



Libraries and Psychosocial Determinants of Adolescent Substance Use and Mental Health in Nigeria: A Scoping Review

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Abstract. In Nigeria, adolescent substance use and mental health issues continue to pose public health problems as psychosocial factors which include family relationships, peer pressure, media exposure, and socioeconomic status drive these issues. Research has extensively studied these factors but scholars have not investigated how libraries can serve as community centers for mental health support and prevention work. This scoping review examines existing research from 2015 to 2025 which studies how psychosocial factors affect Nigeria's adolescent substance abuse and mental health problems, and it identifies library-based intervention points for further research. Researchers conducted a structured search using PRISMA-ScR framework which included PubMed, Scopus, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Nigerian academic databases. Eleven studies met inclusion criteria. The findings show that educational programs taking place in schools and community settings can create opportunities for mental health literacy, substance use prevention, and peer support programs even though the study did not assess library-based interventions directly. The review shows major research deficiencies as studies testing library-led programs and research on vulnerable adolescent groups remains insufficient. Future intervention studies must investigate how libraries create safe spaces for adolescent mental health support in low-resource environments according to the study results.

Keywords: Adolescent substance use, psychosocial factors, libraries and information literacy

1. Introduction

The public health issue of adolescent substance use in Nigeria results from multiple interlinked psychosocial factors, family dynamics, and environmental circumstances. Nigerian researchers have established that family dynamics function as a crucial factor which determines whether adolescents will engage in risk behaviors or remain safe from such activities. Studies found that family environments which included parental supervision, emotional support, and organized daily activities worked as protective factors that reduced the likelihood of substance use (Obadeji et al., 2020; Omotoso et al., 2023). The combination of dysfunctional family systems, parental substance use, and mental disorders leads to higher rates of substance initiation and addiction (Akinawo et al., 2025). The research results confirm previous studies established a connection between adolescent substance abuse and mental health problems in Nigerian youth (Igwe & Ojinnaka, 2010). The use of substances develops within complex human ecosystems including various social and environmental factors rather than appearing as an isolated problem.

Adolescent substance use continues to exist due to peer pressures which affect their decision-making. The students at school face social pressure, requiring them to follow peer group standards to gain acceptance (Omopo, Quadri, & Ukpere, 2025; Omotoso et al., 2023). A study found that when people spend time with peers who consider substance use acceptable, they become more likely to try substances especially in situations that lack adult supervision, and have easy access to substances (Taiwo & Olayemi, 2019). Peer

relationships function together with emotional distress, childhood neglect, and depressive symptoms to establish substance use as a method for handling difficult situations (Omopo, Quadri, & Ukpere, 2025). The study results demonstrate how school and community environments create both dangerous conditions and opportunities to stop substance abuse.

The social and environmental contexts existing beyond family and peer relationships function as essential factors shaping adolescent behavior. Young people who use social media want to access content on multiple platforms which increases their chances of facing cyberbullying and experiencing pressure to compare themselves with others and developing dangerous behaviors (Omopo, Quadri, & Ukpere, 2025). Another study found that adolescents who watch media content develop their own methods for handling stress which also affect their ability to deal with stress (Akinbo & Omoto, 2024). Urban areas and low-income neighborhoods show higher rates of substance use, as structural social inequalities increase psychosocial vulnerability (Habila et al., 2025; Paul & Kabiru, 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how health awareness programs and community centers implement their functional programs to educate people about health matters (Omopo, 2021). The study showed how youth behavior changes due to youth behavioral patterns which depend on their information access to health information inside their community.

Mental health problems like anxiety and depression, stress, sleep problems, and resilience deficits directly relate to how adolescents and young adults use substances. Ibigbami et al. (2023) established through their research that adolescents who experience psychological distress through two different forms of resilience exhibit higher rates of psychoactive substance use. Omopo (2025) showed through his research that stress, sleep disorders, and substance use among tertiary students show structural links. The findings show how psychosocial vulnerability develops from late adolescence through young adulthood although tertiary populations slightly exceed the conventional adolescent age range. The structured psychological approaches which include cognitive reframing and stress inoculation training show effective results in treating trauma-related distress according to intervention research conducted among Nigerian adults (Offor & Omopo, 2025). The studies demonstrate how mental health intervention research functions throughout Nigeria, while establishing the need for accessible psychoeducational facilities.

Studies on psychosocial determinants leading to substance use and mental health challenges remains underexplored as researchers have not studied how libraries and library services might help the system through their contributions. Libraries serve as educational, informational, and community-based institutions that enable people to access multiple resources they have organized, while teaching them information literacy skills and providing them with structured learning facilities. Studies began to examine how libraries help adolescents who need to cope with their problems through programs which prevent substance use (Akinbo & Omoto, 2024; Sulaimon et al., 2023). The school-based prevention discussions which extend beyond their current limits show how libraries need to operate as part of the educational infrastructure existing in schools (Shuaibu et al., 2020). Libraries serve as essential platforms enabling youth to learn about mental health and media literacy through their mission to provide equal access to information especially in areas that lack specialized mental health services.

The scoping review investigates existing research about psychosocial factors leading to adolescent substance use and mental health in Nigeria, while assessing the role libraries play in the existing research from both direct and indirect evidence. This review synthesizes adolescents, youths, and Nigerian mental health studies to clarify research relationships, and determine which areas need more investigation through library-based research

1.1 Research Questions

- What role do libraries play in addressing psychosocial factors (family dynamics, peer pressure, media exposure) that contribute to substance use among Nigerian adolescents?
- What evidence exists regarding library-based interventions in addressing adolescent substance use and mental health?
- What are the key challenges and barriers faced by libraries in implementing interventions to support adolescent substance use prevention and mental health in Nigerian communities?

2. Research Methodology

The study uses a scoping review approach which followed the guidelines established by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR). The researchers chose a scoping review method to create a comprehensive map of all existing studies

which investigated how psychosocial factors affect adolescent substance use and mental health in Nigeria, while examining the role of libraries within this research area. The review included studies between 2015 and 2025, studied adolescents between 10 and 19 years old while investigating how family dynamics, peer pressure, media exposure, and socioeconomic conditions affect their mental health. The study selection process used peer reviewed articles, and included both qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches together with literature reviews that studied Nigeria and similar low-resource countries. Studies focusing exclusively on adult populations, commentaries without empirical data, conference abstracts, and publications outside the specified timeframe were excluded, except where older studies were considered foundational for contextual understanding.

The researchers performed a systematic search throughout different electronic databases which included PubMed, Scopus, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and specific Nigerian institutional repositories. Search terms were combined using Boolean operators and included phrases such as “adolescent substance use

Nigeria,” “psychosocial factors and Nigerian adolescents,” “mental health and peer pressure Nigeria,” “libraries and adolescent mental health,” and “information literacy and substance use prevention.” The research team began by screening titles and abstracts to determine their relevance before they assessed full-text documents of studies which met eligibility criteria. The review process included 11 studies which satisfied the inclusion requirements. Researchers created data charts through a structured extraction form which documented study features, population information, and all psychosocial variables which were studied and all intervention programs which were tested through school or community designs including libraries. The researchers used descriptive and thematic synthesis methods to analyze the data as the study designs and outcomes showed variations, while they aimed to discover common psychosocial factors and potential library-based engagement methods. The researchers conducted mapping of existing evidence through a scoping review process, which required them to establish research gaps without performing risk-of-bias evaluations.

3. Results

3.1 Study Characteristics

A total of 11 studies were included in this scoping review after applying the eligibility criteria. The study selection process is summarized in Figure 1:

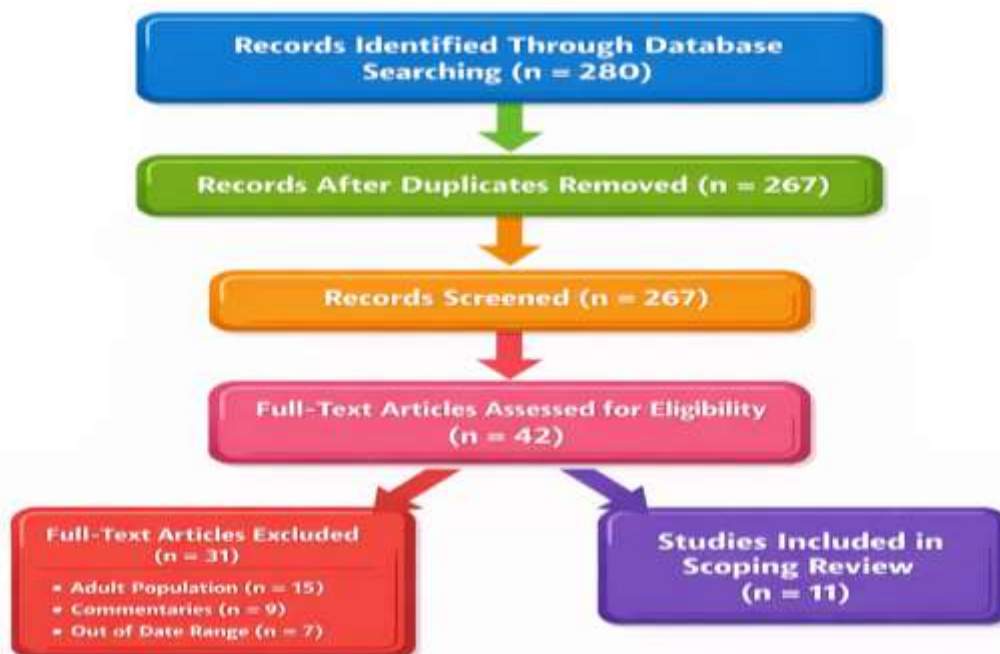


Figure 1: PRISMA-ScR flow diagram illustrating the study selection process.

The research studies which were selected for this analysis included studies which occurred between 2015 and 2025. The studies made use of cross-sectional survey designs for most of their investigation, while some studies applied qualitative methods and others followed literature review methods. The research studies took place across multiple Nigerian states which displayed various geographic environments that existed in low-resource regions.

The studies investigated multiple psychosocial elements that impacted how adolescents used substances and their mental well-being. The elements which affected substance use and mental health included family dynamics through parental monitoring and family conflict together with peer pressure, peer acceptance, and media use through social media dependence, and psychological distress which encompassed anxiety and depression, stress and socioeconomic factors. The included studies did not assess library-based interventions through direct evaluation. Two studies identified educational or school-based platforms as potential library operating environments which fostered mental health literacy development and substance use prevention educational programs. The existing research presents strong evidence about how psychosocial factors lead to adolescent substance use and mental health problems, studies about how libraries function as intervention sites has been briefly investigated.

Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies on Psychosocial Factors Influencing Adolescent Substance Use and Mental Health in Nigeria

Study	Geographic Location	Study Design	Population	Psychosocial Factors Addressed	Key Findings Relevant to Review	Reference to Libraries
Obadeji et al. (2020)	Nigeria (Lagos)	Cross-sectional	Adolescent high school students	Family dynamics, peer pressure, mental health	Parental monitoring and peer influence significantly associated with substance use	None
Paul & Kabiru (2025)	Nigeria (Abuja)	Cross-sectional	Adolescents	Family dynamics, substance use	Substance abuse negatively associated with adolescent mental health	None
Omotoso et al. (2023)	Nigeria (Ilorin)	Cross-sectional	Secondary school students	Peer pressure, social environment	Peer-related factors strongly linked to substance use	None
Akinawo et al. (2025)	Nigeria (Akungba-Akoko)	Cross-sectional	In-school adolescents	Parental factors, psychopathologies	Parental variables predicted substance abuse tendencies	None
Shuaibu et al. (2020)	Nigeria	Literature review	Secondary school students	Psychoactive substance use, peer influence	Emphasized school-based psychoeducation approaches	Indirect (school-based platforms)
Ibigbami et al. (2023)	Nigeria	Cross-sectional	Adolescents	Anxiety, depression, resilience	Mental health variables associated with psychoactive substance use	None
Taiwo & Olayemi (2019)	Nigeria (Osun State)	Cross-sectional	Secondary school students	Socioeconomic factors, substance use	Socioeconomic vulnerability linked to substance abuse	None
Omopo, Quadri, & Ukpere (2025)	Nigeria	Cross-sectional	Adolescents	Peer acceptance, childhood neglect, depression	Social media dependence and peer pressure associated with distress	None
Habila et al. (2025)	Nigeria (Cross River)	Cross-sectional	Adolescents	Substance use, psychosocial correlates	Identified prevalence and psychosocial predictors	None
Akinbo & Omoto (2024)	Nigeria (Benin)	Qualitative	Adolescents	Media exposure, stress	Media influence contributes to stress and coping behaviors	Suggests potential library role in mental health education
Sulaimon et al. (2023)	Nigeria (Ogun State)	Cross-sectional	Secondary school students	Peer pressure, substance use	Recommended educational awareness strategies	Suggests potential library role in prevention

3.2 Findings on Library-Related Opportunities

The studies included in this research could not assess whether library-based programs effectively reduced substance use among teenagers and improved their mental health conditions. However, two studies (Akinbo & Omoto, 2024;

Sulaimon et al., 2023) referenced educational and information-based strategies that could conceptually be supported within library environments. The research conducted by Shuaibu et al. (2020) showed how educational psychoeducation programs delivered at schools need library resources as essential components of their entire educational system.

The literature suggests that libraries, particularly within school settings, may serve as platforms for information dissemination, mental health literacy promotion, and youth engagement activities. These potential roles of the library remain theoretical until scientists conduct research to test their existence. The research found no studies that assessed the results of library-based programs, which created a significant gap in existing evidence about library programming.

Table 2: Conceptual Opportunities for Library Engagement Identified in the Literature

Library-Related Activity	Studies Referencing the Concept	Nature of Evidence
Information literacy and psychoeducation	Shuaibu et al. (2020), Sulaimon et al. (2023)	Suggested within school-based educational strategies
Mental health awareness programming	Akinbo & Omoto (2024)	Conceptual recommendation
Peer discussion platforms	Sulaimon et al. (2023)	Implied through school-based prevention initiatives

3.3 Psychosocial Factors and Conceptual Role of Libraries

The research identified psychosocial factors which educational and informational programs could address, although the investigations did not test library programs. Researchers found four major themes which participants reported throughout their study: family dynamics, peer pressure, media exposure, and psychological distress. Family-related factors such as parental monitoring and family conflict were associated with substance use risk, suggesting that family education resources and parenting support materials could be disseminated through community-based platforms. The study found a strong connection between peer pressure and social media habits which led to specific adolescent behavior patterns, thus emphasizing the importance of media literacy and resilience-building programs. The study found that mental health problems which included anxiety and depression, and stress were major reasons why people used substances, thus making mental health education and coping skills training essential. People who experienced socioeconomic vulnerability faced increased risk as they needed basic information which should be provided through affordable services to people who live in underserved areas.

Table 3: Psychosocial Factors Influencing Adolescent Substance Use and Conceptual Entry Points for Libraries

Psychosocial Factor	Study References	Conceptual Library Role
Family dynamics	Obadeji et al. (2020); Akinlawo et al. (2025)	Parent education materials; family-focused information resources
Peer pressure	Omotoso et al. (2023); Sulaimon et al. (2023)	Youth engagement programs; peer discussion spaces
Media exposure and social media influence	Omopo et al. (2025); Akinbo & Omoto (2024)	Media literacy workshops; digital awareness resources
Stress, anxiety, depression	Ibigbami et al. (2023); Habila et al. (2025)	Mental health literacy campaigns; coping skills programming
Socioeconomic vulnerability	Taiwo & Olayemi (2019)	Accessible prevention materials in underserved communities

4. Discussion

The scoping review results create a mapping of current research studies which investigated how psychosocial elements affect adolescent substance use and mental health conditions in Nigeria and provide library engagement points which researchers can use to study this evidence base. The included studies show that adolescent substance use and psychological distress develop through a combination of family dynamics with peer pressure, media exposure, and socioeconomic vulnerability. Although strong evidence exists for these determinants, no empirical research has investigated how libraries contribute to reducing adolescent substance use and mental health

problems. The specific need for future research exists because libraries establish their presence in both school and community environments. Studies identified family dynamics and peer influence as primary factors which controlled the outcome of their research.

Parents who control their children's activities provide them with emotional support to create a family environment, which leads to two outcomes, either to protect from or to increase the danger of adolescent substance use (Obadeji et al., 2020; Akinlawo et al., 2025). Substance use behaviors showed a strong relationship with peer pressure, and social environmental factors according to research findings

from Omotoso et al. (2023) and Taiwo and Olayemi (2019). The study results confirm existing theories about adolescent behavior, which state that close social surroundings greatly impact how teenagers behave. The literature points to educational settings using structured family interventions as the direct path to teaching families about libraries. Shuaibu et al. (2020) established school-based psychoeducation as the main educational tool which should expand library operations within educational systems.

Social media dependence and media exposure lead to increased stress and vulnerability among adolescents. Omopo, Quadri, and Ukpere (2025) found that people who use social media face two problems, which include social pressure to fit in with their peers and psychological distress. The research from Akinbo and Omoto (2024) showed that media exposure directly impacts how adolescents handle stress and develop coping mechanisms. The findings show that organizations should use media literacy programs together with critical information engagement to create preventive measures against health problems. The libraries in this context function as platforms which provide digital literacy programs to help adolescents evaluate online content with critical thinking skills, while they deal with media-related pressures. The library-based media literacy programs that have been developed require research to show how they influence substance use and mental health outcomes.

The review demonstrates that psychological distress especially anxiety and depression, and stress has a strong connection with substance use in adolescents (Ibigbami et al. 2023 Habila et al. 2025). The research findings demonstrate multiple mental health literacy and coping skills education needs, which should be made available to the public. All studies proposed school-based awareness initiatives, but none of them conducted assessments of libraries as delivery locations for educational programs. Socioeconomic vulnerability serves as a risk factor for substance use (Taiwo and Olayemi, 2019), which establishes the need for affordable information resources to reach underserved areas. Libraries function as dedicated spaces that provide free educational resources to everyone, thus establishing inclusive environments, enabling prevention activities which face resource limitations in their respective domains.

The scoping review establishes its primary value by showing an important evidence gap which exists as no studies have tested library programs for adolescent substance prevention in Nigeria, although library services should connect with psychosocial prevention methods. The existing research concentrates on

finding risk elements, but it does not evaluate solutions which would be implemented through community activities or through informational resources. The research environment needs intervention-based studies to establish program impacts and effectiveness, yet this study reveals a positive direction for upcoming research. The research requires experimental studies combined with longitudinal studies and implementation studies to determine how libraries will become part of school, community mental health systems, and to measure specific results that will emerge from these operations. The scoping review shows that Nigeria has well-documented psychosocial risk factors for adolescent substance use and mental health issues, but libraries need more research to verify their educational role. Libraries function as educational spaces which allow public access without creating identifying experiences thus, they enable mental health literacy activities, helping young people stay healthy. The possibilities of these facilities need research evidence verifying their existence. Research needs to shift from theoretical discussions to practical studies, analyzing library-based programs and their impact on adolescent welfare in resource-limited areas.

5. Conclusion

The scoping review investigated all available research, which studied how psychosocial elements affect drug use and mental health among adolescents in Nigeria, while it specifically studied ways library services can support educational activities. The research findings indicate that family relationships, peer pressure, media consumption, psychological distress, and socioeconomic vulnerability all serve as critical factors that shape the development of risk behaviors in adolescents. Research exists on how psychosocial elements impact adolescent behavior, yet researchers have not studied how libraries help reduce youth substance use and mental health problems. The review identifies a research deficit, libraries possess conceptual links to prevention-based programs which include information literacy education, mental health awareness, and youth engagement initiatives, yet available studies fail to show how libraries directly impact adolescent substance use and mental health in Nigeria. Libraries operate as educational resources, serving as community centers that provide essential services to libraries who work with adolescents. Research needs to progress from theoretical analysis to practical studies to show how libraries function within both school mental health programs and community mental health initiatives.

6. Implications for Theory and Practice

The scoping review establishes theoretical connections between adolescent substance use and mental health by examining library functions in relation to psychosocial factors within environmental contexts. Existing theoretical models focus on human relationships and environmental factors through their research frameworks which study family systems, peer networks, and environmental determinants. The review findings indicate that libraries function as community resources which support adolescent development according to their place in ecological development frameworks. The library system operates as information centers which provide secure environments and educational resources to establish connections with family networks, peer relationships, and media exposure, which all play a role in shaping adolescent behavior. The development of future theoretical models should include libraries as social infrastructure elements, which influence psychosocial risk pathways and resilience development.

The findings demonstrate a need to expand the number of organizations which should participate in programs that protect adolescent mental health and prevent substance use problems. Libraries in under-resourced communities need to become prevention programs, yet schools, families, healthcare providers, and community organizations remain the main prevention actors. Studies show that libraries can enhance existing mental health initiatives by helping people learn about mental health, creating pathways to prevention resources, and delivering organized programs for young people. The functions of these entities exist only in theory, yet they need scientific research to prove their actual existence. Policymakers and practitioners should investigate pilot programs that use libraries for mental health initiatives in schools and community spaces.

7. Recommendations

The scoping review revealed research deficiencies which led to specific recommendations:

Educational stakeholders together with policymakers must identify methods to include libraries in mental health programs which operate within educational institutions and their surrounding communities. Pilot programs could assess the feasibility of delivering prevention education, information literacy workshops, or youth engagement activities through library platforms.

Libraries may benefit from partnerships with schools, public health entities, and community organizations to build joint prevention programs. Collaborative methods would enable better resource distribution, while helping to reach out to young people who live in areas with insufficient services.

Training in mental health literacy and adolescent psychosocial development may strengthen librarians' capacity to support youth-focused initiatives. Librarians who complete this training will not become clinicians but they will learn how to guide users toward valid information together with professional referral networks.

Educational institutions and government bodies should include libraries in their mental health programs to tackle adolescent substance use and mental health issues. Library-based initiatives need evidence-based funding which will enable pilot projects and implementation research to create their library-based initiatives.

The adoption of these recommendations will lead to practical applications that will make libraries to become evidence-based tools for adolescent mental health treatment and substance use prevention. Community-based institutions like libraries need more empirical research and policy assessment in Nigeria as specialized service access gets limited in low-resource regions.

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