Influence of Drug Abuse on Undergraduate Students of University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of drug abuse on undergraduate students of university of Benin, Benin City. The objective of the study was to determine the factors responsible for drug abuse and addiction among undergraduate students of university of Benin; ascertain the social effect of drug abuse and addiction among undergraduate students of university of Benin. The study adopted Social Learning theory. The cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. 400 students were selected in the University of Benin for the study. Data collected was analyzed using frequency count, percentages and mean, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0. The empirical result established that child neglect was the major risk factor associated with increased likelihood of substance use and abuse. The study recommends that the government should have a well- defined comprehensive and realistic policy on control of drugs and that student need to be taught more the dangers of drug use and how it can affect their education and lives.

Keywords: Influence, Addiction, Drug abuse, Realistic Policy, University of Benin

Background to the Study

The abuse of drugs is reported to negatively impact on society, family, health, and life in general, thus constituting an epidemic worldwide. According to Tarig, Cathrine, and Alaa, (2016), the group mostly at risk regarding the abuse of drugs arethe youth. There are recent indications of an increasing trend globally of students in tertiary institutions indulging in this unhealthy habit of drug abuse. Tarig, et al. (2016) pointed out that the abuse of substances such as drug is on the increase in African countries. A lot of sub-Saharan African countries are on the verge of social, cultural, and economic transitions; and these has created an enabling environment for the use of socially disruptive substance. These substances include heroin, inhalants, tranquilizers, cocaine, alcohol and tobacco which have become quite popular among higher educational institutions.

The abuse of drugs has contributed to psychosocial problems among youths. Nigeria, an African country is not exempted from these social problems rampaging higher institutions as evidenced in Ogunsola, Fajemisin, Aiyenuro and Tunde (2020) which compared Nigeria with other third world countries and disclosed Nigeria to be high in the ranks of countries with high number of dangerous drug users. The reason for the availability and prevalence of psychoactive substances was attributed to traffickers using Nigeria as a channel in the transportation of drugs from South East-Asia and South America to European countries. Other contributory factors for this prevalence include peer pressure and the desire of youths to explore and experiment

Drug and substance abuse is a problem affecting Universities and the consequences on the students are far reaching in their achievements of objectives. This has been aggravated by the rapid social and technological changes. Drug and substance abuse is a global problem, whose prevalence has remained unabated amongst youths (Hurst, 2019). Despite the proven dangers, drug use persists. Research has consistently reported that drug and substance abuse behaviors among students in institutions of higher learning commonly linked to already perceived norms. Ikoh Smah, Okwanya, Clement, and Aposhi (2019) identified factors such as peer pressure and media influence, need to release stress, desire to enjoy the drug accessibility of drugs, desire to experiment, influence from guardians and siblings, poor parenting, having trouble in school as key factors influencing drug abuse.

The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has stated that substance abuse is a major problem in schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria (NDLEA, 2013). Many of these students‟ behaviors are heavily tied to the peer culture, as students learn from and imitate the peers they like and admire. Ogunsola, Fajemisin, Aiyenuro and Tunde (2020) which compared Nigeria with other third world countries and disclosed Nigeria to be high in the ranks of countries with high number of dangerous drug users. According to (Ogunsola, Fajemisin, Aiyenuro & Tunde, 2020), Students who engage in drug abuse show lower commitment to education, decrease in academic grades, increase in dropout, and high absence rate.

Drug use and abuse remain a critical problem in most countries and are associated with several social and economic consequences. The societal consequences of substance use and abuse have led to a dramatic loss of resources, both human and material, increased morbidity and mortality; and reduced or lost productivity. The alarming evidence in the prevalence of drug abuse, the effects and consequences of substance abuse among students has called for concern and challenge to all helping professions to mount strategies of equipping youths with skills of living devoid of substance abuse. Drug abuse has been recognized as a barrier in the achievement of educational objectives. Research carried out in Nigeria has shown that drug abuse is common among students of tertiary institutions and this is influenced by factors such as family, economic, school, psychological and financial.

A survey by National Bureau of Statistics highlight a considerable level of past- year use of psychoactive substances in Nigeria, in particular the use of cannabis, the non-medical use of prescription opioids (mainly tramadol, and to lesser extent codeine, or morphine) and cough syrups (containing codeine or dextromethorphan). The survey showed that prevalence of any drug use in Nigeria is estimated at 14.4 per cent or 14.3 million people aged between 15 and 64 years (National Bureau of Statistics,2018) In 2021, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) said recent statistics have revealed that 40 per cent of Nigerian youth between 18 and 35 years are deeply involved in the abuse of drugs (premium times, 2021).

Universities students are the most susceptible to drug use amongst different youth groups in Nigeria because most of them live outside the watch of their parents or guardian. Uchendu and Ukonu (2016) stated that, it is evident that drug and substance abuse is still a problem in our tertiary institutions despite various measures taken to stop it. The trend in drug abuse

studies shows that prevalence of drug abuse is a manifestation that it is a social problem across nations in the world. It involves the improper use of drugs. It is an issue better solved within the socio-psychological and cultural domains. Therefore, Drug abuse should be looked at in an environment where moral and standard are cultured. The impact of drug abuse could be loss of relationships, legal actions, and termination of employment, health and in the case of students, expulsion from the educational institute and in spite of governmental efforts at curbing this growing menace of drug abuse by youths, it appears to still be on the increase probably because of the addictive result following its usage. In view of this, the study seeks to examine the psycho- social effects of drug abuse and addiction on undergraduate students of university of Benin.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine the influence of drug abuse on undergraduate students of university of Benin. Other specific objectives were to:

i. determine the factors responsible for drug abuse among undergraduate students of university of Benin, Benin City
ii. ascertain the social effect of drug abuse among undergraduate students of university of Benin, Benin City.

Literature Review

Drug abuse is the illegal intake of drugs including prescription medicine, alcohol and other substances either in large doses or in the wrong way. It is a condition that is said to be chronic and is identified by habitual drug seeking and use, regardless of its harmful consequences (Barerah, 2018). Drug abuse is when substances that are either legal or illegal are used in ways that they should not be used. People abuse drugs to ease off stress, feel good or avoid reality altogether and when they are unable to stop; they become addicted (Kumar &Dangi, 2019). Drug abuse may be defined as the "arbitrary" over dependence or miss-use of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners. (Oluremi, 2012). Drug Abuse is the harmful use of mind-altering drugs. It added that the term usually refers to problem with illegal drugs, which also include harmful use of legal prescription drugs, Such as in self- medication.

Drugs are psychoactive chemical materials that affect the central nerve system until a user is in a condition of intoxication, addiction, and behavioural problems. Drugs are chemical materials dangerous to individuals that partake in them, as it changed how the mind and body function. Drugs are a special term referring to substances that harms a user's physical, mental, and emotional health as well as behaviour after use. As a result, a drug abuser becomes addicted and is highly dependent on the substance. Continued drug abuse leads to damage to self, family, society, and country (Razali, & Madon,(2016).

Common Drugs Abused by University Students

The abuse of drugs among youths is not only a menace to the sustainable development of a nation especially in developing countries like Nigeria but also a global, social, health and individual problem. A remarkable number of youths, who should be the major agents for change and development, have been rendered unproductive by the abuse of drugs. Drug

abuse has adverse effects of students‟ education in different academic institutions globally and is a major concern in Nigeria because of the effects on youths and the nation (Okafor, 2019). The earlier young people start to abuse drugs, the greater their chances of becoming addicted to them. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Drug Eradication Agency (2010), has identify some of the known and most commonly drugs abused by students, which includes; heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine and hallucinogens. Reports from all over the world about this menace of drug abuse are severe. Amphetamines are used among students, (Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010). The most common drugs been abused by university undergraduates from recent related literature includes the following; Alcohol, Cannabis (Marijuana), Heroin, Cocaine, Tobacco.

i. **Alcohol**

This is a natural product of the fermentation of sugar and water. Alcohol is the drug present in beer, liquor, wine, palm wine, Ogogoro, brandy, whisky, gin, rum and so on. Alcohol interferes with reasoning and the ability to control oneself. Long-term use affects the liver and brain (Odelola, 2008). The use of alcohol has been observed to be associated with adverse health and social consequences arising from its intoxicating ability to its toxic and dependence producing properties. Alcohol was discovered to contribute to traumatic outcome that sometimes kill or disable the user at a relatively young age, thereby resulting into loss of many years of life to death or disability, (Chikere & Mayowa, 2011).

ii. **Tobacco**

Nicotine is the drug present in the tobacco leaf. Tobacco is an unrestricted drug that can be found in public places, such as motor parks and marketplaces. The brands of cigarette available in Nigeria today include Benson and Hedges, Gold Leaf, Consulate, Rothmans, London, Sweet Menthol, and Gold Bond. (Odelola, 2008).

iii. **Cannabis (Marijuana)**

Cannabis is commonly known as marijuana in Nigeria. It is the drug that is largely used by university undergraduates, and it is also the most controversial of all the popular drugs used by undergraduate students. Marijuana is derived from the dried leaves of flowers of hemp plants and used in form of cigarette as narcotic or hallucinogen and also farms where marijuana is cultivated is scattered all over Nigeria, (Abudu, 2008).

The herbal form of marijuana is the most abused drug in West Africa, because it is likely cultivated all over the region and it is therefore affordable, marijuana appears to be the most commonly abused drug students, (UNODC, 2011). In the same vein, Hales (2007) asserted that drug use on universities campus in America is on the increase with almost half of the undergraduates attesting to the fact that they use marijuana.

iv. **Heroine**

Another form of drug that is commonly abused by undergraduates is called "heroine" According to Kinch (2013), heroine is derived from the grooming substance extracted from the opium poppy and it is powdery in form. Opium is prepared by boiling the gum opium and successfully filtering out the impunity. Depending on the process, opium can be produced as a paste, powder or solution. It is known by different names such as horse, junk, smack, stuff, etc.

Theoretical Framework: Social Learning theory

According to Bandura (1977), people observe others behaviors, and outcomes of those behaviors. This theory holds that behavior is molded by rewards and punishments or reinforcement. Social learning theory has a clear-cut application to drug use. It proposes that the use of drugs or psychoactive substances can be explained by different exposure to groups in which drug use is rewarded.

The definitions are learned through imitation and social reinforcement by members of the group with whom „me" is associated (Akers, 1992). Drug use, is determined "by the extent to which a given pattern of behaviour is sustained by the combination of the reinforcing effects of the substance with social reinforcement, definitions through bad effects of the substance and or the negative sanctions from peers, parents, and the law" (Akers et al, 1979). Social learning theory, then, proposes that the extent to which drugs will be used depends on the extent to which the behavior has been differentially reinforced. More so, parental characteristics and behaviors of family members like parental substance or drug use, criminal conduct, and incarceration are associated with drug use among undergraduates. Parental use of drugs and cigarettes has been shown to transmit across generations (Wu &Kandel, 1995).

Methodology

According to Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976), Research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. The cross-sectional study design allows researchers to compare many different variables at the same time. This design was adopted and considered appropriate because it facilitates the collection of original data from the respondent.

The population is the totality of the objects or elements being studied and to which the conclusions or generalization of our results will apply. Sampling is the choosing of part of the population in such a way that the part is a representative of the whole, so that judgment about the whole are deduced from the part (Sellitz, 1997). The Population of the study are the students of the faculty of social science, Management Science, Arts and the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin.

For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling) was adopted. The convenience sampling is one in which the researcher selects whatever unit he or she has easy access to and are conveniently located. The sample comprises of 100 students from the faculty of social science, 100 students from the faculty of Management Science, 100 students from the faculty of Arts and 100 students from the faculty of the Faculty of Education which is totaled 400 students. A sample of 400 questionnaires was distributed randomly to participants across the faculties.

Table 1: Demographic Information on Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	220	56.7
Female	168	43.3
Total	**388**	**100.0**
Age		
Below 18 years	20	5.2
18-25years	315	81.2
26-30years	53	13.7
Above 30 years	-	-
Total	**388**	**100.0**
Marital status		
Single	378	97.4
Married	10	2.6
Divorced	-	-
Total	**388**	**100.0**
Level		
100	73	18.8
200	80	20.6
300	103	26.5
400 and above	132	34.0
Total	**388**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, 2024

Table 1 shows that out of a total of 388 respondents, 220 are male while 168 are female.
In terms of age, out of a total of 388 respondents, 20 of the respondents are below 18 years, 315 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 18-25years, 53 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 26-30years, while none of the total respondents are above 30 years. In 88terms of marital status, out of a total of 379 respondents, 378 of the total respondents are single, 10 of the total respondents are married. In terms of educational level, out of a total of 388 respondents, 73 are in 100 level, 80 are in 200 level, 103 are in 300 level while 132 are either in 400 level or above 400 level.

Data Presentation and Analyses according to the Research Objectives Research Question 1: What are the factors responsible for drug abuse and addiction among undergraduate students of university of Benin?

Table.2: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	**N**	**Total score**	**Mean**	**Decision**
5.	child abuse or neglect are risk factors associated with increased likelihood of youth substance use and abuse	388	1610.2	4.15	Positive
6.	It's common for people with addiction to have a family history of drug or alcohol problems.	388	1579.16	4.07	Positive
7.	Academic Pressure, peer influence are the major factor influencing substance abuse among undergraduate students	388	1571.4	4.05	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.09	**Positive**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2024)

Decision rule: there is a unanimous agreement when the mean values of respondents are above 2.5, unanimous disagreement when it is below 2.5, and also respondents are neutral when the mean value is equal to 2.5. Since it is a descriptive statistic, it requires no level of significance, unless it is inferential statistics. The result in table .2 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 2. Majority of the respondents agreed that child abuse or neglect are risk factors associated with increased likelihood of youth substance use and abuse; that it's common for people with addiction to have a family history of drug or alcohol problems and that academic pressure, peer influence are the major factor influencing substance abuse among undergraduate students.

Research Question 2: What are the social effects of drug abuse and addiction among undergraduate students of university of Benin?

Table 3: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	**N**	**Total score**	**Mean**	**Decision**
8.	prostitution, and growing numbers of youth homicides are among the social and criminal justice problems often linked to adolescent substance abuse	388	1641.24	4.23	Positive
9.	Drug users may even become aggressive and violent toward other people, even their family and friends	388	1823.6	4.7	Positive
10.	Drugs can also cause users to become paranoid about their relationships	388	1889.56	4.87	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.6	Positive

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2024)

The result in table 3 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 3. Majority of the respondents agreed that prostitution, and growing numbers of youth homicides are among the social and criminal justice problems often linked to adolescent substance abuse; that drug users may even become aggressive and violent toward other people, even their family and friends and that drugs can also cause users to become paranoid about their relationships.

Discussion of Findings

The result showed that the respondents agreed that child abuse or neglect are risk factors associated with increased likelihood of youth substance use and abuse; that it's common for people with addiction to have a family history of drug or alcohol problems and that academic pressure, peer influence are the major factor influencing substance abuse among undergraduate students.

The result also showed respondents agreed that prostitution, and growing numbers of youth homicides are among the social and criminal justice problems often linked to adolescent substance abuse; that drug users may even become aggressive and violent toward other people, even their family and friends and that drugs can also cause users to become paranoid about their relationships. The study reported that respondents agreed that People with mood, personality, and thought disorders have been shown to be more likely to use and abuse drugs;

that conflict, unresolved trauma, and the ego are underlying effect of addiction and that many who develop a substance use problem have depression, attention deficit disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder.

The result also showed respondents agreed that alcohol and drug abuse has left a negative impact among undergraduates (university students); that drug abuse and addiction leads to discontinuation of studies and mental disturbances and that alcohol and drug consumption have some detrimental effects on pupils' cognitive abilities, for instance, by decreasing their ability to concentrate. The result also showed respondents agreed that School counselors should be organize different programs to promote healthy living among undergraduate students; that higher institutions should Set clear rules and boundaries that are consistently enforced in a reasonable and measured manner and that giving praise and reward for students' good behavior, achievements and accomplishment.

This agrees with the finding of Ayandiji and Osoba (2017) who examined the effect of drug abuse on rural youths in Nigeria. It was revealed that there were consequences on different aspects of rural youth lives such as their education, occupation and employment, families, communities, health, social and psychological lives. This study investigated social and psychological effects of drug abuse among rural youths in Ogun State. Also, social effect of drug abuse is feeling high and addiction while drowsiness was found as a psychological effect. The study shows that most of the respondents that were prune to having chronic and acute social and psychological effects of drug if they continue. The study also revealed that there was urgent need for more adequate awareness of the youths on the adverse effects of drug abuse as it gradually becoming an acceptable way of life for youths in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined the psycho-social effects of drug abuse and addiction on undergraduate students of university of Benin. A sample of 400 copies of questionnaire was distributed randomly to 400 students in university of Benin. Based on the findings, it was revealed that the participants agreed that revealed that alcohol and drug abuse has left a negative impact among undergraduates (university students); that drug abuse and addiction leads to discontinuation of studies and mental disturbances and that alcohol and drug consumption have some detrimental effects on pupils' cognitive abilities, for instance, by decreasing their ability to concentrate. The study also revealed that that prostitution, and growing numbers of youth homicides are among the social and criminal justice problems often linked to adolescent substance abuse; that drug users may even become aggressive and violent toward other people, even their family and friends and that drugs can also cause users to become paranoid about their relationships.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made

1. Students need to be taught the dangers of drug use on academic performance.
2. Drug education should now form part of the University curriculum. The resources available need to be used to their full potentials. This will require co-operation from all universities as the majority of students in this sample appear to learn about drugs from schools.

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