



Research Article

Patterns of Substance Abuse by Youths in Kagoro Southern Kaduna State, Nigeria
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Abstract

This study aimed at examining patterns of substance abuse among youths in Kagoro of southern Kaduna state, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to; determine the commonly abused drugs, establish the causes of substance abuse on youths and establish measures put in place to curb substance abuse in Kagoro. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and a random sampling technique was used to sample 250 participants, questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The data collected was analyzed using statistical methods like percentages. The study established that alcohol, Weed, Tramadol, and tobacco were the most abused drugs in Southern Kaduna. Sources of drugs identified were friends, kiosks, or shops. The causes of the substance abuse established were; peer influence, availability of money to buy drugs, and family background. The study concluded that substance abuse among the youths led to school dropouts, strained relationships with other students, lack of interest in studying, truancy, low concentration span, and health problems such as anxiety, headaches, feeling sleepy, and confusion leading to declining academic performance and social life. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that awareness should be created on the effect of substance abuse among youths; there should be community counselling of youths involved in substance use. The study suggests that further studies should be carried out in other environments or institutions to check the impact of substance abuse with the view of curbing it.

KEYWORDS: Drugs/substance abuse, Psychological Guidance, and Counselling, Kagoro, Nigeria

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Introduction

Background to the Study

This study is concerned with the increasing use and abuse of substances by youths in Kagoro, southern Kaduna state. Substance abuse and its effects on the youths are relevant to the present trend of events, which was noticed to be increasingly growing as observed. Substance abuse has been found to bring different kinds of hazards to both the individual and the society as a result of an increased intake.

In Kagoro, the predominant dwellers indulge in drug consumption as a social and cultural factor, whereby drug sellers sell the products to youths. Also at birthday parties, drugs are being distributed as a type of refreshment to guests. The younger ones grow up to become substance abusers, thereby seeing no harm or whatsoever in the use of drugs intake. Youths and adolescents of this community also pick up this habit through observing others abusing substances. In other words, these people are typically family members, parents, friends, and neighbours around them. On the health effect, Limo (2012) states that damage to the ovum or sperm before conception can lead to abnormalities in the child. He further says that if the foetus is exposed to alcohol in the mother's blood in the early weeks, it may be born with foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Some studies suggest that marijuana produces a change in the user's chromosome and as with nicotine and alcohol may damage sperm, reducing fertility and affecting the developing foetus. A defective ovum that is fertilized is likely to produce an early miscarriage. Chronic cannabis use causes decreased levels of the male hormone testosterone, testicular degeneration, and arrested or abnormal sperm production (Limo, 2012).

Substance abuse has produced some Kagoro youths with many abusers whose relationship, reputation, future, worth, self-image, and especially academic performance suffer a great deal. Some youths in Kagoro are admirable to substance abuse which does not only rob the young ones of their cherished dreams and goals in life.

The researchers noticed that in Kaura Local Government many youths are involved in the act of substance abuse like alcoholism and smoking which leads to ineffectiveness in their spiritual, health, and academic performance.

Youth is a period when a person began to see some new development (changes) in the body he/she becomes conscious about life and feel on top of the world, of the

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youthful exuberant which is low and is mostly contrary to the societal norms, it is a curiosity that makes them exhibit habits that are evil in our homes, churches, mosques, and to the society at large. These include stealing, prostitution, gambling, and cheating.

It is in consideration of the above that the researchers are concerned with survey analysis of substance abuse by youths in Kagoro of Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The environment includes both physical and social environments. The social environment includes people that we frequently get into contact with daily. Youths, who engage in substance abuse, most likely learn the behaviour from the environment. The teachers and adults in society are the role models for them. In case, they get involved in substance abuse, the students and youths may desire to engage in such behaviours. Excessive alcohol consumption, especially illicit brews are common in Nigeria, therefore this is tied to youths taking the habit from peers and parents and bonding with other substance users in the society. However, a youth's attitude towards substance abuse impacted by education and knowledge can contribute to them deciding not to or to take the substances anyway.

Statement of the Problem

This study is instigated by the increasing use and abuse of substances among youths in Kagoro. Substance abuse and its effects on the youths are relevant to the present trend of events, which was noticed to be increasingly growing as observed. Substance abuse has been found to bring different kinds of hazards to both the individual and the country as a result of an increased intake. We noticed that many youths are involved in the act of substance abuse like alcoholism and smoking which leads to ineffectiveness in their spiritual, health, and academic performance.

Youth is a period when a person began to see some new development (changes) in his body he/she becomes conscious about life and feel on top of the world, of the youthful exuberant which is low and are mostly contrary to the societal norms, it is a curiosity that makes them exhibit habits that are evil in our homes, churches, mosques and to the society at large. These include stealing, prostitution, cheating, and gambling.

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It is in consideration of the above that the researchers are concerned with a survey examining substance abuse by the youths in Kagoro.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of embarking on this research work are:

- i. To find out the effects of substance abuse on Kagoro youths.
- ii. To find out ways that could be used to reduce or prevent substance abuse by Kagoro youths.
- iii. To find out whether the youths who abuse substances are healthy or academically poor.

Literature Review

Substance abuse among Nigerian youths particularly Kagoro youths have caused great concern not only to parents, friends, teachers, and community but to the government, general public, institutions, and individuals in the society, indeed it is a common problem among Kagoro youths in recent times such that unfortunate act has untold consequences on the abusers and significant others. The widespread cry and search for permanent solutions have great implications for communities or schools to achieve that, hence the need for this study.

Drugs are commonly used by everybody whether young or old. Drugs are not only useful for human beings; they are also useful for animals for good health. The drug is an effective substance in the life of any living thing to cure sickness and to make life healthy if it is properly used.

An analysis by the institute of security studies (ISS, 2015, cited in SAGE Open) suggests that ``except members of the criminal justice system identify and deal with youths involved in illicit activities at an early stage and by so doing disrupts illicit market`` youths who use substances may resort to forming criminal gangs which can create and sustain organised crime. Akintola, (2018) in his finding suggests that having a large number of friends may enable youths in a metropolis to have ready access to drugs. This may suggest the reason drug dealers in the metropolis engage the Almajiris and distributors. This could lead to the supply of substances from the metropolis to the rural areas through friends and drug dealers. Drugs consumption pattern differs in the metropolis. While smoking, drinking, and injections are common, depending on the type of drugs involved. (Ibrahim, 2016) This is similar to the youths in rural areas.

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The West African Commission on Drugs (WACD, 2014) indicated that many consumers take a mixture of cannabis with alcohol. Drink a mixture of codeine and tramadol, others that are popular among the street boys include a mixture of lizard dung with La Casera and inhaling of paint and latrine. The smoking of a local plant seed call Zakami (Daturametel) and pawpaw leaves also serves as stimulants. In Kagoro the some of the youths resort to taking some of these substances.

According to the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the consumption of tramadol and codeine can result in drowsiness, decreased alertness, and sometimes agitation and euphoria. Excess dosage of codeine can cause schizophrenia and organ failure among other health-related defects. (Owoseyi, 2018), the effect of substance abuse on the health of the youths is deadly.

Theoretical Framework

The social cognitive theory postulates that role modeling affects behaviour acquisition and shaping of behaviors in society. This study adopted the social learning theory by Bandura (1986, cited in Razieh, 2014) the theory is relevant to the proposed study as it forms the basis for studying the factors that determine the development of behaviour among youths. The behaviors could be influenced by their gender, age, and social pressure from the peers they interact within the schools. Out of curiosity, youths choose to do risky activities making them vulnerable to drug abuse and other substances. The theory also explains that external influences affect behaviour through cognitive processes. Future human behaviour is guided by their capability to form symbols. As such, a person can model an observed behaviour. It is through understanding people's perception of reality and we can understand their behaviors and change them. The pressure to drink comes more from the male than the female gender. In this case, there is the need to have a better knowledge of understanding the factors as they may be related to drugs and substance abuse with their implications in the society or community.

Peer pressure from children in school can have a high impact on the decisions they make. Friends play a significant role in how your child makes decisions. When your child hangs out with certain kids who do certain things, there is the tendency for your child to join in greatly increases. A study done by Columbia University found that a child is six times more likely to have an alcoholic drink according to Nova, (2016).

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Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study came up with the following research questions. The research questions are stated as follows:

- i. What are the major effects of substance abuse on the academic performance of Kagoro youths?
- ii. What ways can be used to reduce substance abuse effects on the health of Kagoro youths?
- iii. Does substance abuse have significant effects on the health of youths in Kagoro?

HYPOTHESES The following are some of the hypotheses for the research

- i. Substance abuse has significant effects on the academic performance of Kagoro youths.
- ii. Substance abuse has a significant effect on the health of Kagoro youths.

Methodology

Participants

The participants for this research work comprised 250 youths from the township of Kagoro and the environment. The researchers randomly selected 250 youths for the study.

Due to the large size of the target population, the researchers used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study. The researchers randomly selected the sample for the study without bias; this random selection was applied in all the areas for the study. 150 males and 100 females were selected. The age range of the participants was between 16 years and above.

The instrument for data collection

The research instrument used is the questionnaires which consist of close and open-ended questions. This was developed, appropriately moderated, and adopted in Nigeria. It has 10 items with 2 sections A and B. The respondents were given the questionnaires to complete without disclosing their identities as ethical considerations. The questionnaire was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents on the substances they abuse or not. It contained information extracted from the questionnaires in which the respondents were required to give a specific answer to a question by ticking in front of an appropriate answer provided.

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Validation of the research instrument

The questionnaire used as the research instrument was developed by Obot, (1993) to assess drinking behaviour and attitudes and adopted in Nigeria. The instrument has 39 items and 7 Likert scales, it has a reliability value of $R=0.9$ for this study, the researchers selected 10 items and adopted them to assess drinking behaviour, frequency of drinking, types of drinking among the youths.

Procedure

Five interviewers were engaged (2 males and 3 females) and trained on the contents of the questionnaire which they mastered and translated into their local, and Hausa languages. They were also trained on ethical consideration on data collection at GidanWaya which is about 15 kilometres away from Kagoro the area of the study; the interviewers were very familiar with the environment and are well known by some of the community members thereby making it easier to access the community and interview them, each interviewer was given 50 questionnaires they administered for a period of 2 weeks in houses, recreation spots, joints, and schools, 50 questionnaires were given in Teachers college Kagoro, 50 questionnaires for houses, 70 questionnaires for joints and 80 questionnaires for recreation spots. The filled questionnaires were collected from the participants. They brought back 200 out of the 250 questionnaires that were given to the participants.

Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design and a random sampling technique was used to sample participants.

Method of data analysis

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations, it is to make valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysed for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphases were laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses, and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of responses to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered. Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion.

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The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand. The researchers, therefore, choose the simple percentage as the method to use. The percentage formula is shown as.

$$\% = F/N \times 100/1$$

Where f = frequency of respondents response

N = Total Number of the response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item contained in the questions.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with a simple percentage for easy understanding. A total of 250 (two hundred and fifty) questionnaires were distributed and 200 (two hundred) questionnaires were returned. The returned questionnaires were analyzed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Commonly abused drugs in Kagoro.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Alcohol	71	35.5
Cannabis	52	26
Tramadol	25	12.5
Cough syrup	30	15
Tobacco	17	8.5
Glue	5	2.2
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey 2019

In Table 1 the researchers asked the respondents the most commonly abused drugs and the result indicate that 71 respondents which represent 35.5% of the respondents agreed that alcohol is the most commonly abused drug in Kagoro, 52 respondents which represent 26% said that is cannabis, 25 respondents which represent 12.5% said it is Tramadol, 17 respondents which represent 8.5% of the respondents said it is tobacco while 5 respondents representing 2.2% of the respondents said it is glue.

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Table 2: The effects of substance abuse on youths

Cause	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor academic performance	98	49
School dropout	23	11.5
Lack of interest in studying	32	16
Poor self-control	26	13
Health problem (confusion/sleepy/anxiety)	21	10.5
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey 2019

Question 2

What is the effect of drug abuse on the youths of Kagoro?

Table 2 has shown that 98 respondents representing 49% of the total respondents responded that drug abuse can lead to poor academic performance, 23 respondents representing 11.5% of the total respondents responded that drug abuse can bring about school dropout, 32 respondents representing 16% of the total respondents responded that drug abuse can bring down the interest of students towards studying and learning, 26 respondents representing 13% of the total respondents responded that youths that take drugs have poor self-control, while 21 respondents representing 10.5% of the total respondents responded that drug abuse can cause sleep/anxiety and confusion on the youths.

Table 3: Sources of Substances

Drug source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Neighboring Village	44	22
Kiosk/shops/pharmacy	67	33.5
Friends	89	44.5
Total	200	100%

Source: field survey 2019

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Question 3

Where do you source drugs from?

Table 3 indicated that 44 respondents representing 22% of the total respondents responded that availability of the drug is the cause of its abuse, 68 respondents representing 34% of the total respondents responded that peer group influence is the cause of drug abuse, 30 respondents representing 15% of the total respondents responded that family background is another cause of drug abuse, 49 respondents representing 24.5% of the total respondents responded that lack of parental care and monitoring is also a cause of substance and drug abuse, while 9 respondents representing 4.5% of the total respondents are of the view that curiosity is the cause of drug abuse.

Question 4

What are the measures that when put in place can curb drug abuse from the youths or students?

Responses gathered from the respondents on open-ended questionnaires indicated that: 60% of the respondents are of the view that the government should enforce a complete ban on drugs through the use of the Armed forces (NDLEA and NAFDAC). On the other hand, 40% are of the view that government should check and license pharmacies around Kagoro town to manage cases of selling illegal drugs like Tramadol. 65 % said that the community and other stakeholders should assist the government to arrest and prosecute people involved in the selling of drugs and other harmful substances. 58 % suggested that the government should empower vigilante groups to help curb the menace of drug abuse because they may have available information relating to harmful substances or other forms of hard drugs.

Summary of Findings

The first objective of this study sought to find out the commonly abused drugs in Kagoro Alcohol (35%) was the most abused drugs, followed by cannabis (weed) (26%) and cough syrup (15%). It was established that substance abuse was more prevalent amongst male youths in Kagoro than in female youths. The study findings indicated that the major sources of these drugs in Kagoro were identified from friends (44%). The second objective sought to establish the causes of drug abuse among Kagoro Youths. The study established that the major causes of drug abuse in Kagoro are: peer influence which was rated highest with (34%), lack of parental care

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was second with (24.5%); availability of drugs is ranked third with (22%). The least cause of drug abuse was the curiosity of the youths.

The third objective of the study sought to establish measures put in place to curb drug abuse in Kagoro. The measures established include arrest and persecution of drugs dealers and buyers by the law enforcement agency; Psychological counselling in religious places against substance abuse; instituting early detection programmes in schools and community to find out those being initiated into the act and prevented from doing so early enough; strict monitoring and inspection of pharmaceutical shops or chemist(s) around Kagoro and neighbouring villages and carrying out regular awareness campaigns on the dangers of substance abuse among the youths.

Conclusion

Based on the research finding of the study, the researchers concluded that; Alcohol was found to be the most frequently abused drug in Kagoro the major source of these drugs in Kagoro were from friends, pharmacies, and kiosks. Most factors such as peer pressure, stress at home especially due to unemployment, frustrations at home, family breakups, and conflict with parents; availability of drugs, availability of money to buy; and family background for example the parents also drink contributed to the students' abuse of drugs. Drug abuse among the youths caused dropping out of school, lack of interest in schooling, low concentration span, and declining grades hence an abuse of drugs had a negative effect on academic performance. Administering punitive punishments such as arrest and prosecution of dealers and buyers of drugs, imposing heavy fines to individuals selling drugs would help reduce the drug menace, regular orientation should be organized to sensitize the youth on the effect of drug abuse. All the stakeholders should take the initiative to save youths and society from drug abuse through awareness campaigns.

Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna state; the researchers intend to investigate the problems and effects of substance abuse by youths in Kagoro. The researchers focus their research on Kagoro because of time and financial constraints which makes it difficult to carry out an in-depth study on a wider scale.

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Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- i. The community should set up Psychological guidance and counseling offices and recruit professionals to counsel youths who indulge in substance abuse. This will help nurture the youths with emotional needs that they wish to share in confidence but lack the platform to do so and in return end up turning into substance abuse.
- ii. Parents and teachers should monitor their children especially adolescent peers to ensure they do not involve themselves with youths who abuse substances.
- iii. Substance or drugs free clubs should be established in secondary and tertiary institutions to provide awareness to the youths about drugs and the consequences of substance abuse.
- iv. The government should tax heavily legal drugs (alcohol and tobacco), and enforce tight sales to minors laws. For this reason, increasing the price of legal drugs by tax hikes can reduce consumption, delay, and in turn prevent the introduction of the young generation into drugs.

Suggestions for Further Research

- i. Since the current study only covered Kagoro a similar study could be carried out in other local governments or states to find out whether the same results will be obtained to allow for generalization of results.
- ii. Similar research should be carried out in tertiary or secondary schools to find out the effects of drug abuse on the health or academic performance of youths.

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