

A STUDY OF SOME CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the causative factors of substance abuse among secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study was the descriptive type while a survey method was applied. The sample of the study comprised four hundred and eighty students (480) selected through multi-stage sampling from secondary school students in Ibadan. A self designed Adolescent Drug Habit Inventory (ADHI) was used to collect data for the study. Three hypotheses were raised for the study. Chi Square with all hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance was used for data analysis and 2 x 2 contingency table was obtained for each hypothesis, allowing for a comparison of the calculated value with the tabulated value at the degree of freedom of 1. Results showed that there is a significant difference in the involvement of males and females in substance abuse. Also, there is a significant difference in the involvement of Junior and Senior students in substance abuse and there is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse between Christian and Muslim students. The findings showed that the causes of substance abuse are numerous; researchers cannot state with utmost confidence the specific causes of substance abuse. It was therefore recommended that researchers should engage in research that can expose the definite causes of substance abuse.

Keywords: Causative factors; Substance Abuse; Secondary School Students.

Introduction

Substance abuse is a social problem that has spread and increased rapidly in our educational institutions especially among our secondary school students. In Nigeria, this social mal adaptation is considered an issue of serious concern as it adversely affects the lives and performance of students involved as well as the harmonious functioning of the entire structure of the society. Drug abuse and other associated problems are inimical to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. A significant number of untimely deaths and accidents have been ascribed to the activities of persons under the influence of one drug or the other.

Fayombo (1998) defined substance abuse as the use of mood modifying substances illegally, excessively and in a socially unacceptable manner. The drugs range from those that should not even be taken without medical prescription such as cocaine, amphetamine, heroine, marijuana, LSD25 to the socially acceptable beverages such as whisky, local gin,

beer and other alcoholic drinks. Odejide (1997) viewed substance abuse as the improper use or application of drugs by a person without proper knowledge of the drugs and without due prescription from a qualified medical practitioner. This definition focuses on psychoactive drugs; all drugs can be abused to an extent that it turns into addiction when the drug user is unable to stop the use of drugs despite the harmful effects on the user's social, personal and economic lives.

The problem of substance abuse is so grave that though it was originally conceived as the problem of a 'select few', it has extended beyond the usual characteristics of abusers being male, adult and urban based people to now include female, youngsters and rural dwellers. These abusers erroneously believe that drugs enhance their performance, put them in good mood, the accompanying problems of this act constitute a major threat to the well-being of the society (Ajala, 2009).

The youths in Nigeria like many countries of the world are developing addiction to psychoactive substances. In 1992, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) collected drug use and abuse data from schools, records of patients admitted at mental health institutions for drug problems and interview of persons arrested for drug offences. The result showed that youths constitute the high risk group for drug trafficking and abuse. Friends and school mates account for about 90% of the source of influence of the use and abuse of various psychoactive substances. In Nigeria, alcohol and cigarette are legal substances but, the two have been discovered to cause physical damage to human bodies. These substances have also said to be "gateway drugs" to other more potent drugs like heroine and cocaine (UNDCP, 1988). In Nigeria, it has been reported that smoking (tobacco) causes 90.0% of lung cancer, 30.0% of all cancers, and 80.0% of other chronic lung diseases (Shokunbi, 1990).

Classification of Psychoactive Drugs

Psychoactive drugs are usually grouped into three:

1. Depressants
2. Stimulants
3. Hallucinogens

Depressants include alcohol, barbiturates and heroin. Alcohol is perhaps the most used and abused drug in Nigeria (Ajala, 2009). Alcohol is used to offer prayers in many cultural ceremonies (libation), used for naming new born babies and freely served in wedding occasions in Nigeria. Alcohol is a terrible downer, a sedative depressant of the Central Nervous System. It has been noted to increase violent behaviour and a major cause of fatal accident. Heroin is a white powdered substance derived from opium and usually taken by injection. It is a powerful depressant that provides euphorid, the abusers claimed that it is so pleasurable that it can eradicate any thought of food or sex. Barbiturate and sedatives are sleeping pills. Like narcotics, barbiturates exert calming effects on the Central Nervous System.

Stimulants are drugs that excite and sustain activity while diminishing symptoms of fatigue, cigarette, caffeine, amphetamines and cocaine belong to this group. Cocaine is the best known stimulant; it is swallowed, sniffed or injected. Hallucinogens produce hallucinations. These are drugs that induce changes in perceptions, thoughts and feelings;

they are usually called “consciousness expanders”. The most common hallucinogens in Nigeria are marijuana, known as Indian hemp or “Igbo”. It produces euphoria and heightens enjoyment of food, music, sex, etc.

Causes of Substances Abuse

Drugs are abused for various reasons. The earlier studies of Weil (1973), Lief (1975) confirmed that search for pleasure motivates drug abusers to alter their state of consciousness. The studies confirmed that people abuse drugs for the enhancement of good feelings and used it as a means of coping with stress of life.

Idowu (1992) advanced these reasons for substance abuse in Nigeria: Intra-individual reasons, Sex, Physical or mental illness, Personality make up, Extra individual reasons, Dependence producing nature of the drugs and Availability.

Intra-individual reasons pertained to the individuals and these include age, sex, physical and mental illness. Odejide (1979, 1982) and Idowu (1987) have shown that young people especially adolescents and young adults are most prone to drug abuse. A survey carried out by National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) revealed that they abuse drugs as early as age eleven (for prescribed drugs) and age 16 (for narcotic drugs). The reasons advanced by these students are: to feel on top like adults, to feel good, to get excited, to be like friends and to be like stars. Odejide (1997, 1994), Idowu (1987) have shown that drug abuse is sex based, more males than females abused drugs. However, (Tanzi and Hedge, 1990; NDLEA, 1991) stated that there are as many males as there are females who abuse drugs. Individuals with physical or mental illness are more likely to use drug than those without such illness. These individuals are more pre-disposed to over use of or over dependence on drugs to control and treat such ailments. The use of these drugs outside medical prescription constitutes drug abuse.

Individuals differ in their make up and in the way they respond to situations and events in their environment. The ability to tolerate or yield to stress, frustrations, pain and discomfort determines whether an individual will become a drug abuser or not. It could be inferred that drug abusers are usually weak and unable to cope with stress, pain or discomfort. Thus, drugs foster a sense of relaxation and sedation which help abusers to escape the reality of environmental stress, such as urbanization, the pressure to get ahead in school and business, unfair distribution of income, poverty and family problems.

There are external reasons that act on the individuals. Drug abusers usually described such factors as those of peer pressure, the urge to be curious and wish to experiment, unemployment, idleness, unstable family conditions, for example, death, separation, boredom, poverty, affluence and the bustles of city life. Extra individual reasons include the need to get rich quickly (drug trafficking), to enhance performance (especially among the athletes and artists) and drug use in the family (NDLEA, 1991).

Dependence producing natures of the drugs are reasons which have to do with the drugs. A drug continually used for a period produces dependence, thus making it difficult for the user to quit the tranquil sedatives and analgesics are the most common dependence producing drugs.

Drugs that are readily available such as alcohol and tobacco can be easily abused. In

1991, more than 12% of the students in Lagos State indicated that it was easy to get illegal drugs like cannabis, heroine, and cocaine. About forty percent (40%), indicated that these drugs could be gotten, though with a little difficulty (NDLEA, 1991). Researchers like Anumonye (1980) and Odejide (1982) have clearly shown that all the reasons stated by Idowu (1992) above curiosity and experimentation are the most valid for young people.

Effects of Substance Abuse

The cancerous effect of substance abuse is not limited to a particular part of the world or an age group. Odejide (1997) confirmed that drug abusers experience academic failure, distortion of the senses, dream like thinking, false confidence, hampered performance, illusions, hallucinations and delusions. Other health effects include loss of brain cells. Adamson (1997) also affirmed that alcohol has bad effect on the health of the abuser because it destroys all the organs of the body. In Nigeria, smoking (tobacco) causes 90.0% of lung cancer, 30.0% of all cancers and 80.0% of other chronic lung diseases (Shokunbi, 1990).

A number of studies revealed that youths, especially students constituted the high risk group, in the use and abuse of drugs. Stimulants such as cocaine, heroin, alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes are most common drugs abused by them. This study investigated the causative factors of substance abuse among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Hypotheses

On the basis of the problem stated earlier, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the researchers:

- There is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse between the male and female subjects.
- There is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse between the senior and junior subjects.
- There is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse between the Muslim and Christian subjects.

Method

Research Design

The design employed in this study was the descriptive type while a survey method was applied.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised all the secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling was employed in selecting sample for the study which involved four hundred and eighty students in the secondary schools. Four local governments were randomly selected, and only an intact class was randomly chosen in each of the schools. All the students constituted the sample for the study.

Instrumentation

The Adolescent Drug Habit Inventory (ADHI) was developed by the researchers. The

instrument was used to collect to collect information on age, sex, religion, parents' occupation and causes of drug abuse in eliciting feedback from the students. It was given to other experts on drugs related issue for evaluation. The final form of the items was then validated, it has an interval test retest reliability co-efficient of 0.73 and a construct validity of 0.70 was obtained. The interval was three weeks.

Results and Discussion

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse between the male and female subjects.

Table 1: Showing difference in the causes of substance abuse between the male and female subjects

Gender	Substance Abuse (Sex) Cross Tabulation		Total	Calculated X ²	Tabulated X ²	P
	Not severe count	Severe count				
Male	95(51.1)	153(52.0)	248	89.90	3.84	0.05
Female	91(48.9)	141(48.0)	232			
Total	186	294	480			

To test this hypothesis, the frequency counts for each gender was calculated, using 480 respondents. The chi square was then used at 0.05 significant levels for the difference.

The table shows that calculated X² value 89.90 is greater than the tabulated value 3.84. The result shows that there is a significant difference in the involvement of males and females in substance abuse. HO₁ is therefore rejected.

Table 2: Showing difference in the causes of substance abuse between Junior and Senior Students

Class	Substance Abuse (Sex) Cross Tabulation		Total	Calculated X ²	Tabulated X ²	P
	Not severe count	Severe count				
Junior Class	35(15.6)	190(84.4)	225	87.19	3.84	0.05
Senior Class	151(59.2)	104(40.8)	255			
Total	186	294				

The table shows that calculated X² value 87.19 is greater than the tabulated value 3.84. The result shows that there is a significant difference in the involvement of Junior and Senior students. HO₂ is therefore rejected.

Table 3: Showing Difference in the causes of substance abuse between Muslim and Christian Students'

Religion	Substance Abuse (Sex) Cross Tabulation		Total	Calculated X ²	Tabulated X ²	P
	Not severe count	Severe count				
Christians	97(42.5)	131(57.5)	228	88.35	3.84	0.05
Muslims	89(35.3)	163(64.7)	252			
Total	186	294				

The table shows that there is no significant difference in the causes of substance abuse

between Christian and Muslim students. The calculated X^2 value 88.35 is greater than the tabulated value 3.84. H_0 is not rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings showed that males and females have different reasons like 'stimulation of their brains', 'inability to cope with the realities of life', 'shyness', 'talk to opposite sex' for engaging in drug abuse. Also, junior and senior students have different reasons for getting involved in substance abuse. Also, religion is not a determining factor of substance abuse between Muslim and Christian students as these students would have different reasons for drug abuse. The causes of substance abuse among secondary school students are numerous. Despite years of dedicated research, scholars understanding of the causes of substance abuse are inadequate to enable researchers state with utmost confidence the specific causes of substance abuse. It was therefore recommended that researchers should engage in research that can expose the definite causes of substance abuse among secondary school students in Nigeria.

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