

THE NEXUS OF DRUG ABUSE AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS AMONG YOUTHS IN KANO METROPOLIS: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the nexus of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano metropolis. There is a strong correlation between drug abuse and deviant behaviours, Youths who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours. The present study aims at identifying the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours, the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours and the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths. The study used mixed method of data. This involved the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Therefore, two hypotheses and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A total of 384 participants was utilised for the study and simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants for the questionnaire. Similarly, 12 participants were engaged in an interview. The researcher employed purposive sampling as a technique for selecting participants for the interview. The instruments used in the study are self designed questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire has a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used in testing the null hypotheses. The findings of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and deviant behaviours. The results showed that the causes of drug abuse are environmental factors, mental health issues, availability of drugs, social and cultural factors. While the causes of the deviant behaviours among youths are peer influence, socioeconomic factors and lack of positive opportunities. Whereas the strong connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours comprises of increased involvement in criminal activity, higher rates of violence, breakdown of social relationships and support systems. However, the government have a greater role to play in tackling drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths.

Key words: drug abuse, deviant behaviour, national security, youths,

Introduction:

Nigerian youths, like in many other countries, represent a dynamic and diverse segment of the population (Fergusson and Horwood, 2020). They are the backbone of any nation and they are the future leaders, entrepreneurs, and employees who will drive the economic growth and development. Youths in Nigeria make up a significant portion of the population, with over 60% of Nigerians under the age of 35 (Flory and Lynam, 2023). This young and vibrant population is a major asset to the country, they have a number of unique strengths that make them well-suited to contribute to national development. They are energetic, innovative, and adaptable. They are also eager to learn and to make a difference in the world (Hser et al, 2017). However, they experience a number of challenges, including unemployment, inadequate access to quality education, limited economic opportunities, and poverty. These challenges have contributed to youth restiveness and migration (Kandel, 2020).

Youth involvement in drug abuse is a serious problem in many countries around the world, including Nigeria. Drug abuse can have a devastating impact on the lives of young people, affecting their health,

education, relationships, and employment prospects (Brook et al, 2019). Similarly, deviant behaviours among youths refers to the participation of young individuals in actions or activities that are considered socially unacceptable, illegal, or contrary to established norms and values (Chen and Hsu, 2018).

There is a strong nexus between drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths. Drug abuse can lead to deviant behaviours such as crime, violence, and risky sexual behavior. Deviant behaviours can also lead to drug abuse, as young people may use drugs to cope with the negative consequences of their deviant behaviours (Obasi and Ogu, (2023).

In view of the foregoing, the study will examine the nexus between drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano metropolis.

Research Questions:

The fundamental questions that require investigation are:

1. What are the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis?
2. What are the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours in Kano Metropolis?
3. What are the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis

Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis
2. To examine the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours in Kano Metropolis
3. To access the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis

4. Hypothesis:

The two null hypotheses will be formulated to guide the study as follows:

H0₁: There is no significant difference on the effect of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between youths who engage in deviant behaviours and those who depend on drugs.

Literature Review:

Trend of Drug Abuse in Nigeria

It is possible that the same drugs that are good for humanity will also be bad for humankind. It goes without saying that drugs are made to treat illnesses and improve the human condition; yet, people may abuse over-the-counter medications, which is referred to as drug abuse. It has affected the family, the economy, and the community, making it a social issue. Drug abuse among youths has become a serious public health concern in our country.

Following independence from Britain in the year 1960s, Nigeria observed an epidemic of drug use (Pela & Ebie, 2012). Tobacco, kola nut, and alcohol were the only narcotics that were commonly utilized during that time. Nowadays, many young people turn into anything, including alcohol drinking, tobacco smoking, and illegal use of narcotics, which are the items that are most readily available to them (Yunusa et al, 2017).

The use of drugs has been justified for several reasons. According to Ibrahim et al, (2016) and Gureje & Olley (2012), people use psychoactive drugs for a variety of reasons, including: (1) to belong to a class or social group; (2) peer group pressure; (4) due to various levels of family deprivation; (5) for fun; (6) to conquer illness; (7) to build confidence; (8) to confront shyness; (9) to be capable of facilitating communication; (10) to combat many other social problems; and (11) to persuade them to work beyond their physical capability.

Relationship between Drug Abuse and Deviant Behaviours

Drug abuse among youths can contribute to the development of deviant behaviours through various interconnected pathways. The relationship between drug abuse and deviant behaviours is complex and influenced by individual, social, and environmental factors (Witt et al, 2018). According to Yen et al, (2018), substance abuse, particularly drugs that affect cognitive function, can impair judgment and decision-making. This impairment may lead to risky and impulsive behaviours that individuals might not engage in when sober. Deviant actions can result from impaired reasoning and diminished inhibitions. Similarly, Tracy (2017), was of the view that, in an attempt to sustain drug habits, youths may engage in deviant behaviours, including theft, drug trafficking, or other criminal activities.

According to Van der Vorst (2019), Drug abuse can contribute to social isolation as individuals may withdraw from family, friends, and conventional social activities. This isolation may lead to engagement in deviant behaviours as individuals seek out alternative social networks, often with others involved in substance abuse or criminal activities. In the same direction, Smith and Book (2020), confirm that substance abuse can be financially burdensome, leading to the need for additional sources of income to support drug habits. Some youths may resort to deviant behaviours, such as theft or drug dealing, to finance their substance abuse. However, Terrie and Brook (2020), reveal that certain drugs can induce aggression and violent behaviours. The use of substances like stimulants or alcohol may lower inhibitions and increase the likelihood of engaging in violent or aggressive acts, contributing to deviant behavior. To Eze et al, (2023), youths involved in drug abuse often form social networks with others who share similar habits. Peer pressure within these networks can contribute to the adoption of deviant behaviours as individuals seek acceptance and validation within their drug-using peer groups. According to Jessor and Jessor (2017), substance abuse is often linked to mental health issues. The co-occurrence of substance use disorders and mental health disorders can exacerbate deviant behaviours. Individuals may act out impulsively or engage in self-destructive actions due to the impact of substances on their mental well-being.

Methodology:

A mixed-method of data collection was employed as a research design. Therefore, the data was sourced through a questionnaire and interview. A mixed methods can be used to integrate quantitative (e.g. Experiments) and qualitative (e.g. Interviews) study to provide a better understanding of the study problem than either of each alone. Therefore, explanatory sequential design was used as an appropriate method for this study i.e. using qualitative data to explore quantitative findings. In this way, the quantitative results are explained in more detail through the qualitative data (Creswell, 1998)

In scientific study, two types of the population are recognized, target population (theoretical population) and study population (accessible population). The target population is the entire group of individuals or objects to which the researcher is interested in generalizing the conclusions and generally has varying characteristics (Sekaran 2010). In this study therefore, target population comprises of drug addicts, parents and security agents within the six metropolitan local governments of Kano State namely Kano Municipal, Gwale, Dala, Fagge, Nassarawa and Tarauni Local Government Areas. The sample size was drawn from the study population based on 0.05 margin error provided in Kreycie and Morgan (1970) to determine the required sample size. Thus, 384 samples were used for the study. The study employed a simple random sampling technique in drawing the required sample size. Additionally, a semi-structured face to face in-depth interview was conducted with 12 participants in the metropolitan local governments of Kano State. The researcher employ purposive sampling as a technique for selecting participants for the interview.

The study employed both questionnaire instruments and interview protocol as a suitable way to reach a potentially large number of participants to allow for both statistical and thematic analyses of the results. However, for the interview protocol, it was described as a guide to a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee (Litchman, 2010). In the interview session, verbal interaction took place between the parties involved (i.e. the interviewer and interviewee) and data was gathered by the interviewer (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2016). The interview protocol comprises of two parts, firstly, the socioeconomic and demographic background of the participants. Secondly, questions on the nexus between drug abuse and

deviant behaviours among youths. The instruments were validated by experts in the area of measurement and evaluation to ensure content validity. Meanwhile, the reliability of the instrument was based on Cronbach Alpha measures of scale reliability.

The researchers personally administered the instruments (i.e. Questionnaire and interview protocol) with the help of research assistant. Both of them were duly involved in the data collection. In the same direction, the interview conducted last for about 25 to 30 minutes. The data obtained from the participants' questionnaire were managed, processed and analysed by using relevant statistical tools (SPSS 24 software) to meet the demand of the research objectives. In analysing the data, inferential statistics such as t-test was used. While, for the interview, the data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. According to Bodgan and Biklen (2017) thematic analysis is “a technique for identifying, examining and recording patterns within the data”. The following phases of the thematic analysis of data were utilized. Namely: transcription, coding, themes generation and interpretation of data.

Result

The results of the study are based on the data collected from the two instruments used in this research (i.e. questionnaire and interview guide). However the two null hypotheses were tested using the t-test analysis below:

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): There is no significant difference on the effect of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths

Table 1: Showing the t-test analysis on the effect of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths

.Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
Effect of drug abuse	205	2.78	1.22	276	0.148	0.843	Not Significant
Deviant behaviours among youths	179	2.66	1.18				

The result in table 1 above shows that the calculated t-test value of 0.148 is less than the critical t-test value of 0.843 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference on the effect of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths, is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between youths who engage in deviant behaviours and those who depend on drugs.

Table 2: Showing the t-test analysis between youths who engage in deviant behaviours and those who depend on drugs.

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
Youths who engage in deviant behaviours	277	2.63	1.17	276	6.034	0.136	Significant
Youths who depend on drugs	107	1.80	0.72				

The data in table 2 above indicated that the calculated t-test value of 6.034 is greater than the critical t-test value of 0.136 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between youths who engage in deviant behaviours and youths who depend on drugs, is rejected.

In addition to that, the results of the interview gathered were presented and analysed. The views of the participants were examined based on the following subheadings:

Causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis

The participants gave their opinions on the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths. The themes that emerged from the participants' clarifications include peer influence, socioeconomic factors, and lack of positive opportunities.

One of the participants mentioned that peer influence is one of the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths. Peer influence plays a significant role in the development of drug abuse and deviant behaviours, particularly among adolescents and young adults. He further stated that:

The impact of peers on individual choices can contribute to drug abuse and deviant behaviours. However, preventive effort should be made to daunt the effect of peer influence such as enhancing individuals' resistance skills to counter attack peer pressure and building resilience can empower individuals to make healthier choices in the face of social influences.

However, one of the participants narrated that socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in influencing drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He argued that:

The complex interplay between socio-economic conditions and individual behavior contributes to the development of substance abuse and deviance. Some of the key socio-economic factors are poverty, financial strain, lack of awareness and feelings of injustice and inequality.

Similarly, another participant explained that lack of positive opportunities is one of the causes of drug abuse and deviant behaviours. She explained that:

Individuals facing limited opportunities for education, employment, and personal growth may be more susceptible to negative influences and engaging in risky behaviours. So, lack of positive opportunities, often stemming from socio-economic disadvantages, can contribute significantly to drug abuse and the development of deviant behaviours.

Connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours in Kano Metropolis

The participants gave their opinions on the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours. The themes that emerged from the participant's explanations includes: increased involvement in criminal activity, higher rates of violence, breakdown of social relationships and support systems.

One of the participants mentioned that increased involvement in criminal activity is one of the connections between drug abuse and deviant behaviours. The connections between drug abuse and deviant behaviours are complex and multifaceted. It can contribute to the development and perpetuation of deviant behaviours, and in turn, engaging in deviant behaviours may increase the likelihood of drug abuse. He further stated that:

The acquisition, possession, and use of illicit substances are often illegal. Involvement in drug-related activities exposes individuals to legal consequences, such as arrests and criminal charges. This connection between drug abuse and illegal activities contributes to deviant behaviours.

Similarly, another participant narrated that higher rates of violence is one of the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He added that:

High rates of violence, drug abuse and deviant behaviours are often interconnected and can create a complex and reinforcing cycle within communities. Therefore, the connections between these issues is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to address the root causes and break the cycle.

In the same direction, one of the participants confirmed that breakdown of social relationships and support systems is one of the connection between drug abuse and deviant behaviours. Social relationships and support systems play a crucial role in an individual's well-being, and their absence or deterioration can contribute to vulnerability and engagement in deviant activities, including drug abuse.

Role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours among youths in Kano Metropolis

The participants gave their opinions on the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. The themes that emerged from the participants' explanations on the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours are legislation and regulation, law enforcement, prevention and education, treatment and rehabilitation, community engagement, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

One of the participants mentioned that legislation and regulation is one of the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He further stated that:

The government should enacts laws and regulations to control the availability, distribution and possession of illegal drugs. Government should also regulate and control the sale and use of legal drugs, such as prescription and medications to prevent misuse and abuse.

In the same direction, one of the participants confirmed that law enforcement is another role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He added that:

The government agencies, such as police, NDLEA and other security agents are responsible for enforcing drug laws. They should conduct investigations, arrests, and prosecutions to disrupt drug trafficking networks and deter individuals from engaging in drug-related activities.

Similarly, one of the participants stated that prevention and education is one of the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He clarified that:

The government should supports public health initiatives aimed at preventing drug abuse and deviant behaviours. Government should allocate resources and funding to educational programs that raise awareness about the risks associated with drug use and promote healthy lifestyles. This include campaigns in schools, community centers, and other public spaces to educate individuals and discourage drug abuse.

In the same direction, another participant assert that treatment and rehabilitation enforcement is another role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. He narrated that government should supports the establishment and funding of treatment centers, clinics, and counseling services to help individuals struggling with drug abuse and addiction. Government should provide financial assistance to individuals who cannot afford treatment, promote the use of evidence-based treatment approaches, and support research on drug addiction and recovery.

Community engagement is also another role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours as mention by one of the participants. She narrated that:

The government should encourage communities to actively participate in the fight against drug abuse and deviant behaviours. They support grassroots organizations, community coalitions, and neighborhood watch programs that create a network of support for individuals affected by drugs and promote healthy and drug-free lifestyles.

Finally, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders is one of the role of the government in combating drug abuse and deviant behaviours. One of the participants reveal that the government should plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who have been involved in drug abuse or deviant behaviours. Government should provide programs and support services to help individuals transition back into society, including job training, educational opportunities, and mental health services.

Implications for National Security

Drug abuse and deviant behaviours can have significant implications for national security. For instance, drug abuse is often associated with criminal activities such as drug trafficking, distribution, and related offenses. Deviant behaviours driven by substance abuse can contribute to increased crime rates, including violent crimes. This poses a direct threat to public safety and law enforcement efforts.

Illicit drug trade is frequently linked to organized crime networks. The involvement of individuals in deviant behaviours related to drug trafficking and distribution can lead to the growth of powerful criminal

organizations. These organizations may pose a significant challenge to law enforcement and national security.

Additionally, the influx of illicit funds from drug trade can contribute to corruption within law enforcement agencies and other institutions. This corruption undermines the rule of law and can lead to political instability. It erodes public trust in institutions responsible for maintaining national security.

Furthermore, in some regions, terrorist organizations may exploit the drug trade as a source of funding. Individuals engaged in deviant behaviours associated with drug trafficking may indirectly support terrorism, creating a nexus between drug abuse, criminal activities, and national security threats.

In the same direction, illicit drug trafficking often involves the movement of substances across borders. Deviant behaviours associated with smuggling can create challenges for border security, requiring enhanced measures to prevent the illegal transportation of drugs and related criminal activities.

Similarly, Deviant behaviours stemming from drug abuse can contribute to social disintegration. Families and communities affected by drug-related issues may experience breakdowns in social cohesion, leading to increased social unrest and potential threats to stability.

Youths engaged in drug abuse and associated deviant behaviours are susceptible to recruitment by criminal organizations or extremist groups. This vulnerability poses a long-term threat to national security, as it can contribute to the emergence of a disenchanting and potentially radicalized population.

Conclusion:

Drug abuse and deviant behaviours are serious problems that can have devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities. Extensive research has shown a strong correlation between drug abuse and the engagement in deviant behaviours among youth populations. They can lead to a wide range of problems, including health problems, crime, violence, and social unrest.

Drug abuse can be a contributing factor to deviant behaviours such as criminal activity, violent behavior, delinquency, school dropout, and risky sexual behaviours. Substance abuse can impair judgment, lower inhibitions, and lead individuals to engage in illegal or harmful activities in pursuit of obtaining drugs or due to the influence of substances themselves. Additionally, drug abuse can negatively impact one's mental health, contributing to feelings of aggression, impulsiveness, and a lack of self-control all of which can increase the likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviours.

Governments and other stakeholders can play a vital role in addressing drug abuse and deviant behaviours. Prevention and intervention strategies that address substance abuse and the root causes of deviant behaviours are crucial in mitigating these issues. Effective approaches involve early education, community initiatives, access to mental health services, rehabilitation programs, and social support systems. Therefore, the intertwining nature of these problems necessitates a comprehensive and multidimensional approach for effective prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation.

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