



# **Influence of Peer Group Pressure on Adolescents' Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated influence of peer group pressure on adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study was 34,168 Senior Secondary School Two (SSII) students in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the 2018/2019 academic session. The sample size of the study was 380 students (176 Urban and 204 Rural). The sample was categorized into urban [SSII] students (176) and rural [SSII] students (204) in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The instrument, "Peer Group Pressure and Adolescents' Smoking Habit" (PGPASHQ) was used to elicit responses from adolescents on peer group pressure. The instrument was a 16-item questionnaire on a four point Likert-type scale. The test retest reliability was used on the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was established for the study. The research questions were answered with means and standard deviations computed from the collected data, while the z-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. It was found that peer group pressure (provision of guidance and counseling, parental nurture, behaviour modification, financial support and provision of conducive learning environment) influences adolescents' juvenile delinquency in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It was recommended, among others that adolescents and school stakeholders should be aware of the dangers of social media addiction as it greatly influences adolescents' smoking habit, and that adolescents should be advised to desist from substance abuse as it impairs their judgment and causes them to do things they normally would not do, such as engaging in premarital sex.

**Keywords:** Peer group pressure, adolescent, smoking habit, secondary schools, Rivers State.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In ways similar to the community, the peer group becomes an agency of enculturation and learning. Even young children develop a sense of self from their perceptions of important people in their surroundings, including relatives, teachers, and peers. Socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, and parents' occupations affect how families view themselves and the process by which they socialize their children (Bornstein, 2012). The peer group serves as a barometer for children examining themselves and their feelings about self and family. The peer group also influences development of children's socializing skills. These early friendships help children learn how to negotiate and relate to others, including their siblings and other family members. They learn from peers how to cooperate and socialize according to group norms and group-sanctioned modes of behaviour. The peer group can influence what the child values, knows, wears, eats, and learns. The extent of this influence, however, depends on other situational constraints, such as the age and personality of children and the nature of the group (Harris, 2012).

Understanding the way social interaction affect the smoking habit of adolescents is important for parents, educators and policy makers (Hamburg, 2012). Peer pressure is the influence exerted by a peer group or an individual encouraging other individuals to change their attitudes, values or behaviors in order to conform to group norms. In most cases, peers tend to replace the modeling value of the family context during early childhood. As a result of the social acknowledgement that adolescents look for, they are under a certain amount of pressure that drives them to abide by the peers convictions or rejections. The influence of peer group on adolescents' smoking habit has also been a subject of intense study (Perry, 2017). According to Hartup (2013), peer influence can mobilize adolescents' energy and motivate for success. Stronger adolescents do have an impact on their peers and actually help improve their overall academic performance. If adolescents are friends to secondary school dropouts, they have the tendency to be absent from school, have lower grades and less positive attitudes towards schools, less popular and less likely to plan to attend higher institutions (Treynor, 2019). If dropout maintains contact with friends who have stayed in schools, however, these friends may provide moral support for returning to school. It is believed that peer pressure is the major cause of deviant behaviour and antisocial behaviour among adolescents.

It has been demonstrated that peer group pressure has a greater influence on adolescents' behaviour than any other factor. This is because many teenagers spend most of their time with their peers than with their family. The dealing among the peers is more direct and more powerful compared to other people such as teachers and other people in authority (Rathus, 2017). For some adults, a peer group can be a source of security, a learning opportunity and a source of encouragement among others. The difference between negative and positive peer pressure is the impact it has on the person. While most forms of influence do not necessarily feel comfortable for the person on the receiving end, the outcomes of the influence are likely to be mostly positive. Positive peer pressure results in a person feeling better, healthier or happier. Negative peer pressure on the other hand, results in people feeling unhappy, unwell or uncomfortable. People give in to peer pressure because they want to be accepted and fit in a group. Conformity may create problems when peers influence each other to participate in deviant activities.

Peer pressure can lead to loss of individual values of teenagers. Extreme pressure for the peer group may result to the teenager following the what the peer group feels is right and may induce an adolescent to adopt what they might think as the right thing. Adolescents have a tendency of going blindly and imitating their peer groups in areas such as the hair style, clothing, music and normal living. Pressure from the peer group can result to the teenagers losing their tastes of life and induce them to start liking what is liked by the peer group. Peer pressure is a human inducement to unite with the bandwagon in which adolescents lose their original likes in life.

Peer group pressure can be measured through social media addiction, dating and sex, substance abuse and change in attitude. Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks (Weber, 2016). Social media provides a massive new digital arena for peer pressure and influence. Research suggests there are a variety of benefits from social media use, such as increased socialization, exposure to ideas, and greater self-confidence. There is also evidence of negative influences such as advertising pressure, exposure to inappropriate behaviour and/or dialogue, and fake news. These versions of digital peer pressure exist between youth, adults and businesses. In some cases, people can feel pressure to make themselves available 24/7 or to be perfect. The way others portray themselves on social media might lead to young people trying to mimic those qualities or actions in an attempt at conformity. It may also lead to a fear of missing out, which can pressure youth into irresponsible actions or decisions. Actions and influence on social media may lead to changes in identity, confidence, or habits in real life for children, adolescents, and adults.

Attitudes are associated beliefs and behaviours towards some object. They are not stable, and because of the communication and behaviour of other people, are subject to change by social influences, as well as by the individual's motivation to maintain cognitive consistency as cognitive dissonance occurs when two

attitudes or attitude and behaviour conflict. Attitudes and attitude objects are functions of affective and cognitive components (Coleman, 2016). Attitude change may be possible, though affective and cognitive components tend to be intertwined. Attitudes are general evaluations of objects, ideas, and people one encounters throughout one's life (e.g., "capital punishment is bad"). Attitudes are important because they can guide thought, behaviour, and feelings. Attitude change occurs anytime an attitude is modified. Thus, change occurs when a person goes from being positive to negative, from slightly positive to very positive, or from having no attitude to having one. Because of the functional value of attitudes, the processes that change them have been a major focus throughout the history of social psychology (Inskoet, 2019).

Dating is a stage of romantic relationships in humans whereby two people meet socially with the aim of each assessing the other's suitability as a prospective partner in an intimate relationship (). It is a form of courtship, consisting of social activities done by the couple, either alone or with others. The protocols and practices of dating, and the terms used to describe it, vary considerably from country to country and over time. While the term has several meanings, the most frequent usage refers to two people exploring whether they are romantically or sexually compatible by participating in dates with the other. With the use of modern technology, people can date via telephone or computer or just meet in person. Dating may also involve two or more people who have already decided that they share romantic or sexual feelings toward each other. These people will have dates on a regular basis, and they may or may not be having sexual relations. This period of courtship is sometimes seen as a precursor to engagement. Some cultures require people to wait until a certain age to begin dating which has been a source of controversy (.The pressure to date the right person is real. Status in high school is often linked with who is hanging on your arm. At the same time, you may feel pressured to have sex with that person either by your friends or your date in order to fit in and be liked.

Substance abuse, also known as drug abuse, is the use of a drug in amounts or by methods which are harmful to the individual or others (Ryan, 2010). The pressure to fit in can get you into big trouble when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Not only are they illegal, they are bad for you. Both can have serious long-term effects. Parties with alcohol present are common in high school. Some students like to drink because they think it's cool. The prevalence of smoking increases dramatically during adolescence (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg 2017). Drugs and alcohol impair your judgment, causing you to do things you normally would not do, such as engaging in sex. In addition to possible physical, social, and psychological harm, use of some drugs may also lead to criminal penalties, although these vary widely depending on the local jurisdiction. Drugs most often associated with this term include: alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogens, methaqualone, and opioids. The exact cause of substance abuse is not clear, with the two predominant theories being: either a genetic disposition which is learned from others, or a habit which if addiction develops, manifests itself as a chronic debilitating disease (Yechiam & Ert, 2017).

Peer groups are among the most influential social forces affecting adolescent behaviour from mundane decisions concerning clothing, hairstyle, music, and entertainment, to more significant decisions concerning short and long-term education plans. More importantly, the nature of peer effects also has fundamental implications in a family's choice with regards whether parents consider that their offspring would benefit from schools which sort students according to their abilities (Foster, 2016). Therefore, prevention of initiation and progression is an important national health objective. Despite the risk, peer groups remain a very essential part of an individual because they have several benefits to an individual. Peer group is a safe place to meet like-minded individuals, allows one to take positive risk and test out values and opinions of others, test out their strengths and limitations, feel safe and boost their self-confidence, explore new and positive things including music, other interesting activities, feel understood and accepted by others going through the same phase and improve their ability to make personal choices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In early adulthood most people begin to accept their adult responsibility such as child bearing and career development. At this stage, young men and women experience major growth and aspire to become mature

adults able to accept adult responsibilities. Middle adulthood stage is faced with heavy responsibilities such as caring for their children, parents, handling career and lifestyles issues and so forth. Middle adulthood ranges from the ages of 35-60 years. This category is considered to be the full bloom of one's working ability whereby the changes they are experiencing are minor and not too negative as it's the situation in Nigeria. Younger teenagers are more easily persuaded by peer pressure as compared to older teenagers with the highest peer pressure influence being highest in eight and ninth grade. Personality characteristics of the adolescents like the level of confidence, degree of maturity and personality trait make a contribution on how teenagers will react to peer pressure.

Although it is commonly believed that adults make independent decisions based on their life experience, this is not always the case in most societies including Nigeria. Many adults are unknowingly making decisions under the influence of peer group pressure. Among the most difficult issues that worry the parents of most adolescents is when they decide to hang with the wrong crowd. Majority of the parents find it hard to manage such behavior and they will express grief that when they prohibited their adolescent from being together with the wrong peers, finally they changed to become a virtual attraction for their teenage children. Despite these developments, there is no empirical information on peer group pressure among adolescents as most studies focused on peer pressure among children. This study therefore intends to fill this gap of information by establishing the influence of peer group pressure on adolescents' smoking habits in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of peer group pressure on adolescents' smoking habit in selected secondary schools in Rivers State. In specific terms, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which social media addiction influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which dating and sex influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Investigate the extent to which substance abuse influences adolescents smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Find out the extent to which change in attitude influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does social media addiction influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent do dating and sex influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does substance abuse influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. To what extent does change in attitude influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which social media addiction influences their smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which dating and sex influence their smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which substance abuse influences their smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

4. There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which change in attitude influences their smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study was 34,168 Senior Secondary School Two (SSII) students in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the 2018/2019 academic session (Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, 2019). The sample size of the study was 380 students (176 Urban and 204 Rural) obtained by applying the online Fluid Survey Sample Size Calculator. The sample was categorized into urban [SSII] students (176) and rural [SSII] students (204) in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The instrument, Peer Group Pressure and Adolescents' Smoking Habit Questionnaire (PGPASHQ) is an instrument that elicits responses from adolescents on peer group pressure. The instrument was a 16-item questionnaire on a four point Likert-type scale. The researcher subjected the instrument to both face and content validity, which was scrutinized and finally refined for use. The test retest reliability was used on the instrument. This was on 2 co-educational schools with 40 adolescents from same school but not part of the school used for the sample in the study with a reliability coefficient of 0.81 established using Cronbach Alpha. The research questions were answered with means and standard deviations computed from the collected data, while the z-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent does social media addiction influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the extent social media addiction influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.**

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students (n <sub>1</sub> = 176)			Rural Students (n <sub>2</sub> = 204)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Social Media help adolescents to unleash their potentials.	3.14	1.24	High Extent	2.59	1.19	High Extent
2	It helps adolescents to be in touch with the world.	2.82	1.19	High Extent	3.01	1.22	High Extent
3	It fosters the sharing of information.	3.02	1.37	High Extent	3.12	1.31	High Extent
4	It has embraced connectivity	3.07	1.31	High Extent	2.73	1.10	High Extent
<b>Grand Scores and Decision</b>		<b>3.01</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The total sample for Urban and Rural students used for the study is 380 Urban and Rural adolescents in selected senior secondary schools with n<sub>1</sub> and n<sub>2</sub> representing the sub-samples for Urban and Rural students respectively.

**Decision:** Urban and Rural adolescents to a **HIGH EXTENT** agreed that items 1 - 4 on Table 1 establishes that social media addiction influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State: ( $2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$ ).

The information in Table 1 above shows that adolescents in urban schools have a grand mean of 3.01 and standard deviation of 1.28, while adolescents in rural schools have a grand mean of 2.86 and standard deviation of 1.21, indicating high extent influence of social media addiction on adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that adolescents in urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in agreement that social media addiction influences their smoking habit to a high extent.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does dating and sex influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Dating and Sex Influences Adolescents' Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.**

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students (n <sub>1</sub> = 176)			Rural Students (n <sub>2</sub> = 204)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
5	Dating among adolescents help them to maintain and build new relationships.	2.79	1.25	High Extent	2.80	1.26	High Extent
6	It helps to maintain friendship and good emotional health.	2.91	1.19	High Extent	2.63	1.17	High Extent
7	It stimulate better cognitive function in order to fit in and be liked.	2.54	1.24	High Extent	2.75	1.30	Extent
8	It improves the health and well-being of adolescents.	2.62	1.09	High Extent	2.92	1.41	High Extent
<b>Grand Scores and Decision</b>		<b>2.72</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The total sample for Urban and Rural adolescents used for the study is 380 Urban and Rural adolescents in senior secondary schools with n<sub>1</sub> and n<sub>2</sub> representing the sub-samples for Urban and Rural adolescents respectively.

**Decision:** Urban and Rural adolescents to a high extend agreed that items 5 - 8 on Table 2 measures the extent to which dating and sex influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State: ( $2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$ ).

The information in Table 2 above shows that adolescents in urban schools have a grand mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 1.19, while adolescents in rural schools have a grand mean of 2.78 and standard deviation of 1.29, implying high extent influence of dating and sex on adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This entails that adolescents in urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in agreement that dating and sex influences their smoking habit to a high extent.

**Research question 3:** *To what extent does substance abuse influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Substance Abuse Influences Adolescents' Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.**

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students (n <sub>1</sub> = 176)			Rural Students (n <sub>2</sub> = 204)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
9	Drug abuse prevents stigmatization	2.85	1.22	High Extent	3.15	1.54	High Extent
10	The prohibition laws are ineffective	3.01	1.30	High Extent	3.00	1.23	High Extent
11	It is common among adolescents today	2.59	1.15	High Extent	2.51	1.70	High Extent
12	It has a pervasive effect on adolescents.	3.15	1.27	High Extent	2.73	1.44	Low Extent
<b>Grand Scores and Decision</b>		<b>2.90</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The total sample for Urban and Rural adolescents used for the study is 380 Urban and Rural adolescents in senior secondary schools with n<sub>1</sub> and n<sub>2</sub> representing the sub-samples for Urban and Rural adolescents respectively.

**Decision:** Urban and Rural adolescents to a **HIGH EXTENT** agreed that items 9 - 12 on Table 3 measures the extent to which substance abuse influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State: ( $2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$ ).

The information in Table 3 above shows that adolescents in urban schools have a grand mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 1.24, while adolescents in rural schools have a grand mean of 2.85 and standard deviation of 1.48, depicting high extent influence of behaviour substance abuse on adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. To this end, it is pertinent to announce that adolescents in urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State consented that substance abuse influences adolescents’ smoking habit to a high extent.

**Research question 4:** *To what extent does change in attitude influence adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Change in Attitude Influences Adolescents’ Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students (n <sub>1</sub> = 176)			Rural Students (n <sub>2</sub> = 204)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
13	Change in attitude helps adolescents to grow	2.78	1.27	High Extent	2.83	1.16	High Extent
14	It challenges adolescents’ values and beliefs	3.05	1.21	High Extent	3.06	1.29	High Extent
15	It reveals the strength in an adolescent.	2.83	1.09	High Extent	2.51	1.10	High Extent
16	Change in attitude makes an adolescent to be compassionate.	2.90	1.23	High Extent	2.75	1.24	Low Extent
<b>Grand Scores and Decision</b>		<b>2.89</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The total sample for Urban and Rural adolescents used for the study is 380 Urban and Rural adolescents in senior secondary schools with n<sub>1</sub> and n<sub>2</sub> representing the sub-samples for Urban and Rural adolescents respectively.

**Decision:** Urban and Rural adolescents to a high extend agreed that items 13 - 16 on Table 4 maintains the extent to which change in attitude influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State:  $(2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49)$ .

The information in Table 4 above shows that adolescents in urban schools have a grand mean of 2.89 and standard deviation of 1.20, while adolescents in rural schools have a grand mean of 2.79 and standard deviation of 1.20, indicating high extent influence of change in attitude on adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This means that urban and rural adolescents in senior secondary schools in Rivers State are of the opinion that changes in attitude influences adolescents’ smoking habit to a high extent.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which social media addiction influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 5: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Social Media Addiction on Urban and Rural Adolescents’ Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	$\alpha$	Cal.(z)	Crit.(z)	Decision
Urban	176	3.08	1.36	378	0.05	0.76	1.96	Ho
Rural	204	3.41	1.72					Not Rejected

Table 5 displays z-test analysis of influence of social media addiction on adolescents’ smoking habit with calculated z [cal.(z)] = 0.76,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , degrees of freedom (Df) = 378 and critical z [crit.(z)] = 1.96. Thus, with cal.(z) = 0.76 < crit.(z) = 1.96, the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents on the extent to which social media addiction influences adolescents’ smoking

habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is not rejected. In other words, adolescents in the urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State consented that social media addiction significantly influences adolescents’ smoking habit to a high extent.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which dating and sex influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Dating and Sex on Urban and Rural Adolescents’ Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	A	Cal.(z)	Crit.(z)	Decision
Urban	176	3.01	1.25	378	0.05	0.93	1.96	Ho
Rural	204	3.76	1.84					Not Rejected

The information on Table 7 explores the z-test analysis of influence of social activities on adolescents’ smoking habit with calculated z [cal.(z)] = 0.93,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , degrees of freedom (Df) = 378 and critical z [crit.(z)] = 1.96. Thus, with cal.(z) = 0.93 < crit.(z) = 1.96, the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which dating and sex influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is not rejected. Thus, adolescents in the urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State are accepted that dating and sex obviously influences, to a high extent, adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which substance abuse influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 7: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Social Activities on Urban and Rural Adolescents’ Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	A	Cal.(z)	Crit.(z)	Decision
Urban	176	2.71	1.22	378	0.05	0.99	1.96	Ho
Rural	204	3.40	1.35					Not Rejected

Table 7 entails the z-test analysis of influence of substance abuse on adolescents’ smoking habit with calculated z [cal.(z)] = 0.99,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , degrees of freedom (Df) = 378 and critical z [crit.(z)] = 1.96. Thus, with cal.(z) = 0.99 < crit.(z) = 1.96, the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which substance abuse influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is accepted. This implies that adolescents’ smoking habit is positively influenced by substance abuse by adolescents in the urban and rural areas to a high extent.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which change in attitude influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 8: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Change in Attitude on Urban and Rural Adolescents’ Smoking Habit in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	$\alpha$	Cal.(z)	Crit.(z)	Decision
Urban	176	2.82	1.41	378	0.05	0.94	1.96	Ho
Rural	204	3.35	1.83					Not Rejected

The information in Table 8 shows the z-test analysis of influence of change in attitude on adolescents’ smoking habit with calculated z [cal.(z)] = 0.94,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , degrees of freedom (Df) = 378 and critical z



[crit.(z)] = 1.96. Thus, with  $\text{cal.}(z) = 0.94 < \text{crit.}(z) = 1.96$ , the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean response of adolescents in the urban and rural areas on the extent to which change in attitude influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is accepted. This means that adolescents in the urban and rural senior secondary schools in Rivers State agreed that change in attitude influences, to a high extent, adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study investigated influence of peer group pressure on adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State and found that social media addiction, social activities, substance abuse and change in attitude influence adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Social media addiction, as a measure of peer group pressure, was found to influence adolescents’ smoking habits in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In line with this finding, Weber (2016) established in his study that social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. He stated further that social media provides a massive new digital arena for peer pressure and influence. Yechiam and Ert (2017) suggested that there are a variety of benefits from social media use, such as increased socialization, exposure to ideas, and greater self-confidence. There is also evidence of negative influences such as advertising pressure, exposure to inappropriate behaviour and/or dialogue, and fake news, which in all influences adolescents smoking habit. These versions of digital peer pressure exist between youth, adults and businesses. In some cases, people can feel pressure to make themselves available 24/7 or to be perfect and as well deceive them to engage in smoking. The way adolescents portray themselves on social media might lead to young people trying to mimic those qualities or actions in an attempt at conformity such as smoking and the like. It may also lead to a fear of missing out, which can pressure youth into irresponsible actions or decisions. Actions and influence on social media may lead to changes in identity, confidence, or habits in real life for children, adolescents, and adults.

The extent of influence of dating and sex, as a measure of peer group pressure was found to be high on adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is supported by the view of Pierce and Gilpin (2015) that dating is a stage of romantic relationships in humans whereby two people meet socially with the aim of each assessing the other's suitability as a prospective partner in an intimate relationship. It is a form of courtship, consisting of social activities done by the couple, either alone or with others. The protocols and practices of dating, and the terms used to describe it, vary considerably from country to country and over time. While the term has several meanings, the most frequent usage refers to two people exploring whether they are romantically or sexually compatible by participating in dates with the other. With the use of modern technology, people can date via telephone or computer or just meet in person. Yechiam and Ert (2017) stated in line with this finding that dating also involve two or more people who have already decided that they share romantic or sexual feelings toward each other which obviously will influence adolescents’ smoking habit. These people will have dates on a regular basis, and they may or may not be having sexual relations. This period of courtship is sometimes seen as a precursor to engagement. Some cultures require people to wait until a certain age to begin dating which has been a source of controversy. The pressure to date the right person is real. Status in high school is often linked with who is hanging on your arm. At the same time, you may feel pressured to have sex with that person either by your friends or your date in order to fit in and be liked.

It was found out that substance abuse influences adolescents’ smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is in line with the findings of Ryan (2010) that substance abuse, also known as drug abuse, is the use of a drug in amounts or by methods which are harmful to the individual or others. The pressure to fit in can get you into big trouble when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Not only are they illegal, they are bad for you. Both can have serious long-term effects. Parties with alcohol present are

common in high school. Some students like to drink because they think it's cool. Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, and Schulenberg (2017) opined that the prevalence of smoking increases dramatically during adolescence. Drugs and alcohol impair your judgment, causing you to do things you normally would not do, such as engaging in sex. In addition to possible physical, social, and psychological harm, use of some drugs may also lead to criminal penalties, although these vary widely depending on the local jurisdiction. Drugs most often associated with this term include: alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogens, methaqualone, and opioids. Yechiam and Ert (2017) asserted that the exact cause of substance abuse is not clear, with the two predominant theories being: either a genetic disposition which is learned from others, or a habit which if addiction develops, manifests itself as a chronic debilitating disease.

The study further found change in attitude influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is in agreement with the result of Inskoet (2019) that attitudes are associated beliefs and behaviours towards some object. They are not stable, and because of the communication and behaviour of other people, are subject to change by social influences, as well as by the individual's motivation to maintain cognitive consistency as cognitive dissonance occurs when two attitudes or attitude and behaviour conflict. Attitudes and attitude objects are functions of affective and cognitive components. Coleman (2016) opined that change in attitude may be possible, though affective and cognitive components tend to be intertwined. Change in attitude is important because it can guide thought, behaviour, and feelings which invariably will deviate adolescents' interest in smoking. Attitude change occurs anytime an attitude is modified. Thus, change occurs when a person goes from being positive to negative, from slightly positive to very positive, or from having no attitude to having one. Because of the functional value of attitudes, the processes that change them have been a major focus among adolescents' smoking habit (Inskoet, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study have shown that peer group pressure (social media addiction, dating and sex, substance abuse, and change in attitude) influence adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The education of adolescents with respect to the harmful effect of smoking is one way of addressing the health of the future generation. Public health campaigns for smoking cessation should target not only the adolescents but also the families of adolescents attending schools. Peer group pressure has a greater influence on adolescents' behaviour than any other factor. This is because many adolescents spend most of their time with their peers than with their family, as the dealing among the peers is more direct and more powerful compared to others such as teachers and those in authority.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1 Adolescents and school stakeholders should be made aware of the dangers of social media addiction as it greatly influences adolescents' smoking habit in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 2 Parents, school administration and other stakeholders should advise adolescents on the consequences of dating and sex as it has influence on their smoking habit.
- 3 Adolescents should be advised to desist from substance abuse as it impairs their judgment and causes them to do things they normally would not do, such as engaging in premarital sex.
- 4 School administration and stakeholders should help adolescents in modifying their attitude which in turn will reduce their level of addiction towards smoking.

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