

# Impact of Substance Abuse on Academic Performance among Adolescent Students of Colleges of Education in Kwara State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated the impact of substance abuse on adolescent on academic performance in colleges of education in Kwara State.. The design used for the study was the survey. A sample of 150 adolescent students was randomly selected from selected departments in three colleges of education in the State. A validated instrument, Drug Habit Inventory (DHI, Fayombo, 1998) was used to collect relevant data and objective tests on Educational and General Studies were also used to test academic performance of these students. The data collected was analyzed using a t-test to analyse the hypotheses of differences. The findings show that there is significant difference between the academic performance and students who abuse drugs and those who do not and there is significant gender difference among adolescent substance abusers on the basis of academic performance. Based on the findings, recommendations were made on campaigns against substance use should be incorporated in health education curricula of colleges of education with special focus on the adverse consequences of the substances used and establishment of Counselling Centres for Drug Control: Counselling centres should be established in every colleges of education by the government or private individuals.

**Keywords:** Substance Abuse, Drug, Adolescence, colleges of education.

## Introduction

The use of hard drugs by adolescent students in Nigerian colleges of education has become an embarrassing occurrence to parents, schools, government authorities, and the society at large. The constant abuse of drugs among this group of students can cause psycho-social problems in society. One may hope that this hateful practice and its associated problems would not lead to the breeding of deranged generation of youths. This fear is not speculative because of what happens to be the frequent and rampant drug crises in many Nigerian educational institutions.

Adolescence is a period of changeover from childhood to adulthood and this critical developmental period is marked by several physical, psychological and social changes. Adolescents are a segment of population with age range between 14-25 years. Most students in colleges of education in Nigeria are usually within the adolescent age range of 14-25 years (Olugbenga-Bello; Adebipe; Abodurin, 2009). Adolescence is a time of experimentation, exploration, curiosity and identity search. Part of such a quest involves some risk-taking, including the use and abuse of psychoactive substances, which are the drugs that apply their major effects on the brain resulting in sedation, encouragement or change in mood of an individual. Adolescents are faced with the huge task of establishing a sense of identity. The new cognitive skills of maturing adolescents give them the ability to reflect on who they are and what makes them unique. Identity is made up of two components, self-concept and self-esteem (American Psychological Association, 2002). Self-concept is a set of beliefs about oneself, including attributes, roles, goals, interests, values, religious and political beliefs, while self-esteem is how one feels about one's self-concept. All of the developmental changes that adolescents experience prepare them to experiment with new behaviours. This experimentation results in risk-taking, which is a normal part of adolescent development (Sue, *et al*, 2009). Engaging in risk-taking behaviour helps adolescents to shape their identities, try out their new decision-making skills and gain peer acceptance and respect (Ponton, 2009).

Unfortunately, some of the risk that adolescents take may pose a real threat to their health and well being. These include pregnancy, cigarette smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and drug abuse. Odejide (2000) posited that drug is said to be abused when its use is not pharmacologically necessary especially when used in the face of legal prohibition or when a socially acceptable beverage is used excessively. Sambo, (2008) viewed that chronic use of substances can cause serious and sometimes irreversible damage to adolescent's physical and psychological development.

A drug refers to a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). This could thus be considered as chemical modifiers of

the living tissues that could bring about psychological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007).

Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world (UNODC, 2005). The use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA, 1997). Several school going adolescents experience mental health problem, either temporarily or for a long period of time. Some become insane, maladjusted to school situations and eventually drop out of school. NAFDAC, (2004) as cited by Haladu (2003) explained the term drug abuse as excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns. It could also be viewed as the use of a drug to the extent that it interferes with the health and social function of an individual. Odejide, (2000) warned that drug abusers who exhibit symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, behavior changes, fatigue and loss or increase in appetite should be treated by medical experts and counsellors to save them from deadly diseases.

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. In Kwara State today, the consequences of substance use are diverse, including acute and chronic health, social as well as psychological problem. There is disruption of interpersonal relationships particularly within the family, marginalization, criminal behaviour, school failure, vocational problems and failure to achieve normal adolescent milestones, yet these adolescents are expected to be the leaders of the country in the future when they do not even have any focus for the future. Several studies carried out among the colleges of education students in Benin City by Omege and Oshiloya, (2006), Nwagwu, (1999), Fayombo, (2000) and Obianwu, (2005) found out that students and youth of easy virtue in the community are involved in cannabis abuse and stimulants such as amphetamines and cannabis. The consensus of opinion therefore seems to be that youths are also seriously involved in substance abuse. Drug abuse has become such a problem of great concern to all well meaning Nigerian and particularly the Federal Government to the extent that an Agency has been established to combat the social disease with a view to reducing the spread of drug abuse to the barest minimum or eradicating it totally.

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. Wanting to be attractive to others becomes very important in adolescence, and this factor is significant in the development of eating disorders, alcohol consumption, tobacco and drug use, tanning, not practicing safe sex, and vulnerability to injury, among other behaviour. These adolescent who get involved in such risky behaviour often have high levels of conflict with their parents and poor self control, suggesting that they engage in such behaviour to manage a stressful life. Adolescents who abused substances typically do more poorly in academic. Parents and peers influence adolescent drinking by influencing attitude about alcohol and by acting as role models (Taylor, 2003). On the other hand, parental deprivation due to deaths, divorces, separation or discord has also been strongly associated with drug abuse (Odejide, 1997).

Most intuitively, alcohol and drug consumption may have some detrimental effects on pupils' cognitive abilities, for instance, by decreasing their ability to concentrate. Concerning the indirect channels, drug and alcohol consumption may for instance be responsible for shifting individuals' resources away from schooling. Additionally, it may undermine students' progress by making them less likely to attend classes or keep up with their studies. Finally, psychologists argue that heavy drinking may lower individuals' expectations about their academic performance (Deas et al, 2000). This effect could be driven by a shift in students' peers when they engage in abusive alcohol consumption.

Adolescent students discourteously depend on one form of drug or the other for their various daily activities such as social, educational, political, moral etc. such drug include tobacco, Indian hemp, cocaine, morphine, Heroin, Alcohol, Ephedrine, caffeine, Glue, Barbiturates etc. Oshikoya and Alli (2006) in their studies on perception of Drug Abuse amongst Nigerian undergraduates identified dependence and addiction as one of the major consequence of drug abuse, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behaviour, are use that persist even in the face of negative consequences. These changes are maladaptive and inappropriate to the social or environmental setting therefore may place the individual at risk of harm. Experiment with drugs during adolescence (11 – 25 years) is common. At this age, they use drugs for new things. They use drugs for many reasons including curiosity, because it feels good, to reduce stress, or to feel grown up. Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age increase the risk of using other drugs later.

In one of the WHO's and the world heart foundation's data, posit that in Nigeria, 22.1% of school youth age between 12 to 17 years use tobacco. Today, more Nigerian youths are becoming drug dependants, while Nigeria gradually transits from the status of a drug-consuming nation to that of a drug-producing one. Young ones who are mainly from well-to-do homes are increasingly identifying with the 'big boys' that practice the use of substance like heroin and cocaine. Others substances like Indian hemp, which is frequently produced in Nigeria and other substances like Methamphetamine and tablet with codeine capable of intoxicating are

mostly found in schools (Staff, 2012).

Illicit drug use is injurious to adolescent students in their academic performance. Today, there are estimated 1.5 million adolescent student drug users in Nigerian higher institution. No academic institution in Nigeria is immune and no student really is (Alabi, 2012). Some adolescents are involved in use of illicit drugs because they want to reduce regular pressures around them. It symbolizes a protest against set rules, and to explore basic to self (Omage, 2005). The arrest by police, NDLEA and the news reports revealed that illicit drug use is on the increase. It is in this connection that this study examines the impact of substance abuse on adolescent on academic performance in colleges of education in Kwara State.

### Purpose of the Study

1. To examine the of substance abuse among adolescent students;
2. To find out gender difference among adolescent students substance abuser;
3. To establish the impact of substance abuse on academic performance.

### Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between academic performance and students who abuse substance and those who do not.
2. There is no significant gender difference among adolescent substance abusers.

### Design

The researcher adopted survey research for the study. This involves systematic collection of information or data from population being studied.

### Population and Samples

Population of the study comprised of 150 adolescent students from three (3) colleges of education in Kwara State. Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Kwara State College of Education, Oro and Kwara State College of Education (Technical), Lafagi. Fifty (50) 200 levels adolescent students were randomly selected from all departments in each college of educations.

### Instrumentation

Researcher adopted Drug Habit Inventory (DHI, Fayombo, 1998) to find out the attitudes and level of adolescent substance abuse. Also, objective tests on Educational and General Studies were also used to test academic performance of these students. Twenty (20) questions on each subject were set and three options. DHI contains 30 items based on the rating 4, 3, 2, and 1 with a test – retest reliability of 0.73. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants. All the questionnaires were collected back and analysed

### Results

**Hypothesis1:** There is no significant difference between academic performance and students who abuse substance and those who do not.

**Table 1:** t-test of difference between academic performance and students who abuse substance and those who do not.

	Variables	N	Mean	S D	DF	t	sig	Decision
Academic Performance	Non-Substance user	63	62.683	9.381	148	2.661	.009	rejected
	Substance user	87	58.931	7.846				

Table1shows that there is significant difference between the academic performance and students who abuse drugs and those who do not, is rejected. Therefore  $t=2.661, p=.009$  at 0.05 level of significant.

**Hypothesis2:** There is no significant gender difference among adolescent substance abusers on the basis of academic performance.

**Table 2:** t-test of gender difference among adolescent substance abusers on the basis of academic performance.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t	sig	Decision
Academic Performance	Female	20	61.3500	10.946	85	3.506	.001	rejected
	Male	67	55.1642	5.221				

Table 2 shows a significant gender difference among student substance abusers,  $t= 3.506, p=.001$ . The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

### Discussion

Substance abuse among adolescents in institutions of learning worldwide is a foremost challenge that has elicited concern from stakeholders. The average age (18 years) in the current study falls within the adolescent period (the

high risk age group for substance abuse) and is similar to data obtained in previous studies in Nigeria Egbuonu, Ezechukwu, Chukwuka, Uwakwe (2004), Odejide (2000).

The first hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between academic performance and students who abuse substance and those who do not was rejected. The result according to table 1 reveals a significant difference in the academic performance of students who abuse substances and those who do not. The finding is similar to that of Obiamaka (2004), Okorodudu and Okorodudu (2004) and Odejide (2000) in their study indicated that the problem of drug abuse knows no boundaries or social class. It impedes the development of any society as it is a threat to life, health, academic performance and dignity of the adolescent.. This result is in line with Cook and Moore, (1993), that it could be the case that alcohol or drug consumption only has a negative causal effect on schooling achievements when consumed frequently and in large quantities, as suggested by other previous empirical studies. The finding also supports the claim made by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (1989). According to the report, there are significant changes manifested in the behaviour of drugs abusers, and such behaviour include distinct downward performance in school, increased absenteeism, chronic dishonesty, hostility and reduced self-esteem

Hypothesis 2 showed a significant gender difference among adolescent substance abusers on the basis of academic performance. The difference is that male adolescent substance abusers were affected in academic performance than their female. This confirms the finding of (Odejide,2000, Ogunremi and Rotimi, 1979, Agunlana, 1999, Ubom, 2004, Obiamaka, 2004 and Okorodudu and Okorodudu, 2004). In their research on the effect of drug abuse on educational performance of some adolescent drug abusers in Ibadan, Fayombo and Aremu (2000) found that the misuse of marijuana has reached an epidemic level in the present Nigeria society and the drug abuse could lead to reduced academic achievement or even halt one's entire academic process. Odejide (2000) point out that the desire to achieve success in a competitive world as a major factor is responsible for drug abuse among students.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Substance abuse in adolescence constitutes one of the most deadly menaces faced by Nigerians today. It has been identified as a social vice that must be eradicated. Although the government has currently championed the campaign against drug abuse, drug abusers exhibit some aberrant behaviour due to their reliance on drugs. They can be helped by Counsellor to overcome their problem. Counsellors are also required to provide drug abuse education to the adolescent in our secondary school and tertiary institutions. Drug abuse counseling is therefore recommended as an integral part of school curriculum; a method of management which focuses on specific problems arising from the abuse of drug.

The following recommendations are suggested:

1. Campaigns against substance use should be incorporated in health education curricula of colleges of education with special focus on the adverse consequences of the substances used.
2. Establishment of Counselling Centres for Drug Control: Counselling centres should be established in every community by the government or private individuals.

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