

**TO INVESTIGATE THE PREVALENCE, TYPES, AND PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS
(A CASE STUDY OF KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN, INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (IOT)
STUDENT)**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
NATIONAL DIPLOMA (ND) IN STATISTICS**

JULY, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research project titled: “To investigate the prevalence, types, and perceived effects of substance abuse among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT)” was carried out by **Onilearan Henry Iyiola**, with matriculation number **ND/23/STA/PT/0005**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of National Diploma, in the Department of Statistics, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God and to our parent (Mr. and Mrs. Onilearan)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give praise and adoration to the creator of heaven and earth; the Alpha and Omega for His blessings and grace bestow upon me. And for the wisdom, knowledge and understanding given to me to be able to accomplish this task.

Our profound gratitude goes to our supervisor, the person of Mr. Kuranga L.J and Mr. Suleiman S. for their assistance and guidance during this research work, and also to our able head of department Mrs. Elepo T.A and to every one of my lecturers that taught me everything I know in statistics and for the good academic support given since the beginning of our program till point on time.

My special gratitude goes to my parent (Mr. and Mrs. Onilearan) who has been there for me throughout the process of everything in my life. And also for their support, financially, morally and spiritually. I say a BIG Thank to you and may you reap the fruit of your labour. Amin...

My appreciation also goes our siblings, my friends and all our along the way friends. You all are awesome.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing drug and substance abuse among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT). Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire focused on demographic characteristics, types of substances abused, and perceptions of the effects of substance abuse. Analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics including frequency tables and bar charts. Findings reveal that prescription medications and alcohol are the most commonly abused substances. Majority of respondents acknowledged the negative impacts of substance abuse on cognitive functions, mental health, academic performance, and social behaviors. The study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive awareness programs, counseling services, and strict enforcement of anti-substance policies within the institution to curb substance abuse and its adverse consequences on students' wellbeing and academic success.

Keywords: *Substance Abuse, Drug Abuse, Students, Kwara State Polytechnic, Prescription Medication, Alcohol Use, Academic Performance, Mental Health, Risk Factors, Preventive Strategies.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	v
Table of contents	vi
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	2
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the study	2
1.4 Significance of the study	3
1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study	3
1.6 Definition of Terms	4
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Review of Related Literature	5
CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology	
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 Statistics Techniques	11
3.3 Data Source	12

3.4	Data Presentation	12
CHAPTER FOUR: Data Presentation Analysis and Result		
4.1	Introduction	13
4.2	Data Analysis	13
CHAPTER FIVE: Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation		
5.1	Summary of Findings	28
5.2	Conclusion	29
5.3	Recommendation	29
References		31
Appendix (Questionnaire)		

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Substance abuse remains a critical public health and social issue worldwide, with significant consequences on individuals, families, and society at large. Among young adults and students in tertiary institutions, substance abuse is especially concerning due to its impact on academic performance, mental health, and future career prospects. In Nigeria, studies have shown increasing trends in the misuse of both licit and illicit substances among youth populations, which calls for urgent attention and intervention.

Substance abuse involves the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, prescription medications, tobacco, and illicit drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, and methamphetamine. These substances alter brain function, leading to changes in perception, mood, consciousness, and behavior. The developing brain of adolescents and young adults is particularly vulnerable to these effects, with possible long-term consequences on cognitive development and emotional regulation.

In the context of Nigerian tertiary institutions, several factors contribute to substance abuse, including peer pressure, academic stress, easy availability of drugs, and socio-economic challenges. The student population is particularly susceptible due to the transition phase of life, exposure to new social environments, and experimentation tendencies. The consequences of substance abuse are multifaceted, ranging from impaired thinking and mental judgment, increased

risk of sexually transmitted infections due to risky behaviors, to adverse effects on physical health and social relationships.

Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT) represents a microcosm of this broader national concern. Understanding the patterns of substance use, the types of substances abused, and students' perceptions of the effects of substance abuse is vital for designing targeted interventions. This study focuses on analyzing these aspects among students of IOT to provide empirical data that can inform policies and support services aimed at reducing substance abuse on campus.

The findings from this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on substance abuse in Nigerian tertiary institutions and guide institutional management, health practitioners, and policymakers in developing comprehensive strategies to address this growing challenge.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology, poses significant risks to academic success, mental health, and future career opportunities. Despite awareness of its harmful effects, substance misuse remains prevalent, indicating gaps in preventive measures and support systems.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

Aim:

To investigate the prevalence, types, and perceived effects of substance abuse among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT).

Objectives:

1. To determine the demographic characteristics of students involved in substance abuse.
2. To identify the types of substances commonly abused by students.
3. To assess students' perceptions of the effects of substance abuse on cognitive, mental, academic, and social functions.
4. To evaluate the awareness of students regarding the risks associated with substance abuse, including health and social consequences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into the patterns and perceptions of substance abuse among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology. The findings will assist institutional authorities in understanding the extent of substance abuse and its effects on students' academic and social lives. Moreover, it will serve as a reference for health practitioners, counselors, and policymakers in designing effective awareness campaigns, counseling services, and intervention programs to curb substance abuse within the institution and similar educational settings.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT), examining their demographic profiles, types of substances abused, and perceptions of the effects of substance abuse. The research is limited to a sample size of 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire student population. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data, which could be influenced by respondent bias or reluctance to disclose sensitive information.

1.6 Definition of Terms

- **Substance Abuse:** The harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances including alcohol, prescription drugs, and illicit drugs.
- **Addiction:** A chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences.
- **Cognitive Impairment:** A decline in mental functions such as memory, attention, and decision-making abilities.
- **Mental Illness:** A wide range of mental health conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior.
- **Prescription Medications:** Drugs legally prescribed by a medical professional, which can be abused if used improperly.
- **Illicit Drugs:** Illegal substances such as cannabis, cocaine, and methamphetamine used recreationally.
- **Tertiary Institution:** An educational institution offering post-secondary education such as polytechnics and universities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Substance abuse remains a pressing concern globally, especially among youth and students in tertiary institutions. The misuse of both licit and illicit substances affects not only physical and mental health but also academic performance and social interactions. This literature review explores existing studies related to the prevalence, causes, effects, and preventive measures of substance abuse among students. It highlights key findings and theoretical perspectives that underpin the understanding of substance abuse in academic settings, providing a foundation for the current study.

2.2 Review of Related Works

Prevalence and Patterns of Substance Abuse among Students

Substance abuse among students in tertiary institutions is a growing concern worldwide, impacting physical health, academic performance, and social wellbeing. Research conducted globally shows a consistent pattern of rising substance misuse among young adults, especially university and polytechnic students. In Nigeria, several studies have documented increasing levels of drug and alcohol use in academic settings, emphasizing the need for targeted intervention.

Adeyemo and Ogunwale (2019) conducted a comprehensive survey of university students in Southwestern Nigeria, revealing that nearly 40% reported lifetime use of at least one psychoactive substance. Alcohol and prescription medications emerged as the most commonly abused, followed

by tobacco, cannabis, and tramadol. Their findings attributed this trend to factors such as peer influence, academic pressure, curiosity, and the availability of substances both on and off campus. The study also noted that the use of prescription drugs, often for non-medical reasons like staying awake or enhancing academic performance, is a significant emerging problem.

Similarly, Johnson et al. (2020) investigated substance abuse patterns among college students in the United States and found that alcohol misuse affected approximately 30% of respondents, with 15% reporting misuse of prescription stimulants or sedatives. The study underscored the role of academic stress and socialization in promoting substance use behaviors. The normalization of alcohol consumption in college culture was identified as a major contributing factor.

Effects of Substance Abuse on Cognitive and Mental Health

The effects of substance abuse on cognitive function and mental health are profound and well-established in medical and psychological literature. Psychoactive substances alter brain chemistry, leading to impairments in memory, attention, executive function, and emotional regulation, which are especially detrimental during adolescence and young adulthood when the brain is still developing.

Smith and Brown (2018) conducted an extensive review on cognitive deficits associated with chronic substance abuse, highlighting that long-term use of drugs such as alcohol, cannabis, and stimulants impairs key cognitive domains necessary for learning and daily functioning. Their research demonstrated that impaired memory and slowed information processing are common among substance users, severely limiting academic performance and problem-solving capabilities.

Jones and Miller (2017) examined the link between substance abuse and mental health disorders, finding that individuals with substance use disorders have significantly higher rates of anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and psychosis. The self-medication hypothesis explains that some students may use substances to alleviate symptoms of mental illness, inadvertently worsening their psychological state and increasing dependency risk.

Studies focusing on adolescents reveal that early exposure to substances can disrupt brain development. Clark et al. (2019) showed that drug use during the critical maturation period of the prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making and impulse control, leads to long-term deficits. This early use is associated with poorer academic outcomes, social difficulties, and increased vulnerability to psychiatric disorders later in life.

Substance Abuse and Academic Performance

The detrimental impact of substance abuse on academic performance has been widely documented, with studies showing that students who use drugs or alcohol regularly tend to have lower grades, higher absenteeism, and greater risk of dropping out. The cognitive impairments caused by substance use—such as poor concentration, memory loss, and reduced motivation—directly undermine learning.

Williams and Garcia (2021) investigated the relationship between substance use and academic outcomes among university students. Their study found that regular users of alcohol and marijuana had significantly lower grade point averages (GPAs) compared to non-users. The negative effects

were especially pronounced for students who combined multiple substances. Furthermore, these students reported increased difficulties in meeting academic deadlines and managing coursework. Thompson (2020) analyzed how drug abuse influences students' study habits and classroom engagement. The study concluded that substance use reduces students' ability to focus during lectures and affects their retention of information. This often results in poor performance on tests and assignments, ultimately compromising academic success.

In the Nigerian educational context, Olatunji and Salami (2018) studied substance abuse among undergraduates and its effect on academic achievement. Their research showed that drug-abusing students exhibited higher rates of absenteeism and disengagement from academic activities. The study suggested that substance abuse is a leading factor contributing to poor academic outcomes and increased dropout rates.

Risky Sexual Behavior and Substance Abuse

The association between substance abuse and risky sexual behavior is a significant public health concern, as impaired judgment during intoxication can lead to unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and increased risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. This link has been observed in numerous studies among youth and student populations.

Parker et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive study examining the effects of alcohol and drug use on sexual risk-taking among college students. Their findings indicated that intoxicated students were more likely to engage in unprotected sex and report multiple partners, increasing their

vulnerability to STIs including HIV/AIDS. The study emphasized the need for integrated sexual health and substance abuse prevention programs.

Adebola and Fakunle (2019) investigated the relationship between alcohol misuse and sexual behavior among Nigerian university students. Their research found that students who frequently consumed alcohol were significantly more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors, including inconsistent condom use and casual sex. This study highlighted the compounded risks of combining substance abuse with unsafe sexual practices in young adults.

Preventive Strategies and Intervention Programs

Effective prevention and intervention strategies are essential to mitigate the growing problem of substance abuse among students in tertiary institutions. A multifaceted approach that includes education, counseling, peer support, policy enforcement, and community involvement has been shown to yield positive results.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) advocates for comprehensive substance abuse prevention programs that integrate health education with psychosocial support. Such programs aim to raise awareness about the risks of drug use, equip students with coping skills, and provide accessible treatment options for those affected.

Smith et al. (2019) implemented a peer-led intervention program at a South African university, combining awareness campaigns with counseling and rehabilitation services. The program resulted in a significant reduction in substance use prevalence over two years, highlighting the effectiveness of engaging students as advocates and supporters.

Okeke and Nwankwo (2021) emphasized the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in Nigerian institutions, recommending partnerships among schools, health agencies, parents, and community organizations. They argued that parental involvement and policy enforcement are critical to creating an environment that discourages substance abuse.

In conclusion, while awareness about the dangers of substance abuse among students is relatively high, comprehensive prevention and intervention programs tailored to the unique needs of tertiary institutions are necessary to address this complex issue effectively.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted in conducting the study on the factors influencing drug and substance abuse among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT). It presents the research design, data collection method, and the statistical tools used for analysis. The study relies on a quantitative descriptive approach aimed at capturing the perceptions and behaviors of respondents regarding substance use. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and bar charts to identify patterns and trends. These methods provided a clear and straightforward interpretation of respondents' views and experiences related to drug and substance abuse.

3.2 Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques were employed in analyzing the collected data:

- **Descriptive Statistics:**

This technique was used to summarize the data and present it in a meaningful and organized manner. It facilitated the identification of trends, frequencies, and distributions in respondents' answers related to drug and substance abuse.

- **Frequency Tables:**

Frequency distribution tables were used to organize the responses for each variable. This enabled the determination of how often particular responses occurred and allowed measurement of the spread and concentration of opinions among the respondents.

- **Bar Charts:**

Bar charts were employed to visually represent the frequency data, enhancing interpretation and enabling easier comparison of results across different variables and categories such as types of substances abused, gender, age groups, and perceptions of substance abuse effects.

3.3 Data Source

Primary data were utilized for this study. Information was collected through a well-structured questionnaire distributed to a total of 100 respondents drawn from the student population at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology. The questionnaire was designed to capture demographic information as well as students' perceptions and experiences regarding substance abuse. The questions were mostly close-ended, facilitating easier quantitative analysis, and focused on environmental, psychological, and social factors influencing drug use as well as the types of substances commonly abused.

3.4 Data Presentation

The data collected from the questionnaires were systematically arranged and presented using frequency tables and bar charts. Frequency tables showed the number and percentage of responses for each item, providing a clear quantitative summary. Bar charts visually illustrated comparisons among different categories and variables, facilitating the analysis of the influence of various factors on substance abuse behavior. This method of presentation allowed for a simple yet comprehensive understanding of the results, making it easier to identify key trends and patterns within the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 100 student respondents from Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT). The aim is to explore the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions on substance abuse and its effects. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages are used to summarize the data, providing insight into the awareness and impact of substance abuse among students.

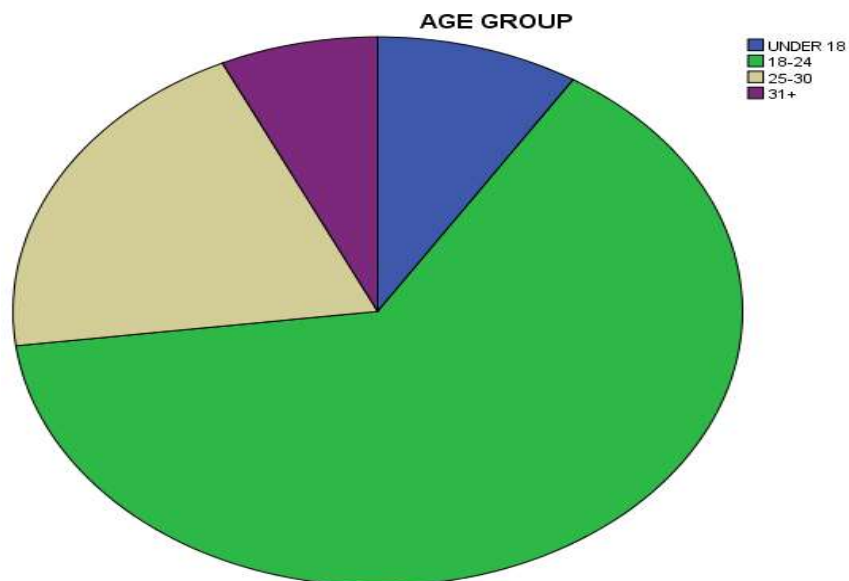
4.2 Data Analysis

Descriptive (Frequencies and Pie-Chart)

AGE GROUP				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
UNDER 18	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
18-24	64	64.0	64.0	73.0
Valid 25-30	20	20.0	20.0	93.0
31+	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

The age distribution of respondents is as follows: 9% were under 18 years, 64% between 18–24 years, 20% between 25–30 years, and 7% were 31 years and above. The majority of respondents (64%) belong to the 18–24 age group, indicating that the study primarily involves young adults.

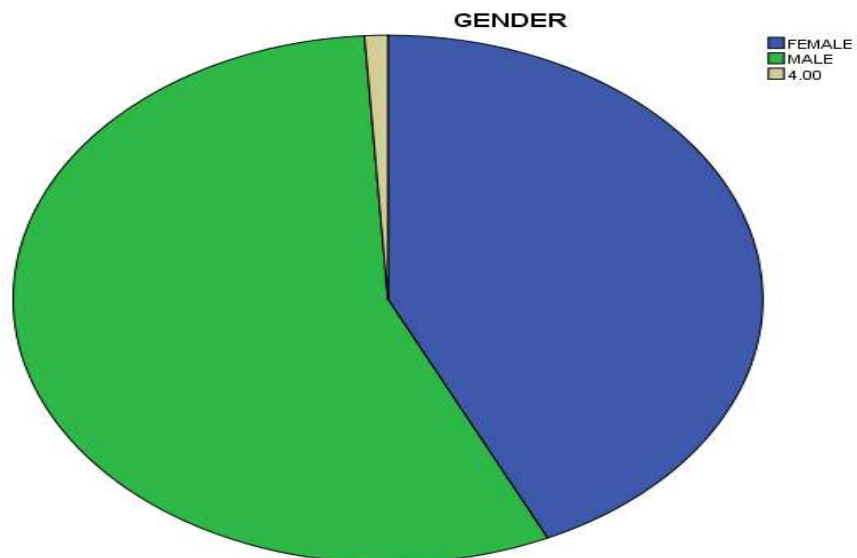


GENDER

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
FEMALE	43	43.0	43.0	43.0
Valid MALE	56	56.0	56.0	99.0
4.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

Out of 100 respondents, 56% were male, 43% female, and 1% identified with another category

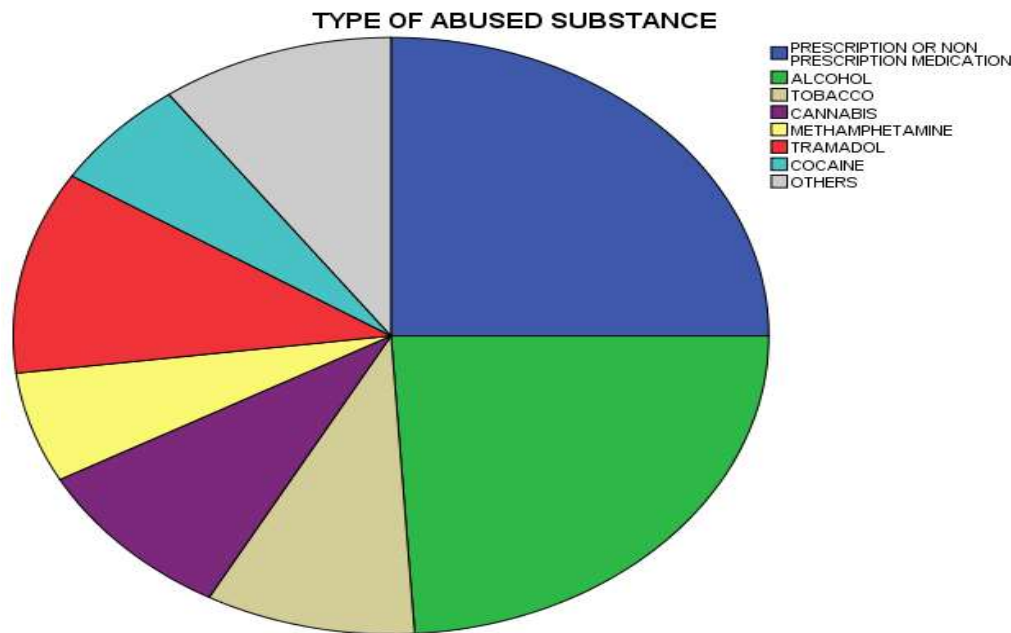


TYPE OF ABUSED SUBSTANCE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	PREScription OR NON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION	25	25.0	25.0	25.0
	ALCOHOL	24	24.0	24.0	49.0
	TOBACCO	9	9.0	9.0	58.0
	CANNABIS	9	9.0	9.0	67.0
	METHAMPHETAMINE	6	6.0	6.0	73.0
	TRAMADOL	11	11.0	11.0	84.0
	COCAINE	6	6.0	6.0	90.0
	OTHERS	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

Respondents reported various substances commonly abused among students. Prescription or non-prescription medications (25%) and alcohol (24%) are the most reported substances, followed by

tramadol (11%), tobacco (9%), cannabis (9%), others (10%), methamphetamine (6%), and cocaine (6%).

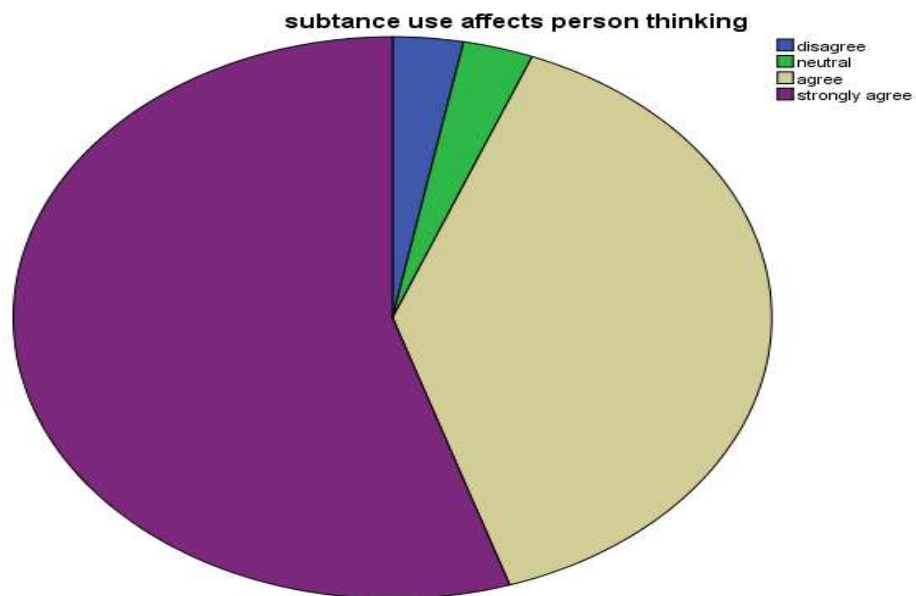


substance use affects person thinking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Neutral	3	3.0	3.0	6.0
	agree	39	39.0	39.0	45.0
	strongly agree	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

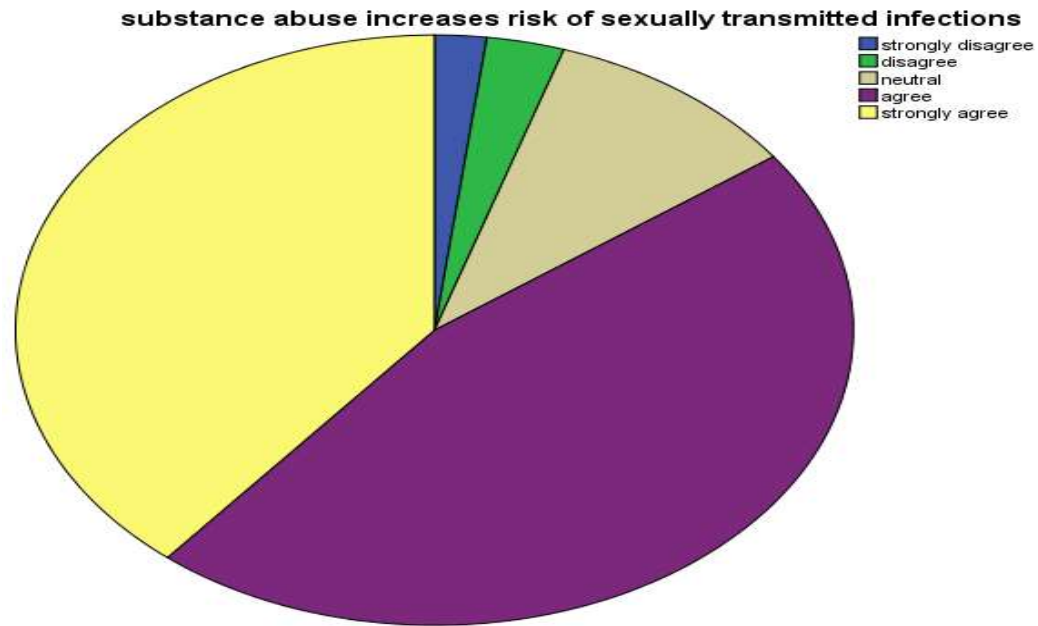
With 94% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that substance use affects thinking, it shows strong awareness among students that substance abuse impairs cognitive functions such as reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. This aligns with scientific evidence that many substances alter brain chemistry and reduce mental clarity.



substance abuse increases risk of sexually transmitted infections				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0
	disagree	3	3.0	5.0
	neutral	10	10.0	15.0
	agree	46	46.0	61.0
	strongly agree	39	39.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	

Interpretation:

85% of students agreed substance abuse increases STI risk. This indicates a good understanding that impaired judgment from substance use can lead to risky sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex or multiple partners, which elevate the chances of contracting STIs.

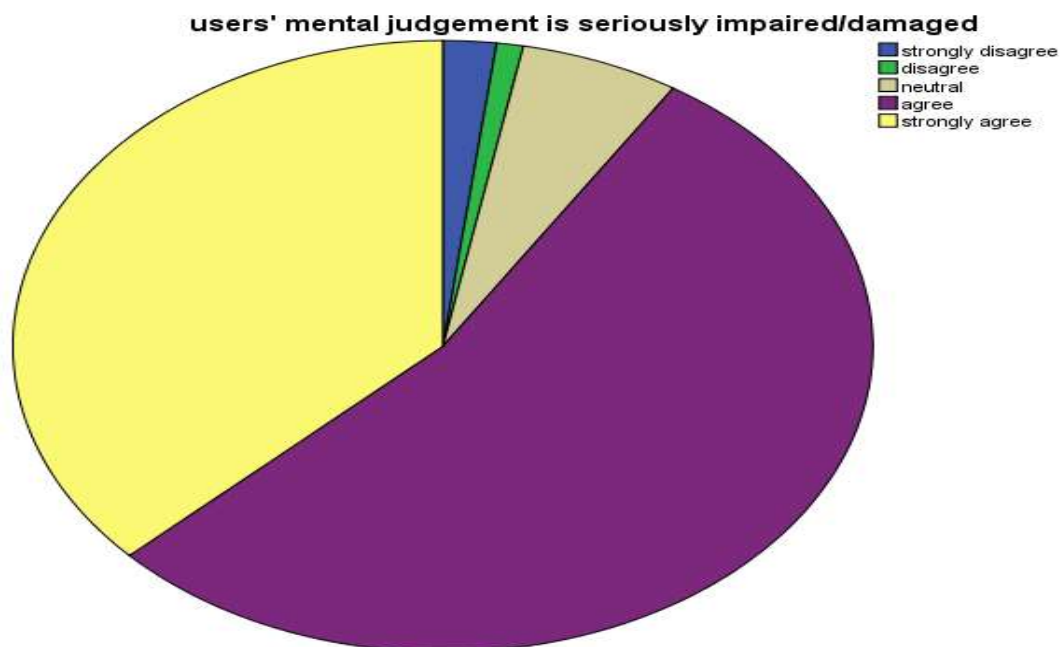


users' mental judgement is seriously impaired/damaged

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
disagree	1	1.0	1.0	3.0
neutral	6	6.0	6.0	9.0
agree	54	54.0	54.0	63.0
strongly agree	37	37.0	37.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

91% of respondents believe that substance abuse seriously impairs mental judgment. This reinforces the recognition that drug use affects the brain's executive functions, leading to poor decision-making and increased vulnerability to harm.

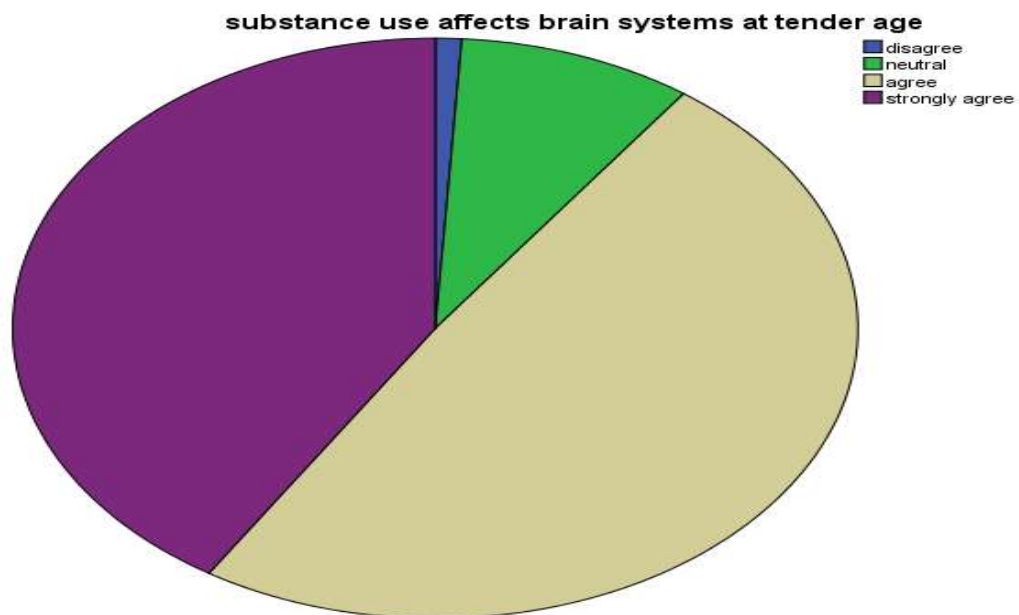


substance use affects brain systems at tender age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Neutral	9	9.0	9.0	10.0
Valid Agree	49	49.0	49.0	59.0
strongly agree	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

90% agreed that substance use harms brain development during adolescence. This awareness is crucial since the adolescent brain is still maturing, and exposure to drugs at this stage can cause long-term cognitive and emotional problems.



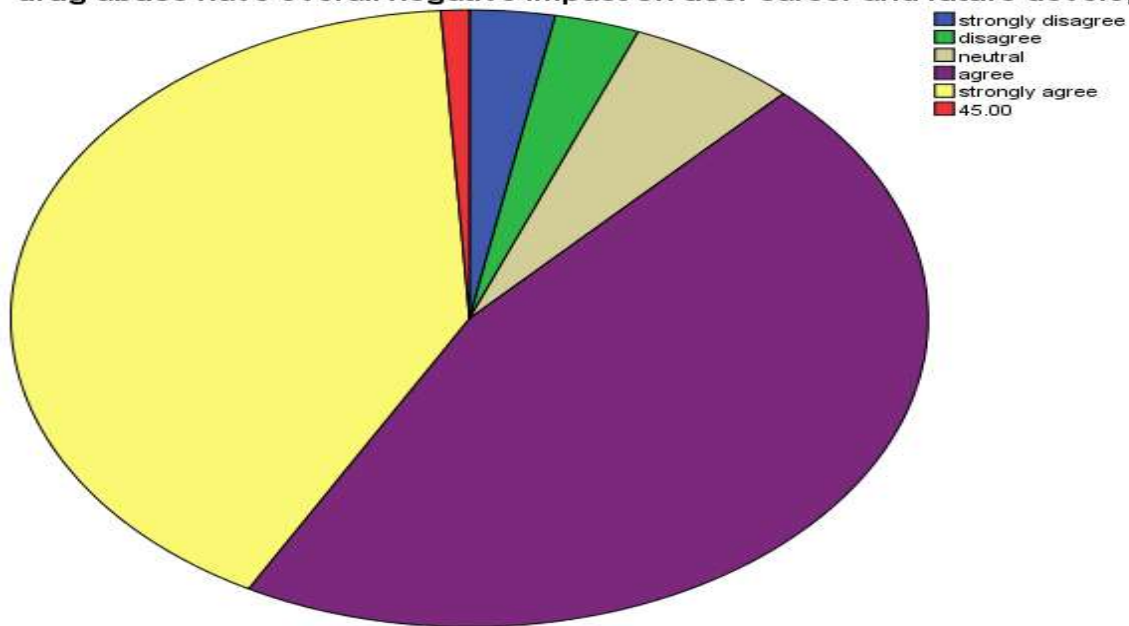
drug abuse have overall negative impact on user career and future development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
disagree	3	3.0	3.0	6.0
neutral	6	6.0	6.0	12.0
Valid agree	46	46.0	46.0	58.0
strongly agree	41	41.0	41.0	99.0
45.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

87% believe substance abuse negatively affects future prospects. This shows that students understand the broader life consequences of drug use, including poor academic performance, job loss, and damaged social relationships that limit career growth.

drug abuse have overall negative impact on user career and future development



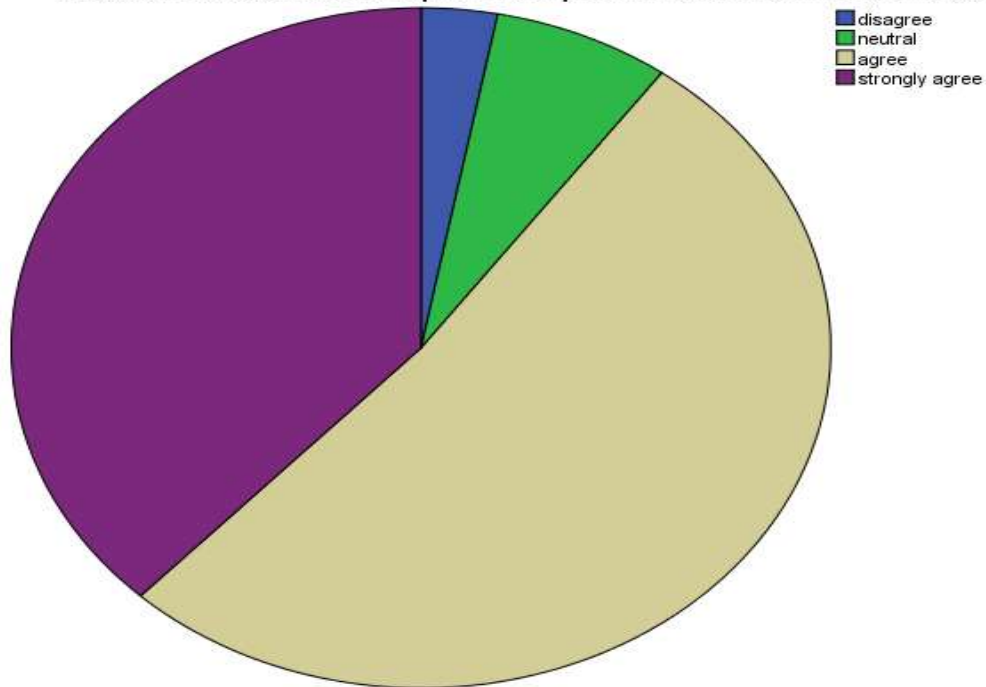
addiction to substances exposes the person to mental illness and disease

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
neutral	7	7.0	7.0	10.0
Valid agree	52	52.0	52.0	62.0
strongly agree	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

90% agreed addiction increases risk of mental illness and disease, demonstrating awareness that substance dependence is linked to disorders like depression, anxiety, psychosis, and physical health problems.

addiction to substances exposes the person to mental illness and disease

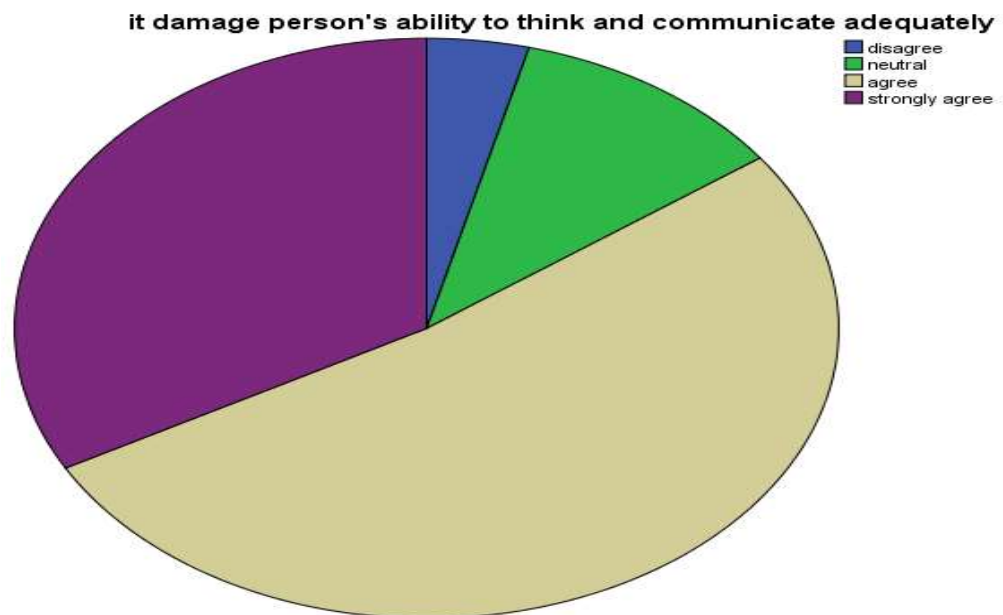


it damage person's ability to think and communicate adequately

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
neutral	11	11.0	11.0	15.0
Valid agree	52	52.0	52.0	67.0
strongly agree	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

85% agreed that substance abuse impairs thinking and communication skills. This highlights recognition that drug use can lead to confusion, memory loss, and difficulties in expressing oneself effectively, affecting social interactions.

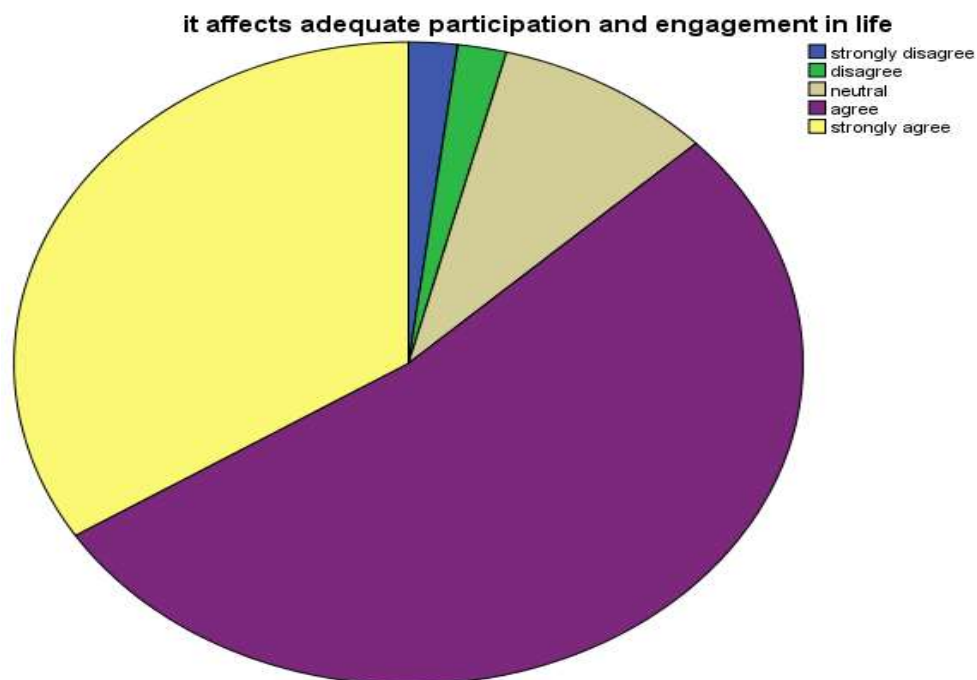


it affects adequate participation and engagement in life

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
disagree	2	2.0	2.0	4.0
neutral	9	9.0	9.0	13.0
agree	53	53.0	53.0	66.0
strongly agree	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

87% agreed substance use reduces participation in social, academic, and family activities. This indicates awareness that addiction can cause withdrawal, isolation, and neglect of responsibilities, undermining quality of life.

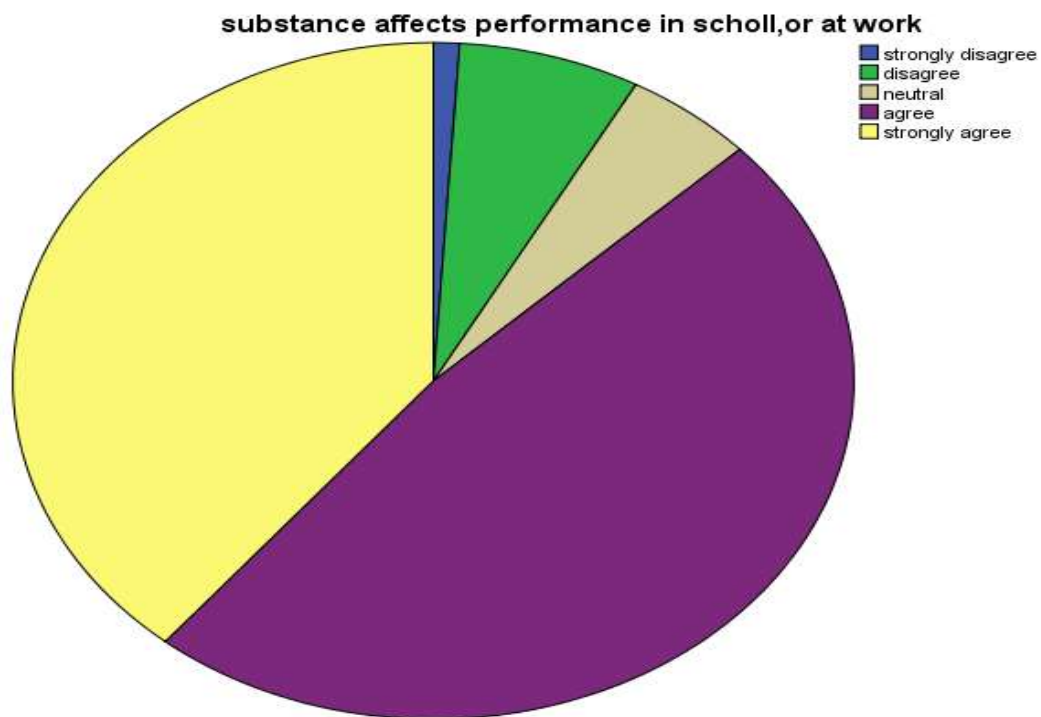


substance affects performance in school, or at work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
disagree	7	7.0	7.0	8.0
neutral	5	5.0	5.0	13.0
agree	48	48.0	48.0	61.0
strongly agree	39	39.0	39.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

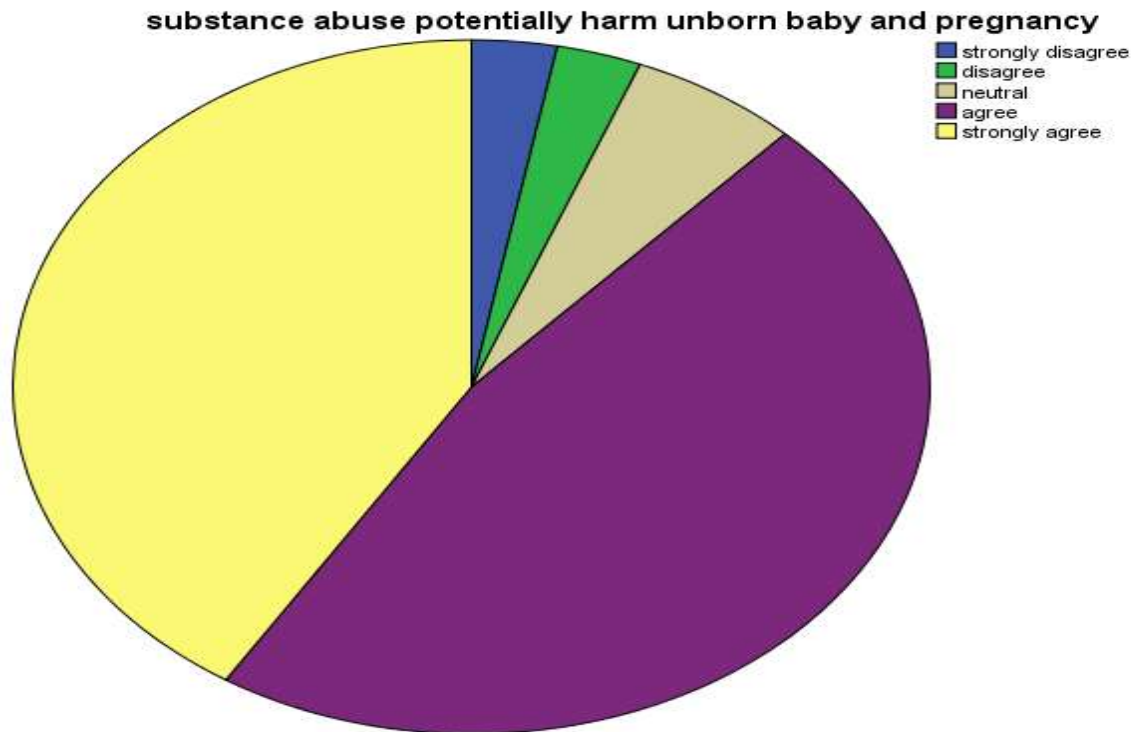
87% believe substance use harms academic or work performance. This shows students understand that drug abuse impairs concentration, motivation, and productivity, leading to poor outcomes.



substance abuse potentially harm unborn baby and pregnancy				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
disagree	3	3.0	3.0	6.0
neutral	6	6.0	6.0	12.0
agree	47	47.0	47.0	59.0
strongly agree	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

88% agreed that substance abuse poses risks to pregnancy and fetal development. This reflects understanding of the dangers of prenatal exposure to drugs, which can cause birth defects, developmental delays, and miscarriage.



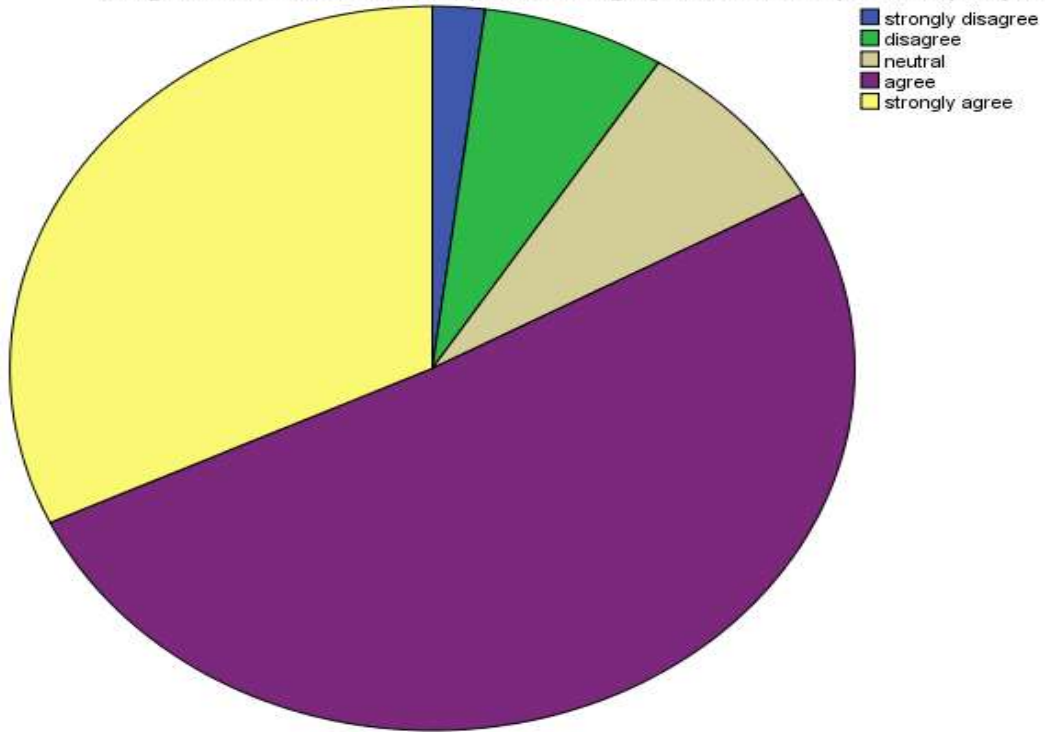
drug use affects attention, processing speed and sleep of the people

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
disagree	7	7.0	7.0	9.0
neutral	8	8.0	8.0	17.0
agree	51	51.0	51.0	68.0
strongly agree	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

83% believe drug use negatively affects attention, mental processing, and sleep quality. This highlights awareness that these cognitive and physical impairments interfere with learning, memory, and overall health.

drug use affects attention, processing speed and sleep of the people



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the patterns and perceptions of substance abuse among 100 students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Institute of Technology (IOT).

The following are the findings;

1. **Demographics:** Most respondents were young adults aged 18–24, with a fairly balanced gender distribution of 56% male and 43% female.
2. **Substance Types:** Prescription/non-prescription medications and alcohol were the most commonly abused substances, indicating easy access and social acceptance; other drugs were less common but still present.
3. **Cognitive Effects:** A large majority recognized that substance abuse impairs thinking ability and mental judgment.
4. **Brain Development & Future Impact:** Most students agreed that drug use harms brain development in youth and negatively affects career prospects and future growth.
5. **Mental Health:** High awareness that addiction leads to mental illnesses and damages thinking and communication, often causing social isolation.
6. **Social & Academic Engagement:** Many believe substance abuse reduces participation in social, academic, and family activities due to withdrawal effects.
7. **Academic/Work Performance:** Students acknowledged that substance abuse harms their performance in school or work.

8. **Pregnancy Risks:** There is good awareness that substance abuse poses risks to unborn babies and pregnancy outcomes.
9. **Attention & Sleep:** Substance abuse was seen to negatively affect attention span, processing speed, and sleep quality, essential for learning and wellbeing.
10. **Overall:** Despite high awareness of its harms, substance abuse—especially prescription drugs and alcohol—remains common, signaling the need for stronger prevention and support measures.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings indicate that substance abuse is a prevalent issue among the students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Institute of Technology. Although there is considerable awareness of the risks and negative consequences associated with substance abuse, the presence of usage—particularly of prescription medications and alcohol—suggests gaps in preventive measures and intervention strategies.

The effects of substance abuse on students' cognitive abilities, health, and future career prospects underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to address the problem within the institution.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhanced Awareness Campaigns:** The institution should implement continuous educational programs to increase students' knowledge about the dangers of substance abuse and promote healthy behaviors.

2. **Establishment of Counseling and Rehabilitation Services:** The Polytechnic should provide accessible mental health and addiction counseling services to support students struggling with substance abuse.
3. **Implementation and Enforcement of Campus Policies:** Stronger enforcement of policies regarding substance abuse should be maintained to deter usage on campus.
4. **Development of Peer Support Networks:** Facilitate the creation of student peer groups aimed at providing support and encouragement to avoid substance use.
5. **Collaboration with Health Agencies:** Partner with local health organizations to offer screening, prevention, and treatment programs tailored to the student population.

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