Are Personality Type and Peer pressure Determinants of Drug Abuse among University Students?

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A R T I C L E I N F O

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A B S T R A C T

Background: Recently, drug abuse among undergraduates appears to become a global problem despite the existences of various measures taken by governments and other agencies due to its negative impact on educational and future leadership innovations as well as human resources. This study investigated personality type and peer pressure as determinants of drug abuse among university students in South-Eastern Nigeria.

Methods: this cross-sectional study was conducted using 212students selected through convenient sampling technique aged 15-30 years. Participants responded to the Type A and B personality scale (TABS), Index of peer relations scale (IPR), and drug abuse screening test (DAST). Collected data was analyzed using Chi square statistics.

Results: The findings indicated personality type not being significantly associated with drug abuse[$X^2(1) = 0.13$, $P>0.05$]. The study also revealed that peer pressure determines undergraduates' drug abuse[$X^2(1) =3.77$, $P<0.05$].

Conclusion: Proper and effective education on dangers of substance or drug abuse should be taught in school and at home by teachers, parents, and guardians.

Keywords: Personality, Peer pressure, Drug Abuse

Introduction

The history of drug abuse could be said to be old as human being; for centuries people from different geographical regions and cultures appeared to consume drugs for relaxation and pain relief while others may have used it out of curiosity or for pleasurable experiences. The recent drug report in 2021 of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that around 275 million of the global population used drugs last year while over 36 million individuals suffered from drug abuse disorders. Drug abuse is the use of drug to the extent of affecting the cognitive, emotional and behavioral attributes of an individual. Within the last ten years, consumption of hard drugs has risen drastically in Nigeria; heroin and cocaine are currently misused along with the traditional drugs such as alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, and other dependence producing drugs (Ofuebe, 2020).However, drug abuse could be the major reason many youths in Nigeria are incarcerated as being involved in crime and health problems. Drug abuse seems to be a serious problem despite the existences of various measures taken by governments and other agencies because of its negative impact on educational and future leadership, innovations as well as human resources. The Nigerian university students could be at higher risk of drug abuse as they are in their youthful age of educational career development, social skills' acquisition, and identity formation. Many factors have been associated with the students use and abuse of substances (sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, etc.). Some of these factors include: the need to cope with academic stress, and low self-esteem (Okafor, 2020; Sarkingobir & Dikko, 2020), poor academic performance (Josiah & Aina, 2020; Adeoyea et al., 2020), strained relationships with close persons (Kanmodi et al., 2020), learned helplessness (Adeoyea et al., 2020), attachment style (Owuor& Karega, 2020), traumatic life events, and frustrations (Sanni& Aransi, 2020). Although efforts have been made to reduce the rate of drug abuse among university students in south-eastern Nigeria, no much concern has been shown to investigate the factors that sustains it. It is then pertinent that this study examines personality type and peer pressure as factors that may determine drug useand abuse among undergraduates.

Personality type which could influence drug abuse among undergraduates is a psychological construct used to categorize different types of individuals based on their uniqueness, and it is one of the major contributors to drug abuse. It could play a significant role in determining who would abuse drugs and who would not. Personality type can be categorized into Type A, and Type B personality (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974). Individuals with type a personality are highly competitive, well-organized, keenly ambitious, highly impatient, time-conscious, easily pissed off, and always under pressure. Smith and Gallo (2001) argued that these individuals could be impulsive, hasty, hyper alert, hostile, and angry. Students with Type A personality could be more prone to higher level of academic stress as they hate failure, and would continuously work hard to achieve a perfect score even when they already have high academic performance. These individuals may likely abuse psychoactive substances such as tramadol and codeine to cope with academic stress, depression, and achieve greater academic success. Individuals with Type B personality are exactly the direct opposite type of individuals with Type A personality. The Type B individuals are relaxed, easy going, less competitive, patient, less hostile, and more interested in pleasurable experiences. In support, McLeod (2018) asserted that Type B individuals could be more tolerating when compared with their counterparts. Students with Type B personality are less prone to academic pressure; however, these students may easily use and abuse psychoactive substances such as alcohol, cocaine, heroin, cannabis, nicotine among others to gain pleasurable experience.

On the other hand, "peer pressure" is one of the most powerful social factors that could influence individuals to change their beliefs, thoughts,

feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, thus could make undergraduates to engage in drug use and abuse. Current research has linked peer pressure to undergraduates' drug use (Sarkingobir & Dikko, 2020; Azeez et al., 2020). Students whose peers abuse drugs could possibly engage in such behavior to be accepted and appreciated by their peers. Some of these students might even be persuaded, teased, and assaulted by their drug abuser peers until they adopt such behavior (drug abuse). In this study, it is hypothesized that personality type will significantly determine drug abuse, and peer influence will be significantly associated with drug abuse.

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted using 212 participants comprising 142 males and 70 females within the age range of 15-34 years. The participants were selected via convenient sampling technique from five departments in Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) which consisted of 50 students from chemical engineering, 40 from Material and metallurgical engineering, 45 from Mechanical engineering, 37 from Agricultural and bio resource engineering and 40 others from Polymer and textile engineering.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using three self-report measures, namely, Type A and B personality Scale (TABS), Index of peer relations scale (IPR), and drug abuse screening test (DAST). The participants provided data on their age, gender and department by indicating them on the questionnaire. To assess personality type, we used Type A and B personality scale (TABS) (Omulabi, 1997). TABS consists of 28 items scored in 4-point Likert type format which ranges from "Never true (1)" to "always true (4)". The TABS has an acceptable face and content validity. In this study, we obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91 which indicated the scale to be highly reliable. The scale has a direct scoring, and the norm is 67.98, thus scores higher than the norm indicates type A

behavior while scores lower than the norm projects type B behavior. To measure peer pressure, we employed the Index of Peer Relationship (IPR) scale (Hudson, Nurius, Daley &Newsome, 1986). It contains 25 items scored in a Likert scale which ranges from "rarely or none of the time (1)" to "most or all of the time (5)". Hudson et al. (1986) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.94. Anumba (1995) provided the psychometric properties for Nigerian sample and obtained a validity coefficient of 0.62. The scale has a direct, and reverse scoring pattern. The direct score items include: 2,3,5,6,9,10,13,14,19,20,23,24, and, 25. The reverse scores items include: 1,4,7,8,11,12,15,16,17,18, 21, and 22. The norm of the scale is 28.07 which implies the scores above the norm demonstrating "poor peer relation" while scores lower the norm prove "appropriate peer relation". To measure drug abuse, Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) (Skinner, 1982) was deployed. It contains 28 items scored in a "Yes" and "No" format. A score of 1 is given to each "Yes" response except for item 4, 5, and 7 for which a "No" response is given a score of 1. Skinner (1982) provided the original psychometric properties for American sample and reported α of 0.92, and a test-retest reliability of 0.78. The psychometric properties for Nigerian sample were provided by Duru (2015), and Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91 was derived with 11 as the norm. Thus, any score higher than the norm is involved in drug abuse whereas the one lower than the norm is not.

Appended with the questionnaires was a consent form which participants had to read, comprehend and tick "Yes" to the statement (after being informed as for accepting to participate in the study) on the form before participation. All the procedures followed were in line with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975 as revised in 2000(5).Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Informed consent was obtained from

all the participants and they were assured they could withdraw at any point without consequences.

Design/ Statistics

A cross-sectional survey design was applied in this study because the data was collected using questionnaires, and segments of large populations were studied. Descriptive statistics were performed to describe the participants' information. The Chi square statistic was applied in data analysis because of the nominal nature of the variables and to determine the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. It was computed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Results

Majority of participants were at the age range of 20-24 years. Most of the students were males and from chemical engineering department (Table1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Subject's Sample Characteristics (n= 212)			
Variables	**Categories**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Age	15-19years	18	8.5
	20-24 years	167	78.8
	25-29 years	25	11.8
	30-34 years	2	.9
Gender	Male	142	67
	Female	70	33
Department	Agricultural and Bio resources Engineering	37	17.5
	Chemical Engineering	50	23.6
	Material and Metallurgical Engineering	40	18.9
	Mechanical Engineering	45	21.2
	Polymer and Textile Engineering	40	18.9

Table 2. Association between Personality Type and Drug Abuse Involvement				
Personality Type	**Drug Abuse**		**DF**	X^2
	Do not abuse drugs	**Abuse drugs**		
Type A	178(178.4)	13(12.6)	1	0.13
Type B	20(19.6)	1(1.4)		

*$P<.05$

The table 2 showed that the first hypothesis which posited that personality type will significantly determine drug abuse was not confirmed[$X^2(1)$ =0.13, P>0.05]. This denotes that undergraduates' personality type does not significantly impact their involvement in drug abuse.

Table 2. Association between Peer Relation and Drug Abuse Involvement				
Peer Relations	**Drug Abuse**		**DF**	X^2
	Do not abuse drugs	**Abuse drugs**		
Adequate	135(131.7)	6(9.3)	1	3.77*
Poor	63(66.3)	8(4.7)		

*P<0.05

Also, the table 2 showed that the second hypothesis which posited peer influence being significantly associated with drug abuse was confirmed [X2(1) =3.77, P<.05]. This exhibits that peer relations among undergraduates were significantly linked to their involvement in drug abuse.

Discussion

The study investigated personality type and peer influence as determinants of drug abuse among undergraduates. In the present study, the majority of the participants were between 20-24 years, which is consistent with the recent England and Wales drug use report-2018 of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The report displayed that drug use was highest among individuals between 20-24 years in the period 2016-2017.In this present situation, if under graduates being in the 20-24 age group abuse drugs, they will be at risk for acute and chronic health, social as well as psychological problems (Oboh & Oboh, 2020). Substance abuse may resultin behavioral, cognitive, and physiological disorders (Jorge et al., 2018).

In this study also, most of the participants were males, which is consistent with the recent Nigeria drug use report-2018 of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNODC (2018) reported that among 4 drug users in Nigeria, one is a female, thus more males (10.8 million men) than females (3.4 million females) were reported as drug users in the previous year. Personality type failed to be significant in this study which implies that personality type difference is ineffective in students' involvement in drug abuse. This was consonant with the findings of Anyasor (2006) and Asika (2011) which reported that personality type has no significant impact on drug abuse. The study of Oparah (2011) revealed that personality type "A" individuals would not differ from personality type "B" people in their level of alcohol abuse. In contrast, the findings of Nwachukwu (2011) suggested personality type being a significant determinant of drug abuse.

Peer pressure was significantly associated with students' involvement in drug abuse, which is consistent with the findings of Sarkingobir and Dikko (2020), and Azeez et al. (2020). The result of a study conducted by Sanni and Aransi (2020) revealed that peer pressure is among the psychosocial factors that determine undergraduates' drug use. In association with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), drug abuse is a type of behavior which can easily be acquired by students observing their peers who are involved in drug abuse. However, the result of this study is inconsistent with the probe conducted by Iwuala (2015) which demonstrated that peer relation fails to bear any significant effect on undergraduates' alcohol use and abuse.

Conclusion

This study identified that personality type has no significant effect on drug abuse among undergraduates; this implies that the parents, undergraduates. The result also discerned that peer influence bears a significant impact on drug abuse among undergraduates, which denotes that the more the students are associated with drug-abusing peers, the more likely they would engage in drug abuse.

It is therefore recommended that individuals kindly stay away from their peers who are drug abusers and are unwilling to stop such behavior. Proper and effective education on dangers of substance or drug abuse should be addressed in schools, and at home by teachers, parents and guardians. Students should be recommended to be cautious not to copy all behaviors of their peers. Teachers, parents and guardians are also needed to teach the students positive quality frames of peer association.

This study suffers from some limitations including cross-sectional design, limited sample size, data collection from one university, use of convenient sampling, thus caution is needed to make generalizations. In the future, researchers should attempt to employ larger sample size and ensure both genders to be equal in size. Subsequent

researchers need to strive to ensure that the participants feel more relaxed in responding to items on the questionnaires by controlling all other variables (Number of items, time of the day, etc.) that may influence their reactions to the questions.

Another limitation of the study lies in the fact that the level of drug abuse measurement was based on students' self-report, which may be associated with some bias; drug abuse can be accurately evaluated by physiological measurements.

Conflicts of interest

The Researchers have no conflicts of interest.

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Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization: C.O.N.; methodology: M.C.O.and C.O.N.; formal investigation: M.C.O.,and C.O.N.; data collection: M.C.O. and C.O.N.; writing original draft: M.C.O. and C.O.N.; writing, reviewing and editing: M.C.O.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible for any question related to the article.

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