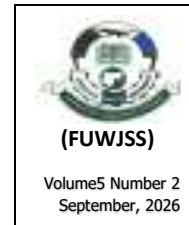


**DRUG ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH
COUNSELLING AMONG OKE-OGUN
POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS, OYO STATE,
NIGERIA**



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Abstract

Drug abuse remains a significant mental health concern among youths and polytechnic students are particularly at risk. This study, therefore, examines the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was employed, and a simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. A total of 440 copies of the questionnaire were administered; however, 438 were returned and properly completed for analysis. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Factors Responsible for Drug Abuse Questionnaire (FRDAQ). Content validity was established by five lecturers from the Department of Mass Communication, The Polytechnic Ibadan, while reliability was determined using the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.83. Data were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the t-test and One-Way ANOVA were used to test the two null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that major contributors to drug abuse among students included poor academic performance, examination anxiety and low self-esteem, with significant differences observed based on gender and age. The study concludes that drug abuse among polytechnic students is largely driven by academic and psychological pressures, which negatively affect their academic performance and overall well-being. The study recommends that students experiencing academic and emotional challenges should seek professional support through counselling services, school clinics, and appropriate support groups rather than resorting to drug use as a coping mechanism. School management should also train lecturers, level advisors, faculty members and non-academic staff to identify and respond to students struggling with drug abuse.

Keywords: Academic pressure, drug abuse, professional support, Oke-Ogun Polytechnic

Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes, during which individuals are often more vulnerable to engaging in risky behaviours. Students in tertiary institutions largely fall within this age bracket of 18 to 30 years, making them particularly susceptible to behaviours such as drug abuse (Chimuanya, 2026). At this stage, the desire for independence, peer acceptance, and experimentation often influences decision-making. As a result, many youths engage in harmful practices without fully considering the long-term consequences (Enakpoya, 2024). Drug abuse has become a major public and mental health concern in Nigerian society (Oyinloye et al., 2026). The increasing rate of drug abuse among students continues to raise concerns in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, which are expected to function as centres of academic excellence and character development, are increasingly facing challenges related to the availability and misuse of drugs among students (Oluwole & Adekeye, 2022). This situation undermines the primary goals of these institutions and negatively affects students' academic performance and behaviour (Umeh & Adegboyega, 2022). The problem is prevalent among students and poses serious threats to the academic environment. It often results in poor concentration, absenteeism, and, in some cases, involvement in other forms of deviant behaviour. Various drugs, including alcohol and marijuana, are commonly sold and consumed in areas surrounding tertiary institutions (Agubosi et al., 2025; Albert & Arthur, 2026). The easy availability and accessibility make it *challenging* to effectively control drug abuse among students.

The widespread occurrence and impact of drug abuse among students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic have raised serious concerns among education stakeholders, including parents, lecturers, counsellors, healthcare professionals, and the broader community. It is particularly worrisome that the number of students engaging in drug abuse continues to increase despite the various interventions implemented by the government to address the problem (Oluwole & Adekeye, 2022). Many students remain unaware of the health, psychological, academic, and social risks associated with both the conventional and non-conventional use of drugs. Students who engage in drug abuse often withdraw from social interactions and experience difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships with family members and friends (Onyeka & Ilomäki, 2022; Simon et al., 2026). This social isolation may lead to strained relationships and a weakened support network, thereby intensifying feelings of loneliness and alienation. Despite the institution's continuous awareness campaigns and preventive measures, drug abuse remains a persistent challenge among students.

Students, who are expected to focus on their academic pursuits, often engage in parties, student union activities, and social gatherings that distract them from their studies (Oyebode & Odesanmi, 2025). Many spend considerable time in secluded areas both on and off campus, participating in non-academic leisure activities. A common practice among these students is participation in *Kegites* gatherings, where palm wine (*Emu*) is consumed alongside various local alcoholic beverages and substances available within and around the school environment. These include *Pito*, *Burukutu*, *Goskolo*, *Şèkètè* (corn or maize beer), *Àgàdàngídí*, and local gin (Ogogoro, also known as *kainkain*, *jedi*, *opaeyin*, *baba apaari*, and *apetesi*), as well as, in some cases, marijuana (Indian hemp, popularly called “igbo”). Such behaviours gradually divert attention away from academic responsibilities, reduce commitment to study-related tasks, and contribute to poor time management and declining academic performance (Ekpodikpo et al., 2025).

Social media has also contributed to the increasing abuse of sedatives, amphetamines, and other drugs among students (Akpan et al., 2024). Through various social media platforms, students are frequently exposed to drug-related posts, videos, images, and discussions that can influence their attitudes and behaviours. In many cases, social media normalises drug abuse by portraying it as fashionable, enjoyable, or a means of social acceptance. It also provides avenues through which students can easily obtain information about drugs and connect with individuals involved in their distribution (Muhammad et al., 2020). Continuous exposure to such content may gradually shape students' attitudes towards drug abuse, making it appear socially acceptable and increasing the likelihood of experimentation and sustained drug abuse. Peer influence on social media further reinforces this behaviour, as students may imitate the actions and lifestyles they observe online (Okosun & Iyore-Osagie, 2025). Moreover, repeated exposure to such content may reduce students' awareness of the harmful consequences of drug abuse, thereby increasing their willingness to experiment with drugs.

Drug abuse involves the improper use of prescription drugs, self-administering medication without professional guidance, and the harmful consumption of illegal substances. It includes taking drugs without medical prescriptions or in ways that deviate from societal norms (Akpan et al. 2024). Some commonly abused drugs are methamphetamine (known as *Mkpuru-mmiri*, meaning hailstone or chunk of ice in southeastern Nigeria), percocets, cannabis (marijuana, hashish, bhang), cocaine (locally referred to as coke, gold, beans, dust, gin, girlfriend, double bubble), heroin or codeine (Chinese tobacco, first line, emsel, smag, scat, horse), morphine, alcohol (liquor, beer, spirit, blue devils), inhalants (solvents, aerosols), narcotics, and khat (*Umeh & Adegboyega, 2022; Mirabelle, 2026*). These drugs are consumed through various methods, including chewing, smoking, drinking, injecting, snorting,

vaping, licking, or swallowing. Signs and symptoms of drug abuse among students include watery eyes and nose, excessive talking or unusual silence, mood swings, difficulty concentrating, and a lack of interest in academic activities.

Alongside well-known drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, rohypnol, marijuana, cannabis, and amphetamines, the use of non-conventional drugs is also widespread among students in Nigeria (Onyeka & Ilomäki, 2022). These include lizard dung (whitish end), Moringa (Zogale) leaves, Zakami seeds, pawpaw leaves, pawpaw seeds, Mandara (Kafra), gunpowder, rubber solvents, nail polish removers, premium motor spirit (PMS), and hydrogen sulfide gas (from pit latrines). The use of these unconventional drugs is often associated with peer pressure, societal influences, poor parental supervision, and as a means of managing stress. Onyeka and Ilomäki (2022) identified academic pressure, low self-esteem, depression, and dissatisfaction with academic performance as additional factors associated with drug abuse among students, while stress and anxiety relief was the least frequently reported reason.

Suleiman and Shehu (2023) indicated several factors that contribute to students' vulnerability to drug abuse, including low levels of self-confidence, financial loss, peer pressure, easy access to various drugs, high levels of academic anxiety, social acceptance, lack of parental guidance, misinformation, and self-medication. Students with personality issues resulting from social challenges are more likely to turn to drug abuse (Simon et al., 2026). The social and economic conditions in Nigeria, where many people live below the poverty line, also contribute to the problem. Poverty, broken homes, and unemployment have led many youths to either search for work on the streets or resort to begging (Enakpoya, 2024). These issues are further compounded by a lack of skills and opportunities for training. The frustration from these difficult circumstances often drives youths to abuse drugs as a temporary escape from their challenges.

Genetic factors contribute significantly to the increased risk of developing addictive behaviours (Mahmoud et al., 2026). Some individuals may inherit traits from their parents that make them more susceptible to addiction, meaning they are more likely to misuse drugs when exposed to them. Research has shown that addiction can run in families, suggesting a genetic link, and people with close relatives who have struggled with drug abuse may have a higher risk of developing similar problems (Akpan et al., 2024). Early life experiences, including trauma and stressful surroundings, can lead to drug abuse. Youths who face stress during childhood are more likely to use drugs as a coping strategy (Odukoya & Odeyemi, 2023). Additionally, mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and trauma-related disorders can increase the likelihood of drug abuse, as youths

may resort to drugs to ease emotional, mental, and psychological distress (Adebayo & Ojo, 2023).

Suleiman and Shehu (2023) stated that students in Nigeria often use drugs like amphetamines and Pro-Plus to enhance their performance during examinations. Enakpoya (2024) found that students who rely on drugs for studying often struggle with poor academic outcomes and have a history of family or social instability. However, some use drugs to increase self-confidence, enhance pleasure, manage feelings of depression and inadequacy, or improve communication skills. Ibrahim and Yahaya (2023) identified several risk factors for drug abuse among students, including negative peer influence, limited awareness of the dangers of drugs, lack of parental supervision, strained parental relationships, and poor academic performance. These factors contribute to some students becoming mentally unstable, maladapted to their academic environment, and eventually dropping out of school.

Gender and age play significant roles in influencing drug abuse among students in tertiary institutions. Younger students (18–25 years) are more likely to engage in drug abuse due to peer pressure, academic stress, and the desire for social acceptance, while older students (26 years and above) may resort to drug use to cope with financial and family responsibilities (Adebayo & Ojo, 2023). Gender differences also shape drug use patterns, with male students generally engaging more in drug abuse due to societal expectations and risk-taking tendencies, whereas female students often use drugs as a coping mechanism for emotional distress (Enakpoya, 2024). Despite these differences, both groups share common risk factors such as academic pressure, mental health challenges, and exposure to environments where drug use is normalized. In addition, male students are more likely to engage in drug abuse, particularly those living in hostels. Suleiman and Shehu (2023) found that cannabis and tobacco were the most commonly abused drugs among male students, with higher levels observed among those in science-oriented disciplines.

Numerous studies have examined drug abuse among students both within and outside Oyo State, Nigeria. For instance, Umeh and Adegboyega (2022) worked on *substance use and mental health among* students of tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria; Suleiman and Shehu (2023) investigated the patterns, incidence, and determinants of psychoactive substance use among adolescents in North-West Nigeria; Enakpoya (2024) examined the prevalence of drug abuse among in-school adolescents and its implications for counselling in Enugu State, Nigeria. Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into drug abuse among students in Nigeria, none has specifically examined the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State. This study was

therefore undertaken to fill this gap by examining the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State and determining whether age and gender influence these factors. The findings are expected to contribute to existing knowledge and provide empirical evidence to guide effective prevention and intervention strategies in tertiary institutions.

Incidence and Intensity of Drug Abuse in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions

A drug refers to a substance that can bring about a change in biological function through its chemical actions (Njeru & Lewis, 2024). It is also considered a substance that modifies perception, cognition, mood, behaviour, and general body functions (Enakpoya, 2024). Drugs can thus be regarded as chemical modifiers of living tissues that bring about physiological and behavioural changes (*Oluwole & Adekeye, 2022*). The use and abuse of drugs by polytechnic students have become one of the most disturbing health-related phenomena in Oyo State and other parts of Nigeria (Oyinloye et al., 2026). Drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students is linked to various forms of destructive behaviour, such as cultism, academic stress, aggression, bullying, truancy, and other acts of indiscipline, which disrupt both academic and social environments. This growing problem has compelled school disciplinary committees to take strict actions against students involved in drug-related offences (Agubosi et al., 2025). The consequences of drug abuse are far-reaching, affecting not only the individual's health and academic performance but also family relationships, peer interactions, and community safety. If left unaddressed on campuses, drug abuse may produce irresponsible youths who are more likely to engage in social vices, criminal activities, and behaviours that undermine societal development (Suleiman & Shehu, 2023).

Several studies have been conducted on the prevalence, knowledge, and psychological effects of drug abuse among students within and outside Oyo State, Nigeria; however, limited attention has been given to the factors responsible for drug abuse among students in tertiary institutions. For instance, Okosun and Iyore-Osagie (2025) examined the relationship between social media and drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, using a correlational research design. The study, which involved 3,641 SS2 students with a sample of 182, found no significant relationship between perceived levels of social media use and drug abuse, suggesting that social media may not be a direct determinant of drug abuse behaviour among students in that context, although limitations such as reliance on self-reported perception and a small sample size were noted. In contrast, Oyeboode and Odesanmi (2025) investigated the knowledge and prevalence of substance and drug abuse

among secondary school students in a sub-urban area of Nigeria using a descriptive survey design in Ipetumodu. The study reported a high prevalence of substance abuse, with alcohol, Tramadol, marijuana, and caffeine being commonly used, alongside psychological effects such as anxiety, irritability, and mood changes. The contradiction between the two studies is that while Okosun and Iyore-Osagie (2025) suggest that social media does not significantly influence drug abuse, Oyeboode and Odesanmi (2025) demonstrate that drug abuse is highly prevalent among students, indicating that substance use is more strongly associated with behavioural, environmental, and psychological factors rather than being primarily driven by social media exposure.

Muhammad, Ijaz, and Intzar (2020) examined causes of drug abuse among university students in Pakistan using a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with eight participants selected through purposive snowball sampling. The study found that drug abuse among students was influenced by individual, interpersonal, and institutional factors, with commonly used substances including sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, cannabis, injected drugs, and alcohol, while hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine were used less frequently; it also revealed that male and hostelized students were more frequent users compared to females and non-hostellers. A major limitation of the study is its very small sample size and qualitative nature, which restricts generalisability. In contrast, Njeru and Lewis (2024) investigated the causes and effects of drug and substance abuse among secondary school students in Dagoretti Division, Nairobi West District, Kenya, using a survey design. The study found that peer pressure and the desire to feel high were the major causes of drug abuse, while poor academic performance was the most significant effect, although the study is limited by self-reported data and its restriction to a single locality. The contradiction between the two studies is that while Muhammad et al. (2020) present a multi-dimensional explanation of drug abuse involving institutional, interpersonal, and individual factors with clear gender and residential differences, Njeru and Lewis (2024) emphasize peer pressure as the dominant cause, suggesting a narrower explanation of drug abuse behaviour.

Although variations exist in previous studies regarding findings, design approach, geographical scope, research instruments, population, and gender-based analysis, available literature indicates that foreign studies have examined both the causes and effects of drug abuse among students. However, these studies were conducted in different socio-cultural and educational contexts outside Nigeria, and their findings may not fully reflect the situation in Nigerian tertiary institutions. In addition, limited attention has been given to the specific factors responsible for drug abuse among

students within Oyo State, particularly at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic. Therefore, this study seeks to address this contextual gap by examining the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals acquire behaviours through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within their social environment (Bandura, 1977). The theory posits that students are not passive recipients of influence but actively learn behaviours by watching peers and significant others, especially when such behaviours appear rewarding or socially acceptable. In the context of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, students may engage in partying, student union activities, kegites gatherings, and substance use after observing peers who participate in such behaviours and receive social approval or enjoyment from them. When such behaviours are reinforced through peer acceptance or perceived pleasure, they are likely to be repeated even when they negatively affect academic performance. This makes Social Learning Theory relevant in explaining how students gradually adopt both positive and negative behavioural patterns within the school environment (*Adebayo & Ojo, 2023*).

The study is also guided by Socialization Theory, which explains how individuals internalize the norms, values, and behavioural expectations of their social groups over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Within the school environment, students interact continuously with peers, campus groups, and community influences that shape their understanding of acceptable behaviour. Through this process, activities such as social gatherings, kegites meetings, and consumption of local alcoholic substances may become normalised as part of student life. As these behaviours become socially accepted within peer groups, students may begin to prioritize them over academic responsibilities, leading to reduced academic engagement. This theory therefore helps to explain how environmental and cultural influences contribute to the development of students' lifestyle choices (*Enakpoya, 2024*).

Both theories provide a strong framework for understanding students' involvement in non-academic and risky behaviours at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic. Social Learning Theory explains how behaviour is acquired through observation and reinforcement, while Socialization Theory explains how such behaviours become internalized as part of students' identity within their social environment (*Agubosi et al., 2025*). Together, they highlight the role of peer influence, campus culture, and environmental exposure in shaping students' academic and social behaviour. The combination of these theories is particularly useful in explaining why some students prioritize

social activities over academic work despite awareness of academic expectations. Consequently, the framework underscores the need for counselling and behavioural interventions that address peer influence and social normalization of risky behaviours (*Odukoya & Odeyemi, 2023*).

Research Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to identify the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State. The population consisted of 220 Ordinary National Diploma (OND) students and 220 Higher National Diploma (HND) students, totalling 440 students, all of whom were selected using a simple random sampling technique. The items were developed by the researchers through a review of relevant literature, interactions with polytechnic students, and guidance from experts. The data collection instrument, titled Factors Responsible for Drug Abuse Questionnaire (FRDAQ), consisted of 15 items. Face and content validity were established by five lecturers from the Departments of Business Administration and Mass Communication, Polytechnic Ibadan. The construction of the questionnaire items was guided by the need to capture key factors influencing drug abuse among students, ensuring that each item reflects real-life experiences and observable behaviours within the polytechnic environment. In addition, the items were aligned with relevant theoretical frameworks such as Erikson's psychosocial development theory, which emphasizes identity formation and vulnerability during adolescence; Bandura's social learning theory, which explains how individuals may resort to substance use as a coping mechanism; and Eagly's social role theory, which highlights the influence of social expectations and roles on behaviour. Consequently, the items were structured to measure individual, social, and environmental factors, ensuring consistency between the theoretical foundations and the variables investigated in the study.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using a test-retest method. It was administered twice to a group of 20 students at the Department of Mass Communication, Polytechnic Ibadan, with a two-week interval. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to calculate the correlation of the two sets of scores, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.83. The instrument had two sections: Section A, which gathered demographic information, and Section B, which identified factors responsible for drug abuse. Section B used a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The benchmark for determining significant factors was a mean score of 2.5, calculated by summing the response points (4+3+2+1=10) and dividing by 4. Factors with mean scores of 2.5 or higher were considered significant, while scores below 2.5 were regarded as not.

Results and Discussions

A total of 438 out of the 440 distributed questionnaires were properly completed and included in the analysis. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested using the Independent t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Factors Responsible for Drug Abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic Students in Oyo State

N	Students engage in drugs due to:	Mean	SD	Rank
9	Poor academic performance	3.88	0.91	1 st
10	Examination anxiety	3.86	1.23	2 nd
7	Low self-esteem	3.85	0.55	3 rd
15	Suicidal ideation	3.44	1.12	4 th
14	Trauma from bullying on campus	3.31	0.59	5 th
3	Sleep deprivation	3.22	0.88	6 th
4	Lack of effective school policies	3.00	1.04	7 th
5	Social media influence	2.97	0.96	8 th
12	Intense academic stress	2.82	1.07	9 th
1	Lack of parental guidance	2.74	1.17	10 th
8	Availability of drugs on campus	2.71	0.77	11 th
13	Negative peer pressure	2.67	0.61	12 th
2	Lack of guidance and counselling	2.66	1.02	13 th
6	Lack of awareness about drug risks and consequences	2.57	0.70	14 th
11	High level of social isolation	2.54	0.66	15 th

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 presented the mean scores and rank order of the factors responsible for drug abuse among students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State. All the factors listed in the table were identified as contributing to drug abuse, as their mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50. Specifically, items with mean scores of 3.88, 3.86, and 3.85 were ranked first, second, and third, respectively, indicating that poor academic performance, examination anxiety, and low self-esteem were the major factors responsible for drug abuse among the respondents. This finding agrees with Eze and Omeje (2022), who identified peer influence, inability to cope with academic demands, low self-esteem, and experimental curiosity as major factors contributing to drug abuse among students. However, the finding contradicts

Ibrahim and Yahaya (2023), who reported that family background and parental supervision were the predominant factors responsible for drug abuse among students. *The reason for this finding may be that* students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic are confronted with increasing academic demands, examination pressure, low self-esteem, and psychological distress, which may predispose them to drug abuse as a maladaptive coping strategy. The situation at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic may also be explained by the pressure to attain academic success, feelings of inadequacy, and persistent emotional distress, including suicidal ideation, which may encourage students to use drugs as a means of coping with their challenges. The finding is supported by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which explains that drug-related behaviours may be acquired through observation and reinforcement from peers, and Stress-Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which posits that individuals experiencing severe stress may adopt maladaptive coping strategies, such as drug abuse, when healthy coping mechanisms are unavailable. The finding therefore underscores that drug abuse among students is influenced by academic, psychological, and environmental factors that require comprehensive counselling and mental health interventions within the Nigerian tertiary education system.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test showing Difference in the Factors responsible for Drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic Students in Oyo State Based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	211	67.07	9.894	436	2.57*	1.96
Female	227	50.96	8.723			

* Significant at .05 alpha level

Table 2 showed the calculated t-value of 2.57 and the critical t-value of 1.96. It was revealed that the calculated t-value was greater than the critical t-value; hence, the hypothesis was rejected. A significant difference was found in the factors responsible for drug abuse among students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State based on gender. This implies that the factors responsible for drug abuse differ significantly between male and female students. This finding contradicts Umeh and Adegboyega (2022), who reported no significant gender difference among students in Oyo State, suggesting that gender-related patterns in drug abuse may vary across institutions due to differences in the socio-cultural environment, peer group structure, and academic stress levels. The reason for this finding may be that

male and female students experience and respond differently to academic, psychological, and social challenges associated with drug abuse. Male students are often more susceptible to peer influence and risk-taking behaviours, whereas female students may be more likely to resort to drug use as a means of coping with emotional distress and psychological challenges. The situation at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic reflects broader societal expectations in Nigeria, where masculinity is frequently associated with boldness and experimentation, while femininity is associated with emotional restraint, thereby influencing the factors that predispose students to drug abuse. The finding is supported by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which explains that drug-related behaviours are acquired through observation and reinforcement within peer groups, and Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), which posits that socially constructed gender expectations influence behavioural tendencies and coping responses. The finding therefore demonstrates that gender differences in drug abuse among students are shaped by a combination of environmental influences, learned behaviour, and socio-cultural expectations within the Nigerian tertiary education system.

Table 3: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the difference in the Factors Responsible for Drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic Students in Oyo State Based on age

Source	SS	df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	96.63	2	48.31	16.21*	3.00	.0034
Within Groups	1298.12	435	2.98			
Total	1394.83	437				

*Significant at .05 alpha level

Table 3 showed the calculated F-ratio of 16.21 was greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .0034 which was less than .05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value was less than .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there was a significant difference in the factors responsible for drug abuse among Oke-Ogun Polytechnic students in Oyo State based on age. In order to ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc was carried out and the output is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Scheffe post-hoc where the significant difference lies based on Age

Age	N	Sub set for Alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
18-25	198	49.11	
26-32	138	47.07	
33 and above	102		41.75
Sig.		.505	1.000

Table 4 revealed that respondents aged between 26 and 32 years had a mean score of 47.07, those aged 33 years and above had a mean score of 41.75, while respondents aged between 18 and 25 years had a mean score of 49.11. This indicates that students aged 18–25 years were more likely to engage in drug abuse than those in the other age groups. The findings also revealed a significant difference in the factors responsible for drug abuse among students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State based on age. This implies that the factors responsible for drug abuse vary significantly across different age groups. This finding contradicts Adebayo and Ojo (2023), who reported that age did not significantly influence the socio-demographic causes of drug abuse among in-school adolescents in Lagos State. The reason for this finding might be that students at different stages of adulthood encounter distinct developmental tasks, social expectations, and life challenges that influence their vulnerability to drug abuse. Younger students (18–25 years) are often more susceptible to peer pressure, social experimentation, and the desire for acceptance within the campus environment, whereas students aged 26–32 years are more likely to experience academic stress, financial hardship, and career uncertainty, which may increase their tendency to abuse drugs as a coping mechanism. Students aged 33 years and above are generally less involved in drug abuse because of greater maturity, stronger personal responsibility, and increased awareness of the consequences of drug use acquired through life experience. The finding is supported by Developmental Theory (Erikson, 1968), which explains that behaviour changes across the lifespan as individuals mature, with younger individuals being more prone to experimentation and risk-taking, whereas older individuals exhibit greater self-regulation. It is also supported by Stress-Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which posits that individuals may resort to drug abuse when they adopt maladaptive coping strategies in response to academic, financial, and psychological stress. The finding therefore indicates that age plays a significant role in shaping students'

vulnerability to drug abuse within the Nigerian tertiary education environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that poor academic performance, examination anxiety, and low self-esteem were the major factors responsible for drug abuse among students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State. The findings further revealed significant gender differences, with male students being more influenced by peer pressure and risk-taking behaviours, while female students were more likely to use drugs as a coping mechanism for emotional distress. Significant age differences were also observed, indicating that younger students (18–25 years) were more susceptible to peer influence and social acceptance, whereas students aged 26–32 years were more affected by academic and financial stress, with those aged 33 years and above being the least involved in drug abuse. These findings indicate that drug abuse among students is influenced by a combination of academic, psychological, social, and demographic factors that require comprehensive and evidence-based interventions.

The results imply that guidance counsellors and other mental health professionals should prioritize interventions that address the specific factors responsible for drug abuse among students. Since poor academic performance and examination anxiety were identified as major contributing factors, counselling programmes should emphasize academic counselling, study skills development, stress management, and examination anxiety reduction strategies. The finding on low self-esteem underscores the need for interventions that promote positive self-concept, resilience, emotional regulation, and healthy coping skills. Furthermore, the significant gender and age differences indicate that counselling services should adopt gender-responsive and age-sensitive approaches to ensure that prevention and intervention programmes effectively address the unique needs and experiences of different groups of students. These findings also highlight the importance of collaboration among counsellors, lecturers, parents, healthcare professionals, and education stakeholders in promoting students' mental health and preventing drug abuse within tertiary institutions.

Based on these findings, the management of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic should strengthen counselling services by employing qualified counsellors to provide academic counselling, self-esteem enhancement programmes, and examination anxiety management interventions for students. Regular drug abuse education and awareness programmes should be organized to equip students with accurate information about the consequences of drug abuse and encourage healthy coping strategies. The institution should also organize periodic training for lecturers, level advisers, faculty members, and

non-academic staff to enable them to identify students at risk of drug abuse and make timely referrals for professional counselling. In addition, teacher counsellors should implement gender-responsive and age-sensitive prevention and intervention programmes that address the distinct factors influencing drug abuse among male and female students as well as among different age groups. Collaboration between the institution, parents, healthcare providers, relevant government agencies, and non-governmental organizations should also be strengthened to support sustainable drug abuse prevention initiatives and improve students' overall wellbeing.

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