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THE IMPLICATIONS OF DRUG ABUSE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN KANTIN AGA, CHIKUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, Sabo Ward, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Adopting a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 394 respondents using copies of a structured questionnaire, field observation, and a key informant interview with the community leader (Mai Angwa). Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse quantitative data, while qualitative insights were integrated into the discussion to enrich contextual understanding. Findings revealed that cannabis, cough syrup with codeine, and prescription pills were the most commonly abused substances. Drug abuse among juveniles was linked by respondents to increased theft, violence, truancy, and social disorder. Factors contributing to this behaviour included peer influence, poverty, parental neglect, and easy access to illicit substances. The study concluded that substance abuse is a key driver of juvenile delinquency in the area, with far-reaching social and health implications. It recommended stronger enforcement of drug laws, expanded community education, establishment of rehabilitation centres, and youth empowerment programmes to address the underlying socio-economic causes.

Keywords: *Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Substance Abuse and Kantin Aga.*

Introduction

Drug abuse is a global crisis with profound public health and societal implications. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) defines psychoactive drugs as substances that affect brain function, altering cognition, perception, and mood. Their misuse has led to alarming statistics: nearly half a million deaths globally in 2019 and the loss of 18 million years of healthy life due to drug-related disorders (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2021). In 2020, approximately 284 million individuals aged 15 to 64 reported drug use, a 26% increase over the past decade. Among the most abused substances were cannabis, opioids, and stimulants (UNODC, 2023).

Africa is not exempt from this growing menace. The continent faces challenges such as drug trafficking, corruption, limited access to rehabilitation services, and inadequate enforcement measures (WANEP, 2024). Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has emerged as a significant hotspot for substance misuse, with over 14.3 million drug users reported (UNODC, 2018). Substances such as cannabis, opioids, tramadol, and codeine are consumed at alarming rates, highlighting a nationwide public health emergency (Osahon & Zekaryah, 2023; Jatau *et al.*, 2021). Within the north-central zone of Nigeria, Kaduna State has a prevalence rate of 12%, representing around 462,000 users as of 2017, hence making it significant for a study on drug abuse (UNODC, 2018).

Kantin Aga, situated in the Sabo area of Chikun Local Government Area in Kaduna State, exemplifies the localized impact of drug abuse. The area has become notorious for high rates of substance use, particularly among juveniles. The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has reported that Sabo in which the case study is situated is a hub for drug abuse and trafficking, leading to an increase in crimes such as theft, rape, and murder (Ibrahim, 2021). The use of codeine, tramadol, and other prescription drugs, as well as cannabis and alcohol, has been reported in the area, with associated risks such as addiction, overdose, and violence.

The persistent prevalence of drug abuse among juveniles in Kantin Aga, Kaduna State poses significant threats to individual and community well-being, despite various government interventions and development partner initiatives such as the National Drug Control Master Plan (2021–2025) and campaigns by the NDLEA. The area has become a hub for substance abuse, particularly among youth, leading to rising crime rates, mental health challenges, and socio-economic instability. These impacts extend to education, security, and overall quality of life in the community, underscoring the urgent need for effective strategies to mitigate the root causes and consequences of drug abuse in the area.

This study aims to assess the implications of drug abuse on juvenile delinquency, using Kantin Aga as a case study. The specific objectives include identifying patterns and types of substance use among juveniles, examining factors driving drug abuse, analyzing its role in fostering delinquent behavior, and evaluating its broader socio-economic and security implications. The research aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by addressing the underlying causes of drug abuse and contributing to strategies for improving public health and safety.

The significance of this study extends beyond the local context, providing insights into combating drug abuse and juvenile delinquency in similar communities. By delving into the dynamics of substance abuse in Kantin Aga, this research sheds light on the interplay between drug use, youth behaviour, and community well-being, offering actionable recommendations to mitigate these challenges and safeguard the future of young people.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Drug

A drug is broadly defined as any chemical substance, natural or synthetic, that alters the function or structure of the body when administered (WHO, 2022). These substances range from legal drugs like alcohol, tobacco, and prescription medication to illicit drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, and heroin (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2018). While drugs can serve therapeutic purposes, their misuse poses significant public health challenges. Globally, an estimated 275 million people used drugs in 2020, with 36.3 million suffering from drug use disorders (UNODC, 2021).

Concept of Drug Abuse

Drug abuse entails the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including illicit drugs and the misuse of prescription drugs (Shehu et al., 2018). It encompasses behaviors such as consuming drugs for non-medical purposes, exceeding prescribed dosages, or combining substances dangerously (Gusau & Dansabo, 2019). Drug abuse has been identified as a major contributor to criminal behavior, social dislocation, and severe health issues (Werb et al., 2016).

Concept of Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency refers to illegal or socially deviant behaviors exhibited by minors, often influenced by factors such as peer pressure, socioeconomic challenges, and family dynamics

(Abhishek and Balamurugan, 2024). Delinquent acts range from minor offenses like curfew violations to serious crimes such as theft, assault, and drug trafficking (UNODC, 2018). The consequences of juvenile delinquency include disrupted education, strained social services, and increased crime rates, underscoring the need for targeted interventions (Sethy, 2017).

Link Between Drug Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency

The relationship between drug abuse and juvenile delinquency is well-documented, with substance use often serving as a precursor to criminal behavior. Factors such as childhood neglect, peer pressure, and the availability of drugs exacerbate this link (Akinpelu, 2021). Drug abuse among juveniles has been associated with a rise in violent and income-generating crimes, further destabilizing communities (Mamman *et al.*, 2014). Addressing these intertwined issues requires comprehensive strategies that encompass education, prevention, and rehabilitation.

Theoretical Framework for Understanding Drug Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency

This study integrates Durkheim's (1897) anomie theory and social learning theory (Sutherland, 1939; Akers, 1973) to understand drug abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, Sabo, Kaduna State. Anomie suggests that societal disruptions, such as poverty and limited education, drive deviant behaviours like drug abuse by weakening norms. In Kantin Aga, these conditions foster substance use as a coping mechanism. Complementarily, social learning theory posits that juveniles acquire delinquent behaviours through peer and family interactions, perpetuating deviance cycles. For instance, exposure to drug-using peers reinforces such behaviours, exacerbated by socio-economic strain (UNODC, 2018). This framework highlights the interplay of societal and individual factors, guiding interventions to address structural stressors and social influences in Kantin Aga.

Literature Review

Drug abuse is a significant public health and social issue that affects individuals and communities globally. Syed *et al.* (2022) explored the attitudes and factors influencing drug abuse among pharmacy and nursing students in Saudi Arabia. They identified peer influence, joy-seeking, and family issues as contributing factors, with transient euphoria being the most reported reason for drug use. Osahon and Zekaryah (2023) evaluated the prevalence and effects of opioid abuse among final-year undergraduate students at a public university. Their findings revealed that 26% of respondents had used opioids, with tramadol and codeine being the most abused substances. Peer pressure was identified as the primary driver of abuse, while the observed effects included drowsiness, absence from lectures, and altered daily activities.

Agubosi (2022) investigated the predisposing factors to drug abuse among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. Peer influence, depression, and poor academic performance were identified as major drivers. Nawi *et al.* (2022), in a systematic review, categorized risk factors for drug abuse into individual, family, and community domains. These included impulsivity, emotional regulation issues, and negative upbringing, emphasizing a multifaceted approach to prevention. Okafor (2020) similarly examined causes and consequences of drug abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, identifying academic challenges and low self-esteem as central causes while urging targeted educational and regulatory measures.

Shehu *et al.* (2018) analyzed the socio-economic implications of drug abuse in Nigeria, noting its links to mental health challenges, political instability, and reduced productivity. They emphasized intensified education campaigns, border control, and rehabilitation center funding as key recommendations. Jatau *et al.* (2021) echoed these findings, highlighting the public health burden of drug abuse among various groups, especially adolescents and university students, with cannabis and opioids being the most abused substances.

Research Methodology

This study utilised a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to investigate drug abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, Sabo, Kaduna State. The target population comprised residents of Kantin Aga, with a total estimated population of 69,467. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample size of 398 was calculated, and 394 copies of valid questionnaire were analysed. Given the informal settlement structure of the area, systematic sampling was not feasible. Instead, convenience sampling was employed to select most respondents, with research assistants and local guides facilitating access to diverse groups, including parents, students, artisans, and tricycle operators. Snowball sampling was specifically used to reach 16 hard-to-access individuals, such as known drug users and dealers, by relying on referrals from initial participants. Purposive sampling was applied to select the community leader for a key informant interview, resulting in one in-depth interview with the Mai Angwa of Kantin Aga. This interview provided background information on the history of the area, insights into local drug abuse patterns, and community responses to the issue.

Copies of a structured questionnaire were administered face-to-face by the researcher and assistants, often in informal settings such as homes and public spaces. Where necessary, questions were translated into local languages to ensure inclusivity. Field observation was used to enrich data on the types of drugs abused and the behaviours of juveniles, particularly for the objective of identifying prevalent substances and patterns of use. Observational findings were discussed alongside survey data to provide context and depth.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to identify patterns in drug use and its perceived effects on juvenile behaviour. Multiple response items were ranked by frequency to highlight the most commonly cited variables. Qualitative data were integrated into the discussion of the quantitative results to deepen the interpretation. However, two participants' perspectives were directly quoted in the findings to support the analysis. Ethical standards were maintained throughout, with informed consent obtained from all participants and confidentiality assured.

Study Area

Kantin Aga's History

Kantin Aga is a locality situated in Sabon Tasha (Sabo), Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State. Originally called Ungwan Kadara, the area was renamed Kantin Aga after a drinking spot established by a local resident named Aga became a community hub. Despite Aga's passing over five decades ago, his name remains synonymous with the area, reflecting its cultural significance and historical roots. The surrounding communities include Angwan Biso, Angwan Madami, Angwan Matari, Ungwan Bulus, and Angwan Gimbiya. Socio-economic activities in Kantin Aga include petty trading, drinking spots, bars, hotels, schools, mechanics, and transportation services. The dominant ethnic groups are predominantly southern Kaduna tribes, including Kadara, Kataf, Bajju, Kagoma, Jaba, and Gbagyi.

Challenges with Drug Abuse and Security

Kantin Aga faces significant challenges related to drug abuse and security. The prevalence of drug use, particularly among juveniles, has contributed to increased crime rates and social instability. Despite interventions by the Sabo police station, the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF), and the NDLEA, efforts to curb drug abuse have been hampered by non-cooperative landlords and the complicity of some security personnel. These challenges underscore the urgency of community-based solutions and stricter enforcement mechanisms to address the growing concerns.

Results and Discussion

The socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sex Distribution	Respondents	%
Male	268	68.0
Female	126	32.0
Total	394	100.0
Age Distribution	Respondents	%
<20	39	9.9
20-24	66	16.8
25-29	86	21.8
30-34	41	10.4
35-39	78	19.8
40-44	34	8.6
45-49	18	4.6
50-54	24	6.1
55-59	-	-
60 and above	8	2.0
Total	394	100.0
Marital Status	Respondents	%
Never Married	219	55.6
Married	156	39.6
Divorced	12	3.0
Widowed	7	1.8
Total	394	100.0
Education	Respondents	%
Informal	14	3.6
Primary	79	20.0
Secondary	208	52.8
Tertiary	93	23.6
Total	394	100.0
Occupation	Respondents	%
Employed	103	26.1
Unemployed	58	14.7
Self employed	136	34.5
Student	94	23.9
Retired	3	0.8
Total	394	100.0
Residency period	Respondents	%
less than one year	37	9.4
1 year - 5 years	108	27.4
6 years - 10 years	68	17.3
Above 10 years	181	45.9
Total	394	100.0
Monthly income	Respondents	%
less than ₦30,000	181	45.9
₦30,000 - ₦60,000	137	34.8
₦61,000 - ₦90,000	18	4.6
₦91,000 - ₦120,000	10	2.5
Above ₦120,000	48	12.2
Total	394	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The gender distribution of respondents, as shown in Table 1, reveals that 68.0% were male and 32.0% female. The higher percentage of male respondents is attributed to their greater availability during the day due to their engagement in commercial activities such as tricycle and motorcycle operations and other trades. This aligns with the findings of Gazimbe and Khosa (2021) on drug abuse among students in Zimbabwe which has more male respondents.

Age distribution, as seen in Table 1, indicates that the largest group of respondents (21.8%) were aged 25–29, followed by those aged 35–39 (19.8%) and 20–24 (16.8%). Younger individuals under 40 made up 78.7% of the sample, suggesting that young adults are more accessible for this study and are more likely to have recent or direct encounters with drug-related issues. This finding diverges slightly from Yunusa and Tofa's (2023) study in Zaria, which reported a majority of respondents (57.3%) under the age of 30, highlighting locational differences within Kaduna State.

Regarding marital status (Table 1), 55.6% of respondents were single, while 39.6% were married. The predominance of single respondents aligns with the younger age demographics, while the substantial proportion of married individuals underscores the diversity of perspectives represented in the study. This pattern agrees with the findings of Neupane and Uprety (2021), where single individuals dominated the data, reflecting their higher likelihood of engaging in or reporting on juvenile behaviours.

Educational attainment showed that 52.8% of respondents had completed secondary education, followed by 23.6% with tertiary education. This indicates a relatively high literacy level in the area, enabling greater potential for understanding drug awareness campaigns. However, the 3.6% of respondents with no formal education may face barriers in accessing such initiatives, necessitating tailored outreach strategies. This finding aligns with Uwaibi et al.'s (2022) study in Edo State, which similarly reported a majority of respondents having secondary and tertiary education.

In terms of occupation, the largest group of respondents (34.5%) were self-employed, engaged in activities such as tricycle operations, mechanics, and petty trading. Students accounted for 23.9%, reflecting the youthful composition of the community. The relatively high representation of self-employed individuals mirrors the economic structure of Kantin Aga, which is predominantly informal. These findings concur with Nkouonlack et al.'s (2023) study in Cameroon, which reported a similar occupational distribution.

Residency patterns (Table 1) reveal that 45.9% of respondents had lived in Kantin Aga for more than 10 years. This long-term residency provided deeper insights into the community's evolving drug use trends. Additionally, the income distribution (Table 1) indicated that 45.9% earned less than ₦30,000 monthly, highlighting economic vulnerabilities that may exacerbate susceptibility to drug abuse.

Types and Patterns of Drug Abuse among Juveniles in Kantin Aga

This section discusses how aware respondents are as regards drug abuse and juvenile delinquency, the prevalence of drug abuse on a scale and the substance commonly abused by juveniles in Kantin Aga community as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Awareness on Drug Abuse among Juveniles in Kantin Aga

Awareness on DA	Respondents	%
Yes	378	98.4
No	16	1.6
Total	394	100.0
Drug Prevalence	Respondents	%
Very low	32	8.1
Low	57	14.5
Moderate	92	23.3
High	167	42.4
Very high	46	11.7
Total	394	100.0
Substance	Frequency (n)	Ranking
Alcohol	341	1
Cannabis (Marijuana)	319	2
Prescription drugs	193	3
Inhalants	122	4
Synthetic drugs	23	5
Methamphetamine (Meth)	17	6
Others	0	7
Cocaine	0	7
Heroin	0	7
Total Responses	915	-
Total Respondents	394	-

Note: Multiple responses were allowed. Percentages for “Substance” were excluded in favour of ranked frequencies for clarity. Source: Field Survey (2024)

The study reveals widespread awareness of drug abuse, with 98.4% of respondents acknowledging its prevalence among juveniles. Prevalence was classified as high or very high by 54.1% of respondents, reflecting the gravity of the issue.

Alcohol was reported as the most widely abused substance, ranked first among the substances recognized by respondents for its prevalence among juveniles in Kantin Aga. This is consistent with the widespread availability and social acceptance of alcohol within the community. Forms of alcohol reported and also observed include whiskey and gin in sachets, local brews such as *burukutu* (BKT), palm wine, and *jiko*, as well as commercially sold beers in cans and bottles. These substances are easily accessible due to their low cost and the proliferation of unregulated sales outlets. Adolescents often have access to alcohol during social events or are sent to purchase it for adults, further normalising its consumption. Open displays and sales of alcohol in the area pose a significant challenge, creating an environment conducive to underage drinking.

Cannabis (marijuana) was identified as the second most abused substance, ranked second among the substances acknowledged by respondents for its use among juveniles. Cannabis, despite being illegal, is readily available and consumed through smoking or as an ingredient in food. Its usage is linked to behavioural issues such as truancy, aggression, and mental health challenges among juveniles. Respondents noted that drug dealers in the area openly sell cannabis alongside other substances such as “crack” and “colos,” highlighting gaps in enforcement and regulation.

Prescription drugs, including codeine cough syrups, tramadol, and rophynol (roofies), were ranked third among the substances commonly abused by juveniles, as cited by respondents. These substances are often sourced from patent medicine stores or pharmacies and are reportedly used not only by juveniles but also by motorcycle operators seeking increased stamina for work. The availability of drugs such as D5, Switnol, and Exell underscores the need for stricter pharmaceutical regulations and heightened awareness about the misuse of medications.

Inhalants were ranked fourth among the substances abused by juveniles, as identified by respondents. These include glue (solution), soakaway gas, and ammonia from lizard waste, which are inhaled for their psychoactive effects. Respondents highlighted the low cost and accessibility of these substances, making them an appealing alternative for juveniles. A community member remarked, “Cheap drugs like solution and glue are everywhere and easily available. The boys who take them often misbehave, steal, and block roads to extort money to fund their addiction.”

Synthetic drugs and methamphetamine were the least reported substances, ranked fifth and sixth, respectively, among those noted for abuse by respondents. Cocaine and heroin were not reported, likely due to their high costs and limited availability in the area. However, cocktails such as “Loud” and shisha were mentioned by some respondents as emerging trends among juveniles.

These findings underscore the need for intervention strategies targeting substance regulation and sale control within Kantin Aga. Enforcement measures must include stricter penalties for dealers and monitoring of chemists and alcohol vendors. Additionally, awareness campaigns tailored to the community's socio-economic realities and school-based programs for younger residents are vital to curbing substance use.

These findings are supported by Otokpa's (2019) study in Lokoja Metropolis, which reported marijuana, codeine, and tramadol as the most commonly abused substances among adolescents. However, this study diverges from Mamman *et al.*'s (2014) findings, which included heroin and cocaine in their prevalence data for Northwest Nigeria. Additionally, Nyameh (2023) highlighted prescription drugs as the most abused substances in North Eastern Nigeria, contrasting with the prominence of alcohol and cannabis in this study.

Factors Contributing to Drug Abuse in Kantin Aga, Sabo

The factors contributing to drug abuse among juveniles in Kantin Aga, Sabo, as reported by respondents, are presented in Table 3, reflecting a range of social, economic, and psychological influences in the community.

Table 3. Factors Contributing to Drug Abuse

Factor Contributing to Drug Abuse	Frequency (n)	Ranking
Peer pressure	271	1
Accessibility of drugs	249	2
Curiosity and experimentation	182	3
Lack of parental supervision	178	4
Psychological issues (stress, depression)	163	5
Lack of educational opportunities	154	6
Influence of media and popular culture	131	7
Lack of awareness and education on the risks of drug abuse	91	8
Poverty	42	9
Mental health issues	37	10
Other	16	11
Total Responses	1514	-
Total Respondents	394	-

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The findings from Table 3 identified peer pressure, drug accessibility, curiosity, lack of parental supervision, psychological stress, mental health issues, and poverty as the primary drivers of substance abuse among juveniles in Kantin Aga. Peer pressure emerged as the most significant factor, ranked first (n=271), highlighting the strong influence of social circles. Adolescents often conform to peer behaviours to gain acceptance, even at the expense of engaging in risky activities such as substance use. This underscores the need for interventions aimed at fostering positive peer influence and providing awareness programs within schools and the community.

Easy accessibility to substances, ranked second (n=249), was another significant driver, as the availability of drugs, alcohol, and prescription medications is widespread in the area. Open sales at beer parlours, hotels, and unregulated patent medicine stores increase exposure to substances, especially for juveniles sent by parents or elders to purchase them. This highlights an urgent need for stricter regulation of controlled substances and better enforcement of age restrictions.

Curiosity, ranked third, also plays a critical role, as juveniles often experiment with drugs out of a desire to explore or mimic observed behaviours. This suggests the importance of early education at home and school to prevent experimentation and raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

Parental supervision was identified as a major influence, ranked fourth, with respondents attributing juvenile drug use to insufficient parental guidance. A respondent stated that regardless of how some juveniles are monitored at home, they still manage to hide their activities and engage in behaviours such as drug abuse. While some become bullies at home and become too much to handle or be controlled by their parents, who then leave them to do whatever they want. This highlights the challenge that some parents face in managing their children's actions within the confines of their own homes, which ultimately becomes a societal problem. Also on parental supervision, another respondent stated that women especially mothers have a big role to play in curbing drug abuse from homes, she further noted that if a child is brought up in a moral way, the child will want to get into substance abuse. This finding reinforces the necessity for parental education on drug abuse prevention, stronger family involvement, and community-wide campaigns to equip parents with the tools to guide their children effectively.

Psychological stress and depression, ranked fifth, were reported as factors driving drug use among students and labourers. Juveniles often turn to stimulants and other substances to cope with academic or physical pressures, such as taking energy drinks or drugs for physical endurance. This calls for counselling services in schools and greater involvement of community leaders in guiding youths away from harmful coping mechanisms.

Poverty, ranked ninth, compounds these challenges, as economic hardships push juveniles to fend for themselves, leading to exposure to risky behaviours. Also, poverty is a contributory factor towards stopping a lot of mental patients from drug abuse seeking treatment as they are either taken to alternative places like religious centres ortrado-medical practitioners for treatment rather than psychiatric or psychological centres. In addition, a nurse working at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Kaduna revealed that some patients are pulled out of their treatment midway while some are unable to complete the full cost of treatment till, they recover due to the cost which not all the parents/guardians can afford as rehabilitation is not cheap. A worker at Bostal Home, a juvenile rehabilitation Centre stated that some of the drug addicts are abandoned by their wards due to their ailments looking beyond redemption. The implication of this finding is that poverty can make juveniles very vulnerable to drug abuse and limit their access to education that could impact their future goals.

The findings align with Syed *et al.* (2022), which identified peer influence as a significant factor in drug abuse among students, and Nyameh (2023), where respondents agreed that peer pressure plays a central role. Similarly, Agubosi (2022) emphasized drug accessibility as a critical

predisposing factor, consistent with this study's results in Kantin Aga. Curiosity as a driver echoes the findings of Nawi *et al.* (2021), who noted impulsiveness as a key factor in adolescent substance abuse. Poverty as a contributory factor is consistent with Enamhe and Eba (2021), which linked socio-economic status to juvenile drug-taking habits

Implications of Drug Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency in Kantin Aga

The implications of drug abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, as reported by respondents, are presented in Table 4, highlighting a range of social, educational, and economic consequences affecting individuals, families, and the community.

Table 4 Implications of Drug Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency in Kantin Aga

Implication of Drug Abuse	Count	Ranking
Increased crime and violence	227	1
Educational challenges	173	2
Increase in mental cases among juveniles	156	3
Economic challenges among family of users	148	4
Deterioration of social cohesion	132	5
Economic burden on the community	118	6
Total Responses	954	-
Total Respondents	394	-

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2024)

The findings from Table 4 indicate that increased crime and violence, ranked first (n=227) among the implications identified by respondents, is a major consequence of drug abuse. Juveniles under the influence of substances are reportedly involved in phone snatching, road blockades, and harassment of passersby to extort money for sustaining their addiction. These behaviours have created a pervasive sense of insecurity within the community, deterring residents from moving freely, especially at night. This situation has led to increased arrests and incarcerations of juveniles, while their families endure societal stigmatization. The community itself faces a deteriorating reputation, making it less attractive for raising children or settling permanently.

Educational challenges emerged as another critical implication, ranked second (n=173), with respondents emphasizing poor academic performance, truancy, and school dropouts among drug-abusing juveniles. These setbacks hinder the educational and personal development of the youth, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage that affects both individuals and society. Substance abuse further aggravates mental health challenges, as reported by respondents ranked third. Issues such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis have been linked to drug use, placing financial and emotional burdens on families seeking treatment. Many families face stigmatization and the stress of caring for mental health patients, particularly when full recovery is elusive.

Economic challenges among families of drug users were highlighted by respondents ranked fourth. Juveniles often resort to stealing within their households to fund their addiction, contributing to financial instability and reduced productivity. These struggles extend beyond the immediate family, affecting the broader economic landscape of the community. Additionally, respondents noted a deterioration of social cohesion, ranked fifth, due to strained relationships between parents towards their children. Parents often condemn substance abuse, leading to avoidance behaviours among juveniles who fear detection or confrontation. This dynamic erodes trust and harmony within families and the community.

The study also found that drug abuse imposes a broader economic burden on the community, ranked sixth, as noted. Costs associated with vigilante groups, reduced local productivity, and the stigmatization of Kantin Aga as a haven for drug abuse collectively impact its economic potential. Families of drug users, and even unrelated community members, bear the financial and social costs of addressing these issues, further deepening the strain.

These findings align with existing research. Orlova and Shevchenko (2023) linked drug abuse to compromised security in school environments, which are critical spaces for juveniles to thrive. Similarly, Akinpelu (2021) detailed the extensive consequences of drug abuse, including cultism, educational dropouts, and threats to national security. Enamhe and Eba (2021) underscored the financial strain placed on governments to rehabilitate drug users and address public health challenges, a concern reflected in the economic implications observed in Kantin Aga.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study establishes a link between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, highlighting alcohol and cannabis, ranked first and second, as the most prevalent contributors to delinquent behaviours among youth. Peer pressure and easy access to drugs, ranked first (n=271) and second (n=249), drive this trend, exacerbating increased crime and violence, and educational challenges as primary consequences. These outcomes threaten community security and youth development, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to regulate substance availability, enhance community awareness, and support at-risk youth through counselling and empowerment programs.

To effectively address the pervasive issue of substance abuse and juvenile delinquency in Kantin Aga, it is essential for regulatory bodies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the Kaduna State Government to strengthen the enforcement of laws restricting access to alcohol, cannabis, and prescription drugs, including through stringent age verification protocols. Community leaders and local authorities should lead education and awareness campaigns aimed at equipping juveniles and their families with the knowledge to recognise and prevent substance abuse. Additionally, the state government, in collaboration with health agencies and non-governmental organisations, should establish accessible counselling and rehabilitation centres to support affected youths, addressing both psychological needs and addiction recovery in a structured and sustained manner. Furthermore, vocational training and economic empowerment programmes, supported by local government and community organisations, should be promoted to engage at-risk youths, offering productive alternatives that address the socioeconomic drivers of substance misuse.

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