

Research paper

Occupation and Drug Abuse among Youths in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT: The usage of illicit drugs, alcoholism, and other controlled drugs is becoming uncontrollable with manifestations of unending involvement in crime, moral decadence, health challenges, poor academic interest, and a high social life, which triggered this research on the occupation and drug abuse among youth in Andoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. A descriptive, cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to get the needed data, with a sample size of 440 and a multistage sampling procedure. The results showed a relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni L.G.A. of Rivers State. The results showed that drug abuse was found among the youths who are self-employed (30.0%), followed by those who were students (86.1%), youths who are unemployed (9.3%), and respondents who are civil servants (14.3%), while youths who were Corp Members (0.0.0%) were not associated with the prevalence of drug abuse. The study concluded that this result implies that the high prevalence of drug abuse was seen among youths who are self-employed and that there is a relationship between occupation and high drug abuse.

Keyword: Occupation, drug abuse, youths, Andoni Local Government, Rivers State

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INTRODUCTION

The consumption of psychoactive substances is an age-long phenomenon. In all known history and culture, psychoactive substances like alcohol and kola nuts, among others, have been in use for several reasons: energizers, elevation of mood, reduction of hunger, stress, and anxiety (James, 2019). Drug abuse, also known as substance abuse, is a pattern of drug use in which the user consumes drugs in amounts or methods that are harmful to themselves or others. It is a form of substance-related disorder as it contributes to a major

public health and social problem worldwide (Shubi et al. (2016)). According to Manyika et al. (2019), alcohol, marijuana, analgesics, tobacco, caffeine, codeine, and glue, among others, remain the most commonly used. These substances are used for medicinal, social, experimental, and religious reasons. Drug abuse may be defined as the arbitrary overdependence or misuse of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners (Lakhanpal and Agnihotri, 2017). According to Asuka (2017), drug

abuse is the harmful use of mind-altering drugs. It added that the term usually refers to problems with illegal drugs, which also include the harmful use of legal prescription drugs, such as in self-medication. According to Olushola (2019), Nigeria has a serious substance abuse problem. These psychoactive compounds (drugs) that have the potential to cause health and social problems, including substance use disorder (SUD), are categorized into three categories: alcohol, illicit drugs (including cannabis, heroin, and opioids), prescription drugs used for non-medical purposes, and over-the-counter drugs (OTC's).

The crude prevalence of harmful use of alcohol in Nigeria, as reported by Adeloye et al. (2019), has been shown to have many negative consequences for the wellbeing of its users. Several studies conducted in Nigeria have shown that drug abuse among Nigerian youth is associated with poor academic performance of students in Nigeria (Akanbi et al., 2015), low self-esteem (Okafor, 2019), crimes (Ayodele et al., 2018), chronic health conditions (UNODC, 2018), loss of potential manpower, low productivity, and the creation of an unfavourable environment for investors, which of course will affect gross national income as well as internally generated revenue (Kawugana and Faruna, 2018). According to the United Nations Drug Control Programme (2010), there is an increasing menace of drug abuse prevalence. An estimate of 142-272 million people, which is 3.3%–6.0% of the world population annually, between the ages of 15 and 64, abuse drugs and substances, while a huge proportion (45%) are composed of students in colleges and universities. It was further reported that 2.5 million people die each year from drug and substance-related complications, and 30% of the cases are students from tertiary institutions (UNDCP, 2010).

Age is a factor that determines the abuse of drugs among students. Younger students or undergraduates who are faced with developmental tasks have a greater likelihood of using one or more illicit substances. Kiriru (2018) opined that alcohol and drug abuse were infiltrated into society, where youth and young adults are the potential risk groups. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012) reported that drug abusers are between the ages of 16 and 28, with over 60% residing in urban areas and 21% living in rural areas in Kenya. According to several reports from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (2017), an increase in the use of drugs, especially illicit substances, was seen among youths, and suspected cases of drug trafficking were arrested in Lafia metropolis with 3,683kg of hard drugs, including 804.22kg of cannabis, 2,873.8kg of tramadol, 5.3g of cocaine, and 57.2 l of codeine syrup.

The prevalence of drug abuse varies by gender. The number of reported cases of drug abuse seems to be high among males as compared with female undergraduates in tertiary schools. Studies by Jaguany et al (2008) found that 41.5% of boys utilized alcohol, 39% smoked tobacco, and 28.7% used cannabis, while only

4.3% of girls reported the use of alcohol with a mean age of 20.57 years (17–26 years). WHO (2010) defined drug abuse as the harmful and/or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. The World Drug Report (2007) revealed that 21.5% of cases of drug abuse in Ghana aged 15–64 smoked marijuana, with males significantly higher than females.

Also, it was reported in a similar study by Chester (2016) that 62% of male students utilize illicit drugs and 38% of female students use any form of illicit substance. Bolakale and Marques (2015) added that male undergraduates used 10 different illicit drugs, whereas female counterparts abuse alcohol mostly; 74.2% use tobacco between the ages of 11 and 12, which was strongly significant ($df = 5$, $X^2 = 21.07$, $P = 0.001$). The studies also revealed that 19.4% started using sedatives at the age of 11–12 years, 31.8% use sedatives between the ages of 13–14 years, and 1.4% use cocaine for men only (Bolakale, 2015). Drug abuse is likely to be higher in male students than female students. Evidence showed a significant difference between male and female students regarding drug abuse, as observed among students in tertiary institutions (Adeoti, 2010). Drug misuse is becoming a major problem for worldwide public health. According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC-2019), 271 million (5.5%) people worldwide (aged 15 to 64) reported using drugs in the preceding year. Additionally, it has been estimated that 35 million people will suffer from drug use disorders.

Most youth develop drug abuse habits from their parents. Students whose parents utilise any form of psychoactive substance, such as tobacco or alcohol, among others, have the likelihood of being victims of drug abuse. Sometimes, parents send children to buy cigarettes, beer, dry gin, Brandywine, etc. and drink in front of the child. Such a student or child will not see the use of those substances as anything dangerous to them. Studies by Adeoti (2010) found a strong and significant influence on the use of illicit drugs based on family setting ($P < 0.05$). In regard to this, students from separated families are prone to vices in society because of a lack of parental care and monitoring. Hence, the issues of poor parental guidance have contributed to social problems in society.

Most individuals, especially younger adults, begin to head their families and involve themselves in taking wrong decisions that affect their future. For instance, some parents let their male child know that he is a man and can make his own decisions. To buttress this, studies by Mohasosa and Mokoena (2017) indicated undergraduates from single parents do not have enough moral support; thereby, evidence showed a significant positive difference in how male and female students regard drug abuse, as observed among students in tertiary institutions (Adeoti, 2010). Factors contribute to drug abuse among young people. Studies illustrated that

172 (59%) of siblings engage in drug abuse and 28% of fathers abuse drugs; also, 47% of family members are drug abusers as compared with 53% of non-abusers of drugs (Chester, 2016).

Similar studies indicated that 99% of undergraduates who stay with their parents use drugs, and about 25% of those who live with their parents' smoke cigarettes; a significant association was observed between the use of alcohol and cigarettes and household structure (p.000) (George, 2015a). According to George (2015a), 5.0% of parents introduce illicit drugs to their siblings due to a 14.5% lack of parental guidance in recent times. Therefore, parental factors may likely predict the abuse of drugs among individuals, especially undergraduates in Nigeria.

Friends as well as peer influence contribute to the menace of drug abuse, especially among young adults in tertiary institutions. Youths who keep more friends may likely use substances improperly as compared with those who are careful with their peers. Studies by George (2015b) reported that 34.7% of drug abusers said that their friends introduced it to them. Most undergraduates are lured by friends to take substances in order to maintain their friendship, which gradually leads to addiction. Chester (2016) added that 35% of their best friends engage in drug use, most of whom copied the same from their trusted peers. Friends may likely be the commonest source of drug introduction among undergraduates.

Studies by Jagnany et al. (2008) reported that 10.5% of drug abusers were introduced by friends in the hostel to substances such as cannabis, alcohol, tobacco, and cocaine, among others. Also, further studies by Al-Alawi and Shikh (2018) revealed that 28% take illicit drugs with friends and 55% take them alone that were introduced by their friends. Exposure to friends who abuse drugs could serve as a social risk of abusing drugs among students. Several studies indicated that undergraduates who are likely to be drunkards and smokers may have at least one friend who smokes and consumes alcohol (Al-Alawi et al., 2018). Peer influence plays a significant role in drug abuse habits, as seen among young adults (Foo et al. 2018).

Drug use and abuse are the primary reasons why many youths have been incarcerated, as well as being a source of youth restiveness, health problems in our society, and the high crime rate and visits today, despite the activities of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). According to Oshikoya (2019), drug abuse is a global health and social problem that varies locally. Its use among Nigerian youths has become a subject of public concern worldwide, partly because of its potential to contribute to unintentional and intentional injuries, crime involvement, demotivation, cognitive values, and sexual defaulting.

With the trend of youth involvement in the growth of crime, cultist activities, cognitive impairments, the

lowering of morals into murky waters, family disintegration, poor academic interest and performance, and mental illnesses ranging from manageable bearable situations to unbearable situations, the quest to exist without solving problems of life seems unending. However, drug misuse has created a serious threat to the next generation, as well as deteriorating health conditions as a result of social and experimental exhibitions and peer pressure groups. This hazard extends beyond the use of illicit drugs to include prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceuticals. Capacity change and interference with health and productive life via the intake of drugs prohibited by law, harmful effects, or having taken drugs beyond the prescription of a qualified physician as examined pose a great threat to our unseen future.

Short-term and long-term effects of drug abuse or improper use of prescription drugs include sleeplessness (insomnia), increased aggression, paranoia, hallucinations, panic disorder, depression, anxiety, slurred speech, change in appetite, loss of coordination, momentary euphoria, increased heart rate, and changes in cognitive function. The deliberate abuse of licit or illegal drugs for amusement, perceived need, or convenience to the point of addiction is still a mirage. In order to determine the connection between occupation and drug abuse among young people in Rivers State's Andoni Local Government Area, the study was conducted.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to ascertain the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. In specific terms, the following objective guided the study to;

a) ascertain the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the study. The population of this study comprised of all youth in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. According to National Population Commission (2022) there are about 152,214 youths in Andoni Local

Table 1: The frequency and percentage distribution of the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni L.G.A of Rivers State.

Occupation	Prevalence of drug abuse		Total
	Low F (%)	High F (%)	
Student	200(69.9)	86(30.1)	286(100)
Self-employed	45(60.0)	30(40.0)	75(100)
Unemployed	24(72.7)	9(27.3)	33(100)
Civil servants	6(85.7)	1(14.3)	7(100)
Corp Members	6(100)	0(0.0)	6(100)
Total	281(69.0)	126(31.0)	407(100)

Government Area. The sample size for this study was 440 youths in Andoni Local Government Area. The sample size of the study was estimated using Taro Yamene method for finite population.

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

S= sample size

N = total number of population from each selected local government area.

n = sample size

e = level of significance (0.05)

Adding 10% non-compliance, the sample size is 440

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted for the study.

Stage 1: Stratified random sampling was used to divide the Andoni Local Government Area into 11 political wards.

Stage 2: cluster random sampling of the 11 political wards into 6 groups.

Stage 3: proportionate stratified sampling was carried out to select the number of respondents from the groups.

The instrument used for obtaining data for the study was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated. The split-half method was used to determine the degree of internal consistency of the instrument. Data was coded and analyzed using the statistical product and service solution (SPSS) version 25.0. Statistical tools such as percentages and means were used for the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni L.G.A. of Rivers State?

Decision guide: Likert's 2.5 (50%) and above high while below 2.5 (50%) is low.

Table 1 shows the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in Andoni L.G.A. of Rivers State. The results showed that drug abuse was found among the youths who are self-employed (30.0%), followed by those who were students (86.1%), youths who are unemployed (9.3%), and respondents who are civil servants (14.3%), while youths who were Corp Members (0.0.0%) were not associated with the prevalence of drug abuse. Hence, this result implies that the high prevalence of drug abuse was seen among youths who are self-employed, and there is a relationship between occupation and high drug abuse.

The findings of this study showed a relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths. The result showed that drug abuse was found among the youths who are self-employed (30.0%), followed by those who were students (86.1%), youths who are unemployed (9.3%), and respondents who are civil servants (14.3%). Hence, this result implies that the high prevalence of drug abuse was seen among youths who are self-employed, and there is a relationship between occupation and high drug abuse.

This confirms the study carried out by Ashley (2022) in North Carolina, titled What professions have the highest prevalence rate of drug abuse? Police and other law enforcement officers are conditioned by high-stress work environments, emergency situations, demanding job hours, and work fixtures that may make family or leisure time difficult. The extent of the job sometimes exceeds the normal schedule and even poses a high risk to their own lives. That can lead to substance use as a means to cope with the job. However, 1 in 4 police officers has a problem with alcohol or drugs. While the substance use disorder rate for the general population is around 10%, for police officers, it may be anywhere from 20% to 30%. Approximately 15% of construction workers may be involved in substance abuse. At 16.5%, they reported the second-highest rate of past-month heavy alcohol use in the 2015 American National Survey on Drug Use and Health. There is a history of a correlation between substance abuse and creativity. Actors and musicians, for example, frequently use alcohol and drugs at greater than normal rates compared to other professions in the arts and entertainment. Given the high rates and variety of substance use experienced by these sorts of workers—nearly 14% reporting drug use in the last month and 11.5% reporting heavy drinking—it is possible that the creative freedom these professions frequently give over scheduling and working hours is to blame.

Professionals in the arts and entertainment industry, such as actors and musicians, tend to show higher-than-average rates of both drinking and drug use. With nearly 14% reporting past-month drug use and 11.5% reporting heavy drinking, the creative freedom these careers often offer around scheduling and working hours may contribute to the rates and types of substance use these kinds of workers' experience.

Conclusion

The study delved into the relationship between occupation and drug abuse among youths in the Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. Notably, the results exhibited distinct patterns. Drug abuse was most prevalent among self-employed youths, with a striking 40.0% incidence rate. Following closely were students, among whom 30.1% were found to engage in drug abuse. Additionally, unemployed youths displayed a prevalence rate of 27.3%, while civil servants showed a notably lower rate at 14.3%. Interestingly, no drug abuse cases were identified among Corps members. This data underscores a compelling connection between occupation and drug abuse tendencies among the youth demographic in Andoni L.G.A. of Rivers State. The findings strongly suggest the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms tailored to the specific occupational contexts of young individuals in order to mitigate drug abuse risks effectively.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward based on the findings of the study:

1. The drug law enforcement agency should redouble their effort to combat illicit drug sales and misuse in every part with special attention on secondary schools.
2. The government and relevant stakeholders should intensify efforts on drug abuse and drug-related occupation advocacy to curtail youths' perpetual indulgences in drug and related crimes within and outside of school.

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