



INFLUENCE OF DRUG ABUSE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEADING TO OUT OF SCHOOL INDIVIDUALS: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated how drug abuse impact on academic performance of secondary school students in Zaria-Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Similarly, purposive sampling technique was used to select 364 students who participated in the study. The main instrument used for the study was a self-developed questionnaire on drug abuse containing some items based on 5 likert point scale of strongly agree, Agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Also, an academic test comprising multiple choice questions with options A-D on English Language, Mathematics and Geography respectively was marked and awarded one(1) mark each question: 20marks for Geography,15marks each for English Language and Mathematics respectively, which gives a total of 50 marks in all. The formulated hypothesis was tested using independent t-test. The result showed that, there is significant difference between academic performance of students who abuse drugs and those who do not. Conclusively, those who abuse drugs are liable to poor academic performance and being out of school. It was recommended amongst others that government at various levels in Nigeria should provide enabling environment and resources for more robust and effective training as well as retraining of schools' teachers especially in the areas of psychology/counselling for behavior management strategies and other psychological intervention services towards the prevention and rehabilitation of out of school children especially as a result of drug abuse.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Academic Performance, Out of School

Introduction

It is obvious that Education is a fundamental human right guaranteed to all and sundry. However, millions of children are struggling to be enrolled into school, while many more who have had the opportunity to be enrolled are exiting (dropping out) due to numerous, and sometimes overwhelming, obstacles. Education being a powerful catalyst to alleviating or even eradicating poverty in its totality and empower communities to prosper, as well as empowering the future generation, seems to have been attacked by many factors including drug abuse.

Gunjan et al. (2020) stated that there is no universal definition for 'drug abuse'. However, it may be described as the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than intended medical purposes and which results in physical, mental, emotional or social impairment of the user. Similarly, Abikwi and Okafor (2022) opined that the use of drugs for purposes other than medical treatment, resulting in negative consequences for the user refers to drug abuse. Such a user may socially, cognitively, or physically experience a devastating effect. An individual's increased inclination to participate in confrontations with friends, instructors, and school activities may represent the social influence. Also, drug can be referred to as anything other than food or water that affects the way individuals feel, think, see, and act, cognitive consequences refer to the individual's lack of concentrate on academic tasks and memory loss. It is a drug that affects physical, mental, and emotional functioning owing to its chemical makeup. Chewing, eating, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin, or injection are all ways for it to enter the body.

The worldwide epidemic of drug use, abuse, and other substance misuse seems to be threatening educational institutions all over the globe. They seem to be overburdened by the monster of drug and substance misuse, despite the fact that their goal is to impart information, ideas, values, and standards. Cocaine, Indian hemp (marijuana), Kuber, cigarettes, codeine, and petrol sniffing are all regularly misused narcotics that are hurting school systems and students’ academic performance, particularly in higher institutions (Universities) across the globe. Drug misuse has been noted to be severe barrier to efficient teaching, school administration, and learning processes in the Nigerian educational system (Abikwi & Okafor, 2022; Akorede et al., 2023).

In the same vein, Ajibola et al. (2024) drug use/abuse is a widespread occurrence among students in Nigerian educational institutions. Parents, peer groups, and society as a whole have all been blamed for the growing rise of drug use. Acts of vandalism, weapon carrying, alcohol abuse, rape, examination malpractices, school violence, strikes, bullying, cultism, truancy, and school drop-outs, as well as other anti-social conduct, are all common in universities, which may be as a result of drug use/abuse (Akorede et al., 2022).

According to Okumu (2024) the problem of drug abuse in secondary schools has various adverse effects on student learning, performance and moral habits. Unless this menace of drug abuse is minimized, the schools would become unmanageable since indiscipline cases would become very overwhelming. Abikwi and Okafor (2022) The causes of drug abuse among students may be sociological, psychological, out of inquisitiveness, boredom, to ease fear, develop sexual and physical pleasures, or as a result of family background among other things. The sequence of usage ranges from tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other higher substances (Akorede et al., 2017). Students are gradually engaging in prescribed drugs, particularly narcotics which are given to relieve severe pain and stimulant medications, which treat conditions like attention deficit disorder and narcolepsy. A long-lasting effect in learning abilities of the user is common for those students who start using drugs at a younger age. Drug abuse causes some areas of the brain not to develop properly leading to learning disabilities. Persistent abuse of drugs further leads to loss of memory and judgment. Many students who engage in drug abuse tend to be forgetful and can hardly focus particularly in their studies; it can also lead to loss of short-term memory (Akorede & Olaleye, 2019). Drug abuse may weaken memory by slowing down the co-ordination materials and may decrease student’s ability to remember such materials that was learned prior to using the drugs.

According to UNESCO (2023) sixteen per cent (16 %) of children and youth (covering primary to upper secondary school level) are not attending school globally speaking. Whereas, at the primary school level, 1 out of 10 children worldwide are not in school. 122 million, or 48% of the out-of-school population are girls and young women. While Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for close to 30 % of all out-of-school children globally. 1 out of 5 African children are not attending school (19.7%). Only half of children attend upper secondary school (that is senior secondary school).

Out of school rate (%)

Out-of-school population (in millions)

Region	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Total
Central and Southern Asia	15.8	16.2	57.6	89.7
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	7.2	8.2	15.8	31.6
Europe and Northern America	1.2	0.9	2.0	4.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.2	2.2	5.4	9.7
Northern Africa and Western Asia	6.3	2.8	5.9	14.9
Oceania	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	35.9	28.6	34.0	98.4
WORLD	69.9	59.1	121.5	250.0

If countries were on track to meet their national 2030 targets:

6 million more children would be in early childhood education

58 million more children, adolescents and youth would be in school

1.7 million more primary school teachers would have been trained

To get back on track:

1.4 million need to be enrolled in early childhood education every year

A new child needs to be enrolled in school every 2 seconds until 2030;

Annual progress in primary completion rates needs to almost triple

The finance gap for countries to reach their SDG 4 targets totals US\$ 100 billion every year and urgently needs to be filled.

Over 140 countries made solid commitments to transform their education systems at the Transforming Education Summit last year. UNESCO has just launched a new dashboard of country commitments and actions to transform education. The platform analyses a series of themes and aims to monitor countries' actions undertaken against their national commitments. It will also facilitate cross-country learning and exchange of experiences. The 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report shows the progress made since 2015 against all SDG 4 targets based largely on the data of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, which oversees 10 of the 12 global indicators.

It finds that between 2015 and 2021:

Early childhood: The percentage of children one year younger than the official primary entry age who are in organized learning programmes has remained constant at 75%.

Out-of-school: The out-of-school population fell by just 9 million, while it increased in sub-Saharan Africa by 12 million. And new data for 2022 show that the out-of-school population increased in 2022 to 250 million, largely due to the exclusion of girls and the resulting education crisis in Afghanistan.

Completion: The completion rate increased from 85% to 87% in primary education, 74% to 77% in lower secondary education and 54% to 59% in upper secondary education.

Learning: The average progress observed in reading at the end of primary education was just 0.4 percentage points per year, although 52% of children live in countries where there are not enough data points to estimate learning trends.

Higher education: The tertiary education gross enrolment ratio increased from 37% to 41%, with women (44%) having a six percentage point gap over men (38%).

Adult education: Among 57 mainly high-income countries, the participation rate of adults in formal or non-formal education and training fell by 10%, mostly as a result of COVID-19.

Digital skills: Among 32 mainly high-income countries, 24 showed an improvement of at least five percentage points in the percentage of adults who can configure software.

Gender parity: The number of young women completing secondary school for every 100 young men increased from 102 to 105 globally and from 84 to 88 in sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the region where young women face the largest disadvantage.

Literacy: The adult literacy rate increased by 1 percentage point globally (87%) but by 4 percentage points in Central and Southern Asia (73%) and in sub-Saharan Africa (64%); still in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of illiterate adults climbed by 9 million.

School infrastructure: The share of schools with electricity increased from 66% to 76% in primary education and from 88% to 90% in upper secondary education.

Teachers: The percentage of trained teachers in primary education has remained almost stagnant at 86%. In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of trained pre-primary teachers increased from 53% to 60%.

Finance: Public education expenditure has remained constant at about 4.2% of GDP but the proportion of lower-income countries rose from 27% to 58%. Aid to education decreased by 7% from 2020 to 2021, while the share of aid allocated to education in aid budgets reached its lowest point since 2015, with only 9.8% dedicated to the sector in 2021 (UNESCO,2023)

Samuel (2024) observed that the increasing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria, especially in the Northern region is extremely concerning and poses a grave threat to the future of the nation. The article identifies several factors that contribute to this problem, including economic barriers, conflicts, socio-cultural norms, and lack of inclusive practices. These challenges have resulted in a high rate of illiteracy and lack of interest in education among children. Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world, with approximately 10.5 million children aged 5-14 not receiving formal education. In the northern part of the country, only 29% and 35% of Muslim children respectively receive Quranic education, which does not include literacy and numeracy. Unfortunately, this issue is widespread in both rural and urban areas due to various reasons, including early and child marriage, economic challenges, conflict, and lack of inclusive practices.

Drug abuse is the use of a substance that affects a normal state or even medical drugs but uses in the wrong doses or method that affects a person or others in dangerous ways. It impacts all aspects of a person's life; mental, physical, emotional, and social. Drug addiction is responsible for more deaths, illnesses, and disabilities than any other avoidable health problem. In the last century, most people decrease their use of smoking tobacco, and alcohol abuse but there are significantly elevated rates of using drugs. In some countries, they found that the use of the drug is more in males, and in other countries found more in females than males, it differs from one culture to other probably depend on many factors. Adolescents there are curious to deviate in ways even the competent of them and increase overtime with prevalence of newer drugs. Drugs are materials or substances that could alter personal thoughts, mood or even behaviour. Hadeel et al. (2023) stated that, drugs could be ingested orally, inhaled, injected or introduced to the human body in any other form. Also, drugs usage could result in both physical or mental addiction, after a certain period of continuous usage, a subgroup of people could develop severe addiction to the drugs such that this becomes the norm despite the adverse effects on the human body. Furthermore one major health issue which is increasing rapidly is the abuse of drugs amongst students worldwide. Such menace is said to be the primary cause of human self-destruction globally.

Observably, drug abusing students do not perform very well academically. They tend to achieve less and also participate on a lower scale in extracurricular activities, as well as dropping out of school, thereby maximising the cases of out-of-school children. It is against this backdrop that the authors of this paper conducted this study to find out the influence drug abuse has on the academic performance leading to out of out-of-school individuals in Nigeria, with a view to suggesting ways forward to have a better future for Nigerians and by extension Africans.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out whether drug abuse influences academic performance of secondary school students in Zaria-Nigeria.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 19,544 students constituted the population of all SSII students in Zaria considered for the study. Ten schools were randomly selected for the study. Similarly, purposive sampling technique was used to select 364 students who participated in the study. The main instrument used for the study was a self-developed questionnaire on drug abuse containing some items based on 5 likert point scale of strongly agree, Agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Also, an academic test comprising multiple choice questions with options A-D on English Language, Mathematics and Geography respectively was marked and awarded one (1) mark each question: 20marks for Geography, 15marks each for English Language and Mathematics respectively, which gives a total of 50 marks in all. The instrument was validated for content validity and pilot tested for reliability. All the instruments used were found to be .855 reliable for drug abuse sub-scale, and .685 for academic performance test of English Language, Mathematics and Geography. The formulated hypothesis was tested using independent t-test.

Results

Hypothesis: there is no significant difference between students who abuse drugs and those who do not in their academic performance.

Table showing independent t-test statistics on significant difference between students who abuse drugs and those who do not in their academic performance.

	Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	t cal.	p
Academic performance	Those who abuse drugs	36	17.5	5.44	362	8.669	.000
	Those who do not abuse drugs	328	25.7	5.38			

P value = 0.05

The results of the independent t-test statistics show that significant difference between students who abuse drugs and those who do not in their academic performance. This is because the calculated significance (p) value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The table also indicates that the mean academic performance of 17.5 and 25.7 by students who abuse drugs and those who do not, respectively, further confirms that a significant difference exists between the two groups. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between students who abuse drugs and those who do not in their academic performance thereby rejected.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that, there is significant difference between academic performance of students who abuse drugs and those who do not. To support this, Ajibola et al. (2024) found out that drug use and substance abuse among students in Nigerian educational institutions have emerged as critical issues, profoundly impacting students' academic performance and overall well-being. They identified a range of drugs and other substances commonly abused to include alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and some legitimate prescribed drugs, and explores their adverse effects on cognitive functions, academic performance, as well as their physical and mental health. They also discovered that substance abuse leads to cognitive impairments, decreased motivation, poor academic performance, mental health issues, and higher dropout rates, thereby increasing the number of out of school individuals. These outcomes are exacerbated by inadequate financial support, psychological stress, peer pressure, and the easy availability of drugs. Their study suggested the need for comprehensive psychological intervention strategies, emphasizing preventative education, rehabilitative support, and supportive policies. Addressing substance abuse effectively requires a multi-faceted approach that incorporates socio-cultural, educational, and health perspectives to mitigate its impact on students' academic success and future prospects. In the same vein, Abikwi and Okafor (2022) found out that, issue pertaining school dropout/out of school is complex, and influenced by multiple factors, including the absence of regulations, family dynamics, and substance abuse. And that truancy, for instance, has been identified as a risk factor for dropout, indicating a disconnection from the educational system and potential involvement in delinquent behavior. Similarly, the link between dropout and criminal behavior is crucial, as those who leave school for personal reasons are more likely to engage in offending conduct than those who leave for economic reasons.

Conclusion

Conclusively, those who abuse drugs are liable to poor academic performance and being out of school.

Recommendation

It was recommended amongst others that the government at various levels in Nigeria should provide an enabling environment and resources for more robust and effective training as well as retraining of schools' teachers, especially in the areas of psychology/counselling for behaviour management strategies and other psychological intervention services towards the prevention and rehabilitation of out-of-school children, especially as a result of drug abuse.

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