



# SUBSTANCE USE IN THE HOME AS PREDICTOR OF AGGRESSION AND DRUG ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*Substance use in the home is an issue that has impacted society in a variety of ways. There are parents who abuse various types of substances like opioids, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and tobacco. These drugs have very devastating effects on family members. Children who are raised in homes where one or both parents' abuse drugs are often introduced to drugs and eventually become dependent on them later in life. Many of these children are neglected and poorly trained because their parents lack the physical resources and moral capacity to enforce discipline. Children who live in homes where substances are used go on to become aggressive and dependent on drugs. This study included a sample of 800 secondary students in Rivers State. This correlational study measured Substance use in the home using the Substance Use in the Home Scale (SUHS), aggression using the Behaviour Problems Checklist (BPC), and drug abuse using the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10). The data was analysed using linear and multiple regression. The outcomes of the study revealed that substance use in the home significantly predicts aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State. It is recommended that parents be taught about the impact their use of substances in the home has on their children and be helped to be rehabilitated. Also, children who have anger problems and aggression should be taught anger management. Adolescents who have been identified as being dependent on substances need to be retrained and restored.*

**KEYWORDS:** Substance use, home, aggression, drug abuse.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Thatcher (2020) describes substance use in the home as the deliberate abuse of mood-altering substances like tobacco, alcohol, and prescription medication by parents for the sole aim of evading or running away from one's emotional or physical challenges. Substance use is not limited to the indiscriminate consumption of illicit drugs alone; it also takes place with the use of prescription medication. When a patient is administered a medicine, takes it for a longer period than prescribed, and cannot do without the drug, it has become an addiction.

According to the NSPCC (2021), parental drug dependency is the long-term misuse of psychoactive substances and alcohol by a parent. In many instances, for something to be an addiction, it must affect the individual's day-to-day normal functioning. They are not able to stay without using drugs and alcohol. These parents very frequently consume high amounts of alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, or even prescription medicines. The use of these substances and possible intoxication may interfere with their work and their capacity to work effectively, as well as their productivity at home and in the workplace.

Marijuana is the most commonly available and frequently used illegal drug in the world. Many people grow it in their homes in



pots or in their gardens, trade it, distribute it, and consume it. It is mostly used by young people (Cooper, 2014). Parents use them as well because it is one of the substances that is easily accessible to them.

Tobacco and alcohol dependency, as well, constitute one of the most common forms of substance dependency (Hall, 2014). Similarly, Adamson et al. (2010) posit that the substances that most parents are addicted to in Nigeria are alcohol, cannabis, sedatives, and tobacco. According to a 2012 UNODC report, about 30% of people worldwide have misused tobacco at some point in their lives. Also, about 230 million people, which makes up about 5% of the world's population aged 15–16, consumed mind-altering substances illegally.

Oyieno (2018) states that in many homes that have parents who smoke cigarettes, there is the challenge of smoke inhalation, which can serve as a health menace to the children involved. Parents who smoke marijuana or cannabis become secondary smokers of the product, and this may impair their physical and psychological functioning.

According to the UNODC (2018), Parents who are given to using drugs and alcohol are not likely to excel in carrying out their parental responsibilities as expected, and this is due to the physical and mental impairment that the parent experiences as a result of being under the influence of substances and alcohol. In addition, such parents are known for frivolously spending the scarce resources of the family on mental stimulants and alcohol instead of family upkeep.

According to information from around the world, about 20% of people who have substance use disorders are parents who take care of young children (Chrzan-Detkos & Walczak, 2017). The kind of parents that exist at this age are more versed in the use and abuse of substances than those before them. Many of them use these substances as a way of coping with the challenges of making a living and training children at the same time.

According to Thakur and Grewal (2021), aggression is when people assault or cause harm to themselves or others. When acts of aggression occur, they are done with the intent to cause hurt and pain to the other party involved. It is not a mistake or something that happens without planning. Aggression as a term is one that many have taken to be mostly physical in nature and have impacts that are visible to the human eye, but this is not so.

Aggression takes many forms, such as Physical, verbal, and emotional. When aggression is done physically, the one who carries out the brutality often picks out the victim and unleashes beatings on him. This can take forms such as slapping, pinching, biting, choking, gang beating, pulling, and threats to do the aforementioned. Sometimes, the manifestation of the acts of aggression may not be seen with the eyes in the form of bruises, black eyes, or broken bones but may take other forms such as

withdrawal, anxiety, or depression, as in the case of verbal or emotional aggression.

Such individuals may manifest such behaviours as lying and deception, running away from home, violent outbursts at people and animals, and destruction of objects within reach and other property. It manifests in an emotionally charged and unpleasant relationship with one's peers, challenges with interacting with others, and poor academic attainment (Frick, 2016). In other instances, aggression has caused children to have rounds of fights with schoolmates, and infractions of school rules have led them to be suspended, placed in detention, or eventually expelled. When students are being picked on repeatedly by another student, they may one day decide to teach the student a lesson, so they stop picking on them, and this eventually leads to them breaking school rules (Frick, 2012).

Aggression in childhood, if left unmanaged, predicts challenges much later in adolescence and adulthood. Such dilemmas include drug dependency, school challenges like truancy, poor academic attainment, and dropping out. It will lead to challenges in handling social situations and relationships like marriage and friendship. Further, it will impact the individual negatively in the workplace in the form of decreased work performance and unemployment (Canino et al., 2010). Severe hostility has been known to lead to mental and psychiatric disorders, thoughts of suicide, problems with law enforcement, jail time, and premature death (Breslau et al., 2012). When a person has been involved in several incidents of violent outbursts, it will lead them to develop a negative reputation, which may affect their chances of turning over a new leaf even if they wanted to. This can lead to depression and the individual's thoughts of taking their lives. Continued assault, especially involving sharp objects and weapons, will lead the individuals to imprisonment and instant death.

Denson et al. (2011) state that some elements predispose children and adolescents to cruel outbursts that constitute aggression. These elements involve the child nursing thoughts that are brutal in nature, especially against someone they don't like or who hurt them, especially thoughts of vengeance. These thoughts, when they occur frequently, inhibit the individual's capacity to control their impulses. Children who constantly think about fighting others or picking a fight with others, especially to deal with a person who has treated them poorly, lead to eventual berserk behaviour. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2012), alcohol is the most abused substance by adolescents. This is because alcohol is a drug that is easily available to young people. Cannabis, mixtures, and prescription drugs are closely behind this.

According to Kann et al. (2016), some young people within the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades were surveyed in the Youth Risk Behaviour Study in 2015. The outcomes of the study revealed that 32.8% of the young people who took part in the study had used alcohol, and about 10.8% of them had smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days.



E-cigarettes and vaping are more common among adolescents because of their covert nature. Similarly, Johnston et al. (2018) stated that within the same population, one in five adolescents had used marijuana. A considerable increase in marijuana use was recorded in 2017 because the adolescents had used marijuana and no longer viewed the substance as harmful or capable of causing any serious health condition that could not be managed. Substance use gets worse as young people get older; they get more adventurous with the substance, and their bodies have gotten used to the dopamine releases they get when the substance has been ingested into their bodies. Hence, they have to use higher quantities of these substances in order to feel the euphoria that they are used to and crave.

According to Kulak and Griswold (2019), the greatest indicator of substance use by young people is having parents who use substances. When young people see their parents' using substances, it sends a message to them that this is acceptable behaviour. In some cases, parents offer their children alcohol to have a sip, especially their male children, who get to try this at this young age. As well, watching their favourite celebrities use and abuse psychoactive materials sends an endorsement of that lifestyle to the youngster, so they are inclined to try it out for themselves. When children are doing poorly in their academics or undergoing victimisation as a result of intimidating or pugnacious acts, they are more likely to use substances (Sonuga-Barke & Halperin, 2010). This is partly due to the fact that they have parents who do not have time to listen to and interact with them, or parents who will insist that they go on to retaliate against such acts to prove they are equally strong. Hence, they turn to substances as a companion and a means of escape, albeit temporarily, from the existing challenge. This is because they lack the requisite skills necessary to deal with and effectively manage such challenges (Sonuga-Barke & Halperin, 2010). They use these substances because they want to excel in every area. Some see their friends use opioids before athletic games and then decide to stay on top of things. Many use the substances because of the thrill that comes with experimenting and conquering new territories.

There are some mixtures being created as substances out of common foods. An example of this is a mixture of TomTom, a candy whose major ingredient is menthol, and LaCasera, which is an apple-flavoured soda drink. Young people would typically put some TomTom bars in the LaCasera drink and allow them to dissolve to form a syrup. This mixture is popularly referred to as "Laca Tom Tom.". The effect of this is similar to taking dopamine-inducing illicit substances, and the users report experiencing extra bursts of zest. It is also a cheaper substance than cocaine and other commonly abused substances. In addition, there has been a widespread trend of people, both male and female, going to sewage points within their neighbourhood and inhaling dangerous gases that are emitted therein. This produces an intoxicating effect on those who inhale it. Other inhalants that are used are fuel and otherwise harmful gases (Eti, 2023).

When substances are used by young people, it puts them at risk for high mortality, fighting, suspension and expulsion from school, low performance in school, brain damage, organ damage or breakdown, somatic illnesses and affective disorders like depression, engaging in criminal behaviour, and engaging in impulsive sexual activity. The recurring nature of the use of mind-changing substances by parents in the home and the resultant effects on the children watching and imitating their behaviours and becoming belligerent as well as being dependent on the substances are what motivated this study to be initiated and carried out.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate substance use in the home as a predictor of aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Investigate to what extent substance use in the home jointly predicts drug abuse and PTSD among secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. Find out to what extent substance use in the home predicts aggression among secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. Identify to what extent substance use in the home predicts drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.

## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does substance use in the home jointly predict aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does substance use in the home predict aggression among secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does substance use in the home predict drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance and were formulated to guide this study:

1. Substance use in the home does not significantly predict aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. Substance use in the home does not significantly predict aggression among secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. Substance use in the home does not significantly predict drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational study that is used to determine and establish possible relationships between variables in this study, which are substance use in the home, aggression, and drug abuse. This study was conducted in Rivers State, in the South-South geopolitical area of Nigeria.

### 4 SAMPLING DESIGN

A sample size of 800 secondary school students was used for this study. The participants in this study were both male and female, from junior high to Senior secondary. The sample size was derived through a multi-stage process. The Substance Use in the Home Scale (SUHS) was used to measure substance use in the home. It is a 10-item self-report measure that seeks to measure

constructs such as substance use. There is also an option for stating what kinds of substances were abused and by who (father or mother). While the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10) was adapted and used to measure drug abuse in students. The instrument was administered directly with the assistance of the class teachers and research assistants.

### 5. STATISTICAL DESIGN

A total of 800 questionnaires were distributed to the students. Of the 800 questionnaires that were distributed to the secondary school students, 783 copies were retrieved after they were completed. Simple linear regression and multiple regression were used to analyse the data generated from the research instruments.

### 6. RESULTS

**Hypothesis one:** Substance use in the home does not significantly predict aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Table 1: summary of multiple Regression Analysis on the extent to which Substance use in the home predicts aggression and drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Unstandardised Error				
	0.933	0.871	0.870	2.656	1.001			
Model		Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	f	α	sig	remarks
ANOVA								
1	Regression	7033.615	1	7033.615	13.119	0.005	0.00 <sup>b</sup>	rejected
	Residual	5497.241	782	170.571				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42530.856</b>	<b>783</b>					

From the analysis of variance in Table 1, R = 0.933 and R<sup>2</sup> = 0.871. Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.870, while the unstandardized B = 1.001. From the regression square (R<sup>2</sup>) value, it is evident that substance use in the home explains only about 0.87% of the variance of aggression and drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The unstandardized B value also indicates that for every one unit increase or decrease in values for substance use in the home, there is a corresponding 1.001 unit increase or decrease in aggression and drug abuse among the

students. The analysis of variance associated with the regression also reveals the sum of squares for the regression and residual to be 37033.615 and 5497.241, respectively. The mean squares were 9258.404 and 70.571, respectively. F = 13.119, and the sig value = 0.00. Since the calculated F (p = 0.000.05) is less than 0.05 alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the predicting variable, substance use in the home, significantly predicts aggression and drug abuse.

**Hypothesis Two:** Substance use in the home does not significantly predict aggression among secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Summary of analysis of linear regression on the extent to which substance use in the home predicts aggression among secondary school students in Rivers State**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Unstandardised Error				
	0.873	0.762	0.749	4.779	2.139			
Model		Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	f	α	sig	remarks
ANOVA								
1	Regression	523.110	1	523.110	4.695	0.005	0.00 <sup>b</sup>	rejected
	Residual	42007.746	782	176.47				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42530.856</b>	<b>783</b>					

From the analysis of variance in Table 2, R = 0.873 and R<sup>2</sup> = 0.762. Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.749, while the unstandardized B = 2.139.

From the regression square (R<sup>2</sup>) value, it is evident that substance use in the home explains only about 0.76% of the variance of



aggression among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The unstandardized B value also indicates that for every one unit increase or decrease in values for substance use in the home, there is a corresponding 2.139 increase or decrease in aggression among the students. The analysis of variance associated with the regression also reveals the sum of squares for

the regression and residual to be 523.110 and 42007.746, respectively. The mean squares were 523.110 and 176.470, respectively.  $F = 4.695$ , and the sig value is 0.00. Since the calculated  $F$  ( $p = 0.000.05$ ) is less than 0.05 alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the predicting variable, substance use in the home, significantly predicts aggression.

**Hypothesis Three:** Substance use in the home does not significantly predict drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Summary of analysis of linear regression on the extent to which substance use in the home predicts drug abuse among secondary school students in Rivers State**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Unstandardised Error			
0.800	0.641	0.631	2.680	1.021			
Model	Sum of sq. df		Mean sq. f	$\alpha$	sig	remarks	
ANOVA							
1	Regression	2734.180	1	2734.18	7.381	0.005	0.00 <sup>b</sup> rejected
	Residual	39796.676	782	430.27			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42530.856</b>	<b>783</b>				

From the analysis of variance in Table 3,  $R = 0.800$  and  $R^2 = 0.641$ . Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.631$ , while the unstandardized  $B = 1.021$ . From the regression square ( $R^2$ ) value, it is evident that substance use in the home explains only about 0.64% of the variance of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The unstandardized B value also indicates that for every one unit increase or decrease in values for substance use in the home, there is a corresponding 1.021 increase or decrease in drug abuse among the students. The analysis of variance associated with the regression also reveals the sum of squares for the regression and residual to be 2734.180 and 39796.676, respectively. The mean squares were 2734.180 and 430.240, respectively.  $F = 7.381$ , and the sig value is 0.00. Since the calculated  $F$  ( $p = 0.000.05$ ) is less than 0.05 alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the predicting variable, substance use in the home, significantly predicts drug abuse.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis revealed that of the substances being used in the home, alcohol was the most commonly used, followed by cigarettes, tobacco products, and marijuana. The following were the substances consumed and their levels: alcohol ( $n = 587$ , 74.96%), cigarettes and tobacco products ( $n = 521$ , 66.53%), and marijuana ( $n = 471$ , 60.15%).

Also, the adolescents that indicated positive for aggression had physical and verbal aggression as the most common among them. Physical aggression ( $n = 671$ , 85.69%) and verbal aggression ( $n = 506$ , 64.62%)

In addition, substance use in the home significantly predicts drug abuse. Based on the study, the respondents revealed that of the 783 responses collected, about 569 (72.66%) of them were abusing drugs actively. The substances on which they were most

dependent were marijuana and mixtures. The respondents were not keen on revealing the composition of the mixtures that they took.

Additionally, parents consumed alcohol the most frequently, then cigarettes and marijuana. They could be turning to substances to help them forget their present predicament, feel numb, and feel good. In extreme situations where the adolescents have attempted to use substances as an escape without success, after the effect of the substance wears off, they are brought back to reality.

These outcomes buttress the fact that substance use in the home has more far-reaching impacts on the children who live in such homes than can be imagined. In many societies, substance use is seen as the norm, not taking into consideration the children who have to deal with the after-effects of the use of these substances on their mental health and interactions with others.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, marijuana, cigarettes, and tobacco products are the most commonly used substances in homes. This indicates that alcohol is the most widely used and accepted substance in the home. Furthermore, the study suggests that cigarettes, tobacco products, and marijuana, while not as widely used as alcohol, are still being used in the home. The results of this study can help inform policy decisions and public health initiatives related to the use of substances in the home.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The children of parents who use substances in the home especially need to be given the requisite attention by way of counselling and therapy in order to teach them the effects of substance use and adequate coping methods



instead of what they have observed being modelled by their parents. They must also be tested and reclaimed through psychotherapy from the substances and their effects that they have been involved in.

2. That the government at all levels should undertake programmes where children from these homes will be taught the best ways to resolve conflict instead of becoming belligerent towards others that they come into contact with.
3. Volunteers from the Ministry of Education and religious organisations should educate parents about the harmful effects of substance use in the home, which will reduce the number of drug abuse cases in the community.

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