KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE USE ON MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG STUDENTS OF GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL NYABUNKAKA JALINGO METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the knowledge of psychoactive substance use on mental well-being among students of government secondary school Nyabunkaka Jalingo metropolis. A structured field survey was conducted, encompassing a sample of 362 students from Government Secondary School Nyabunkaka in Jalingo Metropolis. Results from the first hypothesis which examined the knowledge levels of psychoactive substance use based on students' class levels, revealed a significant difference ($X2 = 36.140$, $p<0.001$). The majority of students displayed low knowledge levels (46%), with fewer students showing average (32.5%) and high (14%) knowledge. The second results indicated no significant age difference ($X2 = .681$, $p>0.05$), suggesting that age does not play a major role in determining substance use among the students. The analysis showed that 37.1% of students aged 13-16, 36.6% of those aged 17-20, and 31.7% of students aged 21-25 engaged in substance use, with a larger percentage of students across all age groups opposing it. The third finding demonstrated a significant gender difference ($t = -7.151$, $p<.001$), with female students exhibiting higher knowledge levels ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.72$) compared to their male counterparts ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 1.84$). The study highlights the need for enhanced awareness and education on psychoactive substance use among secondary school students to improve their mental well-being. The significant knowledge gaps identified call for comprehensive educational campaigns and targeted programs that address both the general student population and specific demographics, such as gender.

Keywords: *Psychoactive Substance Use, Mental Well-being, Secondary School Students*

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Introduction

Globally, substance abuse remains a critical concern. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2015) highlights the extensive societal damage caused by drug abuse across countries. The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 1.1 billion people, representing one-third of the global population above 15 years, use

tobacco, predominantly in developing countries, with significant implications for subsequent drug use (WHO, 2014).

In Africa, the prevalence of marijuana consumption is notably high, over 25 million individuals, constituting 5.8% of the adult population, are cannabis users. Substance abuse treatment in Africa often reveals severe psychological disorders among users, particularly youth (UN, 2020). In Nigeria, drug abuse among youths is a growing concern, with reports indicating rising consumption of substances such as cannabis, cocaine, and heroin. Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs. (ATOD), 2018.

However, students' behaviour towards substance use as observed by Olaitan (2016) revealed the likelihood of poor or low awareness of the health effects. The author stated further that most adolescents lacked knowledge of the effects of substances they engaged in. The studies of Eneh and Stanley, (2014) and Oshikoya and Alli (2016) attributed the poor knowledge of the adverse health effects of substance abuse to inadequate drug education and lack of appropriate information about substance use.

Studies conducted in several regions including Nigeria, underscore the detrimental effects of drug abuse among secondary school students. John *et al.* (2019) conducted a study on the Epidemiology of Psychoactive Substance Use among adolescents in Blantyre, Malawi, highlighting its prevalence and associated factors. Leonor *et al.* (2016) explored the impact of psychoactive substances on school performance among adolescents in Portugal, while Stephen (2012) focused on perceptions and behaviors related to drug abuse among secondary school students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

These studies underscore the widespread concern regarding substance abuse and its detrimental effects on academic, social, and psychological aspects of adolescent life. Research by Dankano and Garba (2017) in Bali Local Government Area of Taraba State identifies drug abuse as a catalyst for health issues and increased dropout rates due to impaired cognitive functions. Despite concerted efforts by government, religious organizations, and stakeholders to mitigate substance abuse, challenges persist, contributing to disruptive incidents and undermining educational outcomes.

The study was anchored on the social learning theory as proposed and advanced by Bandura (1977). The theory is based on the premise that the youth learn the anti-social behavior from relatives, parents, their teachers, their close friends as well as others who they consider as their role models in the society. The theory therefore avers that the young people's associations with the role models who are using drugs and abusing substances, are most likely to influence the youths' admiration of the addict's behaviors and thereby be introduced to the habit of taking the drugs. This eventually leads to the youth's change in behavior and becoming prone to future drug abuse. It also puts more emphasis on the expectations people have formed concerning alcohol and other drugs' effects.

This study is guided by Albert Bandura''s social cognitive theory (1977). The theory puts emphasis on acquisition of social behaviors through observation of other people's behaviors in a social context. Therefore, behaviour change is influenced by mainly three things; environment, people and the behaviour. According to the theory,

observing other people engage in behaviors that seem attractive leads to desire to engage in the same behaviour. Social cognitive theory is relevant to the proposed study as it forms the basis for studying the factors that determine the development of behaviour among students.

Substance abuse among senior secondary school students in Nigeria is pervasive, exacerbated by influences from parents, peer groups, and societal factors. This issue manifests in various detrimental behaviors within secondary schools such as vandalism, weapon carrying, alcohol abuse, rape, examination malpractices, school violence, strikes, bullying, cultism, truancy, and school dropouts, contributing to widespread antisocial behavior and juvenile delinquency. These challenges pose significant threats to the effective administration and management of schools in Jalingo Local Government. This study aims to investigate the understanding and impact of psychoactive substance use on the mental wellbeing of students. The primary objectives are to assess the overall knowledge of psychoactive substance use, examine the influence of age and gender on substance use, and explore the demographic characteristics of the student population in Nyabukaka Secondary School Jalingo Metropolis.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design to collect information by administering questionnaires to a sample of students. This design is suitable for gathering data on students' knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and habits.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised students of Government Secondary School Nyabunkaka in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State, with a total of 3,766 students. The focus was on SS1 and SS2 students, as they had been in school long enough to be influenced by the school environment and could provide the required information.

Sampling Procedure

A multi-stage stratified sampling technique was utilized. Stratified sampling was used to select the major classes. classes were randomly selected from the school, and students (SS1 & SS2) were chosen using a proportionate systematic sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of both classes. Students who consented to participate were included until the required sample size was reached.

Sample Size

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) method, resulting in a sample size of 362.

Research Instruments

A validated Knowledge Scale, a modified version of the Risser (1975) Knowledge Scale, was used to collect data. This version, produced by Hinshaw and Atwood (1982), had been psychometrically tested and showed stable internal consistency with average coefficient alpha values of 0.79. Each question was assessed on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree."

Data Analysis

Responses to the questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS version 26.0 for statistical analysis. The analysis included reliability assessment of the scale using Cronbach's alpha. Chi-Square analysis were used to determine the individual and joint influence of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Results and Description

Presentation of Demographic Data

Table 1: Frequency Table summarizing the demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Options	N	%
Age	13-16yrs	101	28.3
	17-20yrs	116	32.0
	21-25yrs	145	39.7
	Total	362	100.0
Gender	Male	181	50.0
	Female	181	50.0
	Total	362	100.0
Years in School	1st year	83	23
	2nd year	79	22
	3rd year	72	19.5
	4rd year	67	19
	5th year	61	16.5
	Total	362	100.0
Family Size	3-5	73	20
	6-8	82	23
	9-11	96	26.5
	12-15	111	30.5
	Total	362	100.0
Parents Occupation	Civil Servant	175	48
Parents Educational Level	Self-Employ	187	52
	Total	362	100.0
	Literate	171	47
	Not Literate	191	53
	Total	362	100.0
Family Income	Low	131	36
	Moderate	125	35
	High	106	29
	Total	362	100.0

(Source: Field Survey)

Results in Table 1 show that 28.3%, 32.0% and 39.7% fall within the age range of 12-15 years, 16-18 years and 19 years and above respectively. The distribution of the respondents according to gender indicates that males and females were selected 50% each. Results further indicate that 23%, 22%, 19.5%, 19%, and 16.5% were for 1st year in school, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year and 5th year respectively. The distribution of family size between 3-5 is 20%, 6-8 is 23%, 9-11 is 26.5% and 12-15 is 30.5%. Respondent's distribution by parent's occupation, the civil servant is 48% and self-employ is 52%. While parents' educational level is 47% for literate and 53% for not literate. The distribution of the respondents according to family income showed 36% for low income, 35% for moderate and 29% for high.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

This hypothesis states that there is no significant difference on the levels of knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis based on their class. This hypothesis was tested using One-Sample Case Chi-Square and the results are presented in Table 2 below.
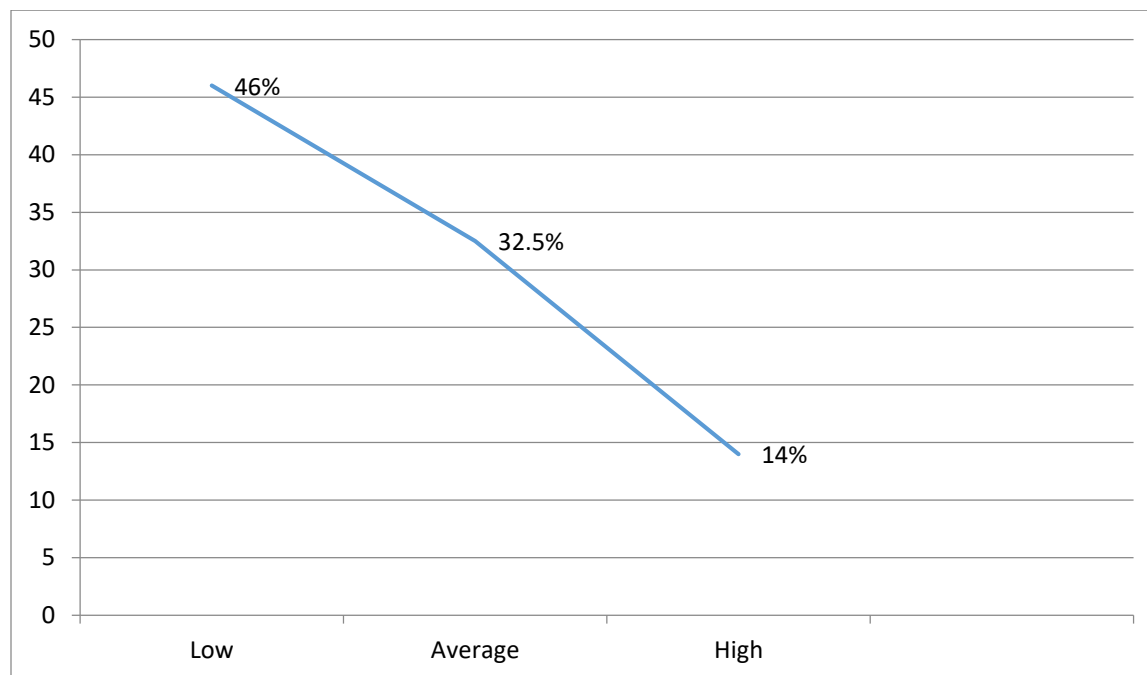
Table 2: Chi-Square test showing levels of knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	df	X^2	P	Remarks
Low	162	133.3	50.7	2	36.140	P<.001	Significant
Average	120	133.3	-3.3				
High	80	133.3	-47.3				
Total	362						

(Source: Field Survey)

The result presented in Table 2 showed that there is a significant difference in the levels of knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis based on the students' class (X2 = (df = 1) = 36.140; p<.001). This means that a greater percentage of the students have low knowledge on the use of psychoactive substances according to their classes. Thus, this hypothesis has been rejected. This result is illustrated as seen in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Line graph showing levels of knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis based on their classes

The Line graph in Figure 1 shows that a significant percentage of respondents amounting to 46% had shown low level of knowledge on the use psychoactive substances, 32.5% had average knowledge and 14% have high level of knowledge about psychoactive substances among the students based on their classes.

Hypothesis II

This hypothesis states that age has no significant influence on the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using Contigency Chi-Square and the results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Chi-Square test showing age difference on the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis

Psychoactive Substance Use			YES	NO	Total	df	X^2	p
AGE	13-16	Count	36	61	97			
		% within AGE	37.1%	62.9%	100.0%			
	17-20	Count	37	64	101			
		% within AGE	36.6%	63.4%	100.0%	2	.681	P>.05
	21-25	Count	26	56	82			
		% within AGE	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%			
Total		Count	99	181	280			
		% within AGE	35.4%	64.6%	100.0%			

(Source: Field Survey)

The result presented in Table 3 showed that there is no significant age difference on the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis (X^2= (df = 2) = .681; p>.05). This means that age of the students is less likely to determine substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis. Thus, this hypothesis has been accepted. This result is illustrated as seen in Figure 2 below:
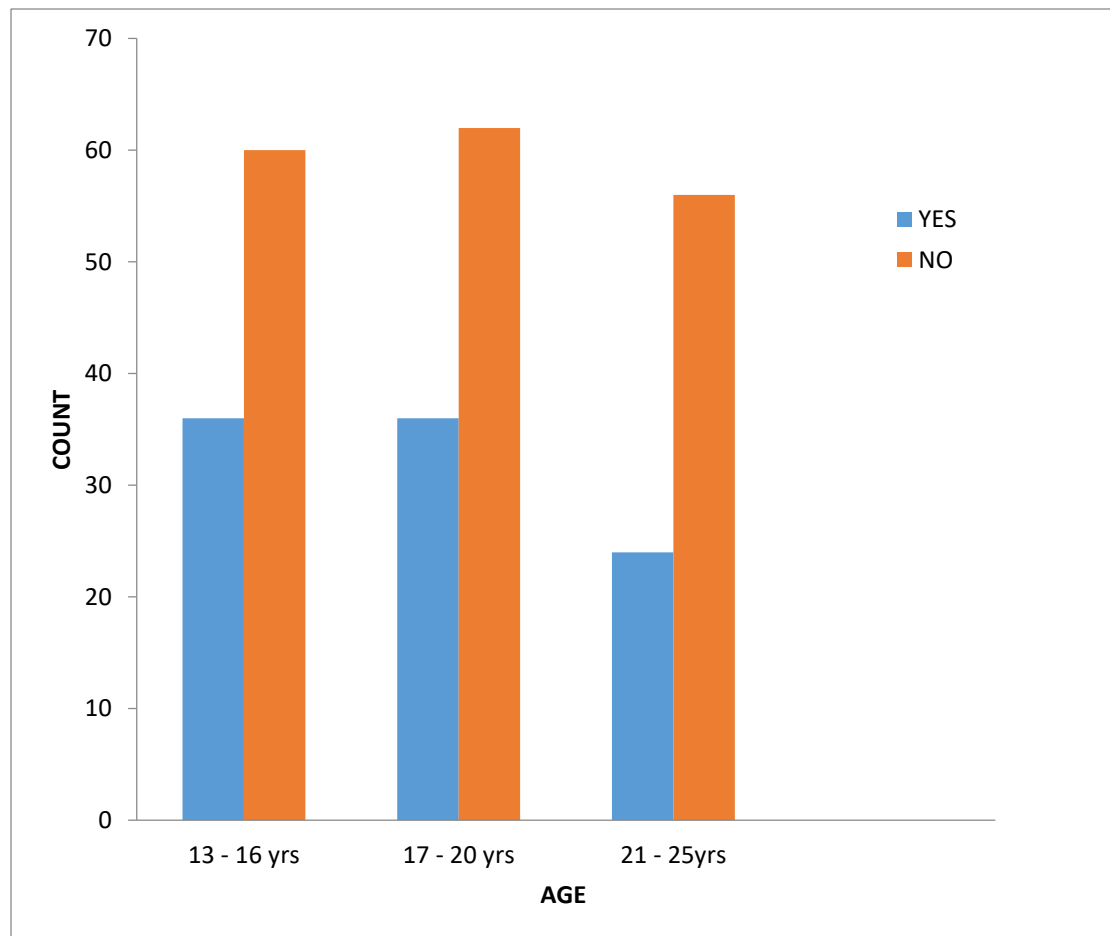

Figure 2:

The Multiple Bar Chart in Figure 2 shows that 37.1% of the students within the age range of 13-16 years were found to engage in the use of psychoactive substance against 62.9% who were not. Also, 36.6% of the students within the age bracket of 17-20 years were found to engage in the use of psychoactive substance against 63.4% of those who opposed it. Furthermore, 31.7% of the students who fall with the ages of 21 to 25 years tend to use psychoactive substance as against 68.3% who opposed to it. This implies that age of the students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis is less likely to influence their psychoactive substance use.

Hypothesis III

This hypothesis states that there is no significant difference on gender on the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using One-Sample Case Chi-
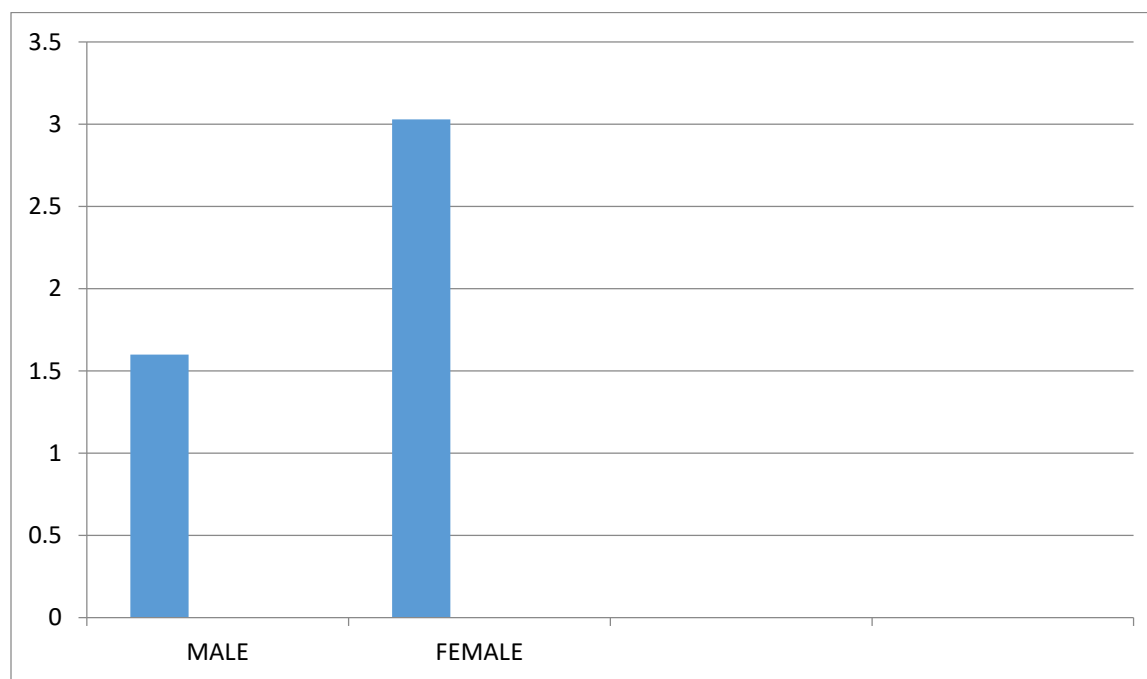
Square and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Independent t-test showing gender difference on the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	p
Psycho-active Subs.	Male	181	1.6000	1.84357	.14575	-7.151	P<.001
	Female	181	3.0250	1.71911	.13591		

(Source: Field Survey)

The result presented in Table 4 showed that there is a significant gender difference in the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis (t = (*df* = 318) = -7.151, p<.001). This means that male students suffered most on psychoactive substance use in Nyabunkaka secondary school. This implies that gender is a crucial factor in assessing the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among the students. Therefore, this hypothesis has been accepted. This result is illustrated as seen in Figure 3 below

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing gender difference in the knowledge of psychoactive substance use among students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis

The bar chart in Figure 3 shows that female students in Nyabunkaka recorded higher mean score (M = 3.03; SD = 1.72) on knowledge of psychoactive substance use than their male counterparts (M = 1.60; SD = 1.84). This implies that substance use has more negative impact on the male students of

Nyabunkaka secondary school than female students.

Discussion of Major Findings

Findings from the study revealed a significant positive influence of knowledge of psychoactive substance among the students. This shows that a significant percentage of students amounting to 46% had shown low level of knowledge on the use of psychoactive substances, 32.5% had average knowledge and 14% have high level of knowledge about psychoactive substances. This means that a greater percentage of the students have low knowledge about psychoactive substances. This finding is not surprising and it is expected as it agrees with the works of Olaitan (2016) who reported the likelihood of poor or low knowledge of the health effects of substance use and further stated that most adolescents lacked knowledge of the effects of substances they engaged in.

Consequently, findings revealed that 37.1% of the students within the age range of 13-16 years were found to engage in the use of psychoactive substance against 62.9% who were not. Also, 36.6% of the students within the age bracket of 17-20 years were found to engage in the use of psychoactive substance against 63.4% of those who opposed it. Furthermore, 31.7% of the students who fall with the ages of 21 to 25 years tend to use psychoactive substance as against 68.3% who opposed to it. This implies that age of the students of Nyabunkaka secondary school in Jalingo metropolis is less likely to influence their psychoactive substance use. The study finding does not agree with Suwala (2014), the findings revealed that use of nicotine, alcohol and other psychoactive substances plays an important role in youth age death rate and incidence proportion. The

research further revealed that probability of accidents, risky sexual behaviours or interpersonal aggression rises when young people are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

More so, findings revealed that female students in Nyabunkaka recorded higher mean score (M = 3.03; SD = 1.72) on knowledge of psychoactive substance use than their male counterparts (M = 1.60; SD = 1.84). This implies that substance use has more negative impact on the male students of Nyabunkaka secondary school than female students. This finding was supported by the work of Hawes *et al*. (2019), who found that most female youths about 74% engage in relatively "low" levels of use, followed by approximately 12% exhibiting an early-initiating "chronic" course, and 14% "escalating" in use of cannabis. The findings further revealed that although boys and girls both experienced increased levels of Cannabis Use across adolescence, boys were more likely to exhibit escalating and chronic patterns of cannabis use and suffered more.

Conclusion

The study found that a significant portion of students exhibited low levels of knowledge regarding psychoactive substances. Specifically, 46% of students had low knowledge, 32.5% had average knowledge, and only 14% demonstrated high knowledge. This highlights a critical need for enhanced educational interventions to improve awareness among students about the risks associated with psychoactive substance use.

Contrary to the hypothesis, the study revealed that age alone did not significantly influence

the likelihood of engaging in psychoactive substance use among students at Nyabunkaka Secondary School. The distribution of substance use across different age groups (13-16 years, 17-20 years, and 21-25 years) showed relatively similar patterns, indicating that factors beyond age play a more decisive role in substance use behaviors among these students.

Gender emerged as a significant factor influencing both knowledge levels and the likelihood of engaging in psychoactive substance use. Female students demonstrated higher levels of knowledge compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, the study found that substance use had a more negative impact on male students, reflecting a greater vulnerability among boys to adverse consequences associated with substance misuse.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the study suggests the following recommendations:

i. **Enhanced Education Programs**: Implement comprehensive and targeted educational programs within schools to improve awareness among students about the risks of psychoactive substance use.

ii. **Gender-Specific Interventions**: Develop interventions that specifically address the unique vulnerabilities and knowledge gaps observed among male students, aiming to reduce their susceptibility to substance misuse.

iii. **Further Research**: Conduct further research to explore additional factors beyond age that may contribute to variations in substance use behaviors

among students, such as socio-economic status and peer influences.

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