

SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF TAI SOLARIN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION IJAGUN, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Substance abuse has long been a significant challenge in public health, persisting throughout history. There is a growing concern over the escalating use of substances among undergraduate students, posing serious threats to societies worldwide. This trend not only jeopardizes physical health but also undermines social and ethical standards. Substance abuse among undergraduates leads to property damage within educational institutions and diminishes the prospects of academic success of students. In examining the social factors influencing substance abuse among undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ogun State, a descriptive survey research design was employed. The study utilized a simple random sampling technique to select a sample of eight hundred (800) undergraduates. The researcher designed a questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.78 to investigate substance abuse among undergraduates, employing statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, and chi-square tests at a significance level of 0.05. The analysis resulted in the rejection of all three hypotheses. The study identified peer pressure, substance availability, and advertisements as significant contributors to substance abuse among undergraduates. Consequently, the study recommends mandatory medical testing for substance abuse across all undergraduate levels and advocates for active involvement of health educators in educating students, including integration of substance abuse topics into General Studies (GNS) courses.

Keywords: Peer Pressure, Substance Abuse, Undergraduates.

1.0 Introduction

Substance abuse has rapidly become a pervasive social issue within Nigerian educational institutions, particularly among undergraduates. It entails the excessive or improper use of a specific drug, often without medical guidance. In Tai Solarin University of Education, numerous untimely deaths and accidents have been linked to substance influence. The prevalence of hard drug usage among university students is a source of embarrassment for parents, schools, government officials, and society as a whole. There is a legitimate concern that this dangerous trend could lead to the emergence of a generation of troubled youths. This apprehension is well-founded given the frequent and widespread drug-related crises observed in numerous Nigerian educational institutions.

According to the World Health Organization (2011), substance abuse encompasses the harmful or risky use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Commonly abused substances include alcohol, marijuana (ganja), bhang, hashish, various cough syrups, sedative tablets, brown sugar, heroin, cocaine, and tobacco, among others. The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has highlighted substance abuse as a significant issue within schools, colleges, and universities in Nigeria (Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, 2013). Peer culture heavily influences the behaviors of many students, as they often emulate and learn from peers they admire. Mohasoa (2010) suggests that the impact of substance abuse among undergraduates signifies a moral decline, leading to the erosion of societal values and principles.

Crowe and Bilchik (2011) contended that substance abuse has a significant impact on the central nervous system, leading to alterations in an individual's emotions, cognition, and behaviors. This directly affects the brain or the central nervous system (CNS), leading to a range of complications, health issues, and behavioral challenges. Undergraduates who engage in alcohol and drug use are disproportionately susceptible to risks such as suicide, homicide, accidents, and illnesses. Substance abuse is associated with instances of trauma, violence, organ damage, various types of cancers, unsafe sexual practices, premature death, and diminished nutritional well-being within families.

According to Adekeye (2012), students who witness adults drinking and smoking may be inclined to experiment themselves to understand the experience. In Nigeria, university students often engage in drug experimentation without adequate knowledge of which drugs to use, when to use them, and how to use them safely. Similarly, Ekpenyong and Aakpege (2014) highlighted substance use among university students as a significant public health concern in Nigeria. . Those who use substances often exhibit decreased commitment to their studies, declining academic performance, increased risk of dropping out, and high rates of truancy. Furthermore, incidents of suicide, homicide, and accidental injuries have been associated with drug use among undergraduates. Javier et al. (2013) and Sahker, et al (2015) suggested that substance abuse among university students leads to numerous adverse outcomes, including academic failure, impaired social and interpersonal relationships, financial difficulties, and mental health issues.

Substances of abuse can be categorized as depressants (e.g., heroin, barbiturates), stimulants (e.g., cocaine, cigarettes, tobacco, amphetamines), and hallucinogens (e.g., marijuana), which are ingested, inhaled, or smoked. Depressants, such as sedatives, act on

the nervous system, providing artificial relaxation and relief from anxiety and mental stress. Prolonged heavy use can lead to psychological dependence, and withdrawal symptoms can be severe. Adolescents may misuse barbiturates for suicidal purposes rather than for addictive reasons. Alcohol consumed by humans for centuries to induce unique bodily sensations, is deeply ingrained in various cultures worldwide, with many individuals unaware of its classification as a drug. Tobacco and alcohol, both legally sanctioned substances, have been widely consumed across diverse social groups and cultures (Zubak et al., 2018).

Stimulants are substances that trigger, amplify, or enhance neural activity. They encompass amphetamines and synthetic appetite suppressants and can manifest symptoms indicative of intoxication, such as rapid heartbeat, dilated pupils, elevated blood pressure, nausea or vomiting, and aberrant behavior like aggression, restlessness, and impaired judgment. The use and misuse of stimulants are becoming increasingly prevalent in the nation. Individuals, including students, often cite various reasons for their use of stimulants, including a desire to fit in, anticipation of certain effects, mental state, sexual urges, specific motivations, ceremonial occasions, pursuit of pleasure, practical purposes, and coping mechanisms for stress, as well as self-medication to facilitate late-night studying (Oshodi, et al, 2010).

Hallucinogens comprise a chemically diverse group that induces significant mental alterations, including feelings of euphoria, anxiety, sensory distortion, and depression. Among students, marijuana was frequently encountered, spanning across various faculties. This trend could be attributed to the extensive publicity from the Nigerian government regarding seizures of marijuana (cannabis) and cocaine, categorizing them as prohibited substances (Wilke et al., 2005).

Social factors influencing substance abuse

Peer pressure

The majority of university students are vulnerable to peer influence. Peer pressure can lead to risky behaviors such as substance abuse and engaging in sexual activities, can detrimentally affect the academic performance of undergraduates (Olalekan, 2016). This influence can manifest in various forms, including social media addiction, dating, substance abuse, and shifts in attitude (Weber, Educational Psychology, 2016). Kirk (2020) observed that sudden alterations in a child's appearance, attire, and demeanor, particularly when combined with secretive conduct, may indicate peer influence.

Availability of substance

The university environment significantly contributes to drug and substance abuse by providing easy access to these substances. Nkonge (2017) emphasized that the availability of drugs creates an environment conducive to substance abuse and promotes increased usage. The ease of obtaining drugs and psychoactive substances lowers the obstacles to their acquisition, thereby increasing the likelihood of substance use and abuse. Additionally, the presence of alcohol-selling establishments like stores and bars had been associated with higher alcohol consumption rates among undergraduates residing nearby.

Advertisement of substance

Advertising proves to be a powerful tool in influencing undergraduates to start smoking. Advertisements and glamorous portrayals in films convey messages suggesting that

success in work, sports, and leisure is enhanced through the use of drugs, promoting the idea that drugs are effective means for achieving success, mood enhancement, and euphoria (Ballas, 2006). Oshodi, et al (2010) further noted that drugs are readily available in various locations across Nigerian cities, including motor parks, street corners, joints on campuses, and unfinished buildings. Recognizing the health risks associated with cigarette smoking, such as lung cancer and coronary heart diseases leading to premature death, the Federal Government mandated that every cigarette brand advertisement must include a warning stating, for example, "cigarette smoking is hazardous to health, and smokers are at risk of premature death" (Ballas, 2006).

Nigerian adolescents are exposed to cigarettes through promotions and musical concerts, leading some teens to experiment with them. While some may try smoking and then stop, or use occasionally without major issues, others may develop addiction, progressing to more harmful and potent drugs, thereby causing significant harm to themselves and society as a whole. Despite efforts by concerned individuals and organizations to combat this problem, many still portray these drugs as harmless, often using slogans such as "for greatness" or "for a brighter life." Furthermore, extensive caffeine consumption has been linked to brain fatigue syndrome, a syndrome predominantly observed among African students. Symptoms of brain fatigue syndrome typically include difficulties in studying, functional somatic complaints involving the head and neck region, and visual disturbances (Oshodi, et al, 2010).

The issue of substance abuse presents a myriad of medical, physical, psychological, social, educational, and economic challenges. According to Abdullahi (2005), substance abuse contributes to high rates of crime, fuels conflicts, fosters cultism on university campuses, promotes religious intolerance, encourages truancy, leads to cases of rape, suicide, and other negative outcomes. Okaza and Aluede (2009) highlight the serious and detrimental consequences of substance abuse in Nigerian universities. The magnitude of these issues underscores the need for urgent scholarly and policy attention to prevent the situation from escalating within university settings. Are these issues evident at TASUED? This question motivated the researcher to investigate the prevalence and spread of substance abuse and its resulting implications on the university community.

1.1 Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses which guided the study will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Peer pressure will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

H₀₂: Availability of substance will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

H₀₃: Advertisement will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

2.0 Theoretical framework

The Health Believe Model (HBM) is one of the first theories developed exclusively for health related behaviors. The HBM originated in the 1950s and has been thoroughly tested in a variety of situations since that time. Today is one of the most popular models, as it

provides specific guidance on health issues. According to this model, a negative health consequence can be avoided, expecting that recommended health behavior will prevent the negative consequences and believing that it is possible to do the recommended actions. This key emphasis of the model is to motivate the public to follow recommended health behavior and best practices that will therefore prevent negative health consequences as thereby improving overall public health. HBM is one models which can be effective in studying social factors influencing substance abuse among undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ogun State. HBM is recommended as a useful model to explain health behaviors including ways of promoting health. Indeed the HBM is one of the appropriate health promotion models designed to predict preventive health behaviors and it has enhanced preventive health behaviors in substance abuse and prevention. Notably, the original six constructions of HBM as presented by Rustvold (2012) comprised perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cue to action and demographics or psychological structures. HBM constructs as follow: a person will take a health related action if that person believes that he or she is susceptible to a health problem (perceived susceptibility), feels that a negative health condition can be avoided (perceived severity) and has a positive expectation that by taking a recommended, he or she will avoid negative health condition also believe that he or she can successfully take a recommended health action.

2.1 Review of Literature

Substance abuse, also known as drug abuse, is a patterned use of a substance in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods neither approved nor supervised by medical professionals. Substance is a drug which when introduced into the body will alter the normal biological and psychological functioning of the body especially the central nervous system (Escandon & Galvez, 2006). The term 'drug' in general sense will include all the substances that will alter the brain functions and create dependence, different substances abused produce adverse negative effects within the body. World Health Organisation (W.H.O.) (2003) defines substance abuse as the self-administration of any drug in a manner that diverts from approved medical or social patterns within a given culture. Drugs abused impact on psyche of the individual are normally referred to as psychoactive substances. The definition includes both legal and illegal drugs and substances. The legal or licit drugs and substances are socially accepted and their use does not constitute any criminal offence or breaking the laws of the state and some of the legal substances include alcohol, khat, and cigarettes. Illegal substances are socially rejected their use, possession, or sale constitutes a criminal offence. Drug abuse among the students is dominated by legal drugs and substances like tobacco, khat and alcohol. Among the illegal ones common examples are cannabis, ecstasy, heroine, mandrax and lysergic acid diethylamide (NACADA, 2004).

Prescription drugs include pain killers with codeine, phenorbaritone, valium, piriton and sleep control drugs. Some undergraduates who would want to read throughout the night use the sleep control drugs. The sleep control drugs are supposed to be used by persons suffering from drowsiness or have a problem staying alert Medical professionals are also known to abuse prescription drugs because of their availability in their places of work. Due

to toxicity and addictiveness, substance abuse implies slow suicide. They poison and degenerate the vital body organs causing diseases like liver cirrhosis, kidney failure and heart attack. Addiction becomes obvious when the subject continues taking drugs in order to carry out daily duties. This makes the problem of substance abuse in the society complex and requires a lot of attention. Drugs abuse among undergraduates from the western countries is alarming (Portner, 1998). Films and magazine show thrilling pictures of the people on drug abuse. This kind of information can be deceiving the viewers, making them vulnerable to substance abuse.

Substance abuse may be defined as the “arbitrary” over dependence or miss-use of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners. (Lakhanpal & Agnihotri, 2007). (Oluremi, 2012) stated that drug Abuse is the harmful use of mind altering drugs. It added that the term usually refers to problem with illegal drugs, which also include harmful use of legal prescription drugs, such as self-medication. Majority of the Nigerian adolescents ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other for their various daily activities—social, educational, political, moral etc. Such drugs include: Tobacco, Indian hemp, cocaine, morphine, Heroine, Alcohol, ephedrine, Madras, Caffeine, Glue, Barbiturates, and Amphetamines. (Oshikoya & Alli, 2006).

3.0 Methods and Materials

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design, as advocated by Kothari (2011). This is suitable for investigating large populations using data from a sample without manipulating variables. The population under study consists of undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The sample comprised a total of 800 undergraduates selected through simple random sampling, with 40 students chosen from each department (20 males and 20 females) for the study. The university is divided into five colleges: the College of Science and Information Technology (COSIT), the College of Social and Management Science (COSMAS), the College of Humanities (COHUM), the College of Vocational Technology Education (COVTED), and the College of Specialized Professional Education (COSPED).

Each of the colleges was subdivided into various departments, and a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques was employed to select four departments from each college. From these departments, a total of 800 undergraduates were selected using simple random sampling, with 40 students chosen from each department (20 males and 20 females) for the study. The research instrument utilized was a researcher-designed modified Likert-type questionnaire, consisting of response options ranging from "strongly agreed" to "strongly disagreed." The instrument underwent validation by experts, who deemed it suitable for data collection purposes. The test-retest method employing Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC) was utilized to assess the internal consistency of the instrument, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.78 with a two-week interval between tests. The questionnaire forms were administered by the researcher to all five colleges, encompassing four departments in each college at Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. Data obtained were analysed using the descriptive

statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, as well as inferential statistics using Chi-Square analysis at a significance level of 0.05.

4.0 Research Results

The results are presented in Tables 1-3 in line with the hypotheses tested.

Hypothesis 1: Peer pressure will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

Table 1a: Frequency Observations

Response	Observed Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	444	55.5%
Agree	232	29.0%
Disagree	75	9.4%
Strongly Disagree	49	6.1%
Total	800	100

Table 1b: Chi- square test of respondents on peer pressure influencing substance abuse among undergraduates.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1855.153 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1482.116	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	756.041	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	800		

Source: Researcher's compilation (2023)

3 cells (18.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.33.

Table 1a showed that four hundred and forty-four (444) undergraduates representing (55.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that peer pressure influenced substance abuse among undergraduates, two hundred and thirty-two (232) which represent (29.0%) agrees with the statement while seventy five (75) undergraduate representing (9.4%) disagree with the statement and forty nine (49) undergraduate representing (6.1%) respondents strongly disagree by not affirming the assertion.

Table 1b showed that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 1855.153 with a corresponding p-value of $p < 0.001$. Since our p-value is less than our chosen significant level ($\alpha = 0.05$), we therefore rejected the null hypothesis. Therefore, Peer pressure significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State

Hypothesis 2: Availability of substance will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

Table 2a: Frequency Observations

Response	Observed Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	522	65.2%
Agree	208	26.0%
Disagree	41	5.1%
Strongly Disagree	29	3.6%
Total	800	100

Table 2b: Chi- square analysis of respondents on availability of substance influencing substance abuse among undergraduates

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1210.843 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	990.675	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	642.557	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	800		

Source: Researcher’s compilation (2023)

a. 4 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.78.

Table 2a showed that five hundred and twenty-two (522) undergraduates representing (65.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that availability of substance influenced substance abuse among undergraduates, two hundred and eight (208) which represent (26.0%) agrees with the statement while forty-one (41) undergraduate representing (5.1%) disagree with the statement and twenty nine (29) undergraduate representing (3.6%) respondents strongly disagree.

Table 2b showed that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 1210.843^a with a corresponding p-value of $p < 0.001$. Since our p-value is less than our chosen significant level ($\alpha = 0.05$), we therefore rejected the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Advertisement will not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun, Ijebu- Ode, Ogun State.

Table 3a: Frequency Observations

Response	Observed Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	482	60.2%
Agree	227	28.4%
Disagree	67	8.4%
Strongly Disagree	24	3.0%
Total	800	100

Table 3: Chi- square analysis of respondents on advertisement of substance influencing substance abuse among undergraduates.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1729.224 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1115.808	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	696.465	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	800		

Source: Researcher's compilation (2023)

a. 4 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .87.

Table 3a showed that four hundred and eighty-two (482) undergraduates representing (60.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that advertisement influenced substance abuse among undergraduates, two hundred and twenty-seven (227) which represent (28.4%) agrees with the statement while sixty-seven (67) undergraduate representing (8.4%) disagree with the statement and twenty-four (24) undergraduate representing (3.0%) respondents strongly disagree.

Table 3b showed that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 1729.224^a with a corresponding p-value of $p < 0.001$. Since our p-value is less than our chosen significant level ($\alpha = 0.05$), we therefore rejected the null hypothesis.

Discussion

For Hypothesis One, which proposed that peer pressure would not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State was rejected. Table 1a showed the analysis and the results indicated that peer pressure indeed influences substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. This is due to the fact that majority of the population were influenced by substance abuse. This finding holds significant implication that health officers and government should make a way of bringing awareness to undergraduates on substance abuse, effects and health implications. This finding aligns with the report by Dada (2012), which noted that undergraduates often obtained substances from peers or relatives, resulting in easy access and negative consequences. Additionally, Common Sense Census (2018) revealed that the alcohol industry utilizes various strategies to promote its products, including paid product placements in films, television shows, and video games popular among youths, sponsorship of sporting events and concerts, and vibrant packaging. Additionally, undergraduates are known to be heavy consumers of entertainment media.

Hypothesis Two probed deeper, as it sought to understand that the availability of substances would not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, was rejected. Table 2a showed the analysis and the results indicated that the availability of substances influenced substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. This correlated with an article written by Goreishi and Shajari's (2013)

assertion that substance availability plays a crucial role in substance abuse among university students, similar to the consumption of any desired goods. In the same vein, Oshodi, et.al (2010) also noted the widespread presence of drugs in Nigerian cities, including motor parks, street corners, campus hangouts, and unfinished buildings. Nkonge (2017) believed that the presence of alcohol-selling establishments like stores and bars had been associated with higher alcohol consumption rates among undergraduates residing nearby.

Hypothesis Three looked into advertising of substance which originally proposed that advertising would not significantly influence substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, was rejected. Table 3a showed the analysis and the results indicated that advertising substance influenced substance abuse among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The result agreed with Giles and Maltby (2004), who suggested that undergraduates are highly susceptible to media influence due to their focus on personal image and identity, making them more likely to identify with and emulate what they observe. According to Ballas (2006) identified the health risks associated with cigarette smoking, such as lung cancer and coronary heart diseases leading to premature death, the Federal Government mandated that every cigarette brand advertisement must include a warning stating that cigarette smoking is hazardous to health, and smokers are at risk of premature death. This awareness should be consistence.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained in this study, the following conclusion was reached:
there is a significant peer pressure that influenced substance abuse among undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
there is a significant availability of substances that influenced substance abuse among undergraduate attending Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
there is a significant advertisement of substances that influenced substance abuse among undergraduate attending Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

5.1 Recommendations

The discoveries and conclusions of this study have led to the following suggestions:

- (i) Student Affairs Unit should regularly host seminars to raise awareness among the university community about the health ramifications of substance abuse, aiming to mitigate this issue within our institutions.
- (ii) Health educators should actively engage in educating undergraduates about the health and social consequences of drug abuse, including integrating this education into the General Studies (GNS) curriculum.
 - (i) Mandatory medical testing for substance abuse should be implemented upon entry to the university, and it should be conducted regularly throughout the duration of undergraduate studies.

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