

## Effects of drug abuse on the Academic performance of university students focusing on Students in Nigeria and Kenyan Public Universities

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to conduct a study on the effects of drug abuse on the Academic performance of university students focusing on Students in Nigeria Public Universities and Universities in Uasin Gishu County Kenya

**Design/ Methodology/Approach:** For the research methodology, the paper adopted the desktop literature review method (desk study), which involved a vast and detailed review of studies and research addressing the effects of drug abuse on the performance of university students focusing on Students in Nigeria Public Universities and Universities in Uasin Gishu County Kenya. Simultaneously, in-depth research of the top keywords related to the same topic was conducted in various databases. As a result, the study was purely qualitative, drawing its findings from secondary sources of information.

**Findings:** Students who use substances during college spend less time studying and skip more classes, thereby reducing their exposure to the classroom learning environment and the beneficial experience of interacting with faculty and other students. Alcohol consumption has a negative predictive effect on study hours under all definitions of drinking (binge, frequent binge, drunkenness, and frequent drunkenness). In this study 56.7 percent of the respondents acknowledged that they spend less time studying because of alcohol drinking. There is a negative relationship between heavy episodic alcohol use and the time students spend on academics. The probability of getting a high grade significantly decreases as the frequency of heavy episodic drinking increases this is because the heaviest drinkers obtain the lowest grades.

**Contribution to policy and practice:** The study concluded that there is a negative relationship between drug abuse and students' academic performance.

**Originality/Value:** The findings of this study should stimulate continuous debate on drug abuse in secondary schools and also provide valuable insights that the government, stakeholders, scholars and researchers can rely on their collective endeavor of addressing the challenges and making the fight against drug abuse initiative a success.

## INTRODUCTION

Education has been regarded as a vehicle for economic, social and political development. There has also been a growing commitment to education by government, individual communities and missionary bodies (Bettinger and Slonim 2007). This commitment on the part of government and other non-state actors has extended to ensure that students are properly groomed and tutored on how best to effectively manage themselves in an ever-changing world. These changes have tempted some students to believe that, for them to be able to maintain academic expectations they need to involve in the use of hard drugs (Brook et al. 2009).

Drug abuse is the Use of drugs for purposes other than medical reasons, thus affecting the individual in a negative way socially, cognitively or physically Kuria (1996). Social effects may be reflected in an individual's enhanced tendency to engage in conflicts with friends, teachers, and school authorities. Cognitive effects relate to the individual's lack of concentration on academic work and memory loss. While Lewinsohn (2007) defines a drug as any product other than food or water that affects the way people feel, think, see, and behave. It is a substance that due to its chemical nature affects physical, mental and emotional functioning. It can enter the body through chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin or injection. Drug abuse amongst the global youth population has become a serious problem affecting everyone. Addiction leads many people, young people prominent amongst them, into downward spiral of hopelessness that in some cases ends fatal. They range from glue sniffing street children and teenage ecstasy users, to hard core heroin and cocaine addicts (Nacada, 2005). Drug abuse is responsible for lost wages, destruction of property in schools, soaring health care costs and broken families. It is a problem which affects us all as parents, children, teachers, government officials, taxpayers and workers.

The use of hard drugs by students in Nigerian universities has become an embarrassing phenomenon to parents, schools, government authorities, and the society at large. The students today are the leaders of tomorrow and they deserve good education in the right direction. The constant abuse of drugs among this group of persons can cause psycho-social problems in society. One may hope that this obnoxious practice and its associated problems would not lead to the breeding of deranged generation of youths.

Similarly, Kenya has reported high rates of substance use among students in public Universities, (Odek-Ogunde et al., 2004) indicated rates as high as 84% for alcohol use and 54.7% for tobacco. The rates would continue to rise among students in institutions of higher learning in the near future for instance, (Kuria MW., 1996) found alcohol use prevalence rates of up to 15% among secondary school students, while (Kwamanga et al., 2003) found lifetime cigarette smoking rates of 32%. In a study among students in Kenya, (Ogwell et al., 2003) found a lifetime cigarette smoking rate of 31%.

The effects of drugs on students are not far-fetched. Drugs are chemical substances that destroy the body cell, depending on how the drugs are used. Every drug is a potential poison. According to Orija (2008) drug dependent person unknowingly damages his/herself and the society. The effect is a deteriorating health, which may cause mental ill health, deformed babies and untimely death of the individual involved. He goes further to say that people who have become dependent on drug becomes more irritable, moody, absent minded, drop in academic performance and change in mode of dressing. They become more demanding with regard to funds, increased appetite and they complain of ten of aches and pains in the body.

The National government in Uasin Gishu County embarked on an aggressive campaign to fight drug and substance abuse (Michael Shiundu, 2014, Kenya News Agency). Stakeholder established advisory committees and other mechanisms to help sensitize communities on the vice. The campaign, which targeted parents and students was spearheaded by chiefs and their assistants at the grassroots level According to Kapsoya location Chief Musa Kipchumba, drug abuse was becoming a disaster both in rural and urban settings, as barons target school children. In an interview, the Chief said the involvement of communities in the awareness campaigns had seen a reduction in cases of drug abuse by both parents and their children, hence increasing student enrolment and completion rates in schools. He said while drug and substance abuse had hit hard on the youthful population, the older people were also resorting to substance abuse through excessive intake of alcohol. Creating awareness to the public on the dangers of drug abuse has become one of the key priorities in the County Government work schedule as public servants, through this effort it is hoped that there will be reduced cases of drug and substance abuse by a huge percentage. The report emphasized that measures had been put in place to reduce the production and sale of illicit brews, stating that through area advisory committees

established under the County Commissioner's office, they have managed to disband the illicit brew dens.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In the research methodology, the paper adopted the desktop literature review method (desk study), which involved a vast and detailed review of studies and research addressing the effects of drug abuse on the performance of university students focusing on Students in Nigeria Public Universities and Universities in Uasin Gishu County Kenya. Simultaneously, in-depth research of the top keywords related to the same topic was conducted in various databases. As a result, the study was purely qualitative, drawing its findings from secondary sources of information. After the filtration was done, the third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the authors to focus on articles related to the top keywords. Finally, the analysis was done using content analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

In universities in Uasin Gishu, Kenya, it was discovered that alcohol, khat and tobacco as the most commonly abused drugs, which possibly reflect the overall current situation of drug abuse among the youth in the country (NACADA, 2004; 2007). According to the findings, alcohol is the most frequently abused drug with a response (41%), followed by Marijuana, (19%), tobacco, (16%), Khat (14%) and barbiturates, (10%).

Regarding the effects of the use of these drugs to academic performance, the study found out that drug abuse indeed significantly deteriorated the academic performance of students. It impacted of students class attendance, the time they spent studying and even their general cognitive dissonance, physical body functioning, and overall zeal for studying. Students who were highly addicted to drugs or took many different types of drugs had overall poor academic performance, compared to students who did not use drugs. Henceforth, to guarantee proper university education among all students, the Nigeria and Kenya should ensure to fight drug abuse among University and College students.

Difficulty meeting academic responsibilities is one of the most common consequences of alcohol use, about 25 percent of college students report academic problems caused by alcohol

use, such as earning lower grades, doing poorly on exams or papers, missing class, and falling behind. According to this study, 21.6 percent of students who drank during the year prior to the study had fallen behind in their schoolwork 46 and 29.5 percent had missed class because of their alcohol use. Also, the study indicates 21.8 percent of students reported performing poorly on a test or assignment, and 30.7 percent said they had missed a class due to alcohol use. Excessive drinking and drug use are both associated with short-term academic problems. Students who use substances during college spend less time studying and skip more classes, thereby reducing their exposure to the classroom learning environment and the beneficial experience of interacting with faculty and other students. In this study 29.5 percent of the students reported missing most of their classes. Longitudinal research has found that students who use alcohol and drugs are more likely to have disruptions in their enrolment in college and also fail to graduate. Associated mental health problems can exacerbate the adverse academic consequences of excessive drinking and drug use.

Alcohol consumption has a negative predictive effect on study hours under all definitions of drinking (binge, frequent binge, drunkenness, and frequent drunkenness) (Wolaver, 2002). More frequent use of alcohol usually produces larger negative effects on study hours, with frequent drunkenness having the largest negative effect (Wolaver, 2002). In this study 56.7 percent of the respondents acknowledged that they spend less time studying because of alcohol drinking. There is a negative relationship between heavy episodic alcohol use and the time students spend on academics (Porter & Pryor, 2007).

The probability of getting a high grade significantly decreases as the frequency of heavy episodic drinking increases this is because the heaviest drinkers obtain the lowest grades (Preseley, 1993). Heavy college drinking predicts a reduction in the probability of having an A average cumulative GPA (Wolaver, 2002). Of the students interviewed, 67 percent who drink everyday reported a mean grade of C or below in their past academic year. Those with higher grades of B and above consumed fewer drinks per week or even a month. Therefore, there is a significant decline in mean grade when comparing abstainers to heavier drinking categories (Rau & Durand, 2000). According to the findings, 46 percent who used marijuana daily, skipped more classes, spent less time studying therefore earning lower grades and eventually dropped out of college. 31.6% who used marijuana every week spent less time studying while

42.9% who used marijuana once a month only reported poor grades. According to a study by University of Maryland, School of Public Health 2013, chronic use can lower your IQ as many as eight points. Marijuana users were broken down into categories from minimal users, those who smoked only a handful of times, to frequent and heavy users.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study found out the substance use of heavy drug-using students may directly impair academic abilities which limits their academic performance. For most students who use drugs at a lower level, however, drug use may serve as a maturational ‘snare’ that keeps some students engaged in deviant peer groups as others move on to more normative groups, thus having a long-term direct effect on educational attainment. Other studies have discussed similar processes, in which differential pathways to problematic outcomes are determined, in part, by the level of multiple risk behaviours.

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