



Family Influences on Substance Abuse Tendency among Secondary School Students in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author CPD designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors PAO and PNA managed the analyses of the study. Authors PNA and AEE managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Substance abuse among young people is a complex and a problematic social phenomenon which is growing steadily worldwide and family influences on it have been hypothesized from diverse research and theoretical perspectives. This paper focused on family influences on drug abuse tendency among secondary school students in Yakurr Local Government Area (LGA) of Cross River State, Nigeria. A questionnaire with a reliability coefficient range of 0.78 and 0.85 was used to collect data from 250 respondents while the t-test statistics was utilized for data analysis. The findings revealed that family type and family size were significant predictors of drug abuse tendency among secondary school students. These results provided support for families to monitor and control their children in order to curtail their involvement in inappropriate drug use; the encouragement of monogamous family type (which is closely knitted and replete with love and affection) over and above polygamous family type while a smaller family size which is easier to manage should be preferred to a large one.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tendency to abuse drugs today among in-school-youths is becoming a serious and an increasing social challenge threatening to destroy individuals, schools and communities. The wrong or inappropriate use of chemical substances capable of changing functions of cells in the body is said to be one of the issues of global dimension seriously threatening the world today [1]. Accordingly, it is both a national and international social problem that results in an enormous cost to the abuser, the family and society at large. The large scale involvement of young people in it is so worrisome in the sense that as tomorrow's leaders they often encounter challenges physically, morally, emotionally, and academically, due to their involvement in drug abuse. Little wonder that Paulston [2] suggested the employment of a well-defined value orientation programme to curb drug abuse and other vices. Bamgboye and Gabriel [3] cited by Eze [4] asserted that drug abuse is common among students in our school system because the disciplinary control measures in schools to combat the menace of drug abuse among students is weak. Eze [4] suggested that the government should ensure that drug abuse among students is curbed, to avoid declining standard of education, mass failure of students and the churning out of weak and half-baked graduates from the educational system. In Nigeria, drug abuse among students is a matter of grave concern to educational stakeholders, government, medical practitioners, sociologists, religious leaders, counsellors and parents [5]. Government, parents, and guardians devote a lot of time and resources in order to explore and harness the potentialities of youths, because when youths are neglected, they can find solace in crimes like drug abuse [6]. Parents are worried about their children engaging in drug abuse; they resort to prayers and commitment to the service of God, care for them, monitor them to check bad company and also engage them in meaningful discussions, just to reduce participation and involvement in it. Religious leaders organize seminars and conferences to discuss the dangers of drug abuse, while educationists teach students the dangers of drug abuse, monitor them and also organize seminars and conferences for students and their parents. Counsellors counsel students appropriately, while government and

communities provide recreational centres, job opportunities and also try to prevent loitering.

A number of studies have defined drug abuse as the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than the intended medical purposes and which results in physical, mental, emotional or social impairment of the user [7,1]. As pointed out by Rutter [8] the pathway to substance misuse is determined by interaction of a complex combination of biological, cultural, psychological and environmental factors. According to Chan [9] involvement with it is progressive and predictable with fundamental transformation over time. Commenting on recent reports from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Nigeria, Etim [10] disclosed that youth involvement in drug abuse particularly in the North-west is quite alarming as a large number of them of both sexes use drugs either as stimulants or depressants and in some instances inhale corrosive substances like super glue, aerosol, gasoline, correction fluid or other organic solvents such as urine, faeces, dirty smelling gutters to achieve a particular effect.

The effects of drug abuse among secondary school students are numerous. Studies have reported that in most cases drug abuse come with medical, psychiatric, psychological, spiritual, economic, social, family and legal issues and with a significant emotional and economic burden for the affected individuals, their families and society [11]. Paul [12] stated that drug abuse accounts for 80 per cent of students' deaths in the US, and had caused most of them to commit suicides, homicides, and accidental injuries. Youth restiveness, violent demonstrations, harassment of innocent citizens, assault and other societal vices are known consequences of drug abuse. Obafemi [1] supported this by stating that the social effects of abuse of alcohols, which include road accidents, loss of jobs, poor academic and job performance, and instability of family set-up, etc. are sources of great concern to the government. Umanna [13] opined that psychoactive drugs like alcohol, marijuana and cocaine can cause poor health, personality and behavioural problems. According to Ajayi [14], most drug addicts or abusers are always out of touch with reality, and are prone to taking decisions and actions which may not be in consonance with acceptable norms and behavioural patterns. He added that crimes such

as armed robbery, aggression, assault, restiveness, and other social ills like prostitution are associated with drug abuse. The efforts of these stakeholders to curtail drug abuse among secondary school students have not yielded as much dividend as drug abuse is still very prevalent. Akinyemi [15] asserted that despite the efforts by NDLEA and other agencies to stem the tide of substance abuse in Nigeria, there has been a consistent rapid rise in the number of cases of drug abuse among young people (ages 10 to 24) in Nigeria.

The causes of drug abuse among secondary school students are diverse. Akinyemi cited by Eze [4] mentioned the reasons why most students engage in drug abuse to include deprivation and loneliness, lack of meaningful stimulation in their lives, frustration due to prejudice, socio-economic problems and inability to achieve desired goals or to deal with physical and emotional wants, and to attain pleasurable states. Researches focusing on the role of the family has established a strong connection between the family and drug or substance abuse. According to Mbotto [16], family, background has a great influence on the behaviour and lifestyle of the individual. Isako [17] supported this assertion by stating that poor home or family back ground is one of the things that contribute to students' involvement in drug abuse. Bolvin [18] commented that those with violent, chaotic and stressful experiences at home often engage in drug abuse. Eze [4] opined that the polygamous family type and large family size which are difficult to manage can lead to drug abuse tendency among students, which is linked with bad behaviours such as cultism, rape, thuggery, youth restiveness and even armed robbery, and so on. This study explored the influence of family type and size of drug abuse tendency among secondary school students in Yakurr LGA of CRS. Based on the fact that the family exerts a lot of influence on students, it was expected that the findings from this study would be helpful in establishing strategies that would curtail drug abuse tendencies among youths in Nigeria.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which family type and size influences substance abuse behaviour tendency among in-school age cohorts. To ensure confidentiality of participants, anonymous questionnaire and interview techniques were used in the study.

2.1 Subjects

The study population comprised 2501 students in the 13 public secondary schools in Yakurr L.G.A. of C.R.S. 250 students selected through stratified random sampling from five of the 13 secondary schools constituted the sample for the study.

2.2 Instrumentation

'Family Background and Drug Abuse Tendency Questionnaire (FBDATQ) developed by the reseachers was used to collect data from two hundred and fifty respondents. Section A of the questionnaire measured family type and family size while section B had 20 items which measured drug abuse tendency using a 4-point Likert like scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. Experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation were used to validate the instrument by making useful recommendations, modifications and corrections. The test-retest reliability technique was used on 50 randomly selected respondents similar in characteristics of the study respondents. This gave a reliability coefficient of 0.78-0.85, which was high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

With the help of some research assistants, the questionnaires were administered directly on the respondents, who were guided on how to complete the questionnaire. Through manual scoring, positive statements were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 points respectively for strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree, while the scoring order was reversed for negatively-worded items. The sum of scores for each respondent for the individual items was generated and subjected to further analysis using t-test statistics.

3. RESULTS

The results of data analysis which was based on the purpose of the study are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

H01: There is no significant influence of family type on drug abuse tendency.

Table 1 presents the summary of independent t-test analysis of the influence of family type on drug abuse tendencies. The result on the table indicated that the mean value for those from monogamous family type ($X=18.48$) is less than

the mean value of those from polygamous families ($X=21.44$). This shows that those from the polygamous family type abuse drugs more than monogamous family type members. Comparing the mean differences using an independent t-test, the result revealed that the calculated t-value of 7.365 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 248 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the null hypothesis 1 which stated that there is no significant influence of family type on drug abuse tendency was rejected. This implies that family type significantly influences drug abuse tendencies among secondary school students.

H02: There is no significant influence of family size on drug abuse tendency.

Table 2 presents the summary of independent t-test analysis of the influence of family size on drug abuse tendencies. The result on the table indicated that the mean value for those from families with below seven children ($X=18.89$) is less than the mean value of those from families with above seven children ($X=20.66$). This shows that those children from large size families abuse drugs more than children from small size families. Comparing the mean differences using an independent t-test, the result revealed that the calculated t-value of 3.612 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 248 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the null hypothesis 2 which stated that there is no significant influence of family size on drug abuse tendency was rejected. This implies that family size significantly influences drug abuse tendencies among secondary school students.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result from the data analysis in hypothesis 1 revealed that family type has a significant

influence on drug abuse tendency among secondary school students in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding agrees with Bardis [19] who studied the relationship between family type and adolescent attitude towards drug abuse and pre-marital sex and discovered that most of the adolescent students who were involved in drug abuse and pre-marital sex were from polygamous families. It is also in line with the assertion of Travers [20] that most polygamous families are characterized by unstable, tensed and a conflicting environment which affects students' psychological and social adjustment to life and their attitudes in general, especially as it relates to drug abuse tendencies. It further supports the study carried out by Ibia [21] which revealed that children from monogamous families are less prone to drug abuse tendencies. From the interactions of the researchers with the students in Yakurr L.G.A., it was observed that a greater number of secondary school students who indulge in drugs are from polygamous homes characterized by poverty, lack, disease prevalence and conflicts. It is difficult for parents to control children from such homes so they easily indulge in drug abuse.

The result from the data analysis in hypothesis 2 revealed that family size has a significantly positive influence on drug abuse tendency among secondary school students in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding agrees with the assertion by Evans [22] that a family that is larger than necessary can put such a strain on the time, energy and the budget of a family that the attitudes of the children can be unfavourably directed towards drug abuse and addiction. It further agrees with Onomka [23] who noted that continuously inadequate income, irregular employments, scanty education, and poor housing conditions typical of very large families make the lifestyles of the students from such families to be marked

Table 1. Independent t-test analysis of the influence of family type on drug abuse tendencies (n= 250)

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	t -cal	t- value
Monogamy	112	18.48	3.81	248	7.365	0.00
Polygamy	138	21.44	3.18	248	7.365	0.00

Table 2. Independent t-test analysis of the influence of family size on drug abuse tendencies (n= 250)

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	t -cal	p- value
Below 7 children	95	18.90	3.48	248	3.612	0
Above 7 children	155	20.66	3.90	248	3.612	0

often by limited alternatives, intense feelings of emotion and economic deprivation as well as failures which more often than not cause a lot of these students to inhale drugs as an escape route from the harsh realities of life. It is also in line with Grant [24] who reported that students from large families have somewhat loose and deviant behaviours, easily indulge in drug use and fall into crimes. In the study area, it was observed that parents of large families hardly devote enough time and attention to their children and so they are easily prone to drug abuse due to lack of guidance and proper socialization.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has given an insight into how family type and family size influence drug abuse tendencies among secondary school students in Yakurr Local Government Area. Specifically, this study revealed that family type and family size as family background variables significantly influence drug abuse tendency among secondary school students in the study area and therefore need adequate consideration. It has been noted that just as family type and family size can drive students into drug abuse, they can as well prevent them from indulging in drug abuse, if properly managed. These findings call for further studies on the influence of other variables of family background namely family structure and the family regime on drug abuse tendency.

On the basis of these findings, parents should ensure that students are monitored, controlled, and provided for and given the right home background so that they would not indulge in drug abuse. Counsellors need to organize seminars and public enlightenment campaigns to create awareness of the advantages of monogamous families over polygamous ones and also small family size over a large family size.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Subject's written consent has been collected and preserved by the author.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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