

Tendencies of Drug Abuse and Class Attendance/Participation among Secondary School Students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract- *This study investigates the influence of drug and substance abuse on class attendance and participation among Senior Secondary School (SSS2) students in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria. Driven by the alarming observation of school-age children engaging in truancy, hawking, and anti-social behaviours such as substance use (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, etc.) during school hours, the research aims to establish the relationship between these activities and academic engagement. The negative consequences of drug use, including poor concentration, reduced optimism for education, and resultant poor academic outcomes, necessitated an urgent inquiry. The study adopts a Survey Research Design, utilizing a sample of 300 SSS2 students drawn from six randomly selected public secondary schools. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire, the Drug Abuse and Class Attendance/Participation Questionnaire (DACAQ), and an analysis of official class attendance registers over a 13-week school term. Framed by Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the research posits that observed and modeled deviant behaviours significantly contribute to substance abuse, thereby compromising students' commitment to education. The DACAQ instrument demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.730$). The findings confirm a significant negative impact of drug abuse, leading to increased absenteeism and passive engagement in the classroom, demanding urgent intervention from key stakeholders, including the NDLEA and school authorities.*

Keywords: *Tendency, Drug Abuse, Class Attendance, Class Participation, Students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Going through the streets of Calabar Municipality area during school hours, particularly the streets and adjoining streets that host Secondary Schools, one could discover, to his amazement, a good number of school-age children (male and female) roaming or

hawking in the streets and markets. More surprisingly also would be those who have enrolled in schools as students, and left their various homes for school but are seen neither in the classrooms nor on the schools' compounds. "A good number of school children roam the streets in their uniforms when they are expected to be in their classrooms learning" (Oba, Ajake and Obindah, 2013: 137). One may be surprised to find such in the bushes around their schools or at city pubs or game stations engaging in activities like alcohol consumption, tobacco, hemp, marijuana smoking, crack, sniffing or inhaling cocaine, glue, petrol, or some other hard substances, and even playing computer games.

Whether taken in the school environments, or at their various localities and homes, or at street corners, these drugs pose serious threats to a positive and successful academic involvement of these children. For one, their optimism for education will wane, leading to poor class attendance; and secondly, if they should try to be present in class, their enthusiasm, concentration and active participation will reduce, due to the effects of the drugs or substances they have used. The effects of these lead to poor performance in examination and low grades. Prestrey and Meilliman (1997) reported that about 25% of students faced academic problems caused by alcohol abuse, such as missing classes, earning lower grades and performing poorly in examinations.

Moreover, a student who takes cocaine before examination or class may find it difficult to remember what to write, or performed poorly in the class because of the influence of cocaine (Edioin and David, 1990). Students' consumption of drugs during examination for the purpose of alertness is very common. Adolescent age is often associated with experimental

age when children indulge in some juvenile behaviours or anti-social acts which cause many of them to resort to drug abuse. The abuse of these drugs leads to addiction among these post-primary school students and gradually progresses to cause a host of evil happenings in the society, thus, leading to failures and eventually drop-out, while some become rude to teachers and parents alike.

There are scarcely any secondary schools in Calabar Municipality where reports of incidences of stealing, violence, gangsterism, harassment, and disrespect or disregard to constituted authority are not found. A great percentage of these adverse behaviours is not unconnected with illicit drug and substance use; hence, drug abuse is suggested to be the leading cause of these and several health problems and exhibition of dangerous behaviour in the society. Aletan (1995) in his research findings observed that adolescents of senior secondary schools in Calabar urban get into repeated conflicts with customs, rules and laws of the society, portraying them as those that are deviant, which is synonymous with delinquency.

Drug abuse has some social, economic, psychological, cultural, physical, moral, and health consequences that may lead to poverty, disability, maladjustment or death of the abusers (Abdu-Raheem, 2013). Hence, drugs such as deamptretamine (sleepless pills) which can keep one awake without sleep has serious psychosocial and psychological consequences. The abuser may be irrational in behaviour, restless, suspicious and verbally aggressive and violent, destroying both government and private properties, and may even kill (Odejide, 1993).

The Federal Government of Nigeria in gearing up efforts against substances abuse, established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) under decree No. 48 (of 1989) and its amendment, decree No. 38 of (1990) to control illicit drug trafficking and psychotropic substances which are capable of sedating, stimulating or depressing the Central Nervous System (CNS). These drugs can alter mood, change behaviour or affect thought processes of the abuser adversely. In order to combat drug abuse, the NDLEA adopted various strategies; these include: the involvement of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of the community

in the fight against drug abuse; public enlightenment programmes using radio jingles, outdoor posters, as well as bill boards, to help students to appreciate the dangers of drug abuse. The efforts of these government agencies seem to meet a Waterloo! Despite the efforts of Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and other governmental 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 10-24) in Nigeria (Akinyemi, 2008).

Drug abuse has become a threat to the lives and success of the youth. This is evidently a source of sorrow to the parents, guardians and relatives. It is also a big challenge to the whole nation. Stakeholders and members of the public, generally, should devote urgent and adequate attention to the alarming rate of drug abuse, especially among the youth who will be our future leaders.

This study, therefore, aims to identify the leading factors that influence drug use and abuse among secondary school students in relation to their class attendance and participation. Based on this premise, the researcher seeks to investigate the influence of drug abuse on class attendance/participation of secondary school students in Calabar Municipality, in order to help curb its excesses, or at least drastically reduce its occurrence.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Tendencies of drug abuse and class attendance/participation

Drug abuse is recognized as a major national and worldwide problem by the general population. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), drug or substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Peterson (2008), noted that drug or substance abuse is a patterned use of drug in which the user consumes the substance (legal or illegal) in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others, and is a form of substance-related disorder, which if not detected and treated early could lead to drug dependence (a psychological and sometimes physical state characterized by a compulsion to use a drug to

experience psychological or physical effects; this takes several forms: tolerance, habituation, and addiction).

Abdulkarim (2004) reported that substance abuse is a complex behavior seen amongst young people all over the world. McArdle (2004) posited that young people often start by taking “gateway” substances like cigarette and alcohol from which they gradually progress to other substances to degrees that control their behavior.

Adolescence is characterized by increased adventurous tendencies and peer influences (United Nations Population Fund, 2003). Adolescents tend to form gangs, and are often seen “hanging” around with peers experimenting with new things including the use of substance (Greydanus and Patel, 2003).

On the issue of prevalence of drug abuse, West and Graham (2005) observed that students, as a subset of the youth population, consume large quantities of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Alcohol has become an integral part of human culture, past and present with special reference to the Nigerian culture. Drug and substance abuse is a public health and social problem which has gradually become a cause for concern in Africa and indeed Nigeria. In Nigeria, the consumption of illegal drugs and the harmful use of other psychoactive substances such as alcohol, pharmaceutical drugs, inhalants and solvents have increased at an alarming rate over the years. Available report indicates that Nigeria is currently the highest consumer of cannabis and amphetamine in Africa (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011).

It is a common belief that students who attend more classes earn higher final examination marks compared to those who always skip classes. In a class that involves calculation, it is important for students to be present in class to see the several methods taught by their teachers to solve any questions and tutorial since there are various ways of solving any mathematical or statistical problem. Hence, students who frequently skip classes will be at a drawback for they had missed several materials covered. The importance of attendance is supported by UiTM’s attendance policy where students must come to class for at least 80% of their total contact hour to avoid them getting barred

from sitting for their final exam (Noh and Sarah, 2018).

In fact, students need to attend school daily to succeed. However; Ubogu (2004) said illness, financial difficulties, age, social rank, geographical region, attitudes of teachers, weak school management, high education cost and weather condition can cause absenteeism. Mervilde (1981) also revealed that; family health or financial concerns, poor school environment, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education are all conditions that can cause a child not to attend school.

Drug use and abuse by students can lead to class absenteeism and a sharp decline in their academic performance as well as increased reports of truancy and expulsion from school. It can also lead to addiction, increased desire for drugs without which normal life processes are disturbed and increased appetite and libido. Other vices such as stealing, fighting and gambling may also be caused by drug abuse as a result of alteration in the brain chemistry of the abusers. Results indicate that alcohol use increases absenteeism among high school students (which could have deleterious effects on educational outcomes). And the results are generally consistent across instrument specifications (Austin, 2012: 238).

Absenteeism is a student behaviour grounded on physical, psychological and social reasons and affecting students' development negatively. Absenteeism can be not only a symptom of students' negative feelings about school but also sourced by many different reasons (Gökyer, 2012). Absenteeism is typically based on total days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Calabar Municipality has experienced rapid growth of population in recent years. The increasing demand for education has led to more secondary schools being founded. Due to the rapid development, drug use has become common among students in campus, affecting their performances in class. Despite the worldwide concern and education about the dangers of drug abuse, most of the students have limited knowledge of how dangerous the habit is (Ngesu, 2008).

Incidentally, young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems, poor peer relationships and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community, and the entire society like conflict between friends, family breakdown, violence, gangs, drug trafficking etc. Declining grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school are problems associated with adolescent substance abuse.

Class participation is an important aspect of student learning. When students speak up in class, they learn to express their ideas in a way that others can understand. When they ask questions, they learn how to obtain information to enhance their own understanding of a topic (Shore, 2018).

Similarly, when students do their homework, class work, or group work, they express how much they have learned about a subject or how well they have understood a topic. This is expressed even in extra-curricular activities like physical exercises, sports, farming, etc.) Class participation, therefore, involves actively contributing to specifically developed class activities.

Weaver and Qi, (2005: 570) believed that students who actively participate in the learning process learn more than those who do not. Quoting Tinto (1997), Weaver and Qi (2005: 570), pointed out that, "Involvement matters," and this involvement can occur both inside and outside the classroom. Students' active involvement is of valuable importance in learning. Hence, active involvement in class facilitates critical thinking and facilitates the retention of information that might otherwise be lost.

Weaver and Qi, (2005: 571) further observed that a handful of students assume the role of active participators and discussants in the classroom, while the majority engage in "civil attention"-paying sufficient attention to know when to nod, to laugh where appropriate, or otherwise to appear attentive without risking too much involvement.

According to Liu (2001), there are four forms of student involvement in the classroom, namely: full

integration, participation in the circumstances, marginal interaction, and silent observation. However, these patterns of participation are not static at all times and in every place. This is because there are students who may be actively participating in some discussion, but may be passive or become silent in another discussion (Abidin, 2007).

In general, student participation in the classroom is through two communication behaviours, that is verbal and nonverbal (Lee, 2005). Verbal or oral participation refers to behaviours of speaking or giving opinions in the classroom, answering and asking questions or comments and taking part in the classroom discussions. Students who do not take the initiative to actively involved are usually considered as passive. In contrast, nonverbal participation is associated with behavioral responses during the class, including nod their head, raise their hands, body movements and eye contact (Abidin, 2007).

(Abidin, 2007) further identifies certain advantages and challenges of class participation:

Advantages of class participation

- i) Encourages students to be active participants in classroom activities and encourages them to take responsibility for their learning.
- ii) Encourages students to prepare for class.
- iii) Encourages students to reflect on issues and problems that relate to the class.
- iv) Enables students to demonstrate their communication and presentation skills through their interactions with peers and teachers.
- v) Fosters students' analytical skills and their capacity to critique ideas and concepts in a supportive environment.
- vi) Supports students in developing their collaborative and team-working skills.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Scope and Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Secondary School Students

Drug and substance abuse among secondary school students is a critical global public health concern that necessitates proactive intervention due to its profound negative influence on academic performance and social development. Empirical studies consistently indicate a high prevalence of substance use within this demographic, often manifesting as violence, disrespect for elders, and overall juvenile delinquency (Anochie and Nkanginieme, 2000; Ayuba and Audu, 2003; Okwaraji, 2006).

Reports from epidemiological studies in Nigeria reveal alarming figures of substance abuse among young people. Charles (2007) noted that alcohol consumption is implicitly institutionalized across the social spectrum, with students constituting a significant risk group. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that in Nigeria, the estimated lifetime consumption of cannabis is 10.8%, followed by psychoactive substances (10.6%), heroin (1.6%), and cocaine (1.4%) (UNODC, 2007). Analysis of global trends confirms this growth, showing the annual prevalence of cannabis consumption among 15-to-65-year-olds increased from 8.7% to 14.3% between 2001 and 2011 (UNODC, 2011; 2001).

Studies conducted across Nigeria highlight geographical variations and common substances of abuse. For instance, in a southwestern Nigerian city, commonly abused substances included analgesics (46.7%), cannabis (16.7%), tobacco (14.3%), and inhalers (14.0%) (Atoyebi and Atoyebi, 2013). Other studies in Rivers State and Lagos found alcohol and tobacco/cigarette use to be most common (Eneh and Stanley, 2004; Okonkwo et al., 2010), while data from Minna in Northern Nigeria showed 17% of students abused alcohol, 22.5% cigarette, and 11% cannabis (Essien, 2010). Udofia (2014) summarized medical records indicating a high occurrence of narcotic drug abuse among secondary school students in recent years.

Determinants and Gender Dynamics in Substance Abuse

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to substance use during this transformative stage of life. Key factors driving initiation include curiosity, imitation, and lack of awareness of adverse consequences (Oshodi, Aina,

and Onajole, 2010; Awani, 1990). Becker and Hu (2007) noted that drug abuse typically begins with acquisition, followed by escalation of use and potential progression to addiction. Peer influence is consistently cited as a crucial factor in adolescent involvement in drug and substance abuse (Oshodi, Aina, and Onajole, 2010). Additionally, psychological and social pressures arising from adolescent developmental needs can lead to delinquent behaviours, which often include drug abuse (Ekpo and Ajake, 2013).

A significant body of research points to distinct gender differences across all phases of drug abuse, from initiation to relapse (Becker and Hu, 2007). While reports indicate increasing female participation, adolescent substance abuse is generally more common in males (Egbuonu et al., 2004; Fatoye, 2003).

Major data sources in the United States, such as the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) and the Monitoring the Future (MTF) study, have consistently documented this pattern for decades. For example, the 1997 NHSDA reported that men showed nearly double the rate of illicit substance use compared to women (8.5% vs. 4.5%). Males also reported significantly higher rates of cocaine use, marijuana use, alcohol use, and heavy drinking (NHSDA, 1997). The MTF study confirmed that males are more likely to use most illicit drugs, and they report initiating use earlier and continuing longer than females (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1997). This difference is partially explained by the finding that males are simply more likely than females to have the opportunity to use drugs (Anthony et al., analyzing 1993 NHSDA data). Furthermore, substance use, particularly alcohol, is often integrated into a constellation of male risk-taking behaviours, including violence and unprotected sexual activity (Mba, 2008). However, it is noted that females may be more prone to consuming specific classes of drugs, such as weight loss drugs, stimulants, and tranquilizers without prescription (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1997).

Impact on Academic Engagement and Performance

Drug and alcohol abuse directly and negatively impact academic achievement, commencing with poor class attendance and passive participation. Deasetal (2000)

argued that alcohol and drug consumption may have some detrimental effects on students by decreasing their ability to concentrate. Additionally, it may undermine students' progress by making them less likely to attend classes or keep up with their studies. This effect is driven by a shift in students' peers when they engage in abusive consumption of alcohol and other substances.

Some studies provide evidence that heavy drinking and drug consumption lead to a lower schooling performance (DeSimone and Wolver, 2005). Williamset, Garrett-Engle, Li, Williams, Rosenman and Goldberg (2003), reported that heavy drinking has a negative impact on academic achievements by reducing the time spent studying. Drug use and abuse by students can lead to class absenteeism and a sharp decline in their academic performance as well as increased reports of truancy and expulsion from school. It can also lead to addiction, increased desire for drugs without which normal life processes are disturbed and increased appetite and libido. Other vices such as stealing, fighting and gambling may also be caused by drug abuse as a result of alteration in the brain chemistry of the abusers. Results indicate that alcohol use increases absenteeism among high school students (which could have deleterious effects on educational outcomes). And the results are generally consistent across instrument specifications (Austin, 2012: 238).

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Attendance and Cognitive Impairment: School attendance is fundamentally important for academic success (Coppes, 2018). Drug and alcohol consumption severely undermines a student's educational trajectory by decreasing the ability to concentrate, reducing the likelihood of attending classes, and diminishing the time allocated to studying (Deasetal, 2000; Williamset al., 2003). Intoxication

interferes with school attendance and enrolment, while risks associated with substance use, such as injury or conflicts with authorities, further limit a student's capability to attend school (Austin, 2012; Cook and Moore, 1993). Substance abuse also affects the brain's functions, drastically reducing concentration span, leading to boredom, loss of interest in schoolwork, and stunted creative thinking and social skill development (Abbot, 2005; Kikuvi, 2009). Heavy alcohol consumption has been specifically linked to a negative effect on the probability of graduating from high school (Renna, 2006; 2008).

Impaired Classroom Participation: Students who are frequently absent or cognitively impaired due to substance use miss out on the experiential, layered learning that occurs within the classroom setting (Quistorf, 2017). A low level of commitment to education and higher truancy rates have been directly linked to substance use among adolescents (Hawkings, Calatano and Miler, 1992). The resulting cognitive and behavioral problems not only interfere with the student's own academic performance but also present obstacles to the learning environment for classmates (United Nations, 2005).

The Critical Role of Classroom Participation

The transition from poor attendance and cognitive issues to passive participation is crucial because active classroom engagement is central to effective learning. Students who are active participants tend to achieve better academically and report higher satisfaction in the learning process (Abdullah, Abu Bakar, and Mahbob, 2012; Astin, 1999).

Active participation allows students to think critically, enhance their intellectual development (Maziha, 2010), and is essential for effective learning (Tsou, 2005). Research by Dallimore, Hertenstein, and Platt (2017) highlighted that participation enhances learning in five key ways: it increases engagement, aids retention and memory, confirms prior learning, provides clarification, and deepens understanding through application. Thus, the relationship between student participation in classroom activities and students' academic success is undeniable and provides a clear mechanism through which substance abuse can damage educational outcomes.

Theoretical framework

The Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura in 1977 is a theory of learning process and social behaviour which proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. In addition to the observation of behaviour, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. When a particular behaviour is rewarded regularly, it will most likely persist; conversely, if a particular behaviour is constantly punished, it will most likely desist. The theory expands on traditional behavioural theories, in which behaviour is governed solely by reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the learning individual.

The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) states: "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." Social learning theory, thus, explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. It integrated behavioural and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a comprehensive model that could account for the wide range of learning experiences that occur in the real world. As initially outlined by Bandura and Walters in 1963 and further detailed in 1977, key tenets of Social Learning Theory are as follows:

- Learning is not purely behavioural; rather, it is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context.

- Learning can occur by observing a behaviour and by observing the consequences of the behaviour (vicarious reinforcement).
- Learning involves observation, extraction of information from those observations, and making decisions about the performance of the behaviour (observational learning or modeling). Thus, learning can occur without an observable change in behaviour.
- Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.
- The learner is not a passive recipient of information. Cognition, environment, and behaviour all mutually influence each other (reciprocal determinism).

Application: Social learning theory is a very powerful method of education. If children see positive consequences from a particular type of behaviour, they are more likely to repeat that behaviour themselves. Conversely, if negative consequences are the result, they are less likely to perform that behaviour. For example, children engage in crime, taking or consuming illegal substances and drugs because of their association with others who engage in them. Their criminal behaviour is reinforced and they learn beliefs that are favorable to crime, smoking, alcoholism and the likes. They essentially have criminal models that they associate with (such as parents, teachers, friends, or the environment in which they live). As a consequence, these individuals come to view crime as something that is desirable, or at least justifiable in certain situations. On another note, if these models are apprehended by law enforcement agents and given undesirable treatment, the children are likely to reconsider having them as models, hence, try to change their attitude towards similar behaviours. Conversely, if these models such as parents, teachers, friends, or the environment in which they live engage in activities that are positive and life-bearing, the students are likely to learn from, imitate, and conform their own behaviour. Learning is done through association with or exposure to others. Students are more motivated to pay attention if they see others around them also paying attention. Consequently, they are motivated to engage in illicit behaviour if they see others around them engaging in such. Hence, their class attendance will suffer great adverse defect.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study relied on the Survey Research Design which is ideal for conducting this research because it describes the attitudes, opinions, behaviours and characteristics of the population under study. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2004), survey research design involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena. Survey research design is a research design that gives the researcher the opportunity to make use of samples from the study in order to make generalizations of the study area.

Population and Sample

The target population of the study comprised only SSS2 students in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. To ensure representation and statistical significance, the sampling was carried out in six public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. The sample comprised three hundred (300) senior secondary students. Fifty (50) students from each of the six (6) randomly selected secondary schools participated in the questionnaire. Such stratification provided good geographical dispersal and augmented the representation of findings. The public secondary schools in the study are shown in Table 1:

S/N	Name of school	Sex	Males	Females	Total
1.	Government Secondary School, State Housing Estate	Mixed	29	21	50
2.	Government Secondary School, Akim Qua	Mixed	33	17	50
3.	West African Peoples' Institute, Diamond Hill	Mixed	26	24	50
4.	Margaret Ekpo Secondary School, IBB Way	Mixed	21	29	50
5.	NYSC Model Secondary School, Ikot Ansa	Mixed	22	28	50
6.	Government Secondary School, Akai Effa	Mixed	28	22	50

Sampling Technique

To ensure that the sample selected is a representative of the population being studied, the "hat and draw" method of the simple random sampling technique was employed. Here the researcher wrote out the names of all the public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality in slips of paper, rolled the papers into balls and put them in a container (a hat), and blindly drew out the required number of papers. Out of the seventeen (17) public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality under research, six (6) secondary schools were randomly selected, and from these six schools, fifty (50) students, present as at the time of administration were randomly selected for the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was specifically developed for this study and used in the collection of data. The instrument had validated scales and items as used in some past studies on drug abuse. The Drug Abuse and Class Attendance/Participation Questionnaire (DACAQ), developed by the researcher was divided into three (3) major sections: section A requested the respondents' demographic information such as age and gender. Sections B and C were a thirty-item, four point Likert-type questionnaires to measure prevalence of drug and substance abuse among students of secondary schools and the effect of drug abuse on class participation. The instrument was developed by first taking note of all the variables involved in the study. Each response was given a

degree of scores, which ranged from one to four, as shown below.

For Section B, the responses were categorized as:

- To a Great Extent (TGE) = 4 points
- To a Moderate Extent (TME) = 3 points
- To a Small Extent (TSE) = 2 points
- Not at all (NA) = 1 point

While the responses for Section C were categorized as:

- All the Time (ATT) = 4 points

- Most of the Time (MOT) = 3 points
- Some of the Time(SOT) = 2 points
- Not at all (NA) = 1 point

Meanwhile, class attendance, which is one of the major parts of the research, was measured using the class attendance registers from one of the arms of SSS2 class in each of the six sampled secondary schools.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument reliability was estimated using Cronbach’s Alpha method and reported for each of the sub-scale and the overall instrument. Each of the sub-scale was adjudged to be valid and reliable before being approved and used for this study. This is reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Estimate

Variable	No. of items	Mean X	Item variance	Standard Deviation	Cronbach’s alpha value
Prevalence of drug abuse	14	26.17	51.261	7.160	0.748
Class participation	9	27.72	31.197	5.585	0.759
Peer group influence	7	23.86	30.585	6.548	0.721
Overall scale	30	69.07	112.629	10.613	0.730

Table 2 shows the result of the reliability of the instrument which ranges from .721 to .759. The values are high enough which means that the instrument is reliable.

Procedure for data collection

The questionnaire was administered in the sampled secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. The respondents were informed of the exercise and the importance of giving objective response to the items. The researcher went to the individual schools and personally approached the principals, or vice

principals of the respective schools. Upon introduction of the self and purpose of the questionnaire, permission was granted to administer the instrument on the respondents. This was done with the help of the respective class teachers.

However, class attendance was collected from the class attendance registers of the respective sampled secondary schools at the end of the school session. Class attendance covered the whole of the Third (3rd) Term in the 2024/2025 school session, which comprised thirteen (13) weeks. Registers of the classes

that were available were obtained, and used simultaneously with the results of the questionnaire during analysis.

Procedure for data analysis

To test the hypotheses generated to guide the study, the dependent and independent variables as well as the statistical techniques employed are shown below:

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in involvement of male and female students in drug abuse in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality.

Independent variable – Gender

Dependent variable – Involvement in drug abuse among secondary school students

Statistical analysis technique – Independent t-test analysis

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship of prevalence of drug abuse and class attendance of secondary school students in Calabar Municipality.

Data needed: – Class attendance

Prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students

Statistical analysis technique – Pearson product moment correlation

Hypothesis three

There is no significant influence of prevalence of drug abuse and class participation (in home work, class work, group work, and extra-curricular activities like physical exercises, sports, farming, etc.) of secondary school students in Calabar Municipality.

Data needed: – Class participation (in home work, class work, group work, and extra-curricular activities like physical exercises, sports, farming, etc.)

Prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students

Statistical analysis technique – Pearson product moment correlation

General description of variables

The main independent variables for this study are:

- i) Gender
- ii) Class attendance
- iii) Class participation

The main dependent variable is prevalence of drug abuse. The mean and standard deviation of the major variables are calculated and presented as shown in Table 3. On the whole, a total sample of three hundred (300) respondents was used for the study.

TABLE 3

General description of data

Variables	X	SD
Prevalence of drug abuse	18.41	3.12
Class attendance	17.76	2.65
Class participation	22.20	1.90

Presentation of results

Each of the study hypotheses is re-stated in the null form. The result of data analysis carried out to test it is presented. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in involvement of male and female students in drug abuse in secondary schools.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is gender; while the dependent variable is involvement in drug abuse. Independent t-test analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Independent t-test analysis of the difference in involvement of male and female students in drug abuse in secondary schools (N=300)

Variables	N	X	SD	t-value	Sig.
Male	144	22.02	1.43		
Female	156	19.76	2.70	4.38*	.000

*Significant at .05 level, critical r = 1.96, df = 298

Interpretation:

The result on Table 4 reveals that the calculated t-value of 4.38 is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that there is a significant difference in involvement of male and female students in drug abuse in secondary schools.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship of prevalence of drug abuse and class attendance.

The independent variable involved in this hypothesis is class attendance, while the dependent variable is Prevalence of drug abuse. Pearson product correlation analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship of prevalence of drug abuse and class attendance (N=300).

Variables	X	SD	r-value
Class attendance	17.76	2.65	
Prevalence of drug abuse	18.41	3.12	0.42*

*Significant at .05 level, critical r = .138, df = 298

Interpretation:

The result on Table 5 reveals that the calculated r – value of 0.42 is higher than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that Prevalence of drug abuse has a significant relationship with class attendance.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant influence of prevalence of drug abuse and class participation.

The independent variable involved in this hypothesis is class participation; while the dependent variable is prevalence of drug abuse. Pearson product correlation analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship of prevalence of drug abuse and class participation (N=300).

Variables	X	SD	r-value
Class participation	22.20	1.90	
Prevalence of drug abuse	18.41	3.12	0.52*

*Significant at .05 level, critical r = .138, df = 298

Interpretation:

The result on Table 6 reveals that the calculated r – value 0.52 is higher than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This

result therefore means that prevalence of drug abuse has a significant relationship with students' class participation.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Gender and prevalence of drug abuse

The result of the first hypothesis showed that gender significantly influence prevalence of drug abuse. The finding is in line with the view of Mbatia and Kilonzo (1998) who found that males were significantly more likely to have ever smoked a cigarette (16.1%) than females (4.9%). Substance use, particularly alcohol use, is frequently part of a constellation of male risk-taking behavior, including violence and unprotected sexual activity. In Northern Nigeria, 80% of narcotic users are men, the majority of whom are in their late teens or early twenties.

Also, adolescent substance abuse has been shown to be more common in males; however reports have shown increasing female participation in the vice as well as a trend towards multiple substance use (Egbonu, Ezechukwu, Chukwuka, and Unakwe, 2004; Fatoye, 2003; Fatoye & Morakinyo, 2002; Obot, 1993). Adolescents' who abuse substances are exposed to risks and consequences that can manifest physically, psychosocially and behaviorally (Goodman & Huang, 2002).

Substance abuse among men was associated with having the "courage" to propose sexual relations, and was likely to impair decision-making. It was found that girls were twice likely to consume weight loss drugs and stimulants, and almost three times more likely than boys to use tranquilizers without prescription. Regarding alcohol use, there is a substantial gender difference among high school seniors in heavy drinking. Thirty-eight percent of males report heavy drinking, while only 2 percent of females do. The same pattern is true for college students and young adults (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1997).

Males drink more and more often. Males (51 percent) drink binge more often, i.e., have had five or more drinks on one occasion in the past two weeks, compared with females (22 percent). Males' cigarette use also outpaces females'. A review of trends in

cigarette smoking suggests early dominance by males until the 1990's when females reached parity with them. In the early 1990s, however, rates among males rose, while they dropped among females (Anderson, 1998).

Prevalence of drug abuse and class attendance

The result of this hypothesis revealed that prevalence of drug abuse significantly relate to class attendance. The findings of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Austin (2012) who observed that it is a common belief that students who attend more classes earn higher final examination marks compared to those who always skip classes.

In a class that involves calculation, it is important for students to be present in class to see the several methods taught by their teachers to solve any questions and tutorial since there are various ways of solving any mathematical or statistical problem. Hence, students who frequently skip classes will be at a drawback for they had missed several materials covered. The importance of attendance is supported by UiTM's attendance policy where students must come to class for at least 80% of their total contact hour to avoid them getting barred from sitting for their final exam.

Noh and Sarah (2018) also noted that drug abuse by students can lead to class absenteeism and a sharp decline in their academic performance as well as increased reports of truancy and expulsion from school. It can also lead to addiction, increased desire for drugs without which normal life processes are disturbed and increased appetite and libido. Other vices such as stealing, fighting and gambling may also be caused by drug abuse as a result of alteration in the brain chemistry of the abusers. Results indicate that alcohol use increases absenteeism among high school students (which could have deleterious effects on educational outcomes). And the results are generally consistent across instrument specifications.

Deastal (2000) also argued that alcohol and drug consumption may have some detrimental effects on students' cognitive abilities, for instance, by decreasing their ability to concentrate. Additionally, it may undermine students' progress by making them less likely to attend classes or keep up with their

studies. This effect is driven by a shift in students' peers when they engage in abusive consumption of alcohol and other substances. Austin (2012) observed that intoxication could interfere with school enrolment and attendance, and time spent in activities where drinking occurs could substitute away from time allocated to studying. This could hurt academic performance in the short term, which might diminish the ability or incentive to continue schooling over the longer term.

Risks stemming from intoxication, such as injury from accidents or fights, pregnancy and disease from unsafe sex, conflicts with parents or law enforcement, and a tarnished reputation with school authorities might also limit the capability of a student to attend school.

Alcohol use could conceivably affect a student's quality of learning and academic performance regardless of its impact on school completion. Municipality has experienced rapid growth of population in recent years. The increasing demand for education has led to more secondary schools being founded. Due to the rapid development, drug use has become common among students in campus, affecting their performances in class. Despite the worldwide concern and education about the dangers of drug abuse, most of the students have limited knowledge of how dangerous the habit is.

Prevalence of drug abuse and class participation

The result of the third hypothesis showed that Prevalence of drug abuse significantly relate to class participation. The findings is in line with the view of Hawkings, Calatano and Miler (1992) who noted that low level of commitment to education and higher truancy rates appear to be related to substance use among adolescents.

Again, drug abuse affects the brain, this results in major decline in the functions carried out by the brain. Drugs affect the students concentration span, which is drastically reduced and boredom sets in much faster than for non-drug and substance abusers. The student will lose interest in school work including extra-curricular activities. Most of the psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of the students, creative thinking and the development of the necessary life and social skills are stunted. They also interfere

with the awareness of an individual's unique potential and interest thus affecting their career development.

Kikuvi (2009) also noted that cognitive and behavioural problems experienced by alcohol and drug-using youth may interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmate. Drug abuse is associated with crime maintenance of an orderly and safe school atmosphere conducive to learning. It leads to destruction of school property and classroom disorder.

Drug and substance abuse have far reaching ramifications, for instance, according to the survey by NACADA (2012) with a sample of 632 children, it was found that 6% have ever engaged in sex while on drugs (7.3% for boys and 4.4% for girls), the median age at sexual debut being estimated at 11 years. An assessment of the situation during the first sexual intercourse indicates that 30% had sex unwillingly. Further, about 20% were given incentives to lure them in to sexual act, with a further 8% reporting having taken drugs before their first sexual encounter. This early introduction into illicit sex goes a long way to impacting negatively on their self-esteem, exposing them to dangers of early pregnancy contracting STIs and AIDS, declining academic performance and ultimately dropping out of school altogether (Maithya, 2009).

Weaver and Qi, (2005) also believed that students who actively participate in the learning process learn more than those who do not. Weaver and Qi also pointed out that, involvement matters, and this involvement can occur both inside and outside the classroom. Students' active involvement is of valuable importance in learning. Hence, active involvement in class facilitates critical thinking and facilitates the retention of information that might otherwise be lost. Weaver and Qi, further observed that a handful of students assume the role of active participators and discussants in the classroom, while the majority engage in "civil attention"-paying sufficient attention to know when to nod, to laugh where appropriate, or otherwise to appear attentive without risking too much involvement.

Class participation is an important aspect of student learning. When students speak up in class, they learn to express their ideas in a way that others can

understand. When they ask questions, they learn how to obtain information to enhance their own understanding of a topic. Similarly, when students do their homework, class work, or group work, they express how much they have learned about a subject or how well they have understood a topic. This is expressed even in extra-curricular activities like physical exercises, sports, farming, etc.) Class participation, therefore, involves actively contributing to specifically developed class activities.

CONCLUSION

The pervasive nature of drug and substance abuse among secondary school students in Calabar Municipality presents a critical threat to academic performance and overall youth development. This study successfully investigated the influence of this menace on two fundamental aspects of academic success: class attendance and participation. Employing a survey research design with a sample of 300 Senior Secondary School 2 (SSS2) students across six public schools, the research utilized the Drug Abuse and Class Attendance/Participation Questionnaire (DACAQ) and official attendance registers to gather data.

The findings, grounded in the theoretical framework of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, overwhelmingly confirmed the significant negative relationship between substance abuse and academic engagement. Students who engage in drug use are disproportionately absent from classes and exhibit drastically reduced levels of active participation—both verbal and nonverbal—when they are present. This behavioural pattern is directly linked to the cognitive impairment, lack of motivation, and antisocial tendencies arising from drug use, as documented extensively in the literature. The prevalence of truancy, violence, and general disregard for school authority, as highlighted in the introduction, is demonstrably fueled by this growing problem.

The consistent rise in drug abuse, despite the efforts of agencies like the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), underscores the need for localized and collaborative intervention. The observed behaviour, often modeled and reinforced by negative peer influence, requires solutions that address both the individual and the immediate social environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and their implications, the following recommendations are proffered to relevant stakeholders:

1. Educational Authorities and School Management: School disciplinary bodies must strictly enforce attendance policies and integrate mandatory, non-punitive drug education programmes into the curriculum. These programmes should focus not only on the health consequences but also on developing refusal skills and promoting positive peer associations.
2. Government and NDLEA: The government, through the NDLEA and other relevant ministries, should intensify public enlightenment and anti-drug campaigns, ensuring they are culturally relevant and target the specific social environments (e.g., street corners, game stations) where adolescents congregate during school hours.
3. Parents and Guardians: Parents must play a more active and vigilant role in monitoring their children's associations and behaviours. They are encouraged to serve as positive role models, reinforcing the pro-social behaviours outlined in the Social Learning Theory, and seeking early intervention counseling when signs of drug use appear.

In conclusion, the academic success and future productivity of Calabar Municipality's youth are critically endangered by the pervasive issue of drug abuse. A coordinated, sustained effort from the government, community, schools, and homes is imperative to curb its excesses and restore an environment conducive to learning, thereby safeguarding the potential of the next generation.

Suggestions for further studies

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made for further studies.

- A replication of this study should be carried out again to cover the entire state as well as the entire country.

- A replication of this study could be carried out again on the variables that were not previously investigated in this study.

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