

Effects of Drug Abuse on Academic Performance of Technology Education Students in Nigerian Public Universities

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ABSTRACT This article examines the drug abuse on the academic performance of students in Nigerian public universities. Three research questions were formulated which include why students in universities take hard drugs whether these drugs have effects on the academic performance of students and whether peer groups have influence on drugs intake among technology education students in Nigerian public universities. Ten technology education students were used as a pilot study while four hundred and fifty-nine (459) questionnaires were administered to the respondents, collected back and analyzed with percentages. The researchers employed survey research design. The results of the study show that technology education students have no cogent reasons for taking hard drugs, drug abuse have effects on the academic performance of students and peer groups influence students of technology education to engage in drug abuse in Nigerian public universities. The effects of drugs on the academic performance of technology education students in Nigerian public universities. Based on these recommendations are made on how to further x-ray the effects of hard drugs on the academic performance of students of technology education in Nigerian public universities.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been regarded as a vehicle for economic, social and political development. There has also been a growing commitment to education by government, individual communities and missionary bodies (Bettinger and Slonim 2007). This commitment on the part of government and other non-state actors has extended to ensure that students are properly groomed and tutored on how best to effectively manage themselves in an ever-changing world. These changes have tempted some students to believe that, for them to be able to maintain academic expectations they need to involve in the use of hard drugs (Brook et al. 2009).

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), defines technology education as a preparation process which is related to the acquisition of more advanced theoretical knowledge and applied skills which in turn, require higher level of judgement (2001). Uwameiye (2010) sees technology education as that education which is designed to prepare the learners to enter an occupation. Uwameiye further asserts that technology education seeks to expose students to the culture of the world of work, which is practical oriented. Indeed the world of work culture ensures that students acquire skills towards job orientation

rather than paper qualification. Skill acquisition constitutes and integral part of the programme of emancipation of Nigeria from technological underdevelopment. It is likely that in an attempt to achieve this loft objectives some students involve in various degrees of drug abuse.

Drug abuse, is generally viewed as the use of a substance that modifies mood or behaviour in a manner characterized by a maladaptive pattern of use. Musto (2008) says that substance abuse is the use of drug that can cause disorder characterized by the use of a mood or behaviour-altering substance in a maladaptive pattern resulting in significant impairment or distress, such as failure to fulfill social or occupational obligations or recurrent use in situations in which it is physically dangerous to do so or which end in legal problems. What this connotes is that it modifies behaviour.

The use of hard drugs by students in Nigerian universities has become an embarrassing phenomenon to parents, schools, government authorities, and the society at large. The students today are the leaders of tomorrow and they deserve good education in the right direction. The constant abuse of drugs among this group of persons can cause psycho-social problems in society. One may hope that this obnoxious practice and its associated problems would not lead to the breeding of deranged generation

of youths. This fear is not unfounded because of what happens to be the frequent and rampant drug crises in many Nigerian universities.

It is in this connection that this study examines the effects of drugs on the academic performance of technology education students in Nigerian universities. To find out whether technology education students have cogent reasons for taking hard drugs and whether these drugs have effects on the academic performance of students of technology education in Nigerian universities.

Literature Review

As an academic discipline, Luppigini (2005) asserts that educational technology prepares individuals by helping them acquire a deeper understanding and mastery of learning resources: messages, people, materials, devices, techniques and settings. This implies that it analyzes and provides solutions to problems through research, theory, design, production, evaluation, utilization. The focus is on effective processes to facilitate learning using technologies and understanding the impacts of technology on learners and organizations (DeVaney and Butler 2009).

The National Policy on Education (NPE 2004) conceptualizes technology education as that type of education that leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as the basic scientific knowledge. It goes further to outline the goals of technology education to among other things;

- (a) Provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades;
- (b) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- (c) Give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant;
- (d) Train people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution to environmental problems for use and convenience of man;
- (e) To enable our young men and women have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology; and

- (f) Give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.

It is for this relation to the foregoing that this study has formulated three research questions which include

- i. Do technology education students have cogent reasons for taking hard drugs?
- ii. Do drugs have effects on the academic performance of technology education students in Nigerian universities?
- iii. Does peer group influence drugs abuse among technology education students in Nigerian public universities?

Udoh and Ajalah (2006) see drugs as that which alter the chemical components of the body as well as affect the central nervous system. Hornsby (2006) defines drug as a substance used for medical purpose either alone or in mixture. Hornsby adds that drug is a substance that changes the function of cells, organs or organism. Turner (2008) asserts that drugs are chemicals that influence or modify the action of the body's own chemistry. At this juncture, it may be pertinent for us to look at the classification of hard drugs.

Adeniyi (2002) classifies drugs based on their nature and function as follows:

1. Antibiotics: These are drugs directed against bacteria causing diseases. Examples of these drugs are penicillin, streptomycin, meamycin, tetracycline, chloramphenicol and so forth.
2. Stimulants: These are drugs taken to keep somebody away from sleep. Stimulants can also be taken to increase the physical activities of the individual. Examples of stimulants are dexamphetamine, amphetamine, tea and coffee. Tea and coffee contain caffeine which has a mild stimulating effect. Alcohol is sometimes classified as stimulant but for its nature it is more of depressant and its stimulating effect due to the removal of inhibitions on individuals.
3. Sedatives: These are drugs used to induce calmness or to calm somebody but not necessarily to induce sleep. Examples are barbiturates, phenobarbitone, tranquilizers such as valium and largactil.
4. Narcotics: These are drugs that depress the central nervous system when taken.
5. Analgesics: These drugs prevent or suppress convulsion. An example is the phenobarbitone.

6. Hypnotics: These are drugs used to induce sleep and they are taken when one is distressed or when one is not happy in order not to be depressed. An example of a hypnotic drug is phenelzine.
7. Hallucinogens: These are drugs that produce hallucination such as distortion, unconsciousness like that of the psychiatric patient. The drug induces abnormal state of mind and causes abnormal feelings. Examples are LSD and Indian hemp.

The major question that arises is why do students engage in drug abuse. Acolagbe (2005), opines that Nigerian youths abuse drugs because they believe that it is the only way to become part of the jet age subculture. He goes further to say that the decision to take alcoholic drinks, smoke cigarette or Indian hemp is a trip out of the curiosity. Oshodin (2003) posits that the availability of drugs as well as sociological and psychological factors have been identified as predispositions of drug use. He adds that those who use drugs to the point of abuse have different reasons for doing so and all of which cannot be said to be bad.

Edward (2003) says that another reason which drive students to abuse drugs is boredom with academic work or domestic activities. Students that are not doing very well in school, are not friends of lecturers easily get disinterested and tired with academic work. So to get occupied with pleasant thoughts and activities, they indulge in the use of hard drugs. He adds that peer group influence is one of the strongest motives, which drive students into drug abuse. Most students with low will power always want to associate with other strong ones.

The effects of drugs on students are not far-fetched. Drugs are chemical substances that destroy the body cell, depending on how the drugs are used. Every drug is a potential poison. According to Orija (2008) drug dependent person unknowingly damages his/herself and the society. The effect is a deteriorating health, which may cause mental ill health, deformed babies and untimely death of the individual involved. He goes further to say that people who have become dependent on drug becomes more irritable, moody, absent minded, drop in academic performance and change in mode of dressing. They become more demanding with regard to

funds, increased appetite and they complain often of aches and pains in the body.

Drugs like Indian hemp has the power to impair mental activities. It decreases the male sex hormone called testosterone and as well as interfere with the menstrual cycle in women (Ogun-sakin 2007). Rebury (2006) enumerates the effects of some drugs abuse as follows: Amphetamine; takes away the desire to eat, hence, some persons grow thin and become easy target for diseases. Methedrine makes one feel powerful but aggressive, nervous, talkative and easily excited. The mind becomes deranged due to sleeplessness. Indeed Indian hemp causes mental disorder, hallucination and cocaine damages the heart and cause heart attack in human beings.

According to Ajala (2002) drug abuse such as alcohol depresses the central nervous system. It can lead to accidents, bad conducts and cause distortion of perception. Drug abuse can be regarded as a factor contributing to the rising incidents of crimes and largely to the social malice, which are becoming too rampant in contemporary society. Haggins (2001) points out that when a man or woman smokes twenty sticks of cigarette a day for 25 years, there will be reduction of 21.5% of his/her life. He adds that the risk of lungs cancer is between 8 and 15 times higher in cigarette smokers than the non-smokers.

METHOD OF STUDY

The researchers adopted survey research for the study. Population of the study comprised of 459 technology education students in Nigerian public universities. A research instrument was constructed and validated by a panel of five lecturers in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria. The questionnaires were in the percentage format. The pilot testing was carried out on 10 students in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education at two different occasions with an interval of two weeks. The score received from the test were subjected to Cronbach Coefficient reliability test. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 which was considered high enough to achieve the objective of the study was obtained. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants. All the questionnaires were collected back and analysed with percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 1, 87.15% of the subjects say that technology education students have no cogent reasons for taking drugs. This is not in agreement with Oshodin's (2003) view. However, 12.85% of the respondents agree. This is in support of Acolagbe (2005); Edward (2003) submissions.

Table 1: Technology education students have reasons for taking drugs

Option	No. of responses	% of responses
Yes	59	12.85
No	400	87.15
Total	459	100

Table 2 shows that 82.79% of the population agrees that hard drugs had effects on the academic performance of technology education students in Nigerian public universities. This is in agreement with Odejide and Bamgboye (2001); Haggins (2001); Ajala (2002); Rebury (2006); Ogunsakin (2007) and Orija (2008) recommendations. But 17.21% of the subjects disagree on the issue raised above.

Table 2: Effects of drugs on the academic performance of technology education students in Nigerian Public Universities

Option	No. of responses	% of responses
Yes	380	82.79
No	79	17.21
Total	459	100

It has been observed from Table 3 that 87.15% of the respondents say that peer groups have influence on drugs intake among technology education students in schools. This is in support of Haggins (2001); Ajala (2002); Edward (2003); Acolagbe (2005); Rebury (2006); Ogunsakin (2007) and Orija (2008) views. 12.85% of the subjects disagree.

Table 3: Peer group influence on drug intake among technology education students in Nigerian Public Universities

Option	No. of responses	% of responses
Yes	400	87.15
No	59	12.85
Total	459	100

Major Findings of the Study

From the data collected through the questionnaire, the following were the major findings:

- (i) Students of technology education have no reasons for taking hard drugs in Nigeria public universities.
- (ii) Drug abuse has effects on the academic performance of technology education students in schools.
- (iii) Peer groups have influence on the drugs intake among technology education students in Nigerian public universities.

CONCLUSION

The use of hard drugs by technology education students in Nigerian public universities need to be discouraging. This is because, the continued abuse of drugs among these students can likely have adverse effects on their academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Parents should advice their children on the implications of taking hard drugs.
- (ii) Students of technology education in Nigerian public universities should not take drugs without the prescriptions of qualified doctor(s) in the clinic or people selling drugs in the chemists.
- (iii) The National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration Control (NAFDAC) should arrest the people selling Indian hemp and other hard drugs in the society and the culprits should also be made to pay a fine that is commensurate with the offence committed or sentence to 3 years imprisonment with hard labour.

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