

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AS CORRELATE OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOURS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study examined the correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State. It also assessed the influence of gender, age, school type, and class type on students' delinquent behaviors. A correlational survey research design was adopted, guided by two research questions and five null hypotheses. The study population comprised 403 secondary school students, selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Substance Abuse and Delinquent Behaviours Questionnaire (PISADBQ). Descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including percentage, mean, rank order, t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were used for data analysis, with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 significance level. Findings indicated a low level of substance abuse and delinquent behavior among respondents. However, a significant correlation was found between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors. Additionally, significant differences in delinquent behaviors were observed based on gender, age, and school type. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school authorities reinforce efforts to discourage substance abuse and delinquent behavior among students. Furthermore, counselors should develop age-appropriate intervention programs to prevent substance abuse and mitigate its potential influence on delinquent behaviors.*

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**Keywords:** Substance, abuse, delinquent, behaviour, student

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### Introduction

Delinquent behaviours encompass a broad spectrum of actions that deviate from societal norms or legal standards which often result in negative consequences for individuals and communities. Delinquent behaviours, spanning a wide range of actions, represent deviations from accepted societal norms or legal standards, often leading to adverse outcomes for both individuals and the broader community (Ajiboye, 2021). Delinquent behaviours, such as truancy, vandalism, theft, violence, substance abuse, gang involvement, and sexual misconduct among others, are increasingly reported among secondary school students in Kwara State (Olumide, 2021). These behaviours not only disrupt the educational process but also pose a threat to the safety and well-being of students and the broader community. Delinquency during secondary school years can have long-term consequences, including reduced educational attainment, limited employment opportunities, and increased risk of criminal behaviour in adulthood (Olawale & Adekunle, 2020). Delinquent behaviour is a disruptive act characterized by covert and overt hostility and intentional aggression toward others. Ajokpaniovo and Awoyemi (2021) described overt delinquent behavior as involving aggressive actions against siblings, peers, parents, teachers, or other adults, such as verbal abuse, bullying, and hitting, while covert delinquent behavior includes aggressive actions against property, such as theft, vandalism, and fire-setting. In early childhood, covert delinquent behaviors may include non-compliance, sneaking, lying, or secretly destroying another's property. Delinquent behavior manifests in various forms, including drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, cultism, examination malpractice, stealing, truancy, bullying, cheating, lying, rape, smoking, cybercrime, and high-risk activities involving self and others. Ajokpaniovo and Awoyemi (2021) further noted that delinquent behavior becomes evident when an individual struggles to adhere to the norms or standards of behavior within their social environment, such as home or school.

As students progress through adolescence, the nature and frequency of delinquent behaviors may change. Olumide (2021) observed that younger secondary school students, typically around 13 to 16 years old, may engage in less severe forms of delinquency, such as truancy or minor vandalism. However, as they grow older, particularly from 17 years and above, more serious delinquent behaviors, such as theft and physical violence, may emerge. This progression is often linked to increasing autonomy, exposure to more diverse peer groups, and experimentation with adult behaviors. Among the key determinants of delinquent behavior is the type of school students attend, whether public or private. The school environment, availability of resources, and social dynamics significantly influence student behavior. Schools facing challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and inadequate supervision may inadvertently create conditions that foster delinquent behaviors among students. Bello (2021) noted that students might engage in delinquent acts as a means of coping with stress and frustration caused by these challenges. Similarly, Ojo (2021) emphasized that delinquent behaviors, such as substance abuse, could be mitigated in schools with sufficient resources and structured support systems. Agubosi, Smith, Johnson, and Kalu (2022) further argued that social pressures related to maintaining status, seeking validation, and conforming to peer group norms (Olawale & Adekunle, 2020) could push students toward delinquent behavior.

Importantly, beyond the school environment, community social dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping student behavior. Ajiboye (2021) observed that students often emulate their peers to gain social acceptance. When behaviors such as substance use become normalized within a community, students may perceive them as acceptable and subsequently engage in them. This normalization can lead to increased substance use and abuse among students in such communities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), substances refer to psychoactive compounds, including legal drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription medications, as well as illegal drugs like cocaine and heroin. Volkow, Koob, and McLellan (2016) explained that substances affect the mind and body when ingested, inhaled, or injected, altering mood, cognition, and behavior. Prolonged substance abuse often leads to dependence, where the brain and body become reliant on the substance, resulting in harmful physical, psychological, and social consequences. The negative consequences of substance abuse are well-documented. Agubosi (2022), Ojo (2021), and Bello (2021) identified poor decision-making, vandalism, truancy, theft, violence, increased school dropout rates, and limited future opportunities as some of the detrimental effects of substance abuse among students. Secondary school students, who are mostly adolescents, are particularly vulnerable to substance abuse due to their tendency toward experimentation and limited awareness of the long-term consequences of substance use. Kelly and Yeterian (2018) noted that many adolescents engage in substance use without fully understanding its impact, making them more susceptible to delinquent behaviors that can negatively affect their academic and social development.

Substance abuse among secondary school students has become a significant public health and social concern, with strong links to various delinquent behaviors such as truancy, violence, theft, vandalism, and academic underperformance. Several factors, including peer pressure, family background, socio-economic status, and school environment, contribute to students' involvement in substance abuse and delinquency. Additionally, early exposure to drugs and alcohol increases the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities later in life. In Nigeria, research has primarily focused on the prevalence and causes of substance abuse among adolescents. Some studies have explored the effectiveness of school-based interventions and parental guidance in curbing substance use and delinquent behaviors. However, despite these efforts, there remains a gap in understanding the specific correlation between substance abuse and various forms of delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State. Many existing studies have examined substance abuse or delinquency in isolation, without adequately linking the two variables to determine their interdependence and causative patterns.

Moreover, the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, school type, and class type on the relationship between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors remains underexplored in the context of Kwara State. There is also limited empirical evidence on how different school environments whether public or private shape students' susceptibility to substance use and engagement in delinquent acts. Given the rising concerns over student misconduct and substance abuse in Nigerian secondary schools, it is imperative to examine how these factors interact to inform more effective intervention strategies. Hence, this study, therefore, seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating the correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State. It will also examine the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, school type, and class type on students' involvement in delinquent behaviors. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to contribute to the development of targeted intervention programs for reducing substance abuse and delinquency among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State and across Nigeria have become a growing concern. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in behaviors such as truancy, vandalism, theft, and violence among students, which disrupt the learning environment and pose significant threats to the safety and well-being of students, school personnel, and the wider community. Left unchecked, these behaviors could escalate, leading to long-term academic failure, criminal tendencies, and social instability. Ideally, secondary school students should exhibit positive behavior, engage in productive academic activities, and maintain discipline within the school environment. Schools should be places of learning, character development, and preparation for responsible adulthood. However, the reality in many schools in Kwara State suggests otherwise, as delinquent behaviors continue to rise, often linked to substance abuse. Several factors, including peer influence, family background, and socio-economic conditions, contribute to delinquency among students. One of the most pressing concerns is whether substance abuse plays a significant role in exacerbating these behaviors. Despite various efforts by schools, parents, and policymakers to curb delinquent behaviors, substance abuse remains prevalent among secondary school students. The accessibility of drugs and other substances, coupled with inadequate supervision, has further fueled this challenge. There is, however, a need for empirical evidence to establish the correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State. However, this study, therefore, seeks to investigate whether substance abuse is a significant correlate of delinquent behaviors among secondary school students. Additionally, it will examine the influence of age, gender, school type, and class type on delinquent behaviors. The findings from this study will provide valuable insights that can inform policies, school-based interventions, and counseling strategies aimed at reducing both substance abuse and delinquency among secondary school students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was examined the correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviors among secondary school students in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the level of substance abuse among secondary school students in Kwara State?
2. examine the delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State?

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the level of substance abuse among secondary school students in Kwara State?
2. What are the delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between substance abuse and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State
- Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on school type.
- Ho<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara state based on class type.

### **Methods**

The research design employed for the study is a correlation survey research design. The population comprised secondary school students in Kwara State. The target population consisted of selected secondary school students from the 16 selected secondary schools across the seven (7) local government areas randomly selected from the three senatorial districts. The sample for this study was 403 selected through multistage sampling procedure. **Stage 1:** a proportional sampling technique was used to select seven (7) Local Government Areas (LGAs) from Kwara State's three (3) senatorial districts - Kwara South, Kwara North, and Kwara Central in the ratio of 3:2:2, respectively. **Stage 2:** proportional sampling technique was also employed to select secondary schools that participated in the ratio of 2:2:3. In Kwara South, two secondary schools were selected from each of the three chosen LGAs making it 6 schools. In Kwara North, two secondary schools were selected from each of the two chosen LGAs, making it 4 schools. However, in Kwara Central, three secondary schools were selected from each of the two chosen LGAs making it 6 schools due to the greater number of senior secondary school students in this area. **Stage 3:** simple random sampling techniques were used to select twenty-three respondents from each of the schools in the three selected LGAs in Kwara South, in Kwara North twenty-three respondents were selected from each of the two (2) chosen schools and in Kwara Central, thirty respondents were selected from each of the schools in the two (2) chosen LGAs. The total number of respondents selected through simple random sampling technique was 403 (total sample of the study). The instrument used in collecting data was developed by the researchers and is titled "Substance Abuse and Delinquent Behaviours Questionnaire (SADBQ)". The instrument has three sections, A, B and C. Section A contains demographic data on gender, age and school type. Section B contained 10 items on substance abuse while Section C contained 10 items on delinquent behaviour. Four-point Likert-type rating format was used for sections B and C thus: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Three experts in test measurement validated the instrument. The test-retest technique was employed to determine the reliability of the instrument by administering twenty copies of the questionnaire twice, at four-week intervals, to twenty secondary school students who were not part of the study sample. Scores generated in the two administrations were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Procedure (PPMC). The coefficient of 0.78 and 0.82 were obtained for substance abuse and delinquent behaviour respectively. The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researchers and were retrieved on the spot. Sections 'B' and 'C' which consisted of 10 items each on substance abuse and delinquent behaviour were scored based on Four Point Likert-type rating scale of, Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The mean of the points was obtained by finding the average of the points thus;  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50$ . The 2.50 is the benchmark. The decision is, that if the aggregate mean in section B is below 2.50 the respondents have a low level of substance abuse and if the mean score of items in section C is below 2.50, it indicates low delinquent behaviour. The data obtained were analyzed using mean, rank order, Pearson Product Moment Correlation

(PPMC), t-test and analysis of variance. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Research Question One:** What is the level of substance abuse among secondary school students in Kwara State?

**Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Rank Order Analysis on the Respondents' Level of Substance Abuse**

SN	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Never consumed any form of alcoholic beverage	3.37	0.83	1st
2	Never experimented with recreational drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, loud)	3.34	0.82	2nd
10	Feels pressured by peers to engage in substance use	2.17	1.09	3rd
4	Never felt dependent on substances to function in daily life	2.16	1.27	4th
5	Abuses prescription substances	2.14	1.13	5th
3	Sought help to address substance abuse issues	2.10	1.11	6th
6	Abuses more than one substance at a time	2.07	1.15	7th
8	Experienced negative consequences (e.g., academic decline, health issues) due to substance abuse	2.04	1.15	8th
7	Believes that using substances enhances social status among peers	1.89	1.27	9th
9	Uses substances (e.g., alcohol, drugs) to cope with stress or anxiety	1.82	1.27	10th
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>2.31</b>	1.11	

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and rank order analysis of the respondents' level of substance abuse. The aggregate mean score of 2.31 falls below the 2.50 decision threshold, indicating a low prevalence of substance abuse among secondary school students in Kwara State. The standard deviation of 1.11 suggests a moderate level of variability, implying differences in substance use behaviors among students. The highest-ranked items suggest that the majority of respondents have not engaged in alcohol consumption (Mean = 3.37, SD = 0.83) or recreational drug use (Mean = 3.34, SD = 0.82). Conversely, lower-ranked items, such as using substances to cope with stress (Mean = 1.82, SD = 1.27) and believing substance use enhances social status (Mean = 1.89, SD = 1.27), exhibit higher variability, suggesting that while substance abuse is generally low, some students may be influenced by psychological and social factors. In general, the findings indicate that substance abuse is not widespread among secondary school students in Kwara State, but targeted intervention programs addressing peer pressure, mental health, and coping mechanisms are necessary to prevent potential future increases in substance abuse.

**Research Question Two:** What are the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State?

**Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Rank Order Analysis on the Respondents' Delinquent Behaviour**

SN	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Faced punishment for actions at school	1.81	1.03	1st
2	Been involved in gang-related activities at school	1.53	0.93	2nd
3	Been involved in physical fights with other students	1.52	0.84	3rd
4	Cheated in tests	1.41	0.71	4th
5	Engaged in acts of truancy	1.40	0.76	5th
6	Been involved in vandalizing school property	1.30	0.60	6th
7	Been caught stealing from classmates	1.26	0.56	7th
8	Engaged in bullying other students	1.23	0.58	8th
9	Used or sold illegal substances (e.g., drugs, alcohol) on school grounds	1.22	0.57	9th
10	Been suspended from school due to disciplinary reasons	1.07	0.26	10th
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>1.38</b>	0.69	



Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation, and rank order analysis of the respondents' delinquent behaviours. The aggregate mean score of 1.38 is significantly lower than the 2.50 benchmark, indicating a low prevalence of delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State. The standard deviation of 0.69 suggests a relatively low level of variability, implying that delinquent behaviours are generally uncommon across respondents. The highest-ranked item, "faced punishment for actions at school" (Mean = 1.81, SD = 1.03), suggests that disciplinary measures are occasionally experienced by some students. Similarly, gang-related activities (Mean = 1.53, SD = 0.93) and physical fights (Mean = 1.52, SD = 0.84) are slightly more common compared to other forms of delinquency. Lower-ranked items such as "been suspended from school due to disciplinary reasons" (Mean = 1.07, SD = 0.26) and "used or sold illegal substances on school grounds" (Mean = 1.22, SD = 0.57) indicate that serious delinquent behaviours are rare among the respondents. Largely, the findings suggest that delinquent behaviour is not prevalent among secondary school students in Kwara State, but measures such as continuous behavioral monitoring, student mentorship programs, and school-based counseling interventions are essential to maintain discipline and prevent the escalation of delinquent activities.

### **Hypotheses**

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between substance abuse and delinquent behaviour of secondary school students in Kwara State

**Table 3: Pearson 'r' Showing Relationship between Respondents' Substance Abuse and Delinquent Behaviour**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Cal. r-value	p. value
Substance abuse	403	25.68	7.93	.233*	.000
Delinquent Behaviour	403	13.76	4.20		

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value of .233 with a correspondence p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected, this implies that the low level of substance abuse significantly correlated with the low level of delinquent behaviours of the participants.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students based on gender

**Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing differences in delinquent behaviours of the respondents**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	182	14.87	4.604	401	4.95*	1.96	.000
Female	221	12.85	3.610				

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 4.95 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with a corresponding p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in Respondents' Delinquent Behaviour Based on Age**

Source	SS	Df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	107.277	2	53.638	3.06*	3.00	.048
Within Groups	7005.855	400	17.515			
Total	7113.132	402				

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the calculated F-ratio of 3.06 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .048 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age. To ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc was carried out and the output is shown in Table 11.

**Table 6: Scheffe post-hoc where the significant difference lies based on Age**

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
below 15 years	119	12.97	
15-18 years	267	13.71	
19 years and above	17		15.12
Sig.		.456	1.000

Table 6 shows that respondents who were below 15 years of age and those between 15-18 years have mean scores of 12.97 and 13.71 (in subset 1) respectively, while those who were 19 years of age and above have the highest mean score of 15.12 (in subset 2), thus contributed to the significant difference.

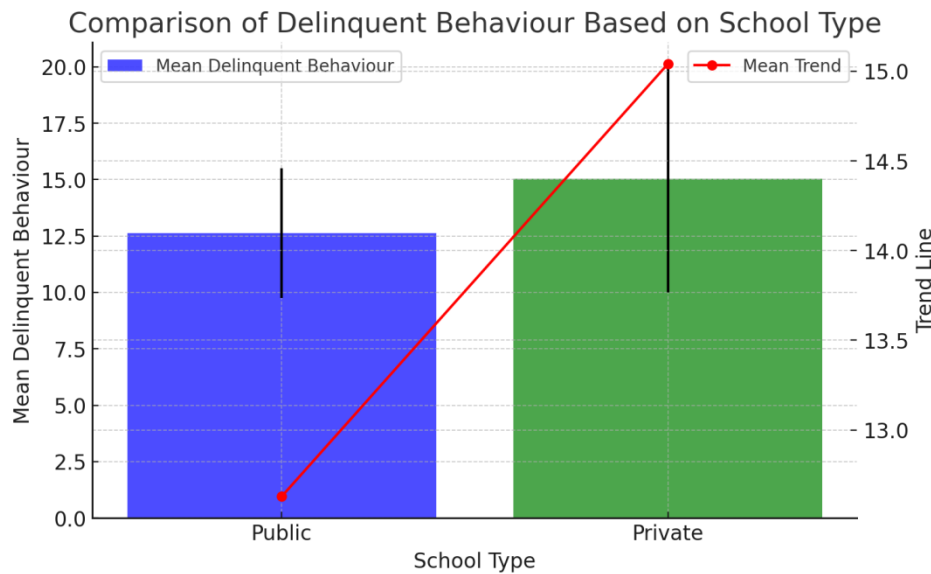
**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on school type

**Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing difference in the Respondents' Delinquent Behaviour Based on School Type**

School	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Public	214	12.63	2.871	401	5.98*	1.96	.000
Private	189	15.04	5.039				

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows that the calculated t-value of 5.98 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with a corresponding p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on school type.



**Figure 1:** The combo chart above visually represents the significant difference in delinquent behaviors between public and private school students in Kwara State. The bar chart displays the mean delinquent behavior scores, with public school students having a lower mean (12.63) compared to private school students (15.04). The error bars indicate the standard deviation, showing higher variability among private school students. The red trend line reinforces the difference, aligning with the statistical analysis, which found a significant t-value (5.98,  $p < 0.05$ ), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

## Discussions

The findings of the study revealed that secondary school students in Kwara State exhibit low levels of substance abuse, as indicated by an aggregate mean below the benchmark. This suggests that most students do not engage in substance use, reflecting effective school policies and awareness programs against drug abuse. The findings are in consonance with the study of Wechsler et al. (2016), who posited that schools with strict substance abuse policies and strong student support systems tend to record lower levels of substance use among students. Similarly, Schulenberg et al. (2020) found that the misuse of prescription medications and recreational drugs had not significantly increased among in-school adolescents, attributing this trend to early intervention strategies and preventive measures in schools.

The findings of the study revealed that secondary school students in Kwara State exhibit low levels of delinquent behaviour, as all mean scores were below the benchmark. This suggests that students generally adhere to school rules and social norms, reducing the prevalence of misconduct such as fighting, vandalism, truancy, and cheating. The findings are in consonance with the study of Nwakpa (2019), who posited that schools with well-structured disciplinary measures and guidance and counseling services experience lower levels of student delinquency. In a related study, Adebayo and Yusuf (2021) found that schools with active student engagement programs and strict anti-bullying policies reported significantly fewer cases of delinquent behaviour, including truancy, physical aggression, and vandalism.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State. This suggests that students who engage in lower levels of substance abuse are less likely to participate in delinquent activities. The findings are in consonance with the study of Lee et al. (2020), who posited that adolescents with lower susceptibility to substance use demonstrate significantly reduced rates of delinquent behaviours. Similarly, Martinez-Loredo et al. (2019) found that students who are less influenced by peer pressure and substance abuse tendencies are significantly less likely to engage in delinquency-related activities.



The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in delinquent behaviours between male and female secondary school students in Kwara State, with males exhibiting higher tendencies for delinquency than females. This suggests that gender plays a crucial role in influencing student behaviour, with male students engaging in more aggressive and risk-taking activities. The findings are in consonance with the study of McHugh et al. (2019), who posited that male students are more likely to engage in physical altercations, vandalism, and gang-related activities compared to their female counterparts. Supporting this finding, Wong and Chen (2021) found that boys exhibit a higher likelihood of delinquent behaviour due to peer influence, social expectations, and risk-taking tendencies compared to girls, who are generally more compliant with school rules.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students based on age, with students aged nineteen years and above exhibiting higher delinquency rates. This suggests that as students progress through secondary education, their engagement in delinquent behaviours may increase due to greater independence and exposure to external influences. The findings are in consonance with the study of Racz and McMahon (2019), who posited that older adolescents, particularly those in their late teens, are more prone to engaging in delinquent acts due to reduced parental supervision and increased peer influence. Similarly, Ttofi and Farrington (2016) found that student involvement in bullying and other forms of delinquency significantly varied across different age groups, with older students demonstrating higher participation rates in rule-breaking activities.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State based on school type, suggesting that students in private schools are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviours compared to those in public schools. This may be attributed to differences in school climate, disciplinary policies, and parental supervision. The findings are in consonance with the study of Gibbons and Silva (2018), who posited that students in private schools report lower levels of delinquent behaviours due to stricter disciplinary measures and a more controlled learning environment. Supporting this, Bryk and Schneider (2019) found that positive school climates and structured school environments in private institutions contribute to lower rates of student misconduct compared to public schools. On the whole, the findings of this study indicate that substance abuse and delinquent behaviours are at low levels among secondary school students in Kwara State. Additionally, significant differences exist in delinquent behaviours based on gender, age, and school type, emphasizing the need for continued policy enforcement, student support programs, and parental involvement to maintain and further reduce delinquency among secondary school students.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study have several implications for education, particularly in promoting a disciplined and substance-free learning environment among secondary school students. The low levels of substance abuse and delinquent behaviours suggest that existing school policies and interventions are effective, but continuous reinforcement through awareness campaigns, peer mentoring, and parental involvement is necessary. The significant differences in delinquent behaviours based on gender, age, and school type highlight the need for tailored interventions. Schools should implement gender-sensitive counseling programs, age-specific behavioural management strategies, and policies that address the unique challenges faced by students in both public and private schools. Additionally, since substance abuse correlates with delinquent behaviour, schools should strengthen drug education programs, incorporate substance abuse awareness into the curriculum, and collaborate with relevant agencies to provide support services for at-risk students. Strengthening student discipline policies and ensuring strict enforcement can further reduce behavioural misconduct. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of guidance and counseling units in schools, as well as the role of teachers in modeling positive behaviour. School administrators should prioritize professional development

for teachers on classroom management techniques that discourage delinquency while promoting student engagement and responsibility. Generally, the study reinforces the need for a holistic approach to student discipline, combining school policies, community involvement, and parental guidance to foster a safe and conducive learning environment.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study provides empirical evidence on the correlation between substance abuse and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings highlight low levels of both behaviours, suggesting the effectiveness of school policies and community interventions in curbing student misconduct. Significant differences in delinquent behaviours based on gender, age, and school type emphasize the need for targeted interventions, such as gender-specific counseling, age-appropriate behaviour management, and school-based discipline strategies. The study reinforces social learning theories by confirming the link between reduced substance use and lower delinquency. Additionally, the findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and school administrators on evidence-based strategies to enhance student discipline and create safer learning environments. By providing region-specific data, this study enriches the discourse on youth behavioural patterns in Nigeria and serves as a foundation for future research on school discipline and adolescent development.

### **Conclusion**

It was discovered that secondary school students in Kwara State have low level of substance abuse and low level of delinquent behaviour. This indicated that there was relationship between substance abuse and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State. In addition, there was no significant difference in the delinquent behaviours of secondary school students in Kwara State based on class type but significant differences were found based on gender, age and school type.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. School authorities should continue to encourage students to shun substance use and abuse through sensitisation and counselling.
2. Schools should continue to organize awareness campaigns focused on the dangers of substance abuse.
3. School counsellors should tailor interventions to be age-appropriate, so that all ages will benefit from the interventions in order to reduce deviant behaviours in schools.

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