

Drug Addiction and Academic Performance of Undergraduates in Nigeria: Implications for Counsellors and Medical Practitioners

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria and also examined whether demographic variables of age and gender will affect the respondents' views.

Descriptive survey method (design) was used for the study. The population consisted of 200 randomly selected students from various faculties in the institution. Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument tagged "Drug Addiction and Academic Performance Questionnaire (DAAPQ)". Data analysis was done using percentage, means and t-test statistical measures and all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

The result revealed that the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology of Technology is negative. The study further revealed that there were significant differences in the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates based on gender and age.

By implication, counsellors and health practitioners should increase the frequency of orientation program organized for students on dangers and adverse of effects of drugs, its abuse and addiction.

Key words: Drug Addiction, Academic Performance, Undergraduates

Introduction

In Nigeria, the adverse effect of drug abuse and addiction is immeasurable especially on students and youths in general. Drugs are commonly used by everybody whether young or old. Drug is an effective substance in the life of any living thing to cure sickness

and to make life healthy. It is true that drugs are used for beneficial and therapeutic purposes, effective for good health. However, the usefulness has almost been rendered useless as a result of misuse, abuse and addiction by the global world most especially students, young adolescents and other youths'.

Drugs are chemical substances that modify mental, emotional and behavioral functioning of an individual. According to the World Drug Report, the use of drugs has increased throughout the recent years. Drug is taken by adolescents and students for satisfaction of pleasure and later becomes a necessity and addiction. Atwal¹ noted that drug addiction is a sweet candy for those who are into it, with potentials of damaging their body system. Drugs take a tremendous toll in the Nigerian society as one of the possible causes of cardiovascular and respiratory disorder, cancers, mental issues. Drugs also refer to any substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions'. It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behavior and general body functions'. Drugs are chemicals that tap into the brains communication system and disrupt the way nerve cells normally send, receive and process information. Drugs can do these in two ways: imitating the brains natural chemical messengers or by over stimulating the reward circuit of the brain. Nearly all drugs, directly or indirectly, target the brains reward system by flooding the circuit with dopamine'. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that is present in regions of the brain and may have effects on movement, motion, motivation and feelings of pleasure.

The over stimulation of the body system, which normally respond to natural behaviors that are linked to survival (e.g. eating), produce the euphoric effects in response to the drugs'. This reaction sets in motion a pattern that teaches people to repeat the behavior of abusing drugs thereby hindering the psychological recipe of the brain to function effectively in the correct proportion. Drugs facilitate non conscious conditioned learning, which leads the user to experience uncontrollable cravings. Brain imaging studies of drug addicted individuals shows changes in areas of the brain that are critical to judgment, decision making, learning and memory as well as behavior control. Together, these changes can drive an abuser to seek out and take drugs compulsively despite adverse consequences in other words become addicted to drugs'. Atwal¹ and Singh² noted that multiple factors

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may be involved which attracts the adolescents as well as students of tertiary institutions to drugs such as desire for new experiment to seek pleasure and joy. Students take drug for excitement, fun and pleasure when they have inadequate and misconceived perception about drugs thereby getting endangered to various disorders. Unfortunately, it crumbles their morale and motives towards life likewise; it shatters and truncates their future desires.

Singh⁷ was of the opinion that "the scourge of drug dependence has deleterious repercussions on individual's physical, emotional and social life spheres as well. Drugs are chemicals that disrupt the brain and the nerve cell function. The use of drugs hurts the people taken it and not only them but as well people around them including families, kids, friends, unborn babies and the society at large. Drugs also tend to hurt the body as well as the brain. Drugs abused are caused by series of overwhelming problems such as: fighting and violence inside and outside the home, illicit troubles in school and its environs, troubles in relationship, child abuse and neglect and disorders of all kinds (lung disease, mental illness and loss of memory). Drugs often make mood change quickly which might bring the feelings of sadness, anger, happiness, frustration and hyper-activeness for no reason. Drugs caused indecision and denial of ability to enjoy things. Not everyone who uses drugs become addicted, each person's body and brain are quite different therefore people's reaction to drug varies. Surroundings and stress can make someone more or less likely to become addicted".

World Drug Report⁸ noted that drug addiction lead to individual factors such as low self-esteem, poor self-control, inadequate social coping skills, sensational seeking, depression, anxiety and stressful life event. Drug addiction is as well associated with anti-social vices and behavior among students such as cultism, hooliganism, thuggery, pre-marital sexual activities, prostitution, indecent dressing, pocket picking, examination malpractice, gambling, smoking, robbery and rape which thereby connote that the problem of drug abuse amidst undergraduate students is the problem of everyone: the parents, the school, the lecturers, the teachers, other students and the general public. Drug abuse eventually leads to drug addiction and then to respiratory or heart diseases and eventually death.

Drug addiction, although often regarded as a personality disorder, may also be seen as a worldwide epidemic with evolutionary genetic, psychological and environmental influences controlling this behavior. Globally, usage of drug leading to addiction has reached all-time high limits⁹. Drug addiction is thought of as an adjunctive behavior or a subordinate behavior catalyzed by deeper, more significant psychological and biological stimuli.

Drug addiction fundamentally indicates a false increase of fitness, leading to increasing drug abuse to continue to gain, even if the gain is realized as being false and illicit. Then the motivation towards gain begins to take precedence over adaptive behaviors among addicted individuals and their emotional system are now concentrated on drug seeking rather than survival. Drug addiction is detrimental for any individual, not only because of the various health problems involved, but also due to the fact that it abolishes negative emotions such as pain, which in turn shuts off basic defense mechanisms against potential threats. However, drug addiction has a debilitating effect on the overall beings of the student involved, academic performance inclusive.

Academic performance refers to how well a student is accomplishing his/her academic task. Studies and grades are certainly well known indicator of academic performance¹⁰. According to Ward, Stocker and Murray¹¹, academic performance refers to the outcome of education: the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is the ability to study facts and being able to communicate one's knowledge verbally or written on papers^{12,13}. In the context of this study, academic performance refers to the extent to which undergraduate students have achieved mastery of the objectives courses they are been exposed to which is their main priority of being in school. To this view, students who are addicted to illicit use of drugs may have a deteriorating academic performance.

Drug addiction could immensely affect and alter students' academic performance in that it limits their performance below their expectations and desires. Educational activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objective. In school, the extent to which these objectives have been achieved is determined by their level of peer pressure, time management as students' success and how they are reflected in their academic performance. Peer pressure and friends plays an important role in the exposure of students and adolescents to addiction which affects their emotional, educational and academic performances (Allen, 2005). Students' exposure to drug leading to addiction obstructs students' potentials in their performances academically.

The adverse effect of illicit usage of drugs in Nigerian society among youths, adolescents and majorly among students is nothing to write about. It is very saddening that females who are going to be mothers and home builders are not excluded. Illicit usage of drugs has immensely contributed to the degradation movement of the society. Majority of student's insanity and maladaptive behaviors is usually caused by abuse of drug concurrently leading to addiction. From various researches^{14,15} and eye witnesses, students' lives aspirations and ambition has

been truncated due to addiction to drugs. The issue of drug has caused students taking it to indulge in examination malpractices while some break down during examinations leading to failure and later not being able to cope leading to dropout, some become high and misbehaves, rude and arrogant to lecturers and parents inclusive thereby causing chaos on campuses. The use of drugs which eventually lead to addiction among students gradually progresses to affect student academic performances, hampering evils on campus and posing threat to the society.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the Descriptive research design. It is designed to depict the participants in an accurate way. Oke¹³ stated that descriptive research attempts to describe, find out and interpret condition, relationship that exist or the attitude of people towards events, things and trends that are developing.

The population of this study consisted all undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology of Technology, Ogbomosho. The target population comprised undergraduates from selected faculties. Simple random technique was used to select 4 faculties; purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 4 departments in each of these faculties. Systematic random sampling technique was adopted to select 50 students in each department across all levels i.e. 100-400 level. This made a total of 200 undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology of Technology that participated in this study.

The instrument that was used in this study was a structured research questionnaire developed by the researcher. A research designed instrument titled Drug Addiction and Academic Performance Questionnaire (DAAPQ) was used to elicit information's. the instrument has two sections; sections A and B. Section A consisted of information on demographic personal data of the undergraduates such as gender and age. Section B contains 20 items on the influence of drug addiction on student's academic performance and was patterned after a four point likert rating scale format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The draft of the instrument was given to three experts in the Department of Adult

Education for amendments, corrections and further instructions which ascertained the validity of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by administering the instrument twice on 20 undergraduates of the University of Ilorin at an interval of 4 weeks. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation formula (PPMC) and a correlation coefficient of 0.78 level of significance was gotten which means that the instrument is reliable for use.

The respondents are expected to supply each of the 20 items with either agreeing or disagreeing based on their perception. The items were scored thus: SA (Strongly Agree) = 1 point; A(Agree) = 2 points; D (Disagree) = 3 points; SD (Strongly Disagree) = 4 points. The mean score is 2.5 (1+2+3+4/4). Therefore, items with mean scores above 2.5 were adjudged as negative influence of drug addiction on academic performance of LadokeAkintola University of Technology of Technology, Ogbomosho and vice versa.

In analyzing data of the study, t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by gender, age, religion, and family type. A total number of 200 respondents participated in the study, out of which 99 (49.5%) were female while, 101 (50.5%) were male. On the table, 57 (28.5%) of the respondents were below 20 years while 143 (71.5%) were 20 years old and above. Also, none of the respondents are African Traditional Worshippers, 159 (79.5%) practice Christianity while, 41 (20.5%) practice Islam. Similarly, 186 (93.0%) of the respondents were from monogamous family while 14 (7.0%) were from polygamous family.

Result indicated that the influence of drug addiction on academic performance is negative. Respondents perceived that drug addiction could prevent students from participating in class, could make addicts irresponsible in school/class activities, could make them have low zeal in achieving success, could make them easily forget what they read, could make them have negligent attitude towards tutorial etc.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender and Age

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage%
1.	Gender		50.5
	Male	101	49.5
	Female	99	100.0
	Total	200	
2.	Age		28.5
	Below 20 years	57	71.5
	Above 20 years	143	100.0
	Total	200	

Table 2
Mean and Rank Order of Influence of Drug Addiction on Academic Performance

Item No.	Students who are drug addicts:	Mean	Rank
20	do not participate in class activities (e.g. test, field trips)	3.88	1 st
6	are irresponsible in school/class activities	3.73	2 nd
15	have low zeal in achieving success	3.72	3 rd
1	are easily frustrated when reading	3.68	4 th
5	easily forget what they read	3.66	5 th
8	increased absenteeism in school	3.57	6 th
17	have cognition deficit	3.52	7 th
18	are unable to focus on a course of study	3.50	8 th
4	have problem assimilating what is being taught	3.48	9 th
7	have poor study habit	3.47	10 th
10	are not alert when learning	3.44	11 th
2	have memory dysfunction and could not assimilate	3.43	12 th
19	have reduced attention and alertness towards learning	3.40	13 th
12	have poor participation in group learning	3.22	14 th
13	lose interest in coming to school	3.20	15 th
3	have fatigue in and outside school	3.10	16 th
11	are usually late to classes	3.00	17 th
9	have learning disabilities	2.87	18 th
16	have negligent attitude towards tutorial	2.65	19 th
14	perform poorly in test and examination	2.58	20 th

Table 3
Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value Showing the Influence of Drug Addiction on Academic Performance based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	101	51.91	8.79	198	3.41*	1.96	0.00
Female	99	56.23	9.09				

*p<0.05

Table 4
Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing the Influence of Drug Addiction on Academic Performance based on Age

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	cal. t-value	crit. t-value	p-value
Below 20years	57	51.16	7.54	198	2.80*	1.96	0.00
Above 20years	143	55.20	9.53				

*p<0.05

It indicated that there is a significant difference in the influence of drug addiction on Academic performance as perceived by Undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology based on gender thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

It indicated that there is a significant difference in the influence of drug addiction on Academic performance as perceived by Undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology based on age thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that drug addiction has negative influence on the academic performance of Undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology. The study revealed that drug addiction could prevent students from participating in class activities as well as irresponsible in all school activities. The findings of the study as analyzed as well shows that drug addiction can cause students to have low productivity in attaining success, to easily forget what they read, frustrated when reading, to have

increased absenteeism in school, lateness to classes, to lose interest in schooling and have reduced or low attention and alertness towards learning. All these, invariably will influence poor academic performance of the students in school and its environment. This finding is in line with Patricia¹³ whose study showed that negative effects of drug addiction on academic performance could involve neglecting planning and execute functioning in school, memory deficit and loss of attention towards studying. This study also collaborate that of Dea¹⁴ that negativity of drug addiction on academic performance in that it undermines students' progress by making them less likely to attend classes and keep up with their studies.

Another finding revealed that there was a significant difference in the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology based on gender. This implies that undergraduates of Lautech both male and female have different perception of influence of drug addiction on

academic performance on the basis of gender. Furthermore, the result showed that female students have a higher perception of influence of drug addiction on academic performance to the male which might be because they considered themselves as weaker sex and hostile to drug usage unlike males. This finding tallies with that of World Drug Report and The 21st century nationwide survey showed that males are addicted to drugs at higher rate than females.

Finding revealed that there was a significant difference in the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology based on age. This implies that each undergraduates of the institution have different perceptions of drug addiction and how it affects academic performance based on age. The result further showed that undergraduates above 20 years has a greater perception of drug addiction and its influence on academic performance to undergraduates below 20 years which contributed extensively to the difference noted and this might be because of the exposure and familiarity of undergraduates above 20 years to drug. It might also be as a result of influence from peers and their experiences to drug. This in correlation with the findings of the National Institute on Drug Abuse that drug addiction is higher among students in their twenties and above than students below twenties with statistics in 2013 showing that people below 20 years of age have 22.6% while people above 20 years of age have a higher percentage.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the findings, it was concluded that the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology is negative. There were significant differences in the influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology of Technology based on gender and age.

Implications for Counsellors and Medical Practitioners

It was revealed in the study that influence of drug addiction on academic performance as perceived by undergraduates of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology is negative. Therefore, counsellors and health practitioners are expected to take into consideration the following to curb the menace of drug addiction among undergraduates.; Counsellors and medical practitioners should work hand in hand with co-operate bodies such as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration control (NAFDAC) in providing efficient information,

activities and symposiums for undergraduates in the school and its environments.

Counsellors in tertiary institutions should exhibit in loco-parents' attitudes to the students by providing information that will enhance self-improvement and self-betterment for the students thereby desisting from illicit activities such as drug abuse and addiction in school. Counsellors and health practitioners should increase the frequency of orientation programme organized for students on dangers and adverse of effects of drugs, its abuse and addiction. Health practitioners and counsellors should adopt Behavior modification as a technique for modifying and eradicating drugs and addiction among students in the tertiary institution should be adequately used.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:-

Drug addicts should be reformed and rehabilitated so as to be responsible citizens in class, school and society at large. Drug addicts should be helped to develop interest in participating in class activities and also be assisted to focus and develop interest in achieving and progressing academically. Furthermore, co-operate bodies and school institutions should assist drug addicts through rehabilitation. Drug addicts should be sanctioned through clearly specified punishment in school and in the society at large.

In other to enhance students' positive attitude towards academic performance, the school, the lecturers, the parents and other school personnel should jointly work to enhance social, mental, physical, spiritual, academic and moral developments of each of the students. Drug addicts should be taught how to develop good study habits and be helped to develop memories to remember what has been read. Counselors and health practitioners should organize talks and seminars continually to make students say NO TO DRUG ABUSE and ADDICTION.

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