EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE AND RELIGION ON DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS OF SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN OWERRI METROPOLIS, IMO STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: A huge amount of research and literature has reported the disturbing increase in the rate of drug abuse by youths and the havoc which this phenomenon has wreaked on the lives of individuals and nations across the globe. Against this backdrop of this problem, this study explores the effect of marriage and religion on drug abuse among students of selected tertiary institutions in Owerri metropolis in Imo State, Nigeria.

Methodology: The objectives include to: i. examine the socio-demographic profile of the target population; ii. Determine the most commonly abused drug by the students; and iii. Determine the effects of marriage and religion on drug abuse among the students.

Findings: The study was a cross-sectional research which disproportionately combined qualitative and quantitative methods. A sample size of 2,400 participants, drawn from five tertiary institutions in Owerri Capital Territory, Imo State of Nigeria, was used in the study. Researchers' made Questionnaire was employed for data collection while binary logistic regression model and descriptive statistics were adopted in the analysis of data. Although the study generally did not find any significant relationship between marriage and drug abuse, it established a higher incidence of drug abuse among the divorced and the separated. The study also found out that the rate of drug abuse was higher among adherents of traditional religion than those of Christianity, Islam and other religions.

Recommendation: Based on these findings, the study recommended concerted family and societal efforts to mitigate the incidences of divorce and separation in marriages and to encourage youths to embrace religious organizations that customarily and doctrinally prohibit drug use and abuse.

Keywords: *Drug abuse, Marriage, Religion, Students, Tertiary institution.*

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INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse, especially among youths is acknowledged as a global, social problem with tremendous public health implications. The world drug report of 2017 draw attention to the escalating trend of the problem from 210 million in 2009 to 255 million in 2015 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, 2017). This indicated an annual average increase of 7.5 million. Although the youth are mostly implicated in the problem, its deleterious effects transcend regional, national informational, ethnic, religious, cultural, sex, clan and age boundaries. The World Health Organization (WHO) cited by Salon and Cemarr (2010) reported the estimated figures of world-wide psychoactive substance use to be "two billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users".

Statement of the Problem

With particular regard to Nigeria, no less person than the former Director-General of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mr. Otumba Ipinmisho, emotionally decried the high rate of drug use among Nigerian youths. He ascribed the situation where about 40 percent of the youths are on drug abuse as "very frightening" (This Day Newspaper, 2016). The sale and consumption of the drugs in their various types and local names (Eg. "kai kai, "ogogoro", akpuru achia", etc) are common sights in motor parks, cities, street corners, private homes, institutional neighborhoods etc across the nation. Although the problem is more prevalent among men than women (Adamson, 2015), among youths than the adults and in urban than rural communities (Murphy, 2018). Its negative public health effects constitute a major threat to all facets of the Nigerian society. It has wreaked a tremendous havoc to the lives of individuals, communities and nations at large. It has engendered a plethora of health challenges and accentuated other problem such as destitution, crime, violence, poverty, prostitution, family instability and national insecurity. In his study on "Youths and drug abuse in Nigeria", Chinedu revealed that youths abuse drugs to relieve pain, stimulate production of breast milk, treat asthma, induce sleep, treat headache, reduce fatigue, alleviate hunger and to get courage (Chinedu, 2009).

Many research studies have been carried out on the problem of drug abuse among youths in Nigeria from various dimensions and in different contexts (Madukwe, Njoku, Annorzie, Nwufo, and Echeme, 2016; Okafor, 2020). Nevertheless, limited number of studies have focused on the target area of this study. Yet, the limited number concentrated on secondary schools and the state in general. Thus, not much scientific explanations have been proffered for the rising trend of the problem among student youths in the target area of this study nor has there been any that focus specifically on students in the target institution and relating marriage and religion to drug abuse.

Objective of the Study

To study the effect of marriage and religion on drug abuse among youths in selected institutions in Owerri metropolis, Imo state, Nigeria; the specific objectives were:

   i. Examine the socio-demographic profile of the students in selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria.

   ii. Determine the most commonly abused drug by the students in selected tertiary institution in Imo State, Nigeria.

   iii. Determine the effect of marriage on drug abuse among students of the institutions under

study.

iv. Determine the effect of religion on drug abuse among students of theinstitutions under study.

Research Questions

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the student population under study?

2. What drug is the most commonly abused among the student population under study?

3. What influence has marriage on drug abuse among the students in the institutions of focus?

4. What influence does religion have on drug abuse among the student population under study?

Conceptual Review

Drugs and drug abuse - Drug is defined as a substance that changes a person's mental state by affecting the way the brain and nervous system work (Hartney, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) (2016) define it as any psychoactive substance which, when taken or administered into one's system, affects mental process such as cognition and emotion.

Drugs exist in wide a variety and are used for various purpose, but they have been broadly categorized into two type: Licit and illicit. Licit drugs are those allowed by the law example of which include alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. They also include medicines and over the counter drugs used as directed and prescribed by medical professional for treating illness. Illicit drugs are drugs that are not allowed by the law to be taken as commonly, freely and openly as the licit drugs. Their usage is restricted because they are dangerous and, if used in an improper manner and without the direction and prescription of medical professionals can lead to human and animal health and lives. Example of illicit drugs include cannabis, cocaine, opium, heroin, tramadol, methamphetamine and psilolybin. Genially, licit and illicit drugs can be as good as they are dangerous, depending if on usage.

Drugs abuse is the use of any drug in a manner that is not socially or medically approved. Drugs can be abused in many ways namely: indiscriminate sale by unlicensed medical dealers (Nwoba, 2011 citing Wolfing), addiction, trafficking or peddling, taken when expired, under or over dose consumption etc. Many people take certain type of drugs as "appetizers" before food, others take them to enhance their performances in sport and fame and in musical theatrical or other stage performance. Haladu, in Adeyemo et al (2016), includes as drugs abuse the excessive and persistent self-administration of drugs without regard to medically or culturally acceptable patterns.

Many factors have been personally and causally associated with drugs abuse; some of them include among others, ignorance (Gobir, et al, 2017), poverty, family background, peer influence (Agwagie, 2016), place of residence, gender (World Drug report, 2018), marital status (Sinha, 2018; Blair and Menarr, 2016), availability and affordability, (Mamman, Othman and Lier, 2014), personality trait (Eg adventurousness, boldness, curiosity, depression, enhancement of intellectual and academic performance) (Idowu et al. 2018). Drug abuse has been globally acknowledged as the cause of many bio-social and psychological problems with tremendous public health implications. Among the injurious effects of drug abuse are health problems including liver damage, stomach ulceration,

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coma and death (Adeyeye, 2017), social/relational problems, family and marital problems (Lodge, 2021), etc.

Youth and drug abuse

Although drug abuse transcends the boundaries of gender, family, culture, ethnicity, race, region, districts, education and age, it has been mostly associated with youths, and reported to be more common in urban than rural areas and among the male than the female. A cursory review of literature on the problem reveal that large populations of students across the globe abuse drugs and are therefore victim of drug abuse. In the United Kingdom, for example, studies have indicated that two out five students are drug users (and abusers) (Coughlan, 2018).

In Nigeria, drug abuse is common among the youth and adult populations, but more common among male students than among female student, among urban populations than rural populations. Ihezue, in Babalola Akinhanmi and Ogunwale (2014) revealed that in Enugu, South Eastern Nigeria, a prevalence rate of 56% was reported among a sample of 246 medical student.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories, ranging from functionalism to conflict have been employed to explain drugs abuse in literature ignorance. This study is anchored on two related socio-psychological theories: symbolic interactions and social leaning theory. The choice of these theories is based firstly, on their complementary relationship and secondly, on their appropriateness in explaining micro-group culture typified by drug culture usually associated with deviant gangs. Symbolic interactionism associated with George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley and William I. Thomas (Obasi, 2015) sees culture of macro and micro group as social products whose shared meanings are generated through the processes of social interaction. By implication of this theory, drug abuse is one of the functions of social interaction. Cohorts of drug abuse tend to develop common perception, usage and feeling about drugs and their effect through social learning, which implicate, social interaction processes. This account for their attitudinal and behavioral similitude as well as explains why substantial volume of literature traces drug abuse to peer influence, family background, criminals, delinquents and some other deviant social categories.

METHODOLOGY

Type of study: This study was a cross-sectional research study combining disproportionally qualitative and quantitative methods.

Area/Scope of Study: This study was carried out in five selected tertiary institutions in Owerri metropolis, Imo state of Nigeria namely, Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Imo State University (IMSU), Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri (FPNO), Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education (AIFCE) and Imo State College of Agriculture Umuagwo.

Imo state, the location of the institutions is one of the 5 states in South eastern Nigeria and of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory making up the Federal Republic Nigeria. The state has 27 Local Government Area, and 6 State and Federal tertiary educational institutions located in the capital territory, Owerri. The capital city, Owerri is well known for its great number and variety of hotels, restaurants, fast food and other eating and entertainment industries which of course explains its popular and active night life.

Population of Study: The target population of the study was youths of 18-30 years in the selected

institution. The lower limit (18yrs) age categories is the nationally recognized age of political or legal majority while the upper limit of 30 years was derived from the national age limit of youths registerable in the National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC). The population also comprised of male and female students of different marital status at various levels of study ranging from 100 to 600. The population also cut across various ethnic groups and social classes.

Sample Size/Sampling Procedure: The sample size was calculated based on the estimated proportion approach (Kothari, 2004), since the total population of youths of 18-30 years in the institution was unknown. Assuming that every youth within the population under study, was equallylikely to abuse drugs, the sample size was calculated using the formula:

$$n = \left(\frac{Z_\alpha}{e}\right)^2 p(1-p) \qquad (1)$$

Where

n = Sample size

Z = Value of standard variate corresponding to α

e = Acceptance error in a given situation

p = Estimated proportion or incidence of cases in the population.

Using the above formula with 95 percent confidence, e = 0.02, p = 0.5, and n = 2400 were obtained.

Data Instruments: The study was an empirical one that mainly relied on primary data complemented by some secondary data. The main instrument for the data collection were Researchers-Made Questionnaire (RMQ). The validity and reliability were assured. The questionnaire which addressed the subjects of the objectives and research questions were administered with the assistance of some trained and final year students of statistics and sociology with experience in field study. The Secondary data were sourced from relevant literature, internet, periodicals and government records.

Method of Data Analysis: Given that the data generated were nominal (categorical) and that the researchers interest was on predicting membership of two categorical outcomes; "abuse drugs" and "does not abuse drugs", binary logistic regression and simple percentages were adopted. SPSS version 21 was used in the analysis of the questionnaire.

Operationalization of variables and concepts:

The two variables employed in the study were the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were marriage and religion derived in literature as factors among others that influence the dependent variable, drug abuse. For the purpose of this study, marital categorieswere: married, single, separated, divorced, widowed while religion was categorized into Christianity, Islam', traditional religion, and others.

Christianity embraced the Orthodox and Pentecostal and Islam, Shia, Sunni, Ahmadiya and Alavis sects. Traditional religion involved the worship of deity or deities through traditional beliefs and practices. "Others" capture any other type of religion outside those mentioned here.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Objectives 1: Socio-demographic profile of the studied population

The 2400 sample size comprised the socio-demographic categories as discussed in 1(a)- 1(f)

1(a): Gender category

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender/Sex	Population
Male	855 (36.9%)
Female	1461 (63.17%)
Total	2316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

Table 1(a) indicates that 2316 (96.5%) out of the 2400 (100%) questionnaires distributed were recovered. The gender composition shows that more female than male students responded to the questionnaires. This finding may have reflected the differential ratio of the gender population in the institutions. It has been often speculated that more female than male seek education especially at the tertiary level while the male youth, in their hurry to make it in life, take more to business than to education.

1(b): Age category

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Population
18-23 years	1361 (58.8%)
24-30 years	955 (41.2%)
Total	2316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

Table 2 indicates that a total of 2316 questionnaires out of 2400 distributed were retrieved. The age composition of the respondents shows that the number of students within the age brackets of 18-23 (58.8%) was greater than those above the bracket (41.2%). On the assumption that the first (lower) age category is likely to be at lower levels of study than the second (higher) age category, it may be argued that youths in the former category are more educationally minded than those in the latter category more of who may be business-inclined.

1(c) Educational Category:

Table 3: Distribution of population by education

Educational level	Population
100-400 (Bachelor) level	2194 (94.7%)
500 and above (Post graduate) level	122 (5.3%)
Total	2316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

Table 3 indicates that 94.7% of the respondents were students between 100 and 400 levels (undergraduates) and only 5.3% were of 500 level and above. This reflects the dominance of the undergraduate population over the postgraduate one, possibly because there are more undergraduate programmes than postgraduate ones in each of the institutions.

1(d) Marital Status Category:

Table 4: Distribution of population by marital status

Marital status	Population
Married	238 (10.3%)
Single	2053 (88.6%)
Separated	3 (0.1%)
Divorced	18 (0.8%)
Widowed	4 (0.2)
Total	2316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

Considering the married (238), the separated (3), the divorced (18) and the widowed (4) together as "the married", since they have had marriage experience, we have a total of 263 as the married and the single who have not had any marriage experience as 2,053.

Table 5: Regrouping the 5 categories in table 4 above into two categories we have:

Marital status	Population
The married	263 (11.4%)
Single	2,053 (88.6%)
Total	2,316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

The figures of the marital category in table 5above reveal that only 11.4% of the respondents were either married, or had had marriage experience, while 88.6% of the respondents were single (have had no marriage experience). This reflects the dominance of the single, or unmarried population, over the married in all the institutions studied. This finding synchronizes with the result in the age categories that indicated that a greater percentage of the youths in the institutions is in the lower age bracket of 18-23, the age at which most youths are not yet married in Nigeria.

1(e) Religious Category:

Table 6: Distribution of population by religion

Religion	Population
Christianity	2195 (94.7%)
Islam	89 (3.8%)
Traditional religion	21 (0.8%)
Others	7 (0.5)
None	4 (0.2%)
Total	2316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

The religious configuration of the respondents reveals that 2195(94.7%) were Christians, 89(3.8%) Moslems, 21(0.8%) traditional religion adherents, 7(0.5%) other religions, while 4(0.2%) belonged to no religion at all. This finding indicates that Christianity dominated other religions in the institutions. This is so, possibly because the state itself is a Christians dominated state.

1(f) Residential Category

Table 7: Distribution of population by residence

Residence	Population
School hostel accommodation	349 (15.1%)
Off campus accommodation	1750 (75.5%)
Family/home accommodation	192 (8.3%)
Others	25 (1.1%)
Total	2,316 (100%)

Source: field work, 2021

Residential categories configuration as contained in table 7 above, shows that 394(15.1%) of the total population of 2,316 resided in the school hostels, 1750(75.5%) resided off-campus, 192(8.3%) resided in their family/home accommodation, while only 25(1.1%) resided in other alternatives. This finding reflects the neighborhood school policy operating in Nigeria and the general inadequacy of hostel accommodation for students in most Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Objective 2: Most commonly abused drugs

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by institutions and most commonly abused drugs

Institutions	Total no. of Institutional Respondents	Most Commonly Abused Drugs in the institutions	No of Respondents to Question	% of total Population of Respondents
IMSU	307	Marijuana	131	42.7%
FPNO	1213	Tramadol	592	48.9%
FUTO	382	Tramadol	171	44.8%
UMUAGWO	168	Tramadol	76	45.2%
AIFCE	246	Tramadol	122	49.6%
	2,316		1,092	47.2%

Source: field work, 2021

Table 8 shows that no particular drug was the most commonly abused in the five institutions, rather, the most commonly abused in FPNO, FUTO, UMUAGWO and AIFCE was tramadol, while marijuana was the most commonly abused in IMSU. The table also indicates that out of the total of 2,316 respondents, 1,092 (47.2%) were drug abusers. This result confirms, or justifies, the alarm earlier raised by the former Director General of the NDLEA, Mr. Otumba Ipinisho on the high rate of drug abuse among Nigerian youths. The table also reveals that in proportional terms, the five studied institutions were almost on equal rate of drug abuse. Tramadol and marijuana are the most commonly abused out of the over eleven drugs implicated in this study; this is so perhaps, because of their relative availability and affordability.

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Objective 3a: Marriage and drug abuse

Table 9: Contingency Table of Marital Status and Abuse of Drugs

Marital Status			Abuse of Drugs		Total
			Unlikely	Likely	
Marital Status	Married	Count	210	28	238
		% within Marital Status	86.1%	13.9%	100.0%
	Single	Count	1829	224	2053
		% within Marital Status	88.8%	11.2%	100.0%
	Divorced	Count	13	5	18
		% within Marital Status	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%
	Separated	Count	3	0	3
		% within Marital Status	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Widowed	Count	4	0	4
		% within Marital Status	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2059	257	2316
		% within Marital Status	88.5%	11.5%	100.0%

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.773[a]	4	.311
N of Valid Cases	2316		

Source: Field Work, 2021

Table 9 indicates that there was no significant association between marital status and drug abuse among the studied students. Nevertheless, it can be observed from the table that 23.5% of the divorced students had the highest percentage of likelihood of drug abuse than the other marital categories. Although this study generally reported insignificant influence of marital status on drug abuse, Blair and Menarr (2016) reported that for both males and females, marriage was associated with lower level of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana use, a result which may be due to the fact that the married can contain emotional problems through family interaction and are more likely to be relatively free from the problem of loneliness. The higher percentage of likelihood of drug abuse among the divorced in this study, may be explained in terms of depression and other problems usually associated with divorce. Since in the context of this study, the divorced, the separated and the widowed were grouped together into the category that had experience, but are no longer living with marriage partners, the finding with regard to the divorced, may be extrapolated to the others in the same category. In their own report, however, which, inversely, studied the effects of drugs on marriage, Menesco and Blair (2014) revealed that high levels of substance use in adult years are shown to be relatively deleterious to both women's and men's chances of marriage and that early alcohol use decreases woman's chances of getting married, but increases the chances for men. This may be due to the fact that alcohol use is more likely to enhance or boost virility and other attributes of manhood in men, and diminish the attribute of reservation usually associated with womanhood, especially   in the African context.

Objective 3b: Religion and Drugs Abuse

Table 10: Contingency Table of Religion and Abuse of Drugs

Religion			Abuse of Drugs		Total
			Unlikely	Likely	
Religion	None	Count	3	1	4
		% within Religion	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	Islam	Count	82	27	109
		% within Religion	79.3%	20.7%	100.0%
	Christianity	Count	1948	227	2175
		% within Religion	89.0%	11.0%	100.0%
	Traditional Religion	Count	14	6	20
		% within Religion	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	Others	Count	7	1	8
		% within Religion	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	2054	262	2316
		% within Religion	88.4%	11.6%	100.0%

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.492[a]	4	.002
N of Valid Cases	2316		

Source: Field Work, 2021

Table 10 reveals significant association between religion and drug abuse among the studied students $\chi_{(4)}^2 = 17.492$, p < 0.05. The table further shows that student adherents of traditional religion were the most likely to abuse drugs, followed by those of Islam. This result is no surprise, because while Christianity disallows drugs abuse or use, and preaches against it, traditional religion and, to some extent, Islam, are relatively more permissive of this. For traditional religion, certain drugs are elements of its medicine and mythical culture. The finding of this study on religion and drug abuse is in consonance with that of Dalgalarrondo et al. (2004) that reported that drug abuse was more frequent with students that had no religion or had no religious education during childhood. The same source observed that many studies conducted in different socio-cultural contexts, showed that among adolescents and youths, there was an association between not having a religious affiliation, minimal religiosity and non-church attendance and drug abuse

Conclusion

There are many factors that have been associated with drug abuse in several studies in literature. They range from social and psychological to economic. Some of the studies established outright causal relationships between the factors and drug abuse, while others did not. In this study, which adopted marriage and religion as independent variables and drug abuse as the dependent variable, it was found that, on a general note, there was no significant relationship between marriage and drug abuse, a result which corroborated Blair and Menarr's report on their similar study. This result may be due to the fact that the married, living with their spouses and children, are likely to cope with emotional problems through family interaction, which tends to insulate them from the loneliness generally associated with those who have been rendered single by separation and

divorce. The study established a higher incidence of drug abuse among the divorced, and this may be due to the depression and hardship commonly associated with divorce and, in some cases, separations.

With regard to religion and drug abuse, the study revealed the highest rate of drug abuse among adherents of traditional religion, a result which agreed with the approri expectation of the researchers, and can be due to the fact that while Christianity and, to some extent, Islam discourage drug abuse in all forms, traditional religion does not. Rather, it is known that certain drugs are elements of its therapeutic and medical culture, especial in Africa and some other developing countries.

Recommendations

Based on its findings, the study recommends that more efforts should be put at the family and societal level to discourage and reduce the rate of separation and divorce.

More marriages between mature and desirous students be encouraged in tertiary institutions, since these are likely to impose more sense of responsibility on the affected students, as well as save them from loneliness and other temptations associated with bachelorhood and spinster-ship.

Families, the institutions and society, at large, should encourage more youths to join religious organizations that customarily and doctrinally prohibit and preach against drug use and abuse.

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