



Online: ISSN: 2756-4428

POLAC MANAGEMENT REVIEW (PMR)

**A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE,
NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY, WUDIL-KANO**

Vol. 5, No. 2, May, 2025 (ONLINE)

POLAC MANAGEMENT REVIEW (PMR)

A Bi-annual Publication of the Department of Management Science, Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil-Kano, Nigeria

Vol.5, No. 2, May, 2025 (Online)

E - ISSN: 2756-4428

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Volume 5, No.2
May, 2025 (ONLINE)

Publisher: Department of Management Science
Faculty of Social and Management Sciences
Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil-Kano
Phone: +2348036949298
Email: polacmanagementreview@gmail.com, inzehty01@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.pemsj.com>

Printing Firm: Advanced Concepts Publishers
Advanceconcepts1@gmail.com

Copy Rights: Department of Management Science, Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil-Kano, 2025

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**POLAC MANAGEMENT REVIEW (PMR)
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NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY, WUDIL-KANO**



DRUG ABUSE AND ITS CHALLENGING EFFECT ON YOUTHS OF CENTRAL PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

Drug addiction can be devastating and shameful; its consequences to the nation have led to worry about the scourge among the youth and adolescents. The problem of substance abuse is so great that, though it was originally conceived as the problem of a 'select few', it has extended beyond the usual characteristics of abusers being male, adult, and urban-based people now to include females, youngsters, and rural dwellers. The accompanying problems of this act constitute a major threat to the well-being of society if not checked immediately. This study is exploratory and uses the psychosocial theory of drug abuse dependence to explain the use of substances in Nigeria. The study established that the majority of young people engage in drug addiction in the search for pleasure to alter their state of consciousness. It also shows that people abuse drugs for the enhancement of good feelings and use them as a means of coping with stress in life. Drug abuse, according to the study, appears to be common among males, with 94.2%, while females have 5.8%, and the age of first use is between 10 and 29 years. The use of volatile organic solvents is 0.53%. The record of drugs abuse in Nigeria as established by the study shows that the Northwest has a statistic of 37.47% of the drug victims in the country, while the Southwest has been rated second with 17.32%, the South-east was rated third with 13.5%, North-central has 11.71%, while the North-east zone has 8.54% of the drug users in the country. The study concludes that drug abuse is a social problem basically associated with young people and therefore recommends that youths have to be kept busy at all times and that greater availability of good educational activities, materials, and leadership opportunities is necessary to curtail youths' restiveness.

Keywords: Drugs Abuse, Youths, Addition, Plateau State

Introduction

The more complex any society becomes, the more socially sophisticated its youths become in substance abuse. This abuse is a social problem that has spread and increased rapidly like wildfire in both developed and developing communities, especially among our youth. In Nigeria, this social maladaptation is considered an issue of serious concern as it adversely affects the lives and performance of people involved as well as the harmonious functioning of the entire structure of the society. Drug abuse and other associated problems are inimical to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. A significant number of untimely deaths and accidents in Nigeria have been ascribed to the activities of persons under the influence of one drug or the other.

The problem of substance abuse is so great that though it was originally conceived as the problem of a 'select few,' it has extended beyond the usual characteristics of abusers being male, adult, and urban-based people, now to include females, youngsters, and rural dwellers. These abusers erroneously and popularly believe that drugs enhance their

performance and put them in a good mood. The accompanying problems of this act constitute a major threat to the well-being of society if not checked immediately.

In Nigeria and many other countries of the world, the youth have become addicted to psychoactive substances (Fayombo, 1998). For example, in 2002, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) collected data on drug use and abuse from schools, records of patients admitted at mental health institutions for drug problems, and interviews of persons arrested for drug offences. The result showed that youths constitute the high-risk group for drug trafficking and abuse. Research findings have established that people abuse substances such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco for varied and complicated reasons, and the specific drug (or drugs) used varies from country to country and from region to region.

In Nigeria, alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances, but they two have been discovered to cause physical damage to human bodies. These substances

are also said to be “gateway drugs” to other, more potent drugs like heroin and cocaine (UNDCP, 2022). Worldwide, the five main drugs of use are cannabinoids, stimulants, hallucinogens and other compounds, opioids and morphine derivatives and depressants. Studies have shown that the effects of drug addiction manifest physically, physiologically, and socially through the behaviour of drug addicts in society (NIDA, 2018). It is therefore noting that dependence on psychoactive substances is widely prevalent, cutting across age, class and gender, but it is difficult to estimate the number of drug addicts or formulate a comprehensive approach to deal with the problem primarily because it involves a “hidden population” that does not seek treatment. Hence, it is necessary to assess the problem, estimate its costs (social and economic), and design reliable intervention strategies for it (Makanjuola, Abiodun and Sajo 2018).

In the case of Nigeria, substance abuse and addiction are becoming increasingly widespread and a substantial percentage of the national budgetary health allocation is utilised for treatment and rehabilitation of people with substance use problems (Adelekan. 2000; Makanjuola, Daramola and Obembe, 2017). From the various reports of rapid situation assessments of drug abuse and addiction in the country, it shows a picture of widespread consumption of cannabis (10.8%), followed by psychotropic substances (mainly the benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants) 10.6% and to a lesser extent heroin (1.6%) and cocaine (1.4%) in both urban and rural areas. The use of volatile organic solvents (0.53%) has become so popular, especially among street children, school children, youths and women (Fayombo, 2002). This and other reports have become major issues and concerns for the control of drug abuse and addiction in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Today, drug misuse and abuse are a major problem worldwide. Its extent and characteristics, however, vary from region to region, although trends among the youth, especially, have begun to converge over these recent years. The most commonly used and abused substances are cannabis and alcohol. Alcohol and other related problems are becoming a public health concern. The misuse of alcohol represents one of the leading causes of preventable deaths, illnesses and

injuries. Other common substances are inhalants, heroin, and cocaine. This abuse is believed to be associated with increasing amounts consumed, frequency of use and groups involved.

The substance abuse problem in Nigeria is not different from other countries, though there may be variations in the magnitude of the problem. Currently, the use and misuse of substances have expanded to include the youth. The age of the affected victims ranged from 16 to 60 years. This gives evidence that the people mostly affected are the young and strong who can contribute effectively to the economy of the country. Increasing youth involvement in substance use and abuse is a major threat to national development, family stability and social security.

In Nigeria, the estimated consumption of cannabis among the population is 10.8%, followed by psychotropic substances like benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants, 10.6%, heroin, 1.6%, and cocaine, 1.4%, in both urban and rural areas (Ajala, 2009). Drug abuse appears to be common among males with 94.2% than among females 5.8%, and the age of first use is 10-29 years. The use of volatile organic solvents is 0.53% and is widely spread among the street children. Multiple drug use happens nationwide, with 7.88% to varying degrees. From the record of drugs abuse in Nigeria, the Northwest has a statistic of 37.47 percent of the drug victims in the country, while the Southwest has been rated second with 17.32 percent, the South-east was rated third with 13.5 percent, North-central has 11.71 percent, while the North-east zone has 8.54 percent of the drug users in the country (Akannam, 2022).

The submission above indicates that the abuse of drugs and other substances has led to risky behaviour among Nigerian youths and adolescents. This act has a devastating effect on nation-building as the youth have engaged in this act.

To address these problems, various programmes in Nigeria, both official and unofficial, have made several efforts towards curbing the menace of substance abuse (cigarette and hard drugs) of which the youth are the most gullible victims. Therefore, this has attracted the interest to carry out this study to find out why the majority of young people engage in drug addiction.

Objective of the Study

1. To determine the incidence of drug abuse among youths in central Plateau State, which is likely to be higher than other social vices.
2. To examine the relationship between peer group influence and drug abuse among youths in central Plateau State.
3. To find out if youths in central Plateau State who engage in drug abuse are likely to experience some health hazards.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the study:

1. The incidence of drug abuse among youths in central Plateau State is likely to be higher than other social vices.
2. There is a positive relationship between peer group influence and drug abuse among youths in Central Plateau State.
3. Youths in central Plateau State who engage in drug abuse are likely to experience some health hazards.

Empirical Studies

Several studies on substance abuse have focused on alcohol because it is legal and more widely used; thus, more is known about alcohol effects. According to Schuckit (2015), the early course of alcoholism typically begins with the first episode of intoxication between 15 and 17 years of age. The first evidence of minor alcohol related problems is seen in the late teens. These events do not differ significantly from the experiences of people who do not go on to develop alcoholism. A pattern of more severe difficulties for people with alcoholism begins to emerge in the mid-20s to the mid-30s (Jeffery & Anthony, 2005). These difficulties can be the alcohol related intoxication or driving while intoxicated, evidence of early alcohol related health problems or significant interference with functioning at work or school. During this time, the person experiences his or her first “black out”, which is an episode during which the person continues to function but has no conscious awareness of his or her behaviour at the time or any later memory of the behaviour.

As the person continues to drink, he or she often develops a tolerance for alcohol; i.e., he or she needs more alcohol to produce the same effect. After continued heavy drinking, the person experiences a “tolerance break”, which means that very small amounts of alcohol can intoxicate the person.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, 2000) defines alcohol abuse as repeated use of alcohol despite recurrent adverse consequences. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism (2010) about 7 million people were taking prescription drugs for non-medical purposes. Among 12th graders, the prescription of drug abuse is now second to cannabis. Jeffery and Anthony (2005) stated that the exact causes of drug abuse are not known, but various factors are thought to contribute to the development of substance-related disorders. They further stated that children of alcoholic parents are at higher risk of developing alcoholism and drug dependence than children of non-alcoholic parents.

These studies lead theorists to describe the genetic component of alcoholism as a genetic vulnerability that is influenced by various social and environmental factors. Slutske, Heath, and Madden (2012) found that 50% to 60% of the variation in the cause of alcoholism was the result of genetics, with the remainder caused by environmental influences.

Neurochemical influences on substance abuse patterns have been studied primarily in animal research (Jeffery & Anthony, 2015). The ingestion of mood-altering substances stimulates dopamine pathways in the limbic system, which produces pleasant feelings or a “high” that is reinforcing or a positive experience. The distribution of the substance throughout the brain alters the balance of neurotransmitters that modulate pleasure, pain, and reward responses. They continued that some people have an internal alarm that limits the amount of alcohol consumed to one to two drinks so that they feel a pleasant sensation but go no further. People without this internal signalling mechanism experience the “high initially, but continue to drink until central nervous system depression is marked and they are intoxicated”

Okpataku, Kwanashie, Ejiofor and Olisah (2014) were among the theorists to believe that

inconsistency in the parent's behaviour, poor role modelling and lack of nurturing pave way for the child to-adopt a similar style and maladaptive coping, stormy relationship and substance abuse and added that children who abhorred their family lives are likely to abuse substances as adults because they lack adaptive coping skills and cannot form successful relationships.

Ciraulo and Sarid-Segal (2015) state that sedative, hypnotics, and anxiolytic drugs, which act as central nervous system depressants, particularly benzodiazepines and barbiturates, are the most frequently abused. The intensity of the effect depends on the particular drug. The effects of the drugs, symptoms of intoxication and withdrawal symptoms are similar to those of alcohol. In the usual prescribed doses, these drugs cause drowsiness and reduce anxiety, which is the intended purpose. Intoxication with cannabis may produce delirium or, rarely, cannabis-induced psychotic disorder, both of which are treated symptomatically. Although some people have reported withdrawal symptoms of muscle aches, sweating, anxiety and tremors, no clinically significant withdrawal syndrome has been identified (Lehne, 2013). Symptoms include slurred speech, lack of coordination, unsteady gait, labile mood, impaired attention or memory and coma.

Lawoyin, Ajumobi, Abdul, Abdul, Adegoke, and Agbedeyi (2015) carried out an investigation on adolescents and youths from three out of the six senior secondary schools in Igboora, Nigeria, selected by simple random sampling. A cross-sectional study, using an interviewer-assisted questionnaire to determine the prevalence of and identify factors associated with drug use. Two hundred and seventy-three respondents were currently using one or more drugs, of which one hundred and twenty-three were single drug users, while one hundred and fifty were multiple drug users. Fourteen different psychoactive substances were reportedly used, of which Alabukun, a popular, locally manufactured analgesic (a mixture of acetyl salicylic acid and caffeine), was the most commonly reported drug currently used and ever used. Alcohol was the next commonly reported currently used drug, while Kola nut was the next commonly ever-used drug. Tobacco ranked low on the list with only 1.5% of current users, while 4.4% reported not having ever used this drug. Following logistic

regression analysis, having peers (close friends) and primary caretakers who use drugs significantly increased the chances of the student using drugs. Males compared with females were also significantly more likely to use drugs ($P = 0.024$). A significant relationship exists between drug use and poor role modelling.

Similarly, Nnoruka and Okoye (2016) studied the prevalence, motives, and observed complications of steroid use as a depigmenting agent amongst African blacks in southeast Nigeria. Consecutive new patients attending the dermatology clinic of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, from June to December 2004, were recruited. The active substances of the products used were determined from their packages, while the unknown concoctions were analysed. Chi-squared and Fischer tests were used for statistical analysis, with a significant threshold fixed at 5%. Female persons aged 18-69 years accounted for 75% (414) of patients. The main topical steroids used by both women and men were class-1 steroids, and these were often compounded with other bleaching products. The median duration of usage was nine years. Disorders observed included steroid-induced acne, macular hyperpigmentation of the face, mycoses, striae, telangiectasis, hypertrichosis, and diabetes mellitus. Duration of utilisation of these topical steroids was significantly associated with severe local and systemic consequences; withdrawal of the offending steroids usually resulted in severe withdrawal dermatitis that was unpleasant to patients.

Furthermore, Gureje, Degenhardt, Olley, Uwawe, Udofia, Wakil, Adeyemi, Bohnert, and Anthony (2017) examined the use of psychoactive substances among selected groups in Nigeria, extending the description to include the features of substance dependence. A stratified, multi-stage random sampling of households was used to select respondents in twenty-one of Nigeria's thirty-six states (representing 57% of the national population). In-person interviews with 6752 adults were conducted using the World Health Organisation Composite International Diagnostic Interview, Version 3. Lifetime history and recent (past year) use, as well as features of dependence on alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, sedatives, stimulants, and other drugs, were assessed. The result revealed that alcohol was the most commonly used substance, with ever users and recent

(past year) users. Roughly 3% were recent smokers. Next most common were sedatives, and cannabis smokers. Male persons were more likely than female persons to be users of every drug group investigated, with male preponderance being particularly marked for cannabis. The prevalence of both alcohol and tobacco use was highest among middle-aged adults. Muslims were much less likely to use alcohol than persons of other faiths, but no such association was found for tobacco, non-prescription drug use, or illegal drug use. Features of abuse and dependence were more common at the population level for alcohol, but among users, these features were just as likely to be experienced by alcohol users as they were by other drug users.

Methodology

Design: The survey design is used for this study; the design accesses and predicts the views, reactions, or standings of a large number of people. Under survey design, the researcher develops a list of questions and presents them in a standard way to each participant using the questionnaire.

Sampling Method: A simple random sampling procedure was adopted in choosing the population of the study as it involves a fairly large participants within the central zone comprising of five local government areas (Mangu, Bokkos, Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam) which is the area under the research study, hence indicates a heterogeneous population.

Participants: The population of the study is made up

of youths within five Local Government Councils of (Mangu, Bokkos, Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam). The sample size for the study, are two hundred and ten (210) respondents, each local government council is made up of forty-two (42) respondent who are drawn from the different local government within the zone using stratified random sampling technique. The participants are made up of twenty-eight (118) males representing 56.2% while females are twelve (92) representing 43.8%. 150 of the participants are Christians, representing 71.4%, while 60 participants are Muslim, representing 28.6% of the study samples.

Instruments: The instrument that will be used to generalize the data collected is the Addictive Severity Index (ASI) Scale questionnaire, this is in other to know the level of their involvement with drugs before the study.

Procedure: The study was undertaken by the researcher who was supported by two research associates who assisted the researchers in locating participants for the study in the different local government areas where samples were drawn from.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study will be presented based on the stated hypotheses.

Hypothesis One: The incidence of drug abuse among youths in central Plateau State is likely to be higher than other social vices.

Table 1: Showing the observed and expected distribution for testing the above hypothesis

No	Observed	Expected
Yes	138	97.0
No	72	97.0
Total	210	

DF = 1, $P < 0.05$, $X^2 = 34.660$, Significant level = 0.000
The hypothesis was tested with Chi Square (X^2) statistics. The obtained Chi Square value is 34.660 and was tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. Since $P < 0.05$, then the result is significant, we then reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, which stated that the incidence of drug abuse among

youths in central Plateau State are likely to be higher than other social vices within the zone.

Hypothesis Two: There is a positive relationship between peer group influence and drug abuse among youths in Central Plateau State.

Table 2: Showing the observed and expected for testing the above hypothesis.

No	Observed	Expected
Yes	137	97.0
No	72	97.0
Total	209	

DF = 1, $P < 0.05$, $X^2 = 13.938$, Significant level = 0.000

The hypothesis was tested with Chi Square (X^2) statistics. The obtained Chi Square value is 13.938 and was tested at $P < 0.5$ level of significance. Since $P < 0.5$, then the result is significant, we the reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, which

state that there is a positive relationship between peer group influence and drug abuse among youths in Central Plateau State.

Hypothesis Three: Youths who engage in drug abuse are likely to experience some health hazards.

Table 3: Showing the observed and expected for testing the above hypothesis.

No	Observed	Expected
Yes	138	97.0
No	71	97.0
Total	209	

DF = 1, $P < 0.05$, $X^2 = 34.660$, Significant level = 0.000

The hypothesis was tested with Chi Square (X^2) statistics. The obtained Chi Square value is 34.660 and was tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. Since $P < 0.05$, then the result is significant, we then reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which stated that youths in central Plateau State who engage in drug abuse are likely to experience some health hazards.

Conclusion

The abuse of drugs and other substances constitute one of the most important risk behaviours among the youths and adolescents in Nigeria. Nigerians have accepted that drug abuse is an undesirable feature of our culture. Many engaged in drug abuse out of frustration, poverty, lack of parental supervision, peer influence and pleasure. These young people involve themselves in taking hard drugs and excessive taking of some drugs alter the body system or may cause damage to their health. The problem of drug abuse among youths in central Plateau State has revealed that drugs do nobody or any society good. Drug abuse is very common among youths, they take drugs, to get high or to make them feel big or for them to just feel among or fit into the environment while some take this

drug through the influence of friends or other people around them. Drugs are mostly abused by male youths than female.

Recommendation

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendation might be of help to policy maker's administrators in this very fight against use and abuse of drugs among youths within the central zone area of Plateau State. An idle mind, they say is the devil's workshop, youths have to be kept busy realizing their potentials rewarding and interesting manner. Otherwise, their potentials or energies which is at a peak in these formalize years may be vented through mischievous channels like drug taking which harm both society and the individual.

Greater availability of good educational activities, material and leadership opportunities for youths are necessary to keep the youths happily busy. This would help a lot towards solving the drug abuse problem. Government should set up rehabilitation centres to aid victims of drug abuse.

Further to this, there is also the need for agency in combating the social disintegration by way of public awareness and education. Community organizations and health and social agencies must identify high-risk groups and educate the public about

the dangers of drug use, emphasizing vital importance of drug free life.

A social environment should be created which would discourage drug abuse, with schools educating students on the dangers of drug abuse and the value of life. Their schools' authorities should formulate policies to prevent drug abuse and should also hold seminars for parents and families to alert them early to the symptoms of drug abuse in their children.

Pamphlets and badges should be distributed to schools, colleges and universities. Also, entertainment and sport celebrities should also deglamourize drug

abuse to add to this, parents also should strive to be showing examples to their children and they should also be wary of the company their kids keep.

Furthermore, legislation should be enacted to penalize haulage companies especially transporters who do not implement and enforce procedure to prevent misuse of their facilities by drug traffickers. Also, as a measure to combat drug abuse and trafficking, the penalty for drug peddling should be made commensurate with the peddlers' profits because profits made by drug pushers far exceed the risk, and that is why many people are going into the business.

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