impact of sexual behaviour and the engagement of adolescent students in secondary school with drug use behaviours. Statistical analysis reveals that as sexual behaviour escalates, there is a corresponding increase in drug use among young people. This implies that risky sexual conduct and substance use are interconnected, likely due to shared underlying factors like peer influence, a desire for new experiences, and diminished impulse control. Adolescents participating in risky sexual practices may resort to drugs as a means of coping or because they are exposed to these behaviours within social groups where both are common. The strong relationship highlights the necessity for comprehensive strategies that encompass both sexual health education and substance abuse prevention to address these risks among secondary school students. This finding aligns with the work of Allen & Loeb (2021) and Prinstein & Giletta (2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the finding, it is therefore concluded that there is a link between sexual behaviour, peer influence, and the participation of high school students in drug-related activities. The findings suggest that adolescents engaging in unsafe sexual practices are at a higher risk of using drugs, indicating that both behaviours may be shaped by shared social and psychological factors like peer pressure, risk-taking behaviour, and insufficient guidance. Likewise, peer influence significantly contributes to promoting drug use among teenagers, as students who spend time with peers involved in substance use are more inclined to adopt similar behaviours.

From the findings, the following recommendation was made:

1. Schools should integrate structured programs that educate students on the dangers of drug use, risky sexual behaviour, and the impact of peer pressure to equip them with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions.
2. Parents and community leaders should actively engage in adolescent development programs, fostering open communication about peer pressure, drug use, and sexual behaviour.
3. Secondary schools should offer counselling services to help adolescents navigate peer pressure, manage stress, and develop healthier coping mechanisms instead of resorting to drug use.



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