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IMPACT OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS IN GOMBE STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: ADDRESSING YOUTH RESTIVENESS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fatusi Arike Omobolanle¹, Salau Abiola Olanrewaju² Bwala Suleiman James³, Doka Dacip Yerima⁴

¹Department of Science Education, National Open University of Nigeria. ^{2,3&4}Natural Sciences Department, School of Sciences, College of Education Billiri, Gombe State. Nigeria.

> Corresponding Author's Phone No: 07066503993 Corresponding Author Email: salauolanrewaju10@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is on the effects of drug abuse on students' academic performance, health, and social relationships with a particular focus on science students at the Gombe State College of Education Billiri. Structured questionnaires were used to gather primary data through a simple random sampling technique. In total, 150 questionnaires were distributed and successfully retrieved for the study. The data collected were analyzed using basic averages and percentages. The respondents consisted of both males and females, aged between 15 and 40 years, and were students from various faculties within the college. Findings from the study showed that the majority of the respondents were females while most of the respondents fell in the age bracket 21-30. the most commonly used drugs among the students were alcohol, cannabis, and tramadol. The primary factors contributing to drug abuse among students are a lack of parental care, peer pressure, and poor relationships between teachers and students. The study further showed that over 70% of respondents felt that drug abuse affects their social lives, and a similar percentage agreed that it also has a negative impact on their academic performance.

Keywords: Drugs, Abuse, Academic performance, Health, Effects

Introduction

Drug abuse

Drug usage among young people in Nigeria is becoming rampant and deserves every necessary attention from all institutions to deal with the menace. It has been a disaster for the country's overall sustainable growth. Substance abuse is a severe problem that affects people of different ages, tribes, and



races all over the world, especially in developing nations like Nigeria. A drug is defined as a substance that causes addiction, and habituation on a marked range in consciousness (Possi, 2018). Sahu and Sahu (2012) define a 'drug' as any pharmaceutical preparation or naturally occurring substance produce physiological that may biochemical effects on the user. This definition includes all substances that cause a change in the emotional, physiological, and psychological activity of a human being when used. Drugs can be abused when taken irrationally.

Drug abuse is the taking of drugs or the deliberate use of drugs for purposes other than their intended purpose without the supervision of a physician or a medical practitioner. In addition, 'drug addiction' is the continuous uncontrolled, compulsive use of a drug not only to include intoxication but also to avoid the tortures of withdrawal (Ahmed, 2019). A substance is considered abused if it is deliberately used to induce physiological or psychological effects or both for purposes other than therapeutic ones and when the use contributes to health risks or some combinations of these (Imam, 2019). The terms "drugs," "drug misuse," and "drug abuse" are frequently used interchangeably, yet they have distinct meanings. The use of a drug for a purpose it was not intended for is known as drug abuse. Following medical advice while using medicines without necessarily wanting to "get high" from them is called misusing them. People who use drugs without a prescription are generally seen to be abusing drugs. It has been

observed that these people not only use drugs in ways that are not recommended by a doctor, but they enjoy its effects. Okafor (2020) postulates that a connection exists between drug misuse and feelings of euphoria, relaxation, and 'getting high'. Drugs can be taken in many ways by people.

According to Olowo (2020), a drug can be taken in several ways which include but are not limited to chewing, injecting, sniffing, swallowing, and smoking. Udama (2013) added that substance abuse is not limited to prohibited drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines but also prescribed drugs such as valium, diazepam, etc. Societal vices associated with drug abuse include an increase in the rate of robbery, burglary, rape, damage of public properties, STIs, and the congestion of our correctional centers thereby mounting much pressure governments with little resources (Abiodun, 2021). Despite the unrelenting effort of individuals, agencies, mass media, and the government at different levels against drug abuse, the prevalent practice among postschool students, primary **Tertiary** Institutions, teenagers, and elderly ones in the community has not reduced but rather growing geometrically.

This paper discussed the following in the subsection; classifications of drugs and factors that motivate the use of drugs by the youths.

Classification of drugs

Drugs can be categorized into different groups depending on the type of effects they produce in an individual, whether short-term



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or long-term. The classifications of drugs include the following; stimulants. hallucinogens, sedatives, miscellaneous, and tranquilizers. According to NAFDAC (2000), the following drugs are classified as abused drugs in Nigeria.

- a. Stimulants: These are chemicals that directly affect and excite the central nervous system. At first, users of these substances report feeling more energized experiencing other positive benefits. The major source of these comes from caffeine substances (Fareo, 2012).
- b. Hallucinogens: These drugs modify the brain's sensory processing unit. They cause hallucinations, anxiety and exhilaration, inner delight and grief, and perception. They typically originate from substances like marijuana, LSD, and others (Ekeagwu, 2018).
- c. Narcotics: These drugs relieve pain, induce sleep, and are addictive. They are mostly found in heroin, codeine, opium, etc. (Adenugba & Okeshola, 2018).
- d. Sedatives: Because of the widespread perception that these drugs reduce tension and anxiety, they are among the most often used and misused substances. Some of them assist people fall asleep, de-stress, relax, or forget about their troubles. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine, and chloroform (Haladu, 2003).
- e. Miscellaneous: This class of volatile solvents or inhalants gives users a persistent emotional disinhibition, euphoric high, and cognitive distortion. long-lasting The

primary sources include chemicals, glues, spot removers, tube repair, scents, and so on (Okafor, 2020).

f. Tranquilizers: Tranquilizers are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium among others (Fareo, 2012).

Factors that motivate the abuse of drugs

Five major factors that motivate drug abuse among students are peer pressure, experimental curiosity, lack of parental supervision, academic-induced frustration, and ignorance (Agwogie, 2016). While Udama (2013)agreed with aforementioned factors he also included a demand for more energy to do work, availability of drugs, and personal problems as factors leading to the abuse of drugs among students.

- i. Peer pressure: A peer group consists of people who are almost all of the same age bracket and carry out their day-today activities together. According to Abdulraheem (2013), the need to be carried along by other members of the group may be a reason for involving in drugs by a member. Since young people appear to be more comfortable and relaxed amid their peers, they are most likely to be involved in what their peers do (Agwogie, 2016).
- Experimental curiosity: According to Haladu (2003) curiosity to experiment the unknown facts about drugs motivates adolescents into drug use. The curiosity of young adolescents to try out new things also leads some of

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them into a land of no return with the abuse of drugs, a young adolescent mind is always active and ready to learn new things either good or bad depending on the type of environment and people in that environment.

iii. Availability of drugs: When drugs are readily available and cheap in the market without proper monitoring and control by agencies in charge of drug administration there will always be an increase in the rate at which people use and abuse such drugs. When drugs are easily obtained and sales are not properly monitored by the government this aids in the increment in the level of abuse of such drugs (Ajibade *et al.*, 2015).

Statement of problem

Various researches have shown the upward trend of drug abuse among youths in different countries around the world but the menace is becoming too common in this part of Africa. The abuse of drugs begins as a form of experimental curiosity and peer influence if not checked at a very early stage becomes an addiction that cannot be done away with, as previous studies have shown that most youths who are involved in drug abuse are mostly in higher institutions and away from the monitoring of their parents. The impact of drug abuse has a dangerous effect on society, No one is immune from addiction as anyone can be addicted, and when it occurs, has serious social impacts on every aspect of an addict's life. The impact could be loss of relationships, legal actions, and termination of employment, health, and in the case of students, expulsion from the educational institute.

Research Objectives

The study primarily evaluated the impact of drug abuse among students at Gombe State College of Education. The specific objectives are as follows:

- 1. To identify the factors contributing to drug abuse.
- 2. To evaluate the extent to which drug abuse affects the social lives of students in higher education.
- 3. To explore the impact of drug abuse on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

- 1. What are the factors responsible for drug abuse?
- 2. To what degree does drug abuse impact the social lives of students in higher education?
- 3. What effect does drug abuse have on the academic performance of students in tertiary education?

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among NCE students at the College of Education Billiri in Gombe State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 students to participate in the study. Data collection was done using a specially designed questionnaire titled the Drug Abuse

Questionnaire (DAQ), which was adapted from Abiodun (2021). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A gathered socio-demographic information about the students, while Section B focused on the research questions that guided the study. A Likert Rating Scale was employed to assess respondents' perceptions, with options ranging from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), to strongly disagree (1). The validity of the instrument was ensured

through expert review of the test items. All questionnaires were distributed simultaneously in a designated hall where students were thoroughly briefed on the purpose of the exercise. The questionnaires were self-administered, and all returned questionnaires were included in the study. Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, standard deviation, and percentages, were used to analyze the data.

Result

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

SN	Variables		Frequency	%	
1	Gender	Female	91	62.3	
		Male	55	37.7	
		Total	146	100	
2	Age	15-20	26	17.8	
		21-30	96	65.8	
		31-40	24	16.4	
		Total	146	100	
3	Level	NCE 1	19	13.0	
		NCE 2	62	42.5	
		NCE 3	65	44.5	
		Total	146	100	
4	The most frequently used drugs.	Amphetamine	6	4.1	
		Cannabis	35	24.9	
		Alcohol	65	44.5	
		Aphrodisiacs	3	2.1	
		Heroin	5	3.4	
		Tramadol	32	21.9	
		Total	146	100	

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered with a total of 146 duly filled and returned. From Table 1 it can be seen that the majority of the respondents are females with 91 amounting to 62.3% of the respondents while the male gender had 55 amounting to 37.7% of the total respondents. The Table also shows that the majority of the respondents are students in NCE 3 with a total of 65



respondents amounting to 44.5% closely followed by respondents in NCE 2 with a total of 62 respondents amounting to 42.5% while the least level of the respondents is the NCE 1 with a total of 19 respondents with 13%. The Table also presents the most commonly used drugs among the students with alcohol having the majority at 44.5% closely followed by cannabis at 24.9% and tramadol at 21.9% with the least of the most commonly used drugs being aphrodisiacs with a paltry 2.1%. from the above table, it can be deduced that most of the students are more in favor of consuming alcohol rather than cannabis or tramadol.

Table 2: The respondents level of drug consumption.

SN	Statements		Yes	No
1	Have you used drugs other than those required	F	50	96
	for medical reasons?			
		%	34.2	65.8
2	Have you abused prescription drugs before?	F	41	105
		%	28.1	79.1
3	Can you get through the week without using drugs?	F	120	26
		%	82.2	17.8
4	Have you engaged in illegal activities to obtain drugs?	F	29	117
	-	%	19.9	80.1

Table 2: This table presents data on the respondents' drug consumption, categorized by yes or no responses. According to Table 2, 65.8% of the respondents reported never using drugs outside of medical purposes, while 34.2% indicated they have used non-prescription drugs. Additionally, 28.1% admitted to having abused prescription medications, whereas the majority, 79.9%, stated they have never misused prescription drugs. Furthermore, 82.2% of respondents asserted they could go a week without using drugs, and 80.1% reported they have never engaged in illegal activities to obtain drugs.

RQ 1: What are the factors responsible for drug abuse?

Table 3: Factors responsible for drug abuse

Statements	Count	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	Decision
Lack of parental care	F	54	68	14	10	1.86	Accept
	%	37.0	46.6	9.6	6.8		
Peer influence	F	43	74	17	12	1.99	Accept
	%	29.5	50.7	11.6	8.2		



Educational stress	F %	28 19.2	50 34.2	33 22.6	35 24.0	2.51	Accept
Nature of extra-curricular activities	F	22	57	38	29	2.51	Accept
	%	15.1	39.0	26.0	19.9		
Emotional stress	F	31	47	44	24	2.42	Accept
	%	21.2	32.2	30.1	16.4		
Poor teacher-student	F	30	53	28	35	2.47	Accept
relationship							
	%	20.5	36.3	19.2	24.0		
Experimental curiosity	F	32	58	38	18	2.29	Accept
	%	21.9	39.7	26.0	12.3		

Research Question 1 aimed to identify the factors contributing to drug abuse among youths. Table 3 reveals that all the listed factors are considered responsible for drug abuse, as their mean scores exceeded the set criterion mean. These factors include lack of parental care, peer influence, the nature of extracurricular activities, poor teacher-student relationships, experimental curiosity, educational stress, and emotional stress.

RQ2: To what degree does drug abuse impact the social lives of students in higher education?

Table 4: The degree to which drug abuse affects the social lives of students in higher education

Statements	Count	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	Decision
Strained relationships	F	48	73	18	7	1.89	Accept
with friends							
	%	32.9	50.0	12.4	4.8		
Reduces sense of value	F	47	71	23	5	1.90	Accept
	%	32.2	48.6	15.8	3.4		
Increased impulsivity	F	46	74	18	8	1.92	Accept
and risk-taking							
behaviors							
	%	31.5	50.7	12.3	5.5		
Indiscipline	F	50	69	20	7	1.89	Accept
	%	34.2	47.3	13.7	4.8		
Increases crime	F	52	59	23	12	1.97	Accept
tendencies							
	%	35.6	40.4	15.8	8.2		

Research question 2 aimed to assess how drug abuse affects the social life of students in higher education. According to the responses, 82.9% of participants agreed that drug abuse strains friendships, 82.2% felt it increases impulsivity and risk-taking behaviors, 81.5% believed it leads to indiscipline, 80.8% thought it diminishes a sense of self-worth, and 76% agreed that it heightens criminal tendencies among youths.

RQ 3: How does drug abuse affect the academic performance of students in higher education?

Table 5: impact of drug abuse on the education of students in tertiary education

Statements	Count	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	Decision
Declining grades	F	52	56	28	10	1.97	Accept
	%	35.6	38.4	19.2	6.8		
Absenteeism from school and other activities	F	50	75	15	6	1.84	Accept
	%	34.2	51.4	10.3	4.1		
Potential for dropping out of school	F	61	56	21	8	1.84	Accept
	%	41.8	38.4	14.4	5.5		
Low level of commitment to education	F	59	61	20	6	1.82	Accept
	%	40.4	41.8	13.7	4.1		
Lead to problems with working memory due to changes in adolescent brain activity	F	63	53	17	13	1.86	Accept
-	%	43.2	36.3	11.6	8.9		

Research question 3 was designed to evaluate the impact of drug abuse on students' education in tertiary institutions. According to the findings, 85.6% of respondents agreed that drug abuse leads to absenteeism from school and other activities, 82.2% believed it results in a lower commitment to education, and 80.2% felt it could cause students to drop out. Additionally, 79.5% thought drug abuse leads to issues with working memory due to changes in brain activity during adolescence, and 74% agreed that it contributes to declining academic performance.



Discussion

A total of 150 respondents were duly selected from the various levels in the college for the research out of which a total of 146 questionnaires were correctly filled and duly submitted. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of the respondents were females with a total of 62.3% which is not in tandem with the study of Enakpoya, (2009) who had the majority of the respondents as males, due mainly to the fact that a lot of males do not yearn for colleges of education while the female's fancies being teachers and are more concerned about staying close to their families. It is also noteworthy that the majority of the respondents were young people within the age bracket of 21-30 years which is in line with the findings of Adeyemo Florence et al., (2016) and Nevadomsky (1985) while in disagreement with the findings from the study conducted by Otiena, (2009) and Odejide, (2000) which accounted for the mean age of most respondents to be about 18 years respectively.

The result of this study further reveals that 34.2% of the sample respondents have at one time or the other taken drugs for reasons other than for medical purposes which is low compared to the finding of Abiodun, (2021) which recorded 65% of respondents who have abused drugs while also close to the result obtained in the study of Adeyemo Florence et al., (2016) which obtained a 43.9% of respondents who have one time abused drugs other than the ones prescribed to them by medical personnel's. The study findings reveal that the most commonly

abused drugs among students at the college include, but are not limited to, cannabis, alcohol, tramadol, amphetamines, aphrodisiacs, and heroin. These results align with previous research by Muhammad et al. (2012), Imam (2019), and Abiodun (2021). Additionally, the study found that alcohol, cannabis, and tramadol were the most frequently abused substances, while heroin and aphrodisiacs were less commonly abused, largely due to their limited availability in the community.

The study further sought the understanding of the factors responsible for the menace of drug abuse among students with the first research auestion. the following factors discovered to be the major causes of drug abuse among the students in the college; lack of parental care, peer influence and experimental curiosity, poor teacher-student nature of extra-curricular relationship. activities, emotional stress and educational stress. This finding is in agreement with the earlier study of Maithya, (2009), Adeyemo Florence et al., (2016), and Abiodun, (2021). Poor parental care by parents gives room for immoral behavior by children due partly to the absence of moral support by the parent thereby allowing the children to fall into the hands of peers who pressure them into wrongdoings. Olowo, (2020) was also in agreement that parental care has a great influence on the abuse of drugs by the youths however zaman et al., (2014), opined that one or more factors could be the causes of indiscriminate drug usage among youths however a different view was put forward in

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the study by Nieru and Ngesu (2014) whose study tilted in the favor of the urge for physical and sensational satisfaction.

This study also sought to determine the impact of drug abuse on the social life of the students, the findings realized drug abuse negatively impacts the social life of the students by causing strained relationships with friends, increased impulsivity and risktaking behaviors, indiscipline, reduced sense of value and increased crime tendencies which are in agreement with the study of Oshikoya and Alli, (2006) who stated that behavioral changes were the greatest impact of drug abuse among students in Lagos state while Kanmodi et al. (2020) also stated that drug abuse could also lead to a strained relationship along with job loss.

Lastly, the study discloses the impact of drug abuse on the education of students of tertiary institutions, due mostly to the following factors such as absenteeism from school, low level of commitment to education, potential for dropping out of school, problems with working memory and declining grades which is in agreement with the work of Okafor, (2020) and Abiodun, (2021). who also noted that drug abuse impacts memory due to alterations in brain activity during adolescence.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have indicated that there are several factors such as peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, emotional stress, and educational stress i.e.,

that lead to the abuse of drugs by students and also stated the impact of such drugs on the education and health of the individuals concerned. The effect of drug abuse is not limited to only educational or health problems but also problems such as mental illnesses which adversely affect the perfect working condition of the brain thereby leading to little or no productivity and ultimately causing depression, and anxiety and probably leading to death in some rare cases.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were forward for consideration by the concerned regulatory authorities;

- I. Educational institutions should provide a quality counseling unit for students who might need advice on issues relating to drugs and mental wellness
- II. Parents/Teachers should be encouraged to provide the necessary support for students who need necessary care and attention.
- III. Educational awareness should be created on the effect of drug abuse among students in other to discourage more youths from going into drugs.
- IV. Disciplinary measures should be taken against erring students in other to discourage other intending drug abusers.



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