

Review on Factors Affecting Entry into Drug Abuse among Youths in Lafia Metropolis: Implication on Security

Moses U Ikoh*, Sam O Smah, Innocent O Kwanya, Uhember A Clemenya, Zuwaira A Aposhi

Department of Sociology, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Abstract

Previous researches on drug abuse in Lafia Metropolis neglected to investigate factors that motivate youths' entry into drug abuse and the likely consequences on security. Motivated by this gap in knowledge, the researchers employed a combination of theoretical framework including the Social disorganization theory, Differential association theory, Control theory, and drug subculture, to present predictions as to how "exposure to socio-economic problems", "parental relations", "influence of significant and generalized others", and "availability of drugs within the Metropolis and its neighbourhood" might influence youths entry into drug abuse. The result showed that youths were significantly motivated into drug abuse by social than economic factors. Poor parental relations, availability and ease of accessing drugs within the Metropolis and its neighbourhoods were significant factors that predisposed youths to drug abuse. The implications of drug abuse on security were found in emerging violent crime, illegal activities, and anti-social behaviours perpetrated by youths in the Metropolis. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended, among others, sensitization programme that should target parents on the implications of drug abuse by youths, and banning the roaming of streets by youths (Almajiris) at night in the Metropolis.

Keywords: Drug abuse; Lafia Metropolis; Parenting; Security; Social disorganization

*Corresponding author: Moses U Ikoh

✉ mosesikoh2015@gmail.com

Department of Sociology, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Tel: 2347034372061

Citation: Ikoh MU, Smah SO, Kwanya IO, Clemenya UA, Aposhi ZA (2019) Review on Factors Affecting Entry into Drug Abuse among Youths in Lafia Metropolis: Implication on Security. J Drug Abuse Vol.5 No.1:2

Received: February 26, 2019; **Accepted:** March 22, 2019; **Published:** March 29, 2019

Introduction

Drug and drug abuse have received several scholarly attentions in recent years. Both international and regional institutions as well as national ones have been set up to control drug use and abuse. The United Nations Office on Drug Control (UNODC) stands out among the international organizations in this respect. In Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) established in 1990 for the purpose of eliminating the growing, processing, manufacturing, selling, exporting, and trafficking of hard drugs has designed several strategies and programmes including punitive ones to curb drug use and abuse. In spite of these efforts, there are increasing numbers of youths (including children) who are getting involved in drugs. The culture of drug abuse seems to be recruiting adherents in large number daily, especially in Nigerian cities.

In Lafia Metropolis, several types of drugs beyond the ones recognized by the NDLEA (cocaine, heroin, cannabis, amphetamines, barbiturate, benzodiazepine, bromazepam)

have been introduced with added innovations. Such criminal innovations include the combination of cannabis with alcohol (known among drug users as combine), codeine and tramadol (known among the users as reliefine), the smoking of paw-paw leaves with the seeds of zakawi (*Datura metel*). The list remains long with several daily discoveries, including inhaling paints and pit toilet cover. An earlier report by the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) unit of the NDLEA collaborated by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) revealed a high consumption pattern of drug in Northern Nigeria [1,2] with Lafia Metropolis having some pockets of drug gangs and addicts. Given this background, the researchers launched an empirical survey to find out factors that predispose youths to drug use and subsequent abuse, and the impacts it is posing to security in the Metropolis.

Data and Method

Random sampling technique was employed to generate representative sample of 520 respondents from 10 wards in Lafia Metropolis. The variables in the questionnaire include socio-

demographic, parental relations, parental control, access to drugs, triggers of drug use, the frequency of drug use, benefits of drug use, sources of drugs, ease of getting drugs in the Metropolis, and implications on security in the Metropolis. The reliability test of the instrument has overall Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.78, which suggest an acceptable level of internal consistency [3].

While socio-demographic variables were categorical measured, Drug abuse: Drug abuse was measured in three dimensions: "Use of drugs known to be outlawed" (seeks to test respondents' knowledge that the drugs being referred to are not over-the-counter drugs and/or those prescribed by medical personnel); "types of drugs" (assesses drugs that are being used by youths in the Metropolis) and "frequency of use in the last one month" (assesses the extent to which each of these drugs is being abused by the youths). In this context, "drug use" and "drug abuse" were used interchangeably. While the "use of drugs known to be outlawed" and "types of drug" were measured dichotomously [coded as 0=No, 1=Yes], the "frequency of use of these drugs within a month" was measured on a 7-point scale that ranged from "None"=1, to "1-2 times"=2, "3-5 times"=3, "6-9 times"=4, "10-14 times"=5, "15-20 times"=6, and "21- 27 times"=7.

Triggers to drug use were assessed using factors like unemployment, suspension, and dismissal from work, loneliness due to being abandoned by wife, husband and/or friends. Other variables included troubles with police and security agents, trouble in school, having medical problems and problems with parents. Respondents rated these factors under "yes"=1, and "No"=2. After being exposed to drug use based on these triggers, the sustained usage was measured in terms of "benefits". Eleven benefits found by Kolbe [4] to promote the use of illegal drugs among urban youths were measured on the basis of Yes/No.

Parental relations measured in terms of "living pattern" and "parental control", and "Significant and generalised others," operationalized to include (a), relatives as well as authority figures (significant others), and (b), friends (peers) and siblings (generalised others) had dichotomized responses that were coded as 0=No, 1=Yes. Availability of drug was measured by

"knowing the sources" where drugs can be gotten, and the "ease of accessing drugs within and in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis. While "knowing the sources of drugs" was assessed under Yes/No, the "ease of getting access to drugs" was assessed using 7-point Likert scale that ranged from "impossible" (7), "moderately impossible" (6), "slightly impossible" (5) "don't know" (4), "slightly easy" (3), "moderately easy" (2), to "easy" (1). Behaviours that threaten urban security were measured on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4).

Table 1 shows the relationship between "use of drugs known to be outlawed" and types of drugs". The relationship ranged from medium to large with a magnitude representing 9.61% to 46.24% shared variance. The recognition was high especially on cannabis and opiate (r=0.68). The mean and standard deviation of drug use varies with the highest mean score given to cannabis, followed with relevine (codeine+tramadol), tranquilizer and ecstasy. The use of cannabis had a stronger association with tranquilizer (r=0.68) and opiate (r=0.66) as well as crack (r=0.66) than with cocaine (r=0.45) and heroine (r=0.53). Users of tranquilizer were more likely to use hallucinogens and opiate (r=0.66), as youths who abused amphetamine were comfortable with all drugs except relevine (r=0.31). There was large and significant positive relationship between the use of ecstasy and all other drugs except heroine (r=0.43). A similar result was found for youths who abused Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). The finding suggests that where other drugs in these categories were available, users tend to pay less attention to heroine. This may be due to either high cost or the role that availability of drugs in the family of opiate (like tramadol) could play in the place of heroine.

In **Table 2**, the result showed that drug use and subsequent abuse was remarkably triggered by social related problems than economics in the Metropolis. For instance, problems with the police, loneliness due to abandonment by friends, drug use in the neighbourhood, and quarrel with parents revealed means scores that were above average. Economic related problems assessed as "unemployment", and "suspension/dismissal from work"

Table 1 Mean, Standard deviation and correlation matrix of drug use, N=400.

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Drug Use		10	0	1											
1	Cannabis	0.98	0.13	0.68*	1										
2	Tranquilizer	0.81	0.37	0.62*	0.68*	1									
3	Amphetamine	0.63	0.11	0.48**	0.57*	0.52*	1								
4	Ecstasy	0.75	0.04	0.47**	0.52*	0.57**	0.67**	1							
5	LSD	0.64	0.19	0.44**	0.61**	0.51**	0.68*	0.68**	1						
6	Hallucinogens	0.43	0.16	0.37**	0.48*	0.61**	0.63**	0.63**	0.55**	1					
7	Relevine	0.86	0.41	0.36*	0.59*	0.54**	0.31**	0.65**	0.64**	0.54**	1				
8	Cocaine	0.36	0.55	0.52**	0.45*	0.46*	0.66**	0.57*	0.60**	0.52*	0.54**	1			
9	Crack	0.68	0.35	0.49**	0.66**	0.58**	0.57*	0.67**	0.66*	0.65**	0.66**	0.62*	1		
10	Heroine	0.58	0.07	0.55*	0.53*	0.35**	0.59**	0.43**	0.32**	0.59*	0.59**	0.63**	0.64**	1	
11	Opiate	0.64	0.02	0.68**	0.66*	0.66**	0.66**	0.56**	0.63**	0.57*	0.67**	0.58**	0.67**	.55**	1

Note: *p<0.05; **P< 0.01; all P-values two-tailed.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation of Drug use and Trigger to Drug use, N=400.

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Drug use	0.68	0.50	1									
2	Unemployment	0.47	0.50	.59**	1								
3	Suspension/dismissal from work	0.44	0.49	.57**	.66*	1							
4	Drug use in the neighbourhood	0.56	0.49	.62**	.53*	.64*	1						
5	Loneliness(wife or husband abandoned)	0.47	0.49	.51**	.62**	.57**	.69*	1					
6	Loneliness (friends abandoned)	0.71	0.39	.73**	.79*	.14*	.58*	.79*	1				
7	Trouble In school	0.47	0.50	.64**	.65*	.17*	.65*	.65*	.53*	1			
8	Trouble with Police	0.82	0.45	.61**	.53*	.30*	.57*	.22*	.72*	.59*	1		
9	Medical Problems	0.41	0.49	.57*	.57*	.47*	.63*	.63*	.33*	.68*	.53*	1	
10	Quarrel with parents	0.53	0.50	.63*	.74*	.19*	.54**	.54*	.64*	.58*	.67*	.35*	1

Note: *p<0.05; **P<0 .01; all P-values two-tailed.

was reported on mean scores of 0.47 and 0.44 respectively with standard deviations that suggested diverse opinions.

From the findings, the researchers began to look at the environment (the Metropolis and its neighbourhoods) with respect to existing conditions favorable to drug using some known theoretical frameworks. The viewpoints of social disorganization theory [5] on neighbourhood culture compensates the argument of differential association theorists [6,7] on the learning process that shape the existence of crime and anti-social behaviour in the urban areas. When the family and other social institutions failed to ensure conventional bonding on the child, it could create room for the emergence of street children who would look up to their peers and what the neighbourhood present as mentoring model. In the learning process that ensues, it is no longer the parents that exist as the socializing agent for the child, but the peers, whose pressure helps to model their exposure. As the children grow into adolescent age, their “significant” as well as “generalized others” are determined by the neighbourhood context. And this is not without consequences, as there exists a reciprocal effect between social disorganization and violent behaviour, such as crime that breed from there. Earlier Gottfredson and Hirschi [8] had pointed out that the behaviour of the youths is greatly influenced by a set of related factors, “attachment and commitment, commitment and involvement, and attachment and belief”. If the parents failed to exert significant positive contrl influence on the children, the peer becomes their primary source of attachment, commitment, and involvement, which determines what they child grows up to be, including becoming prone to drug subculture [9].

Relying on a combination of theoretical lenses: social disorganization theory, differential association theory, the control theory of Gottfredson and Hirschi [8], and the exposition of drug subculture [9], the researchers assessed the influence of “parental relations, significant and generalized others, and the availability of drugs in the Metropolis” on drug abuse. “Parental relations” was measured by two related variables: living pattern and parental control. “Significant and generalized others” factored in the influence of parents, peers and sibling’s use of drugs. In terms of “availability of drugs in the neighbourhood, the study focused on environmental factors such as “growing of cannabis in farms near and/or within the Metropolis and nearby Local

Government Areas, availability of drugs stores where drugs are easily assessed, availability of drug dealers, pushers/suppliers, detail pharmacists/chemists and other vendors.

The findings revealed a significant effect of parental relationship on youths’ use of drugs and subsequent abuse. Youths who lived with their parents, and those who lived their step mothers and grandparents, were less likely to abuse drugs. On the contrary, those who “lived alone”, “lived with their mothers’, and “lived with friends” reported frequent use and abuse of drugs. When the variables associated with parental control were assessed, it indicated that youths whose parents did not care to know the kind of friends they keep, were likely to use and abuse drugs, compared to those youths who reported strict parental monitoring against going out at will in the night, frivolous spending of pocket money, and the use of drug and smoking of cigarettes.

Youths from families where the parents use drugs acknowledged being socialized into drug use. Similar finding was obtained where siblings and peers were drug users. This is not unexpected. As Akers [10] would argue, youths learned delinquency by modeling exposure to their friends’ delinquent behaviours. Availability of prodrug socializing agent is bound to encourage drug use as members anticipate reward for engaging in drugs. When there is weak family bonding as seen in this study, peer influence will not only enhance initiation into drug use but will also make drug supply possible.

Beside socialization, the Lafia Metropolis seems to provide environment comfortable for drug abuse. Availability of farms, where cannabis is grown in the neighbourhood was highly rated. Majority of the respondents reported availability and ease of getting drugs from stores, drug dealers, pharmacists, chemists and other sundry vendors. Since drug use varies directly with availability and proneness [11], drug sub-culture tends to thrive in the Metropolis, with users extoling its several benefits. The rating for perceived benefits of drugs differs, but majority of the respondents cited “acceptability by friends”, “enhancing strength”, “enhancing fearlessness”, “ability to speak out in the public”, and “experiencing joy”. While very few of the respondents reported drug abuse for the purpose of “enhancing sleep”, a greater number took drugs to alleviate depression, improve memory, and enhance self-confidence.

Discussion

It is not likely that the high rating of drug benefits reported by the respondents will diminish soon in the Metropolis. As Kubrin and Weitzer [5] reported elsewhere, there is reciprocal effect between social disorganization and anti-social behaviour. As the culture of the Metropolis and its neighbourhood shape drug use and abuse in the Metropolis, so does drug abuse shape the Metropolis in terms of violent and anti-social related activities. In the finding of this study, quarrel and argument promoted by the subculture of violence was a significant predictor of frequency of drug abuse in the Metropolis. While quarrel and argument may result in scuffle and fighting where police are invited, involvement in subculture of violence often results in hospitalization. Beside these, youths who abuse drugs need money to stay afloat. They therefore hustle and /or steal to get money to satisfy their appetite for drugs.

Given the findings on the factors that enhance entry into drug abuse, the researchers took the discussion a step further by highlighting the implications of drug abuse on security in the Metropolis. Violent crime and other illegal activities perpetrated by youths under the influence of drugs have severally been reported in the Metropolis. These crimes include armed robbery, burglary, pick-pocketing, assaults, snatching of hand-phones, handbags, rape, etc., which were hitherto not heard of in the Metropolis. Since no known armed criminal gang has been identified in the Metropolis, the on-going security challenges tend to be the outcome of drug subculture that appreciates deviant behaviour.

Life and pattern of living in the Metropolis are implicated in the existing drug culture with the recruitment of street children. For instance, street children known as Almajiris (plural form of Almajiri) are found roaming the street from morning to night, begging, and in search of what to eat. These are children who were sent by their parents to live with teachers of Quaran to receive religious instruction. But because they have no means for survival, they resort to go into the street to beg and do menial jobs. Street has its own culture; the ability to survive includes violence, drugs and stealing. The Muslim Rights Concern [12] confirmed that the Almajiris are not only abusing drugs but are also being used by drug dealers as courier and distributors. This

finding raises moral question on the character of the environment that the child is growing up; and a prism to peep into the likely future of drug problems in the Metropolis.

In the context of the findings of this work, it is not likely that the Nigerian drug policy, which is characterized by prevention and punishment, will be adequate in curbing drug use and abuse in the Metropolis. There is need to include sensitization programme that target parents on the implications of drug use by youths, create awareness among parents on drug culture in the Metropolis and the need for parental control, as well as putting a stop to the roaming of Almajiris on the street of the Metropolis, especially at night.

Conclusion

The article researchers started from the premise that knowing the factors responsible for widespread drug abuse in Lafia Metropolis is necessary for understanding how to curb it, and checkmate the rising security problems. The result identified poor parental relations, availability and ease of getting drugs in the Metropolis and in the neighbourhoods, predisposing factors. Each factor tends to reinforce the other. These findings serve to strengthen the arguments of the proponents of social disorganization, and control theories. Lack of effective parenting have weakened not only the role of guardianship but also training and socializing the child to acceptable norms, rules and values of the society. In the circumstance, the moral compass of some youths is modeled after street values and behaviour, where the code of honour [5] "encouraged those who are inclined to aggression to precipitate violence encounters in an approved way" [13]. This observation is responsible for the high rating of the benefits of drug use and abuse in the Metropolis.

Limitation

The incorporation of social disorganization framework in the discussion of environmental context in this study enables the understandings of factors that create conditions favourable for youths' involvement in drug abuse. However, the impact of cultural factors as key variables in parental control was not assessed. It would have helped in giving more insight into the problem of parenting in the study area.

References

- 1 National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2010) Drug data collection and research report. Lagos: Author.
- 2 Obinna, C (2018) Codeine chaos: How disorganised sector fuels abuse and addiction. Daily Trust, pp: 18-21
- 3 Nunnally JC (1976) Psychometric theory. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- 4 JJ (2009) Triggers to cannabis smoking among street children in Western Nigeria. Lagos: Wusen Publisher.
- 5 Kubrin CE, Weitzer R (2003) New direction in social disorganization theory. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 40: 374-402.
- 6 Sutherland EH, Cressey DR (2004) Criminology. 12th edition, Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- 7 Matsueda RL (1988) The current state of differential association theory. Crime and Delinquency 34: 277-306.
- 8 Gottfredson MR, Hirschi T (1990) A general theory of crime. Stanford: Stanford University. US.
- 9 Johnson BD (1973) Marijuana users and drug subcultures. New York: Wiley 1973.
- 10 Akers RL (1977) Deviant behavior: A social learning approach. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth.
- 11 Brunswick AF, Boyle JM (1979) Patterns of drug involvement: Developmental and secular influences on age at initiation. Youth and Society 11: 139-162.

12 Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) (2018) Almajiri children, cultists, area boys and drug addiction. Being 2018 Children's

Day Speech delivered by Professor Ishaq Akintola, Director of MURIC. Abuja, Nigeria.

13 Anderson E (1999) Code of the street. New York: Norton.