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Research Article

Effects of Drug Abuse on the Academic Performance of Students of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: Drug abuse has become an international phenomenon, a torn in the flesh of nations across the globe. It has been identified as one of the precarious vices; an impediment to the academic excellence of students of tertiary institutions; and a threat to the future of the Nigerian nation. The task of the paper was to interrogate the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. A quantitative method of data collection was employed to get the task of the paper done. The work adopted social learning theory as its theoretical framework. The study found peer group pressure, experimental curiosity, remedy for low self-esteem, poor parenting and influence of role models among others as root causes of drug abuse among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The finding revealed that the rise of drug abuse among the students of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria is at an alarming rate; by implication, absenteeism from school activities, loss of memory, lack of seriousness in academic work, declining grades, increased potential for dropping out of school and suspension from school to mention a few are attributed to drug abuse. The study concluded by recommending a peer education intervention strategy, enactment of laws to discourage drug abuse, inclusion of mandatory drug education in all educational programs, constant monitoring of students by parents, and setting up of guidance and counselling offices across the campuses. Constant awareness programmes about the effects of drug abuse on academic achievement are also appropriate.

Keywords: academic performance, drug abuse, education, students, tertiary institutions

1. Introduction

Tertiary institution is globally recognized centre of learning, citadel of research, hub of engaging in creative learning activities as well as mental preparation for comprehending the outside world, and a place where new ideas through research and philosophical postulation through a veritable approach to problems of learning are established (Adedeji, 2022). It was an honour and a great achievement for families and students of any higher learning institution at the heyday of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The once excellent centre of research has lost its glory and relevance due to the activities of students who engage in drugs. Drug abuse remains a major societal hazard, a barrier to academic success, and a threat to the future of the country. It has become a torn in the flesh of foursome of students, parents, the institutions of higher learning and the nation as a whole. It is one of the global challenges that constitutes a great threat to both the lives of people and society at large (United Nations, 2008).

Drug abuse has been regarded as one of the major challenges confronting nations across the world, especially among young people some of whom are learners (Chesang, 2013). According to the account of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), out of the approximately 275 million drug users worldwide, 36 million individuals worldwide suffered from drug use disorders in 2020 (Moga et al., 2023). It is worrisome that youngsters appear to be the new target for the drug market worldwide (United Nations, 2008).

It is evident that drugs are majorly abused by teenagers who are mostly school children of age, as 60% of students were found to abuse drugs in a report by the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) (Zemba, 2022). National Drug Use Survey found that in 2018, around 14.8 million people were drug addicts, while close to 3 million also suffered from the consequences of drug abuse in Nigeria (Moga et al., 2023).

The challenges of drug abuse among Nigerian students in higher education institutions are growing at an alarming rate and if not addressed, the accompanying challenge will breed a generation of young people who are disordered (Akanbi et al., 2015). The Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) lamented the extent to which drug abuse has grown to be a significant issue in Nigerian institutions of higher learning (Akanbi et al., 2015).

Contemporarily, the number of drug dependants among the students are increasing as young ones are gradually associating with the so-called "big boys" that abuse drugs. Nigeria is gradually metamorphosed from a country that consumes drugs to one that manufactures drugs (Akanbi et al., 2015). It can be established that almost all academic institutions and students in Nigeria are vulnerable to the menace. The frequency of drug usage, its causes, and its effects throughout the Nigerian nation call for concern from all sundry to address the menace.

1.1 *Objectives of the study*

The major objective of the paper was to interrogate the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria, while the precise objectives were to:

1. Examine the causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria; and

2. Access the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria.

1.2 *Research questions*

As a guide to the study, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria?

2. What are the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria?

2. Literature review

2.1 *Conceptual classifications*

A drug is a substance or chemical, be it local or modern prescribed for medical reasons by the registered local or modern physician. Eze-Michael and Emma-ugheoke (2019) defined a drug as a substance used for medical purposes, which usually changes the function of the body. Drug is defined by Awonyinfa (2012) as any substance that has the potential to change either the function or structure of the organism upon entering the body. Drugs are chemicals that change living tissues and have the potential to alter behaviour (Nnachi, 2007).

Furthermore, drugs are substances that alter behaviour, mood, perception, cognition, and basic bodily processes (Balogun, 2006). There are two groups of drugs, namely legally approved and acceptable drugs and legally disapproved and unacceptable drugs. The former are drugs which have become part of society and remain acceptable through the ages and used as prescribed while the latter are drugs which have neither been part of society nor acceptable, and not use in line with physician prescription, but can be most dangerous or injurious to both the body and brain (Ballas, 2016) as referenced in Eze-Michael and Emma-ugheoke (2019).

It is an undeniable fact that the drug is not a threat to body function when correctly administered as prescribed by a certified physician. Drug becomes a threat when administered based on reasons other than the physician's prescription.

Hence, taking drugs in excess of what is prescribed is considered drug abuse. Drug abuse is a condition marked by the deliberate use of drugs for goals other than those meant for medical purposes, which impairs the users' social, mental, emotional, or physical well-being (Awonyinfa, 2012). It can also be seen as an abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2016), drug abuse is a state of chronic or recurring stupefaction caused by the persistent use of a substance (natural or synthetic) that is detrimental to the user as well as to society. Drug abuse is the use of drugs for self-desired behaviours, developing dependency or addiction, or constitutes a public nuisance. Abikwi and Okafor (2022) also argued that lack of due authorisation from officially recognized and properly qualified individuals who, in accordance with professional ethics backed up by the law of the land to approve their use constitutes drug abuse.

Tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, amphetamines, bath salts, depressants, heroin, inhalants, ketamine, salvia, rohypnol, mushrooms, and benylin with codeine among others are commonly abused drugs (Stephen, 2018). Though, these drugs can occasionally be applied by the physician in very extreme and rare cases with close monitoring, for certain medical reasons. In a rare case when such a drug is applied, it can make one feel good, but the moment it is taken out of context it becomes abuse and has the potential to do harm to the body and brain (Moga et al., 2023).

Conceptually, a student is a person studying at school, college, and university in an attempt to qualify for a particular profession (Trilanti et al., 2013). Scholarly defined, students are individuals who are undergoing intellectual, personal, and social development. Comprehensively, students are individuals who are engaged in learning and acquiring knowledge from a teacher or a lecturer as the case may be, with the goal of gaining personal autonomy and a sense of identity. However, students are not restricted to certain age groups, they can be children, teenagers or adults.

Higher institutions of learning are another name for tertiary institutions. Higher education establishments serve as centres for transferring information and skills to learners (students). According to the National Policy on Education (2004, Section 8, No. 58), tertiary education is the education obtained after completion of secondary education in either universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, or all other institutions that provide correspondence courses. Higher institution is the body established to handle tertiary education in Nigeria. The latter usually results in the acquisition of academic degrees, diplomas, or certifications as a result of intense study and application of knowledge in the relevant fields.

2.2 *The National Policy on Education and Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria*

Education is one of the services listed on the concurrent list of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ostensibly due to its significance and role as an essential component of development (Igbozuruike & Agabi, 2019). After earlier attempts by the Federal Government to make the educational system responsive to Nigeria's needs and aspirations, the second national development plan was created in 1970 (Igbozuruike et al., 2021). It was imperative, realizing that Nigerians' needs and aspirations were unlikely to be met by the education system the colonial masters had left behind.

The second National Development Plan of Nigeria outlined five national objectives: a land of bright and abundant opportunities; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong, and self-reliant nation; and a free and democratic society (Igbozuruike et al., 2021). Thus, the goals of national education are to instil a sense of national consciousness and unity, instil the proper values and attitudes for both individual and Nigerian society's survival, train the mind to comprehend the outside world, and acquire the necessary physical and mental skills, abilities, and competencies to enable an individual to contribute to and live in their community (National Policy on Education, 2004).

Tertiary education is the next step or level of education after secondary education is completed. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), some of the objectives of tertiary education are to develop and instil proper values for society's survival; acquire both intellectual and physical skills that will allow people to become self-sufficient and functional members of society; and contribute to intellectual and community services. National Policy on Education (2004) outlines additional objectives, including fostering national unity, fostering understanding and interaction between nations, and enhancing people's intellectual capacity to comprehend and value their local and external contexts.

These admirable goals are undoubtedly unachievable in the face of a compulsive drug user. A cursory examination of these goals in relation to drug abuse in higher educational institutions makes it abundantly evident that drug addictions are antagonistic to the achievement of the goals. The implications of drug abuse are not limited to campuses

but rather affect the entire society. Conversely, any threat to education will definitely affect every other aspect of the social structure, as education forms the benchmark of the development and prosperity of any nation. The far-reaching implications of drug abuse on academic performance in tertiary institutions make it constitute a social and development problem, an issue that should be of priority to address to all well-meaning Nigerians regardless of political, ideological or religious inclination.

3. Theoretical framework

The paper adopted social learning theory as its theoretical framework. The theory was championed by Albert Bandura in 1977 (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory focuses on how children can learn and imitate the behaviours exhibited in their surroundings. The theory stipulates that people, most especially the young ones learn new behaviours by observing others. It is the belief of Bandura that behaviourism alone cannot explain everything about learning, as behaviour and the environment affect each other (Edinyang, 2016).

Social learning theory also referred to as observational learning, occurs when the behaviour of an observer changes after observing the behaviour of an influential model. A model in this sense is described as an agent of socialisation in society such as parents, mass/social media, friends/peer groups, religious groups, and the school (Edinyang, 2016). These sets of people are models which children pay attention to, and imbibe the behaviours exhibited. The theory is predicated on the idea that people, regardless of age, gain an understanding from their social interactions (Nabavi, 2014).

The general premise of the theory is that happening in human knowledge is elucidated by the interaction of internal factors (cognitive, affective and biological events); behaviour; and environmental events. Bandura showed how children imitate behaviours they see in adults who they think are similar to them. A child is likely to continue performing the behaviour he/she imitates when reinforced (strengthened) by the people exhibiting that character (Mcleod, 2016). Furthermore, a learner is also likely to imitate a model being rewarded for a particular action.

The theory is relevant to this study as it has shown that through observation, internalisation and environment, students learn either to abuse drugs or not. Parents and peer pressure can influence students through direct modelling of drugs. The transference of society and parental values of drinking also have an impact on students abusing drugs. Sadly, people of unquestionable character (drug barons, nudists, cross dressers and others who engage in other social vices) are being celebrated and henceforth rewarded in Nigerian society due to the influence of their financial strength. Hence, students are motivated to identify and imitate such people.

4. Methodology

A descriptive survey research approach was used for this study, which examined the effects of drug abuse on students' academic performance of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. The study employed quantitative methods of data analysis. Questionnaires were used to obtain research data for the survey. The research was conducted in tertiary institutions in Lagos state, Southwest of Nigeria. Lagos was chosen due to its metropolitan nature and multiculturalism (all states are represented). Beyond, it is assumed to be the most populous city in Nigeria.

The population of the study was selected from four tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria namely Caleb University, Imota, Lagos; Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos; Federal College of Education Technical, Akoka, Lagos; and Nigerian College of Administration, Ojo, Lagos. The sampling size for the study was 400 respondents (lecturers, non-teaching staff and students) drawn from four selected tertiary institutions in Lagos. The sampling size was determined using a simple random sampling procedure. Along with two study assistants, the researcher personally administered the surveys to the respondents.

5. Presentation and analysis of the results

This section deals with the presentation of data through collated questionnaires and analysed based on the concern

of the study which is to interrogate the effect of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. A total number of four hundred (400) questionnaires; one hundred (100) each were administered randomly in the four selected institutions of higher learning.

A structured questionnaire with five (5) point Likert scales; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), and Undecided (U) was used as the data collection instrument. The use of descriptive statistics was employed in analysing the data with the aid of research questions. The statements were presented in the table format using comparative percentages capable of self-explanation and further analysis.

Table 1. Analysis of Questionnaires Administered

SN	Tertiary Institution	Target	Returned		Unreturned	
			No	%	No	%
01	Caleb University, Imota	100	88	22	12	3
02	Yaba College of Technology, Yaba	100	92	23	8	2
03	Federal College of Education Technical, Akoka	100	94	23.5	6	1.5
04	Nigerian College of Administration, Ojo	100	86	21.5	14	3.5
	Total	400	360	90	40	10

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 shows that out of 400 questionnaires that were distributed, 360 copies representing 90% of the total questionnaires administered were properly filled and returned by the respondents, while 40 copies representing 10% were not returned. For accuracy, the 40 unreturned questionnaires were discarded. Therefore, the findings of this study were based on 360 copies of questionnaires that were properly filled and returned.

5.1 *Distribution of responses according to bio-data information*

This subsection details bio-data particulars of the study participants utilizing four (4) bio-data information videlicet, sex, age, marital status and the relationship with the tertiary institutions.

Table 2. Bio-Data Information of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Male	204	56.7
Sex	Female	156	43.3
	Total	360	100

Table 2. (cont.)

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-29	142	39.4
	30-39	66	18.3
	40-49	74	20.6
	50 and above	78	21.7
	Total	360	100
Marital Status	Single	148	41.1
	Married	138	38.3
	Divorced	46	12.8
	Widow/Widower	28	7.8
	Total	360	100
Relationship With the Tertiary Institution	Lecturer	98	27.2
	Non-Teaching Staff	78	21.7
	Student	184	51.1
	Total	360	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

In line with Table 2, 56.7% of the respondents were male while 43.3% were female. Table 2 also revealed that 39.4% were between the age brackets 18 and 29, 18.3% fell within the age bracket 30-39, 20.6% were within the age bracket 40 to 49 and 21.7% were fifty years and above. The breakdown of marital status revealed that 41.1% were single, 38.3% were married, 12.8% were divorced, and 7.8% were either widows or widowers. Further, as depicted by Table 2, 27.2% of the total respondents were lecturers, 21.7% non-teaching staff, and 51.1% were students of various tertiary institutions selected for the survey.

5.2 *Presentation of data according to variables*

This subsection presents the result of the survey in accordance with the objective of the study. It provides empirical insight into the causes and effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria.

5.2.1 *Related causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria*

Research Question 1: What are the causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria?

The result of the related causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria is presented and analysed accordingly.

Table 3. Causes of Drug Abuse among Students of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Lagos, Nigeria

Causes of Drug Abuse among Students of Tertiary Institutions	SA	A	SD	D	U	Total
			(%)			
Poor parenting	41.7	30	16.7	8.3	3.3	100
Experimental Curiosity	31.7	40.6	10	14.4	3.3	100
Peer Group Pressure	46.7	31.7	12.2	6.1	3.3	100
Remedy for Low Self-esteem	38.3	33.9	16.1	9.4	2.2	99.9
Easy Accessibility of Drugs	30	37.8	13.9	16.1	2.2	100
Relaxation Bid for Emotional Stress	28.3	35.6	15.6	19.4	1.1	100
Influence of Role Models	40	31.7	14.4	11.7	2.2	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

In line with Table 3 on the causes of drug abuse, 41.7% of the total respondents strongly agreed that poor parenting was one of the causes of drug abuse among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, 30% agreed, 16.7% strongly disagreed, 8.3% disagreed, while 3.3% were neutral. Also, 31.7% and 40.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that experimental curiosity was one of the causes, 10% and 14.4% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, while 3.3% were opinionless.

Table 3 revealed that 78.4% of the total respondents affirmed peer group pressure as one of the causes, on the other way round, 18.3% denied the claim and 3.3% distanced themselves from both sides. Also, 38.3% strongly agreed, 33.9% agreed, 16.1% strongly disagreed and 9.4% disagreed that remedy for low self-esteem was one of the causes of drug abuse among students of tertiary institutions, while 2.2% played a neutral role. Similarly, 67.8% of the total respondents maintained that easy accessibility was one the causes, 13.9% strongly disagreed, 16.1% disagreed and 2.2% were blanded.

Table 3 also depicted that 28.3% and 35.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that relaxation bid for emotional stress was one of the causes, while 35% refuted the claim as 1.1% were unaligned. In addition, 71.7% and 26.1% of the total respondents acceded and disputed respectively that role models' influence was one of the causes of drug abuse among students of tertiary institutions with 2.2% indifferent.

5.2.2 *Effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria*

Research Question 2: What are the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria?

The result of the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria is presented and analysed below.

Table 4. Effects of Drug Abuse on the Academic Performance of Students of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Lagos, Nigeria

Effects of Drug Abuse on the Academic Performance	SA	A	SD	D	U	Total
	(%)					
Loss of Memory	46.1	32.8	11.1	7.8	2.2	100
Absenteeism from School Activities	51.1	35	6.7	4.4	2.8	100
Declining Grades	45.6	32.2	10	8.9	3.3	100
Lack of Seriousness in Academic Work	40	32.2	15.6	10	2.2	100
Mental Disorder Leading to Attempted Suicide	44.4	33.9	8.9	11.1	1.7	100
Increased Potential for Dropping Out of School	48.3	31.1	9.4	10	1.1	99.9
Suspension from School	31.1	36.7	16.7	12.2	3.3	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

On the effects of drug abuse, table 4 depicted 46.1% and 32.8% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that loss of memory was part of the effects of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria, 11.1% and 7.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 2.2% played fair-minded. Similarly, 51.1% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 6.7% strongly disagreed, 4.4% disagreed that absenteeism from school activities was part of the associated effects as 2.8% were undecided.

In line with Table 4, 77.8% of the total respondents asseverated that declining grades was an effect of drug abuse. However, 18.9% dissented from the claim with 3.3% unbiased. Similarly, 40% of the total respondents strongly averred that lack of seriousness in academic work was an effect of drug abuse, 32.2% averred, and 25.6% contested the assertion while 2.2% were impartial. Also, 44. 4% and 33.9% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that mental disorder leading to attempted suicide was one of the connected effects of drug abuse, 8.9% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed and 1.7% were neutral.

Similarly, 79.4% and 19.4% of the total respondents attested and opposed respectively that increased potential for dropping out of school was one of the effects of drug abuse while 1.1% were undecided. In addition, 67.8% of the total respondents asserted suspension from school as one of the effects of drug abuse. Contrariwise, 28.9% repelled the proposition and 3.3% were nonaligned.

6. Discussion of the findings of the study

The main objective of this study was to interrogate the effect of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria, as derived from the research objectives. To set the ball rolling, it is essential to call to mind the specific objectives of the study that guide this work which were to examine the causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria; and to access the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria.

The study found poor parenting and experimental curiosity as part of the causes of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria as substantiated by 71.7% and 72.3% of the total respondents respectively were in affirmation. The duos of Abikwi and Okafor (2022) and Akanbi et al. (2015) mentioned the factors of poor parenting and experimental curiosity respectively as parts of the causes of drug abuse in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Peer group pressure and remedy for low self-esteem were also found to be responsible for students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria participating in drug abuse. These factors were respectively admitted by 78.3%

and 72.2% of the total respondents of the survey. Adewale (2022) argued that peer groups have the ability to influence many adolescents into drug abuse as students mostly teenagers show more dependency on their friends. Drug abuse was also attributed to low self-esteem (Zemba, 2022).

In addition, 67.8%, 63.9% and 71.7% of the total respondents respectively attributed easy accessibility of drugs, relaxation bid for emotional stress and influence of role models to drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. In line with the survey, Adewale (2022) linked the dropping of the prices of drugs which increased the supplies of drugs among the students as one of the major reasons for drug abuse on the campuses. Kaluwe (2019) attributed abusing of drugs by students as an attempt to relax, relieve stress or a panacea bid to come out of depression. The influence of role models from television personalities abusing drugs tends to drive students into drug abuse (Abikwi & Okafor, 2022).

Consequently, all the causes itemised in the above table were attributed to drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. However, peer group pressure was majorly attributed to responsible to drug abuse among students by the survey followed by experimental curiosity and remedy for low self-esteem. Poor parenting and the influence of role models were rated equally, followed by easy accessibility of drugs, while relaxation bid for emotional stress was the least rated causes of drug abuse among students.

As presented, 78.9% of the total respondents chose loss of memory, 86.1% favoured absenteeism from school activities and 77.8% asseverated declining grades as the effects of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. According to Abikwi and Okafor (2022), the excess drug is capable of having a negative effect on memory and cognitive capacity of the students engaging in the vice. Absenteeism from class coupled with other school activities has been attributed by Adewole (2022) as one of the problems associated with students engaging in excessive drug intake. Zemba (2022) also noted that drug abuse has the capability of impacting negatively on the students' academic performance.

It was revealed that drug abuse gives room to a lack of seriousness in academic work and mental disorders leading to attempted suicide. This is evidenced in the survey as 72.2% consent to lack of seriousness in academic work, while 78.3% acknowledged mental disorders leading to attempted suicide as the effects of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. It was categorically stated that low levels of commitment to academic work appear to be related to drug abuse among students (Adewole, 2022). However, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide were attributed as some mental health problems to drug abuse (Onyeka et al., 2013).

The study also found increased potential for dropping out of school and suspension from school as the consequences of drug abuse among students of higher institutions as manifested in the people's opinion. According to the survey, 79.4% and 67.8% respectively affirmed increased potential for dropping out of school and suspension from school as parts of the effects of drug abuse. Zemba (2022) maintained that dropping out of school as well as suspension of students from high institutions of learning was high among students who engage in illegal drugs. Okari and Masese (2018) argued that drug abuse has taken root in institutions of higher learning leading to students' dropping out of school.

In essence, all the itemised effects of drug abuse among the students of higher institutions of learning were acknowledged as the effects of the menace. However, absenteeism from school activities was highly rated followed by increased potential for dropping out of school, loss of memory and mental disorder leading to attempted suicide. This is followed by declining grades and lack of seriousness in academic work, while suspension from school has the least rated effects.

The paper adopted social learning theory as its theoretical framework. The theory emphasises that people imbibe the ways of life exhibited within their environment as originated by Albert Bandura. Hence, people, most especially young ones learn and imitate new behaviours by observing others they perceive as similar to them. The theory is predicated on the idea that everyone, regardless of age, acquires knowledge from their social interactions.

The respondents through the survey lend credence to the idea of learning through observation. The way of life observed automatically impacts the life of students of tertiary institutions. The study found peer group pressure as one of the major factors responsible for students of tertiary institutions engaging in drug abuse as substantiated by 78.3% of the total respondents of the survey. Adewale (2022) further attributed the influence of peer groups to drug abuse among the students of higher institutions of learning.

The high number of survey respondents also favoured the influence of role models as a contributing factor for drug

abuse among students of tertiary institutions with 71.7% of the total respondents assented to the factor. It is established by Abikwi and Okafor (2022) that the influence of role models has the capacity to drive students of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria into drug abuse. The theory has shown that through observation, internalisation and environment, students do learn to abuse drugs.

7. Conclusion

Drug abuse has grown to be a serious issue that has millions of victims, including the students of higher institutions who by standard supposed to be the torchbearers of society. The study noted that drug abuse has become one of the deadliest threats to Nigerians, and a threat to the future of Nigeria nation. The impact that drug abuse has on the academic performance of students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria was the main subject of this study. The deduction from the study made it abundantly evident that there is a nexus between drug abuse and the academic performance of the students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria.

The work noted that students are likely to continue imitating models being rewarded for particular behaviours. Students are therefore motivated to identify and imitate people of unquestionable character due to the manner society is celebrating them. The survey asserted that the primary factors of drug abuse among the students of selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria are peer group pressure, experimental curiosity, remedy for low self-esteem, poor parenting, and influence of role models among others.

The study also has shown that the rate of drug abuse among students of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria keeps growing; by implication, absenteeism from school activities, loss of memory, lack of seriousness in academic work, declining grades, increased potential for dropping out of school and suspension from school among others are attributed to drug abuse. The study therefore calls for a realistic and collaborative effort by all sundry to curb the menace of drug abuse plaguing Nigerian society, especially institutions of higher learning in Lagos. Comprehensively, the study recommended that:

1. The government in collaboration with the respective institutions of higher learning should create and run constant awareness programmes about the consequences of drug abuse on the academic performance of students through information and communication (mass media). The program should be comprehensive and cover both the risk and protective variables with the goal of strengthening the protective aspects.

2. The government is advised to mandate drug education at all educational levels and include it in the education curricula of all Nigerian higher education institutions. Students will learn about the reality of drug abuse as well as its most likely causes and consequences.

3. Similarly, the instructor (lecturer) is suggested to educate students on the consequences of drug abuse and its repercussions. The campaign against drug abuse should be intensified in the early days of students on school campuses. The campaigns should be periodic against drug abuse and drug dependence. This could be through seminars, conferences and roundtable discussions.

4. The government in collaboration with administrators of tertiary institutions should enact laws and policies that will make it difficult for drug abuse practices to take place on the campuses and Nigeria's society as a whole. Consequent punishment should be carried out against the defaulter of the law.

5. There should be a peer education intervention strategy to train students' representatives by providing them with information on issues of the peer group. Peer educator has the capacity to discourage factors that are responsible for students' exposure to drug addiction. It will also help students to examine the risk factors of abusing drugs to avoid temptation and peer pressure.

6. It is important for parents to instil a culture of regular supervision and educating their children about the dangers of using hard drugs. A stable family atmosphere with a culture of discipline is also recommended for the parents, as the disposition of parents to alcoholism, acceptance of drugs, family conflicts, distance (separated) and family relationships are likely to influence children's (students) use of illicit drugs.

7. Religious and social organisations (anti-drug abuse) should be formed among the lecturers and the students' bodies with regard to reducing the social evils connected to drug abuse in higher education institutions. Early institution detection programs can be introduced to detect students using drugs, while appropriate measures are kept in place to avoid students' dependency on drugs.

8. The government in collaboration with the authority of higher institutions of learning should also establish guidance and counselling offices on campuses and employ experts to provide drug-abusing students with professional counselling. Students who have emotional needs that they would like to confide in, can as well benefit from this nurturing.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no competing financial interest.

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