

INFLUENCE OF DRUG ABUSE ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING IN YOLA EDUCATIONAL ZONE, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The widespread of drug abuse is worrisome among teenagers and the increasing scourge of this phenomenon has raised a lot of concern because of the attending negative consequences. It is against this backdrop that this study examines influence of drug abuse on senior secondary school students' attitudes towards learning in the Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State. The objectives the study was to determine the major causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State and to determine the effect of drug abuse on mental health of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State. The study uses the survey research design. The population of the study was the entire students of senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State, Nigeria, which consists of three local government areas (Yola North, Yola South and Fufore). Multistage sampling technique was employed to select three schools from each of the three local governments in Yola Education Zone resulting to a total of nine schools. The study further selected one hundred students from each of the nine schools using simple random based on class and sex strata, which resulted to 900 students. Data was analyzed using, independent t-test. The result of the hypothesis shows that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students. It further reveals that there is no significant difference rural and urban students on the perceived effect of drug abuse on students' mental health in senior secondary school. In view of the foregoing findings, the study recommends that Government and Schools should implement comprehensive drug education programmes that correct misconceptions and beliefs about drug use and highlight its negative effects on mental health.

KEYWORDS: Drug Abuse, Students, Learning, Secondary Schools

Introduction

In 2018, World Health Organization (WHO) ranked Nigeria among the thirty nations with the highest drug abuse worldwide. Currently, Nigeria is ranked 27th globally in drug abuse, making it one of the leading African countries in drug abuse (Osna, 2020). It is a well-known fact that drug abuse have become major health concerns in many societies all over the globe. The use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances constitutes one of the most important risk-taking behavior among adolescents

and young adults in secondary schools. Despite worldwide concern and education about psychoactive substances, many adolescents have limited awareness of their adverse consequences. Curiosity, social pressure and peer group influence are reported to be primary reasons for substance misuse (Dorcas and Alpha, 2018). The percentage of drug use and abuse has increased significantly in a number of industrialized countries, making it a matter of national concern.

Students of senior secondary school in Yola education zone and its environs are by day engaging in drugs abuse, particularly narcotics which are professionally meant to relieve pain and stimulant medications, which treat conditions like attention deficit, disorder and narcolepsy. Youths who are seen as the leaders of tomorrow and being placed to be trained in secondary schools have been deviated to the use and abuse of drugs. This act in no way contributes to the development of the students and the expected output of these students can greatly diminish their academic performances because of their tenacity to drug addiction.

Secondary school system in the study area is failing in its duty towards inculcation of expected moral values among its students. Consequently, establishing of well-equipped guidance and counseling unit in our secondary schools can effectively complement the attitude of drug abuse among the secondary school students focusing on the abuse of substances which are inherently dangerous, using visual media and other aids in a classroom-style setting to help addicts learn to recognize the consequences of substance abuse. It could produce individuals who could manifest positive commitment towards the value of morality, ability to communicate with others and to understand feelings of others and those of his own, which is in agreement with the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria: the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes, appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities for the survival of the individual and his contribution to the development of the society. It is against the foregoing backdrop, the current study intends to examine the influence of drug abuse on senior secondary school students' attitude toward learning in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

The Problem

Drug abuse has emerged as a significant public health concern in Nigeria, with its impact reaching far beyond individual health consequences. In the Yola Educational Zone of Adamawa State. Secondary school students are increasingly exposed to and engaging in drug abuse, raising serious concerns about its influence on their attitudes toward learning. The problem lies in the multifaceted and negative influence of drug abuse on students' academic experiences. Drug use can impair cognitive function, memory, and concentration, hindering students' ability to effectively learn and retain information. The negative consequences of drug abuse, such as absenteeism, behavioral problems, and social isolation, can further disrupt their academic engagement and motivation. The drug abuse is seen as cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fiber of the African. It is also discovered that many take

drugs without having the knowledge of its usefulness and the harmful effects on their body within Schools.

The presence of drug use can normalize risky behaviours and create a culture of disengagement, negatively impacting the overall academic atmosphere. Furthermore, the potential for drug-related violence and crime within schools can contribute to a climate of fear and anxiety, further hindering students' ability to focus on learning. This issue is particularly of concern in Yola Education Zone due to several unique factors. The region has faced significant social and economic challenges, including conflict and displacement, which can contribute to increased vulnerability to drug abuse among young people. Additionally, limited access to effective drug prevention and treatment programmes further exacerbates the problem.

The influence of drug abuse on students' attitudes towards learning needs to be investigated. This involves exploring the behavioral and psychological changes associated with substance abuse that may impact students' motivation, interest, and overall engagement in the learning process. The underlying factors that contribute to drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone is crucial. This may involve examining social, environmental, and individual factors that influence students' susceptibility to drug abuse. It is on the bases of these that the study is undertaken to assess the influence of drug Abuse on senior secondary school students' attitudes towards learning in the Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the major causes of drug abuse on senior secondary school students' attitude toward learning in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

What are the reasons why senior secondary students abuse drugs in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Methodology

The study uses the survey research design. The population of the study area was the entire students of senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State, Nigeria, which consists of three local government areas (Yola North, Yola South and Fufere). The uses of multistage sampling

technique was employed to select three schools from each of the three local governments in Yola Education Zone resulting to a total of nine schools. The study further selected one hundred students from each of the nine schools using simple random based on class and sex strata, which resulted to 900 students. The analysis of the data generated using, independent t-test and mean.

Concept of Drug Abuse

Drug abuse involves the misuse or overuse of substances, encompassing behaviors that can jeopardize physical, mental, and social well-being (National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2020). Substance misuse refers to using medications or drugs in ways not prescribed or intended, potentially leading to dependency and addiction, characterized by compulsive drug use despite harmful consequences (World Health Organization (WHO, 2018). Drug abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain (Ananya, 2017). It often is referred to as the problematic use of alcohol or drugs. This study concur with the definition of NIDA (2020) who defines drug abuse as the misuse or overuse of substances, encompassing behaviors that can jeopardize physical, mental, and social well-being.

Forms of Drug Abuse: The forms of drug abuse among senior secondary school students are as followings:

Alcohol

This substance earns the dubious distinction of being the most frequently used drug. With more than half of high school seniors abusing alcohol in the last year, According to the MTF survey in 2015, students admitted drinking alcohol during the last year. This high rate is not surprising since it is the most widely used substance among adults, as well. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA, 2020).

Marijuana

According to Eric (2023) the second most popular substance among high school students is marijuana, according to the MTF. Whereas abuse of other substances has been declining over the years, marijuana use has been steady or increasing in some cases. Marijuana is most often smoked but can be consumed by other means such as consumption of edible products. The psychoactive chemical in marijuana, delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), binds to specific parts of the brain that trigger the release of a neurotransmitter called dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of pleasure and reward (NIAAA, 2020).

Nicotine

According to Meredith (2023) though the level of cigarette use has been dropping significantly as perceptions of risk increase, nicotine use continues to be a topic of concern for teens and adolescents. A factor is the rising trend of e-cigarette use among younger teens. Teens and adolescents that use these products are often unaware of what is contained in e-cigarettes due to lack of regulation and misinformation from the manufacturers and their peers (Eric, 2023).

2.4.4 Adderall

According to Eric (2023) Adderall is a medication prescribed primarily for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) that is comprised of two substances: amphetamine and dextroamphetamine. Both substances essentially speed up the functioning of the body and induce improved levels of concentration while reducing hyperactivity. Adderall falls into a broader category of prescription stimulant medications with other drugs like: Dexedrine (amphetamine). Ritalin (methylphenidate). Concerta (methylphenidate). Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine).

Oxycontin

According to Meredith (2023) oxycontin is a powerful and highly addictive brand name for oxycodone, a prescription opioid substance used for its pain-relieving capabilities. Oxycontin is frequently abused by teens, with 3.7% of 12th graders using the substance in the year prior to the MTF survey.

Tranquilizers

According to Eric (2023) tranquilizers includes substances that alternatively are called depressants or sedatives like: Benzodiazepines: Ativan, Xanax. Klonopin and Valium. Barbiturates: Phenobarbital, Butalbital. Sleep medications: Ambien, Lunesta, Sonata. The MTF reports that: 6.9% of 12th graders abused tranquilizers in their lifetime and 5.8% of 10th graders abused tranquilizers in their lifetime. These substances share the ability to slow the central nervous system by increasing the effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) in the brain. These substances are helpful in treating anxiety disorders, seizures, and sleep problems when taken as prescribed in pill form, but have a high potential for abuse and dependence (Meredith, 2023).

Inhalants

According to Eric (2023) inhalants is the name for the group of substances that are abused by sniffing, snorting or huffing fumes: Directly from a bottle, from a soaked cloth, from a balloon and Sprayed from an aerosol container. As surprising number of liquid or gas items are abused for their intoxicating effects, with most of these substances being legal and available in many homes and businesses. Examples of specific inhalants include: Gasoline, Glue, Nail polish remover, Paint, Hair spray, Computer dusters and Whipped cream aerosols (NIAAA, 2020).

Dextromethorphan (DXM)

Medicines for coughs and colds contain the active ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM). When used as directed, the substance treats cold symptoms, but at higher doses, it can produce an intoxicating

and dissociative effect. Abuse of cough medicine by young people is more common than many parents might think. (DXM) containing cough medicine is an inexpensive, legal, and easy-to-obtain high. Teens can get it from their home or in pharmacies for a minimal fee. Often, teens will drink the entire bottle of cough syrup and even combine it with alcohol. This combination brings an extreme intoxicating effect and has the potential to cause severe central nervous system (CNS) depression, overdose, and even death (Eric, 2023).

Causes of Drugs Abuse

There are countless reasons why people begin to abuse drugs, whether they are illicit drugs or prescription medications. The range of reasons why people take drugs is as broad as the types of people who use them. While there are emotional, psychological, and physical reasons why people may choose to abuse drugs in the first place, there are several triggers that fall within these reasons. Many factors have been identified to be responsible for drug abuse among young people, these include:

Peer Pressure

Teens face a different set of substance abuse triggers and influences. Teenagers face a difficult period of time that's characterized by school pressures, social obligations, hormonal changes and much more. According to Rehab (2023) one of the most well-known ways for people especially teens and young adults to start using drugs is through external pressures from other people. Commonly known as peer pressure, people may begin using drugs because of the influence of their peers. For them, it becomes something they all share in common, and so they feel pressured to continue to use drugs even if they understand the dire consequences. Additionally, younger people may experience social pressure to use drugs from television, social media, and other celebrity influences. It's possible that people see drug use being glorified in the media, and so they feel pressured to participate as well (Rehab, 2023).

Stress

During high school many teenagers are overly stressed with a packed schedule of advanced classes and extracurricular activities. A lack of coping skills can lead them to seek out an artificial method of coping with stress. They then turn to drugs such as marijuana in order to relax (Fairchild, 2017). According to Rehab (2013) financial stress: The burden of financial stress can be intolerable for many people. Money pressures can cause people to feel trapped, desperate, and out of control. These feelings lead to emotional and psychological conditions that trigger drug use. Drugs can often help people to forget about their financial responsibilities or avoid dealing with them altogether.

Curiosity

Curiosity is a natural part of life and teenagers are not immune to the urge. Many teens begin experimenting with drugs and alcohol simply because they are curious and want to know what it feels like. As teenagers, they have the delusion that they are invincible. Even if they know that drugs are bad, they don't believe that anything bad can actually happen to them. Educating your child on the repercussions of drug and alcohol abuse may extinguish this curiosity (Harry, 2016).

Depression

Some teens turn to drugs and alcohol as a form of escapism. When they are sad or depressed they see these substances as a way to forget and feel happier. It's their attempt to self-medicate. You may see a sullen attitude as "just being a teenager," but there may be a deeper depression within. For example present traumas, such as living in an abusive environment, can also trigger substance use as a means of forgetting the pain and suffering. Often, abuse is faced on a regular or even daily basis, and so drug use can quickly turn into an addiction in this case (Rehab, 2023).

Lack of Parent-Child Communication

According to John (2018) one of the greatest things a parent can do to prevent their daughter's drug use is simply to communicate. If you believe your teenager is at risk of using drugs, talk to her about the consequences of drug abuse and her options. Teach her how to say no. Educate her about the risks of substance abuse. John continued that research has proven that the majority of girls who have conversations with their parents about drinking or drug use are reportedly less likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs.

Social Pressure

Ogunremi and Rotimi (2018) found that many teenage girls initiate drug use to fit in with their peers. Their interview with 13-year old girls revealed that the girls are under more pressure to smoke, drink, and try drugs. According to her the more friends a girl has who smoke, drink, or use drugs; the likelier she is to do so herself. If five of her close friends drink alcohol, she is over seven times likelier to drink (Ogunremi and Rotimi, 2018)

Family Background

Family is defined as a group of specified people related to each other either by blood, by marriage, or through legal adoption (Bouwmeester, 2012). Families do play important roles always in the actual development of drug use and drug related problems among youth. Parental influence is a

critical factor in adolescent drug use and drug abuse. Drug and other substance use by parents, older siblings and liberal parental attitude towards drug use by adolescent foretell greater risk of young drug use. Children born of parents who abuse alcohol are at high risk of many indecent behavioral and medical problems such as delinquencies, marked learning disorders, psychosomatic complaints, and involving in drinking or alcoholism as with adults (Bouwmeester, 2012).

Grieving a death

The terms bereavement, grief and mourning are often used in place of each other. To separate from the person who died a person must find another way to redirect the emotional energy that was giving to the loved one (Benson, 2020). The death of a loved one, such as a close friend or family member, or even a mentor who positively influenced a person, is emotionally devastating for people. Different people handle grief in different ways. Some people are able to seek counseling or work through grief on their own in healthy ways. Other people really struggle with emotional or physical loss, so they use drugs as a way of coping with grief in the short-term. However, this short-term coping mechanism may transition into a long-term dependence for some people (Rehab, 2023).

End of a Relationship

The end of a relationship is one of the most emotionally destructive events in a person's life. When a relationship ends through a breakup or divorce, it can negatively impact self-confidence. This goes on to affect other areas of life including career, friendships, families, and even one's ability to find a purpose. If the person doesn't have appropriate emotional support available to them, they may use drugs as a way of grieving the loss of their relationship (Rehab, 2023).

Environmental Influences

According to Rehab (2023) the environment that a person has been exposed to can influence and trigger drug use. Growing up in poverty or in households with drug addiction, abuse, crime or other negative factors can create a high risk for substance abuse in those exposed to these conditions. They may perceive drug use as normal or acceptable. Or, they may psychologically believe this to be a pattern they can fall into (NIAAA, 2020).

Self-Medication

According to NIAAA, (2020) when people face physical or emotional pain, they may use drugs to self-medicate. This means they use drugs that are not prescribed to them by a doctor. Instead, they

use drugs such as painkillers to administer pain relief to themselves. Certain painkillers have highly addictive properties, which often leads to developing an addiction to them (Rehab, 2023).

Enhance Performance

According to Rehab (2023), certain drugs may help to temporarily enhance cognitive function, memory, and focus. They may also help to alleviate fatigue and lethargy. These are usually stimulants and other prescription drugs. For students or busy professionals, these types of drugs can seem like a viable solution. Other drugs, such as anabolic steroids, human growth hormones or stimulants, are used to improve physical performance in athletes or those who are extremely physically active. People often choose to use these types of drugs in order to compete or look a certain way.

Answering the Research Question

What are the reasons why Senior Secondary Students abuse drugs in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State? This question is aimed to answer the reasons that drive Senior Secondary Students to abuse drugs in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State and the data that answered this research question, are presented below

Table 1

Indicator	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	It enables me to sleep easily	3.18	0.79
2	It enables me to stay awake and study	3.02	0.92
3	It relieves one from fear	2.96	0.89
4	It keeps me out of frustration	3.05	0.93
5	It helps me forget about home and school problems	2.99	0.97
6	It gives me wisdom and strength as well as courage me to face life	3.09	0.77
7	It gives me curiosity to try to use drugs	2.94	0.88
8	It helps me use my leisure time well	3.06	0.73
9	It enables me to be independence and self-confidence	2.95	0.85
10	It enables me to feel comfortable among my friends	3.03	0.78
<i>Reason for Abusing Drugs total score (possible range 4-40)</i>		30.28	8.51
Grand Mean		3.03	0.85

Source: Field Survey, (2024).

The Table above reveals the descriptive analysis of the reasons that drive Senior Secondary Students to abuse drugs in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. The grand mean of the reason for indulging in massive drug abuse is 3.03 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.85 and a possible range from 4 to 40. The total average item score for the scale is 30.28. The item with the highest mean score is that most of the students claimed drugs enable them to sleep easily ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.79$) and also

give them increased wisdom and strength as well as courage to face life challenges ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.77$). They further acknowledged that it enables them to use their leisure time effectively ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.73$) and drives them out of frustration and other related predicaments ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.93$). The analysis in table 4.3 revealed that the drugs enable them to feel comfortable among their friends ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.78$) and also allow them to stay awake and study effectively ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.92$). They also noted that drugs assist them to forget about home and school problems ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.97$) and allay one from unnecessary fears ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.89$). They further stated that drugs enable them to be independent and self-confident at all times ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.85$) as well as intensify their curiosity to try to use drugs regularly ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.88$). Considering the above analysis with the corresponding grand mean that is above the threshold value of 2.50, leads to the conclusion that the active participations of drugs abusers in senior secondary students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State are caused by the enumerated factors.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State. This hypothesis sought to determine if there is a significant difference in the mean scores of students on their perceived causes of drugs based on gender ($n = 870$: Male = 547, Female = 323). The Independent Samples t-Test statistic was used to analyze the data and the result is presented below

Table 2
Summary of t-Test Analysis of Students' Causes of Drugs among Students Based on Gender

Source	N	Mean	Mean Difference	SD	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	547	30.19	-2.40	4.49	868	-0.757	0.449
Female	323	30.43		4.58			

Not Significant; $p > 0.05$.

It could be observed from the aforementioned analysis in Table above the mean grouping of gender shows that the females have the highest mean ($M = 30.43$) compared to the males ($M = 30.19$). The statistical test of difference indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean perception of students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State based on gender ($t = -0.757$, $df = 868$, $p > 0.05$). This result shows

that the statistical evidence between male and female students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State did not differ significantly in their perception on the causes of drug abuse.

Major Findings

- i. The study revealed that students believed that drugs enable them to sleep easily and also give them increased wisdom and strength as well as courage to face life challenges. The study further revealed that it enables them to use their leisure time effectively and move them out of frustration and other related predicaments. The study revealed that drugs enable them to feel comfortable among their friends, stay awake and study effectively and that drugs assist them to forget about home and school problems.
- ii. The result of the hypothesis shows that the statistical evidence between male and female students on the perceived causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State did not differ significantly in their perception on the causes of drug abuse.

Discussion

The findings of this study were discussed in order of the research questions and hypotheses that were raised. The analysis of this research question reveals that most of the respondents revealed that there is a widespread use and abuse of drugs among students in the Yola Education Zone. This aligns with previous researches, which indicate increased levels of drug abuse in secondary schools due to peer pressure, availability of drugs, and socio-economic factors (Afolabi, 2016; Obot, 2013). It was also discovered that most of the students' belief hinged on the fact that drugs enhance their cognitive and physical abilities is a mere common misconception that has been debunked in various studies. Hall and Weier (2017) found that drug abuse impairs cognitive function and does not enhance it and this invalidates and undermines the ignorance and misconception that drives the students into excessive drugs abuse.

Recommendations

In accordance with the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Government and Schools should implement comprehensive drug education programmes that correct misconceptions and beliefs about drug use and highlight its negative effects on mental health. These educative efforts should be collaborative with high level of demonstrations and practical instances to communicate the intended repercussions to both the potential and prospective victims.

- ii. Government and Schools should as a matter of urgency should educate parents about the signs of drug abuse and encourage them take an active role in preventing their children's drug use. The education should equally discourage parents that are major source of drugs for their children to keep it out of their reach because of the attending negative consequences it has on their mental health.
- iii. Government should adopt partnership models that encourage partnerships with non-governmental organisations to establish Community-based initiatives should to reduce the availability of drugs and provide support for students at risk of drug abuse for effective rehabilitation and integration back to the schools and society.

Conclusions

The study investigated the influence of drug abuse on senior secondary school students' attitudes towards learning in the Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State. The findings of the study led to the following conclusion that there is prevalent use and abuse of drugs among the students, there are multiple sources of drug acquisition, which is always on the rise of drug abuse. The study also revealed that drug abuse has negative impact on mental health of the students, reduce their academic performance and poison their positive attitude towards learning because of their preference for independence and leisure that are seldom in schools. It was concluded that there is evidence of significant difference in attitudes towards learning between drug abusers and non-abusers. The research highlighted that there is no significant gender difference in the perception of drug abuse causes and perceived effect of drug abuse on students' mental health in senior secondary school in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State.

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