

Parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience and undergraduates' substance abuse in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract - Substance abuse has been considered to be a serious problem among young people especially College students. Unchecked substance abuse among youths and the entire population could negatively affect general wellbeing and life expectancy. This study, therefore, set out to determine the relative and composite contribution of the parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience to undergraduates' substance abuse in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research design of the ex- post facto type. 400 undergraduates, chosen through sample random technique, participated in the study. The results revealed a negative relationship between openness to experience and parental involvement ($r = -.261$; $p < .01$), substance abuse and parental involvement ($r = 0.042$; $p < .01$), peer influence and parental involvement ($r = 0.290$; $p < 0.01$) and a positive relationship between openness to experience and substance abuse ($r = 0.474$; $P < .01$), openness to experience and peer influence ($r = 0.474$; $p < 0.01$), peer influence and substance abuse ($r = .582$; $p < .01$). Also, the results showed that peer influence had the highest contribution to the prediction ($\beta = 0.499$; $t = 11.045$; $p < .05$), then followed by openness to experience ($\beta = 0.283$; $t = 6.335$; $p < .05$) and parental involvement the least contributor ($\beta = 0.177$; $t = 4.301$; $p < .05$). The study concluded that parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience are among important factors responsible for high incidence of undergraduates' substance abuse in Nigerian universities. It was therefore, recommended among other things, the need to develop comprehensive guidance programmes to accommodate substance abuse tasks. Parents should serve as good role models to their wards by not abusing substance in their presence. They also need to monitor their wards and the peers they keep.

Keywords: Parental involvement, peer influence, openness to experience, substance abuse, undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse has been considered to be one of the most serious problems in every human society. The phenomenon exists in various dimensions such as medical, social, economic and cultural [1]. Unchecked substance abuse among youths and the entire population could negatively affect general wellbeing and life expectancy. This is supported by the 2017 World Drug Report which submitted that substance abuse is dangerous, affects user's health and can result in disability and even death [2]. The prevalence of substance abuse such as alcohol, tobacco, and other

illegitimate medications among adolescents and undergraduates spreading across the globe constitutes an important public concern [3]. It cuts across Central and Eastern Europe with girls and young women identified with smoking, while it affects larger population of young people in developing countries like Nigeria [4], [5].

Despite various governments' stringent legislations outlawing illicit use of un-prescribed substance across the world, citizens including adolescents and undergraduates still get involved to the extent that their health and wellbeing are

threatened thereby leading to moral decadence and psychological trauma both within the family system and society at large [6], [7]. This, over the years, has become a serious and continuous problem in most of the African nations [8]. Researchers have reported that substance abuse is getting worse among undergraduates in Nigeria with attendant public health concerns [9]-[13].

Substance abuse, a form of risk-taking behaviour among adolescents, is not unconnected with the general features of adolescence as a stage of storm, stress and confusion characterized by curiosity, exploration, quest for experimentation, and identity search. Some, if not all of the illicit substances taken by adolescents and undergraduates in particular exert aversive effects on the brain. The effects include but not limited to stimulated sedation, and mood swings among the young population. It has been observed that there is a threat to the health and wellbeing of substance abusers. For instance, abuse of substance such as alcohol, cigarette, and various other drugs is detrimental to wellbeing of the abusers, the family and the larger society. Literature has shown that the developed nations - Europe and the Americas - were the earliest hubs of substance abuse [14]. In recent time developing countries including Nigeria have witnessed the increased occurrence of substance abuse among adolescents and more specifically students in tertiary institutions [15]. Findings have shown that many Nigerian undergraduates are involved in the consumption of substance without prescription by qualified health professionals [16].

In Nigeria, College students now experiment with drugs with limited knowledge of which, when, and how to take the drugs [17]. This has become a worrisome and significant public health concern to Nigerians [18]. Riding on the freedom in the university environment, many youngsters often use and abuse substance for self-reassurance and as a means of expressing their newfound freedom as some of them are living independent of adult guidance and supervision for the first time in their lives. Undergraduates hold the erroneous belief and strong conviction that the university is a place of unabated freedom. Their perceived freedom ranges from academic freedom, socio-political freedom, religious, relationship, to freedom of speech. Using their discretions, undergraduates often express these freedoms to their detriment based on illicit dealings including substance abuse. Prior study [19] observed that some undergraduates, compared to their age

mates not in college, indulge in riskier behaviour such as taking intoxicants including beer, alcoholic wines that can make people sizzled and misbehave.

It has been observed that there is high incidence of substance abuse inform of cigarette smoking in an epidemiological survey carried out in 1995 by the Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education. The result of the survey showed that 11% of the participants had smoked cigarette; while 5% had used cannabis [20]. Another study [16] reported that the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in the year 2009, apprehended 84 students from different tertiary institutions in Osun State using illicit substances. Equally, two Nigerian undergraduates were detained at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos while attempting to import approximately 1.370kg and 1.6kg of cocaine [21].

A lot of factors have been identified by scholars accounting for high incidence of substance abuse among youths - ranging from biological to environmental. Literature has shown that that peer pressure, poor parental guidance, exposure to and availability of drugs were some of the reasons given by various authors for substance abuse [22]. Other identified factors for substance abuse include need for acceptance, curiosity, access to more funds, availability and easy access to substances [22], [23]. Peer influence is also a considered significant determinant of substance abuse among undergraduates in a public university in the southwestern region of Nigeria [24]. Scholars [25], [26], [27] opined that social, familiar and personality factors are among the predictors of substance abuse or addiction. The personality factors include openness to experience.

Evidence shows that the family process and parental involvement play key roles in reducing social and maladaptive behavioural problems among youths. Family warmth and filial connectedness are protective factors against adolescents' many risky behaviour. Studies have shown that parents serve as models for their children in imparting appropriate behaviour, and important health-related knowledge and, they also serve as sources of reinforcement of children's behaviour and purveyors of opportunities and barriers [28], [29]. Given these numerous parental involvements, it is quite challenging to compare information across studies, fields, and programmes. Based on mixed findings on different roles played by parents, it would not be out of place other factors such as individual characteristics, development, belief system, family and school expectations.

Researchers are beginning to consider parental involvement as an area of interest in relation to substance abuse. According to United Nations [30], parental involvement in adolescents' use of alcohol is linked to parents' responsibility in providing their wards' basic needs, protecting them and ensuring the adolescents' safety and health. Parents are considered to influence adolescents' value for the use of alcohol [31], independent and conscious decision making [32], as well as health behaviour and lifestyle [33]-[36]. In same vein, parental involvement could determine the onset of alcohol use, the rate of consumption and reduction in the levels of drinking later in the life [34], [37]. Notwithstanding the parental involvement in the overall development of the young ones, there is dearth of literature on its relation to substance abuse. There is need therefore, to explore the rate at which the construct would predict substance abuse among undergraduates in Nigeria. This may broaden our understanding as well as preventing substance abuse and promoting adolescents' healthy living [38].

Undergraduates are susceptible to riskier behaviour than do adults due to the influence of their similarly risk-prone peers. Membership of peer group makes adolescent adhere to group influence so as not to be seen as deviants among group member even with the knowledge and consequences of some of the group dictates. The peer group, a small group of similarly aged, fairly close friends, and sharing the same activities exert lots of influence on members [39]. Membership of such groups is usually between two and twelve and averagely between five and six. The groups, in many ways, provide sense of identity and a sense of security and build among the young people. Adolescents are often bothered by questions of social identity, purpose in life and self-awareness such as "Who am I?" and "What do I want out of life?" Attempts to answer the identity questions lead to stereotypic behaviour. College adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as they do with their parents/other adults, therefore, it become imperative to study the influence of each on the other.

Peer influence, being a complex sociological construct, is often discussed in relation to substance abuse based two theories stemmed from literature on the relationship which are social selection and social influence. Accordingly, social selection theory states that adolescents search friends with similar deviant tendencies based on pre-existing deviant stereotypes while social influence theory submits that deviant

peers directly and indirectly influence illicit drug use and other risk behaviours during adolescence through peer pressure, modeling and behavioural reinforcement. [40].

Another factor considered in relation to substance abuse is openness to experience, a personality dimension of the Big Five model of personality [41]. Other dimensions of the Big Five schemata are conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism [42]. Openness to experience has six facets - active imagination (fantasy), aesthetic sensitivity (beauty), attentiveness to inner feelings (emotional intelligence), preference for variety (diversity) and intellectual curiosity (inquisitiveness) [43]. Openness to experience is the individual's disposition to being imaginative, flexible, sensitive, thoughtful, creative, curious and independent, [44]. Openness may have diverse meaning to individual and his is dependent on the individual's period of development. However, for the purpose of this study, openness to experience refers to curiosity, intelligence, and creativity, during childhood and accessing to inner experiences during adulthood that can either propel or discourage university undergraduates from substance abuse.

Empirical studies that covered about past three decades [1] linked openness to experience to substance abuse. For instance, a study [45] on the nexus between personality traits and drug abuse among British adolescents, revealed that there is a direct, positive relationship between drug abuse and sensation seeking (excitement seeking). The study further established that addiction resulted from situational anxiety and depressed temper. The results of another research indicated that personality trait of openness to experience makes people prone to drug abuse [46]. Other researches [47],[48] reported that high levels of openness are related to drug abuse. The results of a research [49] conducted on a sample of 1102 drug abusers suggested that users of cocaine and opiates had high scores in neuroticism, low scores in conscientiousness; while marijuana users had high scores in openness to experience, and low scores in conscientiousness and agreeableness. Also, a study showed that agreeableness and conscientiousness have an inverse relationship with drug abuse and openness to experience is positively related to hallucinogens [50].

From the foregoing, parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience have been independently linked with substance abuse and

addiction among adolescents in different part of the world, but there is scarce literature and evidence on the combination of the identified variables in s prior studies in predicting substance abuse among universities undergraduates, particularly in Ogun State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

The present research sets to: (i) determine the relative contribution of each of the predictor variables (parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience) to the criterion (substance abuse) and (ii) establish whether the independent variables, taken together, are good determinants of substance abuse among undergraduates in Ogun State, Southwest, Nigeria

Two null hypotheses were set and tested for the study: There is no significant relationship among parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction of substance abuse among university undergraduate in Ogun East Senatorial District in Ogun State; and there are no significant combined and relative contributions of parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction of substance abuse among university undergraduate in Ogun East Senatorial District in Ogun State.

METHODS

Design

The study adopted the descriptive research design of ex- post facto type. This is because the researchers did not manipulate any of the variables.

Participants

Four hundred (400) undergraduates, drawn from the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye and Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, participated in this study. Sample was selected through simple random sampling techniques from five (5) Faculties in each University with no particular reference to departments. 40 students were randomly chosen from each of the selected faculties to make the total of 200 respondents in each University, thus, making a total of 400 respondents.

Measures

Four standardized instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are:

i. To measure substance abuse among the undergraduates, the researchers employed the 32-

item self-administered questionnaire Substance Abuse Attitude Scale (SAA) to collect data was used. Each question on the scale was answered on a 5-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The scales have been shown to be valid and reliable with Cronbach scores ranging between 0.63 and 0.77 [51].

ii. We measured openness to experience of participants using the openness to experience sub-scale of the NEO-FFI personality measure. The domain is a 12-item measure anchored on 5-point scoring - strongly disagree (0), strongly agree (4). Internal consistency values of the sub-scale range from 0.74 to 0.89 using [43].

iii. The study adopted the use of 22-paired items describing how peers influence one another Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) to measure the participants’ peer influence. The scale had a reliability of 0.72 [52].

iv. The Parental Involvement survey (PIS) was used to collect data on parental involvement. Examples of the items are “I feel comfortable with parent volunteers assisting me in my classroom “I am comfortable with meeting parents from ethnic groups different from my own”. Reported internal consistency of the measure is Cronbach’s Alpha= 0.705 [53].

Procedure for Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers administered the instruments to the participants and data resulting from the filled instruments were analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) and Pearson Moment Correlations coefficient at .05 level of significance. The confidentiality of the participants was protected by ensuring anonymity on the administered questionnaire.

RESULTS

Table 1. Correlation Matrix of the relationship among parental involvement, peer influence, openness to experience and substance Abuse

	1	2	3	4
1. Parental Involvement	1			
2. Peer Influence	-.290*	1		
3. Openness to Experience	-.261*	-.474**	1	
4. Substance Abuse	-.042	-.582	-.474**	1

***. Correlation is critical at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 2. Model summary and coefficients of the contribution of parental influence, peer influence, openness to experience to substance abuse

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	21.954	2.919		7.522	.000
Parental Influence	.193	.045	.177	4.301	.000
Peer Influence	.253	.023	.499	11.046	.000
Openness to Experience	-.162	.026	.283	6.335	.000
Model Summary	R = .646; R² = .417; R²_(adj) = .412; F_(3,387) = 91.526; p < .001				

a. Dependent Variable: Substance Abuse

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Influence, Peer Influence, Openness to Experience

Table 1 above revealed that there was negative relationship between openness to experience and parental involvement ($r = -.261$; $p < .01$), substance abuse and parental involvement ($r = 0.042$; $P < .01$), peer influence and parental involvement ($r = 0.290$; $p < .01$), positive relationship existed between openness to experience and substance abuse ($r = 0.474$; $p < .01$), openness to experience and peer influence ($r = 0.474$; $p < .01$), peer influence and substance abuse ($r = .582$; $p < .01$). By the findings of this study, the null hypothesis which sought no significant relationship among parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction of substance abuse among university undergraduate in Ogun East Senatorial District in Ogun State is hereby rejected

From the table 2 which shows there exist positively and significantly contribution of parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience to substance abuse among university undergraduates ($R = .646$, $R^2 = 0.417$; $F_{(3,387)} = 91.526$ $p < 0.05$). This implies that parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience contributed about 41.2% to substance abuse among university undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District in Ogun State.

Also, the results show that peer influence made highest significant contribution ($\beta = 0.499$; $t = 11.045$; $p < .05$) followed by openness to experience ($\beta = 0.283$; $t = 6.335$; $p < .05$) and parental involvement made the least contribution ($\beta = .0177$; $t = 4.301$; $p < .05$). This implies that substance abuse among universities undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District, to a large extent, depends on the control of a peer group over an individual. Therefore, the null hypothesis which seeking no significant combined and relative contribution of parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction

of undergraduates' substance use in Ogun East Senatorial District in Ogun State was rejected.

DISCUSSION

This study examined parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience as determinants of undergraduates' substance abuse in Ogun State, Nigeria. Results from analysis revealed that there existed positively significant relationship among parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction of substance abuse. Results further revealed a negative relationship between openness to experience and parental involvement, substance abuse and parental involvement, peer influence and parental involvement and there was positive relationship between openness to experience and substance abuse, openness to experience and peer influence, peer influence and substance abuse the results showed that the independent variables (peer influence, openness to experience and parental involvement) made significant relative contribution to the substance abuse among universities undergraduate in Ogun East Senatorial District. Peer influence made the highest contribution followed by openness to experience and lastly by parental involvement. This implies that substance abuse among universities undergraduates to a large extent depends on (peer influence) over the individuals.

The study outcome is in line with prior work [1] which reported relationship between substance abuse and openness to experience. Similarly, a body of literature has established peer influence predicting adolescents' substance abuse. For instance, a study [54] found peers exerting extraordinary influence over one another in formation of certain behaviours, including substance abuse. Both modern and

traditional societies have come recognize peer influence as a powerful socializing agent among the young population [55]. Previous work revealed negative peer influences led to increased use of substances [56]. Peer group influences adolescents' engagement in undesirable activities and majorly encourages adolescents' substance abuse [57].

The results further indicated significant combined contribution of parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience in the prediction of undergraduates' substance abuse. The results further showed existing positive and significant contribution of the combined predicting variables (parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience) to the criterion variable (undergraduates' substance abuse). The value of the coefficient of determination shows that parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience contribute about 41.7% to substance abuse among undergraduates.

The findings are in consonance with prior work [58] which revealed the important roles played by family in adolescents' health risky behaviour. Studies [59], [60] reported that parenting styles, family structure and process, and family members' smoking habits all correlated with adolescents' smoking and drinking. Finding of this study further reinforced previous research that found both peers and parental influences exerting on adolescents' substance abuse outcomes [61],[62]. Results of studies [63],[64] further strengthened the findings of this study -parents' substance abusing behaviour and friendship selection were found to be stronger predictors of choosing substance and adoption of substance abuse. These results are consistent with the findings of other studies [64] which revealed strongly correlation between peers' engagement in substance abuse and increased probability of the adolescents initiating similar behaviour. The findings of this study contradict earlier work [65] which reported that adolescents engaged in activities with their parents are at a lower risk of maladaptive behaviour harmful to their health while adolescents having poor parent-child relations are highly prone parent-child conflicts and are at greater risk of substance abuse engagement

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has shown that parental involvement, peer influence and openness to experience are among important factors responsible for high incidence of substance abuse among Nigerian undergraduates. This

study also indicated that undergraduates' substance abuse resulted significantly peers or parents use of substances – that is, parents and friends, consciously or otherwise serve as models. The enormous health implication of substance abuse was established by the study. These include social, family and occupational misdemeanor. Poor grades, absenteeism, learning challenges, interferences in learning process and dropping out of school are all adverse effect of substance abuse by undergraduate. The findings confirmed the assertion of the social influence and social selection theories on peer relations, who in trying to avoid being ostracized or seen as an outlier by group members, submit to peer dictates in relation to substance abuse.

Based on the finding of this study, it was recommended that comprehensive guidance programmes be part of the university induction activities and possibly be quarterly provided to all students and other stakeholder in the school system. The programme should be encompass prevention, identification of and curative tasks for identified substance abusers. The government, university authority and non-governmental organizations used to sensitize youths in general and undergraduates in particular to desist from substance abuse. Government should judiciously deploy extant legislations to deter and prosecute erring members of the public. Also, correctional and rehabilitation centres should be staffed with professional (such as counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, health and educator. The centres should be furnished and equipped to accommodate modern realities in order to give comprehensive assistance to undergraduates found as abusers of substance. The General Course Studies (GNS) should incorporate relevant courses in drug education, guidance and counselling, social studies, and sociology. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials should be deployed on campuses to create awareness on the danger of substance abuse. The limitations of this study are in the areas of sample size and methodological approach. It is therefore suggested that future researchers can increase the sample size in terms of participants and number of tertiary institutions covered. The deployment of qualitative techniques such as In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) may be used to complement the survey in order to provide more insight into the studied variables.

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