
DRUG ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.



www.akwapolyjournal.org
P-ISSN: 2536-6733 | E-ISSN: 2616-0773



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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the impact and causative factors of drug abuse among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. It utilized a descriptive survey sample of 141 participants selected through stratified and accidental

sampling techniques, with data collection conducted using a questionnaire. The social learning theory served as the theoretical framework for the investigation. Descriptive statistics, such as simple percentages, frequency counts, bar charts, and PPMC, were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed that students who habitually abuse drugs encounter academic difficulties and are at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system. Peer pressure was identified as the primary reason for drug addiction among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area. The study suggested that the issue could be addressed by implementing effective student orientation programs.

Keywords: *Drug abuse, addiction, students, peer pressure and academic performance*

INTRODUCTION

A pervasive social issue that is wreaking havoc on society in general and Calabar South Local Government Area, in particular is drug abuse. Drug use is not a bad thing in and of itself. When used correctly, drugs have been a blessing in medicine. For instance, plants, bark, roots, and herbs have all been used to help manage illness and ease pain. Unfortunately, the use of illegal substances has been on the rise globally over the past few decades at a never-before-seen pace. In order to develop effective

treatments and preventive measures, numerous researchers have looked into the causes of drug abuse and addiction. Studies have shown that wrong misuse of substances comes from various sources: family sources, such as mother-father relationships, the pattern parents raise their children, the income situation of the family, and the society, such as compromised gathering places, bad or wrong values, and abandonments. The people teenagers spend time with also affect their habits.

The circumstances surrounding

drug misuse call for the promotion of awareness among various associations in order to ensure that teenagers develop a sense of self-worth, raise teenagers' awareness of hard drugs and themselves, and equip them to resist both illicit and drug-related misuse. Communities must assist these kids in preparing for such circumstances by acting as mentors. Friends, family, teachers, and other members of the community should give support to adolescents so that they are emotionally and mentally ready to fight against drugs. An additional factor affecting drug abuse is the lack of knowledge of the drug's effects.

Drug usage is not dangerous in and of itself since, when appropriately used, drugs have been a blessing. According to Sambo (2021), adolescents' physical and psychological development might suffer grave, irreparable harm from long-term substance use. Depending on how they are used, medications can be helpful or detrimental. Apart from the detrimental consequences of substance abuse, a multitude of studies have demonstrated that

students use drugs for a wide range of reasons, such as curiosity, experimenting, peer and family pressure, absence of parental supervision, personality disorders, socioeconomic issues, the need for extra energy for work, achieving happiness, lowering fear, the accessibility of drugs, feeling good, reducing stress, sleeping, staying awake, improving sexual performance, age, unemployment, poverty, and arbitrary reasons. Students in secondary schools have been seen to be becoming more violent as the rate of substance usage rises.

Recently, there has been a steady rise in the number of individuals abusing or using stimulants, even though drug usage negatively impacts youngsters by altering their brain perception (Alan, 2023). Furthermore, some utilize substance abuse as a coping strategy and a means of blending in with those who are depressed due to boredom, fury, frustration, or academic failure. This inevitably impacts their academic performance; therefore, after consuming it, hours that could be spent studying are instead spent

relaxing and sleeping (Alan, 2023). The NDLEA has been initiating statewide enforcement campaigns to collect drugs and apprehend drug abusers in society. Additionally, the agency has implemented programs for sensitization, rehabilitation, and border patrol to prevent the trafficking of illicit substances into and out of Nigeria. Over the last ten years of operation, the 2019 NDLEA report states that 56 745, 795 555 kg of drugs were confiscated, 85, 058 people were held for drug-related charges, and 16 937 cases were secured and found guilty.

Acting through the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN), an entity entrusted with regulating pharmacy practice in the nation, the Federal Government of Nigeria has outlawed the creation of open drug markets in Nigeria. This project aimed to clean up the country's drug distribution network.

Moreover, it is illegal in the PCN for unlicensed people to handle drugs, especially prescription and controlled pharmaceuticals. The manufacture, importation, and sale

of codeine and syrups containing codeine (without a valid prescription) are prohibited by the National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) of the federal government of Nigeria. In 2018, NAFDAC shut down a few pharmaceutical companies manufacturing syrups with codeine nationwide. To help the government reduce the growing problem of drug misuse in the country, the Federal government of Nigeria also established a Presidential Advisory Committee for the Elimination of Drug Misuse in Nigeria in 2018.

Despite the efforts of the government at all levels and the destruction of illicit drugs, users in various parts of the country have resisted the endeavours of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) of Nigeria and additional governmental organizations to curb drug abuse, leading to an increase in misuse of substance cases. The number of drug abuse cases among youths, who are primarily students, has been steadily rising (Akinyemi 2021). This necessitated the current

study, which assessed the effect of drug misuse on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Calabar South Local Government Area and throughout Nigeria, the misuse of both legal and illicit drugs by secondary school students is developing into a subculture. Social and professional bodies, educational institutions, social workers, community development experts and Nigerian society are deeply concerned about this development. When drugs are misused, the brain is harmed, and the central nervous systems are frequently altered permanently. Many students who are under the influence of substance abuse end up performing poorly academically, and some have even died from drug overdoses.

It is concerning that secondary school students have more and

more access to a wide range of substances. Pain relievers, mood enhancers, and antidepressants are a few of these medications. Worldwide, drug misuse has a detrimental effect on students' academic performance. Adverse effects on the user's general health result from drug misuse behaviours, which also put the abuser at risk for crime, infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, and other fatal illnesses.

In addition to low academic standing, destitution, handicap, maladjustment, or even death for people with an addiction, drug misuse has adverse effects on education, society, economy, psychology, culture, physicality, morality, and health. Prostitution, child trafficking, adolescent pregnancy, psychological disorders, cultism, low self-worth and dignity, physical harm, social exclusion, and shame are all consequences of drug misuse. The lives and prosperity of adolescents, as well as the greater society, are

now at risk due to drug usage. This has been a significant concern for many parents, stakeholders, social workers, community development experts and the general public. Drug misuse among students in secondary schools has been a concern that has been addressed through numerous initiatives from governments and their agencies, including NDLEA, NAFDAC, social workers, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private efforts from various stakeholders.

However, the abuse of drugs among students appears to be on the rise. It has become a national issue in Nigeria due to its effects on human resources, innovations, leadership, and education. Most students are unaware of the extent of the dangers associated with drug usage despite widespread concern and teaching about the subject. The lives of those residing in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State are in jeopardy due to the high number of

secondary school students who have chosen to drop out of school and the criminal activities of others. There is a parallel, increased rate of secondary school students who use illegal drugs, despite the government's worries and increased efforts to discourage vice among students. It is based on this that this research looked at the relationship between drug misuse and the academic performance of secondary school students in Cross River State's Calabar South Local Government Area.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine how drug misuse affects secondary school students' academic performance in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, Nigeria.

The study specifically aimed to:

- i. Examine how drug misuse impacts Calabar South LGA secondary school students.
- ii. Find out why drug addiction is a problem among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide the study:

- (i) How does drug misuse impact students in Calabar South Local Government Area's secondary schools?
- (ii) Why do students in Calabar South Local Government Area's secondary schools abuse drugs?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. The impact of drug abuse on secondary school students' academic achievement in Calabar South LGA is not significantly correlated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of medications for purposes other than treating illnesses that have a detrimental impact on a person's social, cognitive, or physical well-being is known as drug abuse (Kuria, 2019). An individual might exhibit social impacts through an increased propensity to argue with friends, instructors, and school administrators. Memory loss and a lack of focus on academic work are

examples of cognitive impacts. On the other hand, Lewinsohn (2017) describes a drug as any substance that alters a person's feelings, thoughts, perception, or behaviour and excludes food and drink. It is a drug that has an impact on mental, emotional, and physical functioning because of the composition of its chemicals.

Gnawing, breathing in, drinking, smoking, applying to the skin, or injecting it are some of the techniques drugs might penetrate the body. The misuse of drugs by young people worldwide has grown to be a severe problem that impacts all. Addiction sends many individuals—young people in particular—down a dark path of despair that can sometimes be fatal. Drug misuse is to blame for broken families, lost income, property damage in schools, and skyrocketing medical expenses. It is an issue that impacts government representatives, educators, parents, employees, and taxpayers.

Among the most significant problems with public health on American campuses is substance abuse (Sullivan and Risler, 2021).

The report noted that steps had been taken to lessen the manufacturing and distribution of illicit brews, and it claimed that the illicit brew dens had been shut down thanks to local advisory committees set up under the County Commissioner's office. 271 million persons, or 5.5% of the global population between the ages of 15 and 64, reported consuming drugs in the year prior, according to the UNODC's most recent World Drug Report, 2022. Also, Forecasts indicate that 35 million individuals will be experiencing drug use disorders. Furthermore, Dankani (2021) revealed that more than half of the individuals admitted to mental facilities due to drug usage were students in secondary school.

These results also point to a significant frequency of substance misuse among secondary school students. Youth represent the most significant resource for the long-term social advancement of any community; however, the majority of this demographic is ignorant mainly about substance addiction, which hinders their ability to stop abusing drugs. This constraint is illustrated in a study conducted by

Namadi (2016) among Nigerian secondary school instructors and students. According to the study, 73% of teachers said they did not currently provide drug abuse education to their students, while almost 60% of students reported never having received such instruction. This data may represent a critical gap that warrants targeted interventions, and it may also explain why the frequency is more significant in younger populations.

Drug usage is growing more common in Nigeria and is starting to pose a threat to public health. Africa's most populated country, Nigeria, is known for being a hotspot for drug usage and trafficking, especially among youth. In Nigeria, one in seven adults (15–64 years old) reported using drugs, in line with the 2018 UNODC study "Drug use in Nigeria"— Nigeria's first comprehensive, nationwide drug use survey. Furthermore, among those who had taken substances in the preceding year, one in five had drug-associated disorders. Misuse of drugs has been connected to numerous crimes, such as theft, sex

work, burglary, and shoplifting. Nigeria is a very ethnically diverse country with around 400 different ethnic groups. Because Nigeria is a cosmopolitan country, drug use is consequently viewed from a broader angle. For instance, most societies do not consider the use of some medications to be drug abuse if the usage does not manifest in overt behavioural changes.

Nonetheless, even though Nigerians are a diverse nation, the public, police, clergy, medical experts, educators, government organizations, social workers, community development experts, and parents have all consistently voiced their concerns about the nation's growing drug abuse (abuse of substances that change behaviour). The President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria made the latest call. Reactivate (fencamfamine), Mandrax, tramadol, codeine, amphetamine/dexamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, diazepam, cough syrup, and cannabis were the most often implicated and frequently abused drugs, according to Gobir, Sambo, Bashir, Olorukoba, Ezeh, and Bello (2017). Proplus (50 mg of caffeine)

and Madrax (methadone and diphenhydramine) are two more medicines that are commonly abused, according to Yunusa, Bello, Idris, Haddad, and Adamu (2017).

A study on drug abuse among teenagers in Nigerian secondary schools in Surulere, Lagos State: The Cross-Sectional Study was carried out by Bakare (2019). Investigating drug addiction among secondary school teenagers in the Iponri community of Surulere, Lagos state, Nigeria, was the aim of the study. Specifically, the study looked at substance abuse and its prevalence among secondary school students in the Iponri area of Surulere, Lagos state, Nigeria. It also evaluated the accessibility of these substances, identified the primary cause or causes of abuse, and, based on its findings, recommended suitable educational and sensitization programs for the students. Randomly chosen from the Surulere local government area in Lagos State, the target audience was 276 students from Junior and Senior Secondary Schools 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The study employed descriptive statistical

approaches to analyze the collected data. The qualitative data was split up into numerous sections before processing. The data analysis procedure used the Statistical Package for Social Science, and the collected results were presented in tabular, frequency, and percentage formats.

The results of the study indicated that 74.2% of people abuse drugs. Sixty-two per cent of the students have smoked cigarettes at some time in their lives. It was also evident that most of the students in the sample (70%) had drunk alcohol at some point in their lives and that they had effectively started smoking after entering secondary school. The survey likewise showed that peer and social pressure accounted for 98% of drug misuse among students.

The research additionally showed that a proportion of students used substances recreationally since they got high (254 out of 92% of the students). The survey also revealed that the students' subpar academic standing-a mean score of 4.58-was a direct outcome of their drug usage.

Furthermore, the study found that the students engaged in physical altercations or fights following drug use (4.32 and 4.38), as well as an accident or injury due to drug consumption. According to the report, the students also experienced conflicts or disagreements following drug use (4.24), with their parents (4.25), and with their teacher (4.26). The results of the study indicate that parents and educators of students should be steadfast in their attempts to discourage and guarantee that their kids do not use alcohol or other drugs that are excessively used in schools.

Peer pressure and group influence are critical factors in substance usage, according to Haladu (2023), and they are crucial in persuading many young people to misuse drugs. Because people may not enjoy the company of others unless they comply with their way of life and convention, students in Nigeria and other areas of the world typically rely more on their friends and less on their parents. The increased rate of drug use among students can be attributed, in part, to students' high level of experimental curiosity, according

to Haladu (2023). The initial experience of drug abuse also leaves one feeling happy, oblivious, and pleasurable, which encourages one to keep using drugs. Parental supervision and accountability deficiencies have also contributed to substance abuse. According to Haladu (2023) many guardians and parents who are supposed to be taking care of their kids do not have much time to spend supervising them.

A few guardians do not even engage in positive, productive conversations with their children, and some just put pressure on them to perform well in school, which in turn encourages them to start using drugs because some students have been shown to learn longer when they use drugs. The increasing availability and accessibility of drugs in Nigeria pose a challenge to the fight against drug use among secondary school students.

According to Haladu (2023), this further explains why socioeconomic circumstances make students more vulnerable to personality problems. Most

Nigerians have below-average living standards, social well-being, and economic status. Both the unemployment rate and the level of poverty are at an all-time high. Sadness is a significant contributing factor to substance misuse and can be brought on by these epidemics. Drug addicts' wish to prevent experiencing withdrawal symptoms is another major factor in their continued drug usage. After quitting drugs, people with an addiction experience a range of symptoms, including pain, anxiety, trembling, and excessive perspiration. Due to their inability to cope with these signs, drug addicts frequently keep abusing narcotics (Igwe & Ojinnaka, 2020).

Drug-abusing students frequently face difficulties in their academic careers and occasionally find themselves in the juvenile criminal system. According to research done (2019) by Hawkins, Calatano, and Miler, students who abuse drugs or other substances tend to be less committed to their studies and have excellent truancy rates. Abot (2015) asserts that drug usage affects the brain and causes a significant reduction in the

functions it performs. Drug misuse affects students' ability to focus in one way or another. They also impact professional growth by obstructing the recognition of an individual's distinct capabilities and interests.

METHODOLOGY

This study's research design was a descriptive survey. At the time of the investigation, the study's population consisted of 1,415 pupils from the five public secondary schools in the local government region. Stratified and accidental sampling approaches were utilized in the study to choose a sample size of 141 or 10% of the population. Data for the research was gathered from respondents using a questionnaire named "Drug abuse and academic performance among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State Questionnaire (DAAPSSSQ)". The instrument's dependability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha.

The sub-scale had coefficients ranging from 70 to 84. Since the coefficients were high enough, the instruments could be trusted to collect data. The researchers gathered the data and used descriptive statistics (bar charts, percentages, and frequencies) and Pearson product-moment correlation to analyze it.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

According to the first hypothesis, students in Calabar South do not significantly differ in their academic performance from the impacts of drug misuse. Table 1 displays the outcome of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation study to evaluate this hypothesis.

Table 1

An examination of the association between secondary school student academic performance and drug misuse effects using the person product moment method

Variable	N	X	S.D	Df	r-cal	p-va
Effect of drugs abuse	141	13.98	4.18	139	.657*	.000
Academic performance	141	15.11	4.01			

*=significant at .05

According to the result in Table 1, ($r=.657^*$, $p<.05$). There appears to be a strong correlation between substance misuse and academic achievement in Calabar South secondary school students, as indicated by the fact that $p (.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis, which claimed that there is no meaningful correlation between drug abuse and academic performance among students in secondary schools in Calabar South, is not accepted.

What factors lead to drug abuse among Calabar South secondary school students? Table 2 and Figure 1 demonstrate the results of using simple percentages to answer this question.

Table 2

Simple percentages analysis of the causes of drugs abuse among secondary school students

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

s/n	Responses on causes of drugs abuse	Yes	No
1	Anxiety	98 (69.50)	43 (30.49)
2	Peer influence	124 (87.94)	17 (12.06)
3	Broken homes	56 (39.71)	85 (60.28)
4	Availability of money	117 (82.97)	24 (17.02)

5	Negligence by parents or guardians	126 (89.36)	15 (10.63)
6	Experiment	18 (12.76)	123 (87.23)

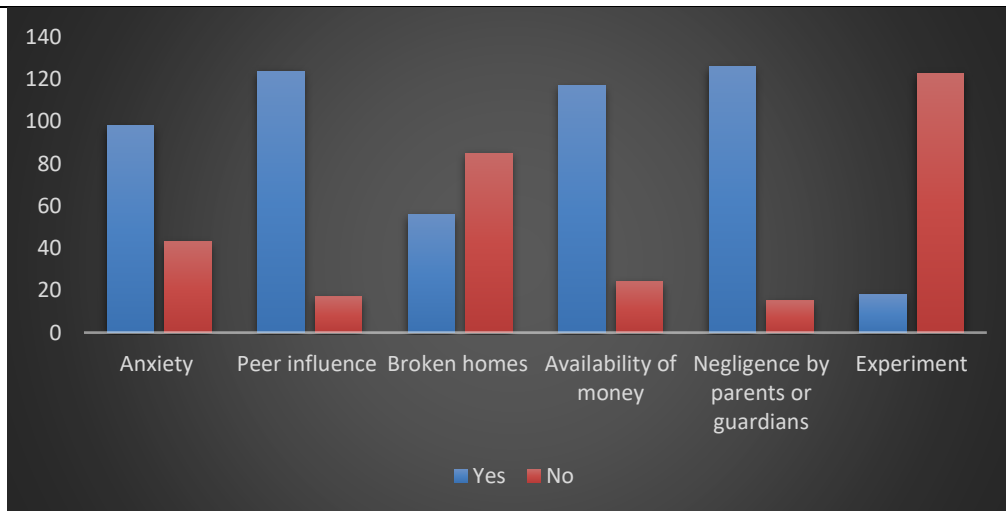


Fig 1. Bar graphs showing responses on causes of drugs abuse among students

According to the results in Table 2 and Figure 1, peer pressure is the main factor contributing to drug abuse among students followed by respondents, or 10.63% of the sample, disagreed. Next in line was peer pressure, with 124 parental or guardian neglect and financial (or 39.71%) agreeing and 85 respondents (or 60.28%) disagreeing. With 18 respondents, or 12.76%, who agreed that experiments are not the most common cause of drug abuse and 123 respondents, or 87.23%, who

availability. Drug experimentation, which is still susceptible to peer pressure, is the least, however. 126 respondents, or 89.36% of the sample, agreed that parental or guardian irresponsibility is the main reason why students abuse drugs, while just 15 disagreed, the experiment comes in sixth place.

respondents (or 87.94%) agreeing that the availability of money is the third most common cause of drug abuse, 17 disagreeing respondents

(or 12.06% of the sample), and 117 respondents (or 82.97% of the sample) disagreeing (17.22% of the sample). While 43 respondents, or 30.49% of the sample, disagree that anxiety is the fourth most common cause of drug usage, 98 respondents, or 69.50% of the sample, agreed that it is. The data indicates broken households are ranked fifth, with 56 respondents

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1 stated that misuse of drugs has no significant correlation with secondary school students' academic performance in Calabar South Local Government Area. An analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted to test this hypothesis. The study's conclusions concur with those of the following research, which show that adolescents who use drugs habitually and repeatedly frequently struggle academically and occasionally end up in the juvenile criminal system. According to a study done in (2019) by Hawkins, Calatano, and Miler, students who abuse drugs or other substances tend to be less committed to their studies and have

excellent truancy rates. Abot (2015) asserts that drug usage affects the brain and causes a significant reduction in the functions it performs. Drug misuse affects students' ability to focus in one way or another. They also impact professional growth by obstructing the recognition of an individual's distinct capabilities and interests. Drug addicts have behavioural and cognitive issues that can disrupt their academic achievement and create obstacles for their peers' study sessions. According to Ballas (2016), substance addiction can lead to a breakdown of the neurological system, a rise in heart rate, and breathing difficulties, as well as recurrent illnesses.

Additionally, it dilates blood vessels, makes people needlessly antagonistic, egotistical, and despondent, impairs judgment and leads the learner to make poor, ignorant decisions because it poisons the higher brain and nerve centres. More importantly, substance addiction promotes undesirable, unlawful, and disorderly behaviour in learners by making them exuberant and

causing them to act in ways that are deemed odd, which occasionally results in criminal activity. Mainly because it costs much money to get these drugs, substance misuse particularly promotes poverty. This hurts students' academic performance because they would prefer to buy drugs with their money than learning materials (Akus, 2020). Because drug misuse has been linked to mental health problems, it can also make a student unstable.

What are the reasons behind drug abuse among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area (LGA)? was the following research query. In addressing research question number two, the study's conclusions showed that worry, background of family and peer pressure are some significant factors that contribute to drug abuse among secondary school students in the research area. The results of the study corroborate those of Foo, Tam, and Lee (2021), who claimed that technology has additionally and significantly facilitated youngsters' easy access to narcotics. They pointed out that

there are now more channels for companies to operate online, including selling medicines. The web is now a helpful instrument regarding the promotion and retail of additional nutrients, a few of which are suspected of being combined with illegal substances like marijuana. According to Orubu (2023), a student who performs well on exams do drugs to gain social recognition and acceptance from their peers who view them as tough, brave, and strong. Students generally view drug users as the appropriate persons to socialize with, especially those in secondary school.

Olatunde (2015) claims that pharmaceuticals, such as amphetamines pro-plus, are used by secondary school students to assist them in staying energetic during their studies, which ultimately helps them succeed in exams. Some people use drugs due to their curiosity, strength, camaraderie, pleasure from social events, pressure from school, restless sleep, sexual prowess, and gaming prowess. A severe problem among secondary school students is substance abuse, which has

progressively rendered the average Nigerian student crippled, and doomed to a life of misbehaviour, madness, and premature death.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, medical experts can prescribe medications as a means of therapy and medication for various illnesses, including preventive disorders. However, students' intellectual, social, psychological, and physical development suffers when medications are misused and used without a prescription. It is consequently necessary to properly inform students of the risks connected with drug abuse in light of the study's observations. Considering the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

(i) To make sure students do not hang around with drug addicts, parents and teachers should ensure they keep a careful eye on who their wards or students associate with. The students will benefit from not succumbing to peer influence.

(ii) Teachers and parents must set a good example for their children. To keep other kids from copying them, they should make sure they stay away from driving home and to school after drinking.

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