

## Research Article

## Drug Abuse as Correlate of School Attendance among Senior Secondary School Students in Uromi Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the influence of drug abuse on the school attendance among male and female senior secondary school students in the Uromi metropolis, Edo state, Nigeria. One research question was raised and one hypothesis was formulated to provide direction for the study. The study used an ex-post facto survey design. The research participants were 589 public senior secondary school students sampled in Uromi metropolis, Edo state, Nigeria. The instruments used for the study were school attendance checklist and an adapted questionnaire titled: "Influence of Drug Abuse on School Attendance among Male and Female Senior Secondary School Students", which was completed by the participants. The result showed that there is no significant difference in school attendance between male and female victims of drug abuse. The study therefore recommended that effort aimed at enhancing the concept of self esteem among adolescents should be sustained..

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, confessional hospitals, spirituality, religiosity, corporate culture, values.

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### INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse as a pattern of deviant behaviour makes life miserable for those around the deviants. Youths who engage in drug abuse usually have no regard for the moral or ethical rules of the society or the rights of others, thus manipulating people and situation for their own benefits. They display little or no guilt when they have injured someone else and even understand that they may have caused a person some harm but feel no remorse (Roberts, Nwogu, Iwuagwu & Okereke, 2009),(Cited in Nwankwo, Nwoke, Chukwuocha, Obanny, Nwogu, Iwuagwu & Okereke, 2009).

Regrettably, this idiosyncrasy of an average Nigerian youth cuts across gender divide. It is on this note that Ndagi (2010) opined that the rate of increase in anti-social or deviant behaviour such as drug abuse in the society is alarming and reveals the high proportion of maladjusted personality among young boys and girls. This is evidenced in the number of people, who die of suicide, rape, murder and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS (Loeber 1990; Jamieson & Flanagan, 1987) (cited in Nwankwo *et al* 2009) and Ndagi (2010).

Gender is a term that refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society consider appropriate for men and women. More

commonly it refers simply to the biological sex of an individual either male or female.

Drug abuse problems are faced by both male and female students, in fact these problems do not discriminate between gender divide. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2000), (cited in the Recovery Village, 2016), men are likely than women to have opportunities to use drugs, but men and women given an opportunity to use drugs for the first time are equally likely to do so and to progress from initial use to addiction. In essence, the difference is only obvious before the initial period of consumption and the difference is removed once the chance to consume drugs is presented. In all, once the opportunity is available, males and females are equally as likely to use drugs.

However, recently, outcome of researches have continue to indicate that males abuse drug at higher rates than females. Specifically, the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (Recovery Village, 2016) indicated that close to 12% of American males age 12 and older were currently using illegal drugs, compared with just over 7.3% of females in the same age group.

In observing the difference in male and female drug use, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2000), (cited in the Recovery Village, 2016) averred that more males use drugs at an earlier age not because they are more susceptible to substance abuse, but because they have more opportunities. Teenage males are more likely to be exposed to drugs through their peer group than teenage girls, who are often introduced to drugs by their boyfriends (NIDA, 2000), (cited in the Recovery Village, 2016).

### **Gender and Drug Abuse**

According to National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2010), women are less likely than men to abuse alcohol. It implies that drug abuse used to be an exclusive preserve of the male gender. In consonance, Shehu and Idris (2008), in their study involving 350 secondary school students recorded a prevalence of 9.43%. Out of this prevalence rate they found out that more than 90% of smokers of marijuana are males. A comparison between marijuana smoking and academic performance was also made. The study shows that there was better academic performance based on the position taken by the students among non-smokers (51%) and smokers (21.27%) and this was also found to be statistically significant. In all, the researchers observed that there was a better academic performance observed among non-smokers than among smokers which might be as a result of absenteeism in which they attributed to marijuana smoking on the part of marijuana smokers rather than lack of intellectual capacity. This is so because there was a remarkable improvement in the academic performance of those students who were smokers when they later stopped smoking. It was therefore indicated in the study that the poor academic performance seen in smokers was as a result of truancy which was found to be high among smokers than non-smokers, rather than due to low intellect.

However, it appears the trend is changing not only among Nigerian youths but in other places. For instance, from available data for 763 of 1,058 students aged 13 years in 50 schools and for 768 of 1,160 students aged 16 years in 57 schools, Barnett, Gavin, Lambert, O'Loughlin, Paradis and McGrath (2007), were able to determine that students aged 13 years, 3.8% of boys and 7.1% of girls smoked daily, 21.0% of boys and 25.2% of girls aged 16 years smoked daily. The recently released statistics by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Cited in Makinde and Aluko, 2012), revealed that there is an increasing global trend of girls who have taken to tobacco smoking. Of the 5.4 million victims that die every year, 1.5 million are girls. The report also stated that half of the 151 countries surveyed, approximately as many girls use tobacco as boys. Similarly, Onohwasafe, Egenegbe & Blinkhorn (2008), found out in their study that 315 or 60% of boys and 324 or 59% of girls reported drug use thus they

concluded that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in terms of their reported drug use.

Numerous psychological explanations have been advanced in an effort to explain why both boys and girls abuse drugs. For instance, Oteyo & Kariuki (2009) observed that most of those who had low level self-esteem scored highly in alcohol and cigarettes use index. These findings concurred with past studies that postulated that level of self-esteem and drug abuse were negatively correlated (John & Donald, 2006; Parker & Benson, 2004; Dubois & Silverthorne, 2004). The results indicated that majority of respondents had low and medium self-esteem and this was consistent with similar research that postulated that self esteem drops drastically during early adolescence and improve as individual grow to late adolescence (Santrock, 2005).

Earlier Weir (1967) found that male college students perceived male smokers as rugged, daring and adventurous, whereas they were more likely to perceived non-smokers as timid, shy and awkward. On the other hand, Mauser (1966) perceived college female smokers as reluctant to quit smoking because smoking seemed to belong to the self-image of the bright, sophisticated, career-oriented young woman. Similarly, Barnett *et al* (2007) concluded from their study that young girls may be more susceptible to social influences at school related to tobacco use, an explanation that accounts for increasing prevalence of girls' involvement in drug abuse.

In the past, according to Shehu & Idris (2008) high prevalence of drug use among boys was attributed to influence of friends, schoolmates and relations at night parties, an assertion which portray boys as having exclusive right to partying. However, recent findings have shown that fun-seeking is no longer an exclusive preserve of the male gender. According to Makinde & Aluko (2012), clubbing and night parties in this part of the world were dominated by the male gender for a very long period. The women who made it to the club houses and the dance parties were regarded as the bad ones and they were few then. They further opined that with the passing of time the popular saying that "what a man can do, a woman can do better" would later be used, albeit by the female gender to challenge male dominance of fun, smoking and consumption of alcohol.

On the subjective nature of the subject drug abuse in terms of its conceptual clarification Adomeh (2010), alluded to the fact that professionals now prefer the term non-medical drug use to drug abuse due to variations arising from what constitutes abuse in the use of drugs because an individual may out of curiosity, fun, recreation or amusement use drug. Such an individual may not be said to have abused drug even though he uses it without medical prescription. Rather,

he can be said to be involved in the act of self-medication.

Concurring, Rathus (1981) asserted that if the legal definition of drug abuse is adopted as a criterion, it is clear that the uses of drugs are instances of abuse. But if we use the term as our criterion of abuse a judgment about whether or not usage of the drug interferes with one's ability to meet the demands of ordinary life, abuse cannot be so readily determined. In this case, probably the amount consumed did not interfere with such an individual's other daily activity, who can possibly still maintain accurate perception and judgment. From this perspective, Rathus (1981) opined that the quantity of drug use is not necessarily an adequate indication of whether or not a person is abusing drug. Rather, account must also be taken on how that person's pattern of drug abuse interacts with other elements in his or her life.

### **The Problem of the Study**

The victims of drug abuse cut across gender divide. Infact many of the youths that have been victims of drug abuse are growing at an alarming rate in the school system, thus inducing in such youths a generalized melting away of ambition. The effect of drug abuse on these young ones could impact negatively on their willingness to attend school regularly. To this end, students who are victims of drug abuse could be abstaining from regularly attending school.

Alcoholism, marijuana and cigarette smoking are the common drugs consumed for which the adolescent must be discouraged from using. According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future Survey (cited in the Recovery village, 2016), which studied drug use among males and females in high school and college, for instance, 9% of males reported that they use marijuana daily, while less than 40% of females use the drug every day. However, in younger teens (8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade), girls tend to abuse drugs at the same rate as boys.

In South Africa, a study of illicit drug use among high school adolescents found that cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption are associated more with males than with females and most of the respondents do so when they are bored, tired or stressed up or at parties (Madu & Matla, 2003). There is evidence of alcohol and cigarettes use not only with college students but also with secondary school students in Nigeria (Eneh & Stanley, 2004).

The study is therefore aimed at examining the influence of drug abuse on school attendance among senior secondary school male and female students in Uromi metropolis.

Specifically, it will:

- a. Describe the school attendance rate of senior secondary students in Uromi metropolis.

- b. Determine the influence of drug abuse on students' school attendance.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study would be of a great significance to the school administrators, Counselors, parents, students, teachers and the government. The result of the study will inform school administrators of the need for effective guidance and Counseling services in the school system; thereby encouraging teachers and educators to direct students who are victims of drug abuse to the school Counsellor or psychologist.

### **Research Question**

The study was designed to find empirical answers to the following question:

What is the school attendance profile of senior secondary students in Uromi metropolis?

### **Research Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in school attendance profile between male and female victims of drug abuse.

### **Method of Study**

An ex-post facto survey design where a self-report instrument was administered to participants was adopted for the study. The research area was Uromi metropolis, the headquarter of Esan North East Local Government Area, Edo State Nigeria. The area has a total of nine (9) public Senior Secondary Schools with a student population of eleven thousand seven hundred and seventy (11,770), comprising of five thousand eight hundred and fourteen (5,814) males and five thousand and nine hundred and fifty six (5,956) females.

Multi-stage cluster sampling technique was used in selecting five (5) public Senior Secondary Schools for the study. A sample size of five hundred and eighty nine (589) or 5% of the total population of 11,770 Senior Secondary School One-Three (SSS 1-3) in the five (5) public Senior Secondary Schools in the metropolis was drawn. The 589 students were randomly selected base on the sample population comprising of two hundred and ninety two (292) males and two hundred and ninety seven (297) females.

The instruments that were used in collecting data for the study were the student school attendance checklist and a questionnaire. The researchers collected the school attendance performance data of the selected sample of respondents from their school attendance registers as recorded by their class teachers in each of the selected school covering a period of nine (9) weeks in a school term. Similarly, the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) a self-test completion questionnaire originally developed by Gavin, Ross & Skinner (1989) and modified by the researchers was adapted into Likert type response format ranging from 1-4; while also

containing the demographic data of respondents, which is gender to meet the purpose of this study. The questionnaire has a co-efficient alpha of 0.86. As a standardized instrument, the validity of the instrument has been ensured by developers of the instrument.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers in conjunction with research assistants. All completed questionnaires were collected, collated and the scores subjected to statistical analysis. Scores for research question were analyzed using frequency count,

percentage and ranking, while scores for the hypothesis were tested using t-test at 0.05 Level of Significance.

A total of 589 questionnaires were administered to students in the sampled schools. Of the total number distributed 588 were found to be correctly filled consequently they were considered as the total number of students that participated in the study. The breakdown of the respondents according to Gender is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Demographic Distribution of Students according to Gender

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	292	49.7
	Female	296	50.3
Total		588	100%

The above table indicates that the respondents consisted of 588 participants in the SSSI-III classes in the sampled public Senior Secondary Schools. In addition, 292 of the participants were males and the remaining 296 were females.

**Research Question**

What is the school attendance profile of senior school students in Uromi metropolis?

The breakdown of the respondents according to students’ school attendance performance is presented in the Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Students’ School Attendance Performance.

Score Range	Grade Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
Less Than 62	Poor	55	9.3
63-66	Good	115	19.6
67-75	Very Good	151	25.7
76-Above	Excellent	267	45.4
Total		588	100%

The above table indicated that respondents consist of 588 participants in the SSSI-III classes in the sampled public senior secondary schools. In addition, 55 of the participants scored less than 62 in the score range indicating poor school attendance rate, while 115 of the participants scored between 63 and 66 in the score range thus indicating good school attendance performance. Also, 151 of the participants scored between 67-75 in the score range indicating very good school attendance performance and the remaining 267 participants scored 76 and above in the score range

which indicated excellent school attendance performance.

**Hypothesis**

The Hypothesis for the study states that “there is no significant difference in the school attendance profile between male and female victims of drug abuse.

To test this hypothesis, the t-test for two independent sample means was applied for respondents’ scores on the variable. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3:** t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the School Attendance Profile of Male and Female Victims of Drug Abuse

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	F	Sig.	Decision
Drug Abuse	Male	28	77.68	19.554	65	0.704	0.402
	Female	39	82.50	13.883			

Table 3, indicates that the p-value is 0.402. Since the p-value of 0.402 is greater than the Confidence level value of 0.05 ( $p = 0.402 > 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in school attendance profile between male and female victims of drug abuse.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Influence of Gender of Victims of Drug Abuse on School Attendance. The study found out that there is no significant difference between male and female victims of drug abuse in their school attendance records. Drug abuse problems are faced by both male and female.

The fact that no difference exist between the male and female victims of drug abuse in their school attendance records may be hinged on the indication that these mostly inexperienced young adults indulge in drug use out of curiosity, fun, recreation or amusement in which case they cannot be referred to as drug abusers (Adomeh, 2010). In other words, these students are at most experimenters of drug use. In this way, their pattern of drug use is not such that the students rely on drug excessively and chronically as to occupy a central position in their lives leading to absence from school. This suggests that the amount ingested may be inadequate to induce what Rathus (1980) referred to as a motivational syndrome, that is, a generalized melting away of ambition in these youths that is capable of making them to avoid school.

Also, because drug use is more and severely stigmatized especially among adolescents by the society where this study was carried out, both the male and female students found the school as an attractive venue to indulge in drug abuse, in this way they are always present in school, thus maintaining regular school attendance in order to carry out their experiments. The result of this current study is however, inconsistent with previous findings by Shehu and Idris (2008). The time and location of both studies could be contributing factors.

### Recommendations

An elaborate marijuana, cigarette and alcohol use prevention campaign programme should be launched with priorities towards targeting young adults and parents for effective results. This preventive enlightenment campaign programme which must focus on enhancing the level of self-esteem of young adults can be achieved by partnering with the mass media to communicate the deleterious effect of drug use messages as it is capable of reaching large audience which makes it cost effective; because it has been observed that self-esteem is a "social vaccine that empowers individuals and inoculates them against socially undesirable behaviours" (California Task Force to Promote Self Esteem, 1990).

Meanwhile, Government should endeavour to improve on the infrastructural facilities in schools by eliminating the problem of dilapidated and uncompleted school buildings that provide attractive venue for these adolescents to indulge in drug use.

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