



## **Building a Skilled and Inclusive Society Through Educational Measurement and Evaluation: Evaluating the Effects of Drug Abuse on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.**

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### **Abstract**

*The study evaluated the effects of Drug Abuse on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers-East Senatorial District. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population was 12,124 senior secondary school students while the sample was four hundred (400) which was determined using Taro Yamane Formula. The data collection instrument titled "Drug Abuse and Academic Performance Questionnaire (DAAPQ) was validated by two professionals who majored in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was pilot tested and Cronbach Alpha was used to establish reliability of the instrument. The data collected was analyzed using mean and grand mean. The findings revealed that the cause of drug Abuse among senior Secondary school students is the false impression that drugs stimulate intelligence, strength and wisdom and one of the recommendations made amongst others is that the Ministry of Education (State or Federal) as a matter of urgency should return to School Boarding System as to critically checkmate the activities of the students and screening each and every one of them by National Drug Law enforcement Agency (NDLEA).*

**Keywords:** Academic Performance, Drug Abuse, Effects, Evaluating, Rivers-East.

### **Introduction**

Researches have shown that medicines, herbs, leaves and plants are forms of drugs that are used to heal and control diseases. Plants have been utilized as medicines for since creation. The specific plants to be used and the methods of application for particular ailments were passed down through oral history in production of drugs like cocaine and morphine were extracted and freely prescribed by physicians for various ailments and even sold over the counter (Magidson & Jessica, 2016).

Drug is referred to as a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Chebukaka, 2017). It is also considered as a substance that is

handed down from one generation to the other (Khalid, Zaidi, & Ahmad, 2014). There is evidence that intentionally fermented alcohol existed from as early as 10,000 BC when it was used in religious worship, for recreation, medicinal use and quenching thirst by long distance travellers. Marijuana was used as medicine from 2,737 BC in China then later in the 19th century; active substances used modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2016).

This could thus be considered as chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about psychological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2017). The use of drugs in itself does not constitute any danger, because drugs correctly administered have been a blessing to bring healing. Unfortunately, in contemporary times certain drugs that initially produced effects such as ecstasy, sense of feeling good, serenity and power have grown into a problem of dependence and abuse (Ekpenyong, 2012). Drugs such as tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol among others tend to stimulate the nervous system of an individual to behave in abnormal and extraordinary manner, leading such individual to lose his/her sense of being. The abuse of drugs can cause serious irreversible damage to such individual's physical and psychological development. AsManbe (2018) pointed out, common incidence that happens around us today is as a result of drug abuse and that if care is not taken, this could lead to mental disorders. The World Health Organization defined drug abuse as a "state" of periodic or chronic intoxication, detrimental to the individual and to the society, produced by the repeated consumption of a drug (natural or synthetic) (WHO, 2016). Drug abuse are disorders evident in the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than intended medical purposes and which occasioned physical, mental, emotional, or social impairment to the users (Mehta & Rouf, 2013) argued that the use of drugs like Benylin with codeine, Tutolin with codeine, for medical purposes like the whooping cough is not drug abuse but becomes abused only when it is geared towards producing some desired behaviours, physical dependency, addiction, and/or constitute a nuisance to the society. More so, drugs can be said to be abused when they are used without due authorization from formally qualified and registered persons who, according to the laws of the land, must approve their use. This observation is borne out by several studies on ill behaviours, particularly among undergraduate students in tertiary institutions (Abdullahi, 2015; Obiamaka, 2014; Fawa, 2013).

In a similar vein, students found in the acts of drug abuse are often times academically and socially less developed as they are not respected and recognized to make reasonable contributions to any development. This is because drug abuse does not only downgrade the

academic performance of students, but also affects the moral, physical and general buildup of the students (Dankano & Garba, 2020). Thus, youths who are perceived as the leaders of tomorrow and are being trained in various tertiary institutions in diverse field have veered to the act of abusing drugs. This act does not in any way contribute to the development of the students and as such the expected output of these students can greatly diminish their academic performances because of their persistence to drug abuse (Staff, 2012). It is against this background that the study sought to ascertain the effect of drug abuse on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Edo State.

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### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, the abuse of drugs such as tobacco, sedatives, Marijuana (Indian hemp), cocoa leaves, alcohol, heroin, morphine, cocaine, inhalants (such as glue), amphetamines to mention but a few have drastically been on the increase. This is disturbing globally as well as in our circumstantial setting among undergraduate students in Edo State. It is widely believed that drug abusers are often mentally derailed and are unable to perform well in their academics. This is more pronounced in science courses, such as computer science, medicine and allied studies, which require high attentiveness for better understanding. Profligacy in drug abuse by undergraduate students does not only tend to affect their academic performance, but also affect their cognitive quotient and thus exposing them to crime and health challenges (Jonathan & Samuel, 2018). Despite worldwide concern and education about the dangers of drug abuse, many undergraduate students ignorantly or knowingly depend on one drug or the other for their daily lifestyle. It therefore becomes necessary to carry out this study in order to determine the effect of drug abuse on academic performance of undergraduate students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

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### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of drug abuse on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers – East Senatorial District of Rivers State. In specific terms, the study;

1. Investigated the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers - East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
2. Found out some effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers –East Senatorial District.

## **Objective of the Study**

1. To examine the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
2. To find out the effect of academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

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## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?
2. what are the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

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## **Drug**

Drug is, in the sense of pharmacology, any chemical substance used in the treatment, cure, prevention, or diagnosis of disease or used to otherwise enhance physical or mental well-being of humans or other animals (Bernstein et al., 2006). Drug is an effective substance that can be used to cure sickness and to make life healthy. It is pertinent to note that drugs are used for beneficent therapeutic purposes, and is effective for good health; but are abused by people most especially the students. They use it illegally and unlawfully, thus it becomes harmful to their bodies (Adeniyi 2020). Drug abuse is the wrong use of drugs for purposes other than medical reasons, thus affecting the individual in a negative way socially, cognitively or physically. Social effects may be reflected in an individual's enhanced tendency to engage in conflicts with friends, teachers, and school authorities. Cognitive effects of drugs relate to the individual's lack of concentration on academic work, memory loss and even his or her physical appearance. While Lewinso (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.

A drug is any substance which when introduced in to the body alters the normal biological and psychological functioning of the body especially the central nervous system [Myers, 2006]. Drugs such as tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol among others tend to stimulate the nervous system of an individual to behave in abnormal and extra ordinary manner, leading such individual to lose his/her sense of being. The abuse of drugs can cause serious irreversible damage to such individual's physical and psychological development. Manbe (2018) pointed

out, common incidence that happens around us today is as a result of drug abuse and that if care is not taken, this could lead to mental disorders.

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### **Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse is the over indulgence in and dependence on a drug or other chemicals that are detrimental to the individual's physical and mental health or the welfare of others (Harrison 2008). Drug abuse crosses Social boundaries, affects all ethnic groups and genders. And it has been considered a global epidemic (McCabe, Boyd & Teter 2009). Drug abuse most often begins in early adolescence because of the social economic problems and cultural practices of this age group (Kandel & Chen 1995). Across the globe drug abuse has always been a major problem among the young people. Indeed, the use of drugs continues to emerge as a strategy for most youths to cope with their prevailing problems such as unemployment, neglect, sexual abuse and poor academic performance ~NACADA, 2012).

Drug abuse are disorders evident in the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than intended medical purposes and which occasioned physical, mental, emotional, or social impairment to the users. Mehta and Rouf (2013) argued that the use of drugs like Benylin with codeine, Tutolin with codeine, for medical purposes like the whooping cough is not drug abuse but becomes abused only when it is geared towards producing some desired behaviours, physical dependency, addiction, and/or constitute a nuisance to the society. More so, drugs can be said to be abused when they are used without due authorization from formally qualified and registered persons who, according to the laws of the land, must approve their use. This observation is borne out by several studies on ill behaviours particularly among undergraduate students in tertiary institutions (Abdullahi, 2015; Obiamaka, 2014; Fawa, 2013).

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### **Causes of Drug Abuse**

The causes of drug abuse among students may be sociological or psychological such as out of inquisitiveness, boredom, to ease fear, develop sexual and physical pleasures, or as a result of family background, among other things (Ngesu, 2018). The sequence of usage ranges from tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other higher substances. Undergraduate students are gradually engaging in prescribed drugs, particularly narcotics, which are given to relieve severe pain and stimulant medications, which treat conditions like attention deficit disorder and narcolepsy (Turner in Dankano & Garba, 2020).

### **Consequences of Drug Abuse**

A long-lasting effect on the learning abilities of the user is common for those students who start using drugs at a younger age. Drug abuse causes some areas of the brain not to develop properly leading to learning disabilities. Persistent abuse of drugs further leads to loss of memory and judgment. Many undergraduate students who engage in drug abuse tend to be forgetful and can hardly focus particularly in their studies; it can also lead to loss of short-term memory. Drug abuse may weaken memory by slowing down the co-ordination materials and may decrease students' ability to remember such materials that were learned before using the drugs (Magidson & Jessica, 2016).

Obisike (2022) pointed out some major causes of drug abuse such as; accessibility and availability of drugs, bad friends and families, social media influence, unemployment, desire for riches, lack of parental care and guidance, poor performance in school, lack of knowledge of the adverse effects of drugs, lack of stringent measures against abusers on the community or government, low self esteem, ignoring early warning signs, depression etc.

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### **Drug Abuse as a Prevailing Social Problem**

It is a known fact that the abuse of drugs is now a societal problem; we can comfortably apply the term “problem drug users” to mean any drug user whose action constitutes a social problem. A social problem is any shared condition or attitude that damages or disorganizes society such as crime, illiteracy etc. (Obisike, 2022). The following have been identified as the indices showing drug abuse as a social problem;

- a. Level of aggression
- b. Increase in criminality
- c. Reduction in the number of skilled manpower among the youths
- d. Lack of respect for elders and constituted authorities
- e. Indecent dressing
- f. Low turnout of educated persons and skill trainees, etc.

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### **Types of Drugs Abused by Students**

Kalunta (2017) postulated that the most common drugs abused by secondary school students, which also hinder their academic performance, are Indian hemp, tramadol, mandrax, caffeine, codering, etc. However, other drugs as listed below are equally abused by secondary school students. Such as:

**i) Alcohol:** Alcohol is a toxic substance, mainly to a developing fetus when a mother consumes this drug during pregnancy. One of the most common addictions, alcoholism can have

distressing effects on the alcoholic individual's physical health, as well as his or her ability to function interpersonally and at work. Examples of alcohol are, beer, ogogoro, burukutu, aspetesi, pito, palmwine, sapele water, kaikai. They all contain alcohol.

**ii) Cocaine:** This is a drug that stimulates the nervous system; cocaine can be snorted in powder form, smoked when in the form of rocks, or injected when made into a liquid.

**iii) Nicotine:** The addictive substance found in cigarettes, nicotine is actually one of the most addictive substances that exist. In fact, nicotine addiction is often compared to the intense addictiveness associated with opiates like heroin.

**iv) Phencyclidine:** is referred to as PCP, this drug can cause the user to feel extremely obsessed, quite aggressive and have an unusual amount of physical strength. This can make the individual somewhat dangerous to others.

**v) Sedative, hypnotic, or ant anxiety drugs:** As these substances quash the nervous system, they can cause death by respiratory arrest of the person who either uses these drugs in overdose or who mixes one or more of these drugs with another nervous system depressant drug.

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### Academic Performance

Performance is defined as a measure of quality and quantity of success someone has acquired in the mastery of knowledge, skills and understanding (Davidson, 2004). Ziedner (1998) opined that academic achievement is the extent to which the teacher, student or institution has successfully attained their long or short term educational goals, completion of academic calendar in Secondary School, educational benchmarks such as diploma and bachelor's degrees which represent academic achievement.

A student's educational success is measured by his or her performance after course work grand, test scores and cumulative bench mark. Academic performance is commonly measured through the, means of test, examinations or even continuous assessments but this idea is not a generally accepted view of the concept on how to evaluate the students' performance or academic achievement that would be reliable through most important-procedural knowledge like skill or declarative knowledge such as facts (Murray-Ward, 1996).

Students' academic performance is tied to the interest the learners have in learning, otherwise, all efforts made by the parents, guardians and several sponsors of the educational system would fail. Understanding and developing the knowledge about the factors that affect the academic motivation, the students are expected to improve on their interest to study hard for good

academic performances. Personality variables such as ability and intelligence are considered predictors of one's academic performance. There are evidences that variables play pivotal roles in the academic performance of students (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007). It has also been shown in several research results that personality traits affect the academic performance of students and even the motivational aspect of learning (Chamorro-Premuzie & Furnham, 2003; Komarraju & Karau, 2005; Costa & McCrae, 1990).

### Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 12,124 in 154 secondary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 out of 154 secondary schools in Rivers –East Senatorial District who participated in the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 20 students from each of the secondary schools selected totaling 400 students. The instrument was a structured questionnaire of a four-point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) and was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The instrument was pilot tested using 70 students who were not part of the main study, and Cronbach Alpha was used to establish reliability of the instrument. The data collected was analyzed using mean and grand mean to answer the research questions.

**Research Question 1:** What are the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

**Table 1: The mean responses of students on the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.**

| S/N | ITEMS                                                                                | SA | A  | D  | SD | Mean | Decision |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| 1.  | Academic problems is a reason why student engage in drug abuse                       | 31 | 27 | 63 | 71 | 2.9  | Accepted |
| 2.  | To become high and fit into peer group is the major reason why students abuse drugs. | 25 | 40 | 52 | 83 | 2.7  | Accepted |
| 3.  | Drug habit of students is attributed with their parents drug habits                  | 52 | 30 | 73 | 35 | 3.1  | Accepted |



|                   |                                                                                    |    |    |    |    |      |          |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| 4.                | Students associating with their peer group influence them to engage in drug abuse. | 9  | 12 | 97 | 72 | 3.2  | Accepted |
| 5.                | Students involved in drug abuse because they want to reduce stress.                | 32 | 30 | 63 | 65 | 3.0  | Accepted |
| <b>Grand Mean</b> |                                                                                    |    |    |    |    | 2.98 | Accepted |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 showed that the respondents rated all the items as causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District, even with the grand mean higher than the criterion mean of 2.5.

**Research Question 2:** What are the effects of drug abuse?

**Table 2: The mean responses of students on the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.**

| S/N               | ITEMS                                                                               | SA | A  | D  | SD | Mean | Decision |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| 1.                | Drug abuse helps the students to pass their examinations very well.                 | 23 | 28 | 59 | 79 | 1.9  | Rejected |
| 2.                | Drug Abuse decrease students focuses in class                                       | 47 | 74 | 37 | 32 | 3.3  | Accepted |
| 3.                | Drug abuse reduces the cognitive ability of the students and increase forgetfulness | 12 | 14 | 84 | 80 | 3.3  | Accepted |
| 4.                | Drug abuse increase students retentive memory in class                              | 96 | 57 | 22 | 15 | 1.8  | Rejected |
| 5.                | Drug abuse causes students to be depress with their academic activities.            | 54 | 74 | 30 | 32 | 3.1  | Accepted |
| <b>Grand Mean</b> |                                                                                     |    |    |    |    | 2.7  | Accepted |

Source; Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 revealed that the respondents rated items 2,3 and 5 as effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District, if while items 1 and 4 were rejected since their mean scores were lower than the criterion mean of 2.5. However, the grand mean was higher them the acceptance criterion mean.

## **Findings**

The finding of the study revealed that the causes of drug abuse among senior secondary school students include: academic problem under the false impression that same drugs stimulate intelligence and increase strength and give wisdom as well as courage to face life, to become high and fit into peer group, Drug habit of students is attributed with their parents drug habits, Students associating with their peer groups and reduction of stress.

The finding of the study revealed that the effects of drug abuse among senior secondary school students include: Drug abuse motivate the students in reasoning which was debunked by the respondents through their responses, Drug Abuse decrease students focuses in class, Drug abuse reduces the cognitive ability of the students and increase forgetfulness, Drug abuse increases students retentive memory in class which also did not fly through the respondents and Drug abuse causes students to be depressed with their academic activities.

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## **Conclusion**

Drug abuse is a social problem basically associated with secondary school students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. These students involve themselves in taking hard drugs and excessive taking of some drugs which may alter the body system or may cause damage to their health and most especially affect negatively their academic performance. Drug abuse is very common among secondary school students, they take drugs, to get intoxicated or feel high or for them to just feel among or fit into the environment while some take this drugs through the influence of friends, peers or their parents.

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## **Recommendation**

Based other research finding, the following recommendations were made;

Government should prevent the cultivation/sales of Indian Herm and other deadly herbs that encourage drug abuse by enforcing its existing laws against drug abuse through its regulatory agencies.

1. Ministry of education (State and Federal) should as a matter of urgency, add to the curriculum drug education at all levels of education.
2. Government should organize massive campaign against Drug Abuse and the Ministry of Education (State or Federal) should return to School Boarding System as to critically checkmate the activities of the students and screening each and every one of them by National Drug Law enforcement Agency (NDLEA).
3. Parents and guardians should Endeavour to monitor their children and wards so that they do not engage in substance/drug abuse.

4. Establishment of Counseling units for Drug related issues and problems.

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