

# The Impact of Drug Abuse on Adolescents, A Case of Nyabira, Zvimba West.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the effects of substance/drug use or abuse by adolescents at Nyabira high density suburb. Residents are left gaping at the amount of maladaptive behaviour by adolescents as some of them finally engage in stealing and even take to streets within the suburb anticipating to live through begging and handouts, from well-wishers. The main objective was to establish the most abused drugs/substance and the study was meant to benefit parents and drug abusers to a larger extent. The related relevant literature was obtained from journals, textbooks and interactions as well as articles from various researchers. The gap was to identify the environmental factors which influenced adolescents to engage in drug abuse especially from Nyabira. The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of adolescents, police officers and psychologists. A qualitative research approach was utilised with an interview guide and observation as data collection instruments. Judgemental sampling technique was applied because of the scarcity of qualified psychologists. The research results were that adolescents were engaging in drug abuse and the conclusions arrived at that depression, hallucinations, suicidal tendencies and addiction are some of the effects of drug abuse. The researcher recommended that government make advocacy campaigns and apply stringent rules to deal with drug abuse. Further research was on the application of the quantitative approach to enable the generalisation of the results across all the adolescents.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Abuse, Drug, Nyabira, Substance

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of substance use and abuse among adolescents has now reached heights of worry across different social settings. The problem is increasing on a daily basis which has caused a lot of concern on educators, parents and everyone in the communities. The problem has caused a lot of young children to lose focus on perusing their education carriers due to the rampant intake of drugs. The adolescents have become something that the parents and the communities do not fully understand. All they say mostly is "vana vedu variku sticker". This meaning our children have become hopeless and helpless because of drugs. Some parents and guardians have gone to lengths in trying to give their children life back by taking them for counselling and rehabilitation centers but to many this is fruitless as some relapse after being rehabilitated. According to (World Drug Report, 2012) about 153-300 million persons aged between 16-60 years has been involved in drug use world all over in 2009. Futhermore the current study indicates that about 38.6 million people are problem drug users.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to statistics which were issued by the (World Drug Report, 2023) they indicate that about 16 million people are injection drug users worldwide. As asserted by the (National Intelligence Centre, 2011) the estimated economic cost of drug use was about \$ 193 billion United States Dollars. This amount represent the financial resources which were incurred in order to address the health issues to do with drug use and abuse including crime consequences, premature deaths and withdrawal from formal and legitimate workforce. In

Africa there has been a report on the increase in use of cannabis and opioids (World Drug Report, 2012). As said by (Chiwanga, 2013) an alarming levels of drug use and abuse in Zimbabwe has been experienced. There has been an increase also in the illegally imported cough mixture called bronclere with the street name “Bronco”. It is very popular with youths of both sexes between the ages of 15-35 years (SARAIDS Media, 2013). Abuse of substances has a negative effects on the psychological, physical and social wellbeing of an individual. Individuals face poor and difficulty in performing daily living activities for example self-hygiene (Stoffel and Moyers, 2004). Drug abuse also leads to thuggery activities which attracts even imprisonment.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

This study basically intends to extrapolate factors which are associated with drug abuse among adolescents and its consequences in Nyabira.

### **Research Objectives**

This research is premised on the following objectives;

#### **Broad Objectives**

To determine the factors associated with drug abuse among the adolescents.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- To identify the commonly abused drugs/substances
- To determine the socio-demographic factors associated with drug/substance abuse.
- To explore the impact of substance abuse on performance.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the commonly abused substances?
2. What are the socio-demographic factors related to substance abuse?
3. What is the impact of substance abuse in the society?

### **Justification/Significance of the Study**

The current study is poised to benefit the following in various ways;

#### **Medical Doctors and Nurses**

More rehabilitation centers will be opened where individuals with disorders as a result of drug abuse could be helped to cope with substance abuse. Knowledge acquired from rehabilitation centers will assist the physical, psychosocial and social functioning of the affected individual especially on psychomotor activities as well. Also knowledge generated from this research will help in raising awareness among other health professionals to be able to assess, diagnose and screen for substance abuse among the adolescents although the adolescent’s reason for being at hospital is for a different condition. Advocacy for financial resources and proper parental life styles which do not expose children or siblings to intoxicating substances.

#### **Psychologist and Counsellors**

Psychotherapists should educate adolescents about primary prevention and care of diseases and disorders associated with drug abuse. Psychotherapists may also mobilize for resources for different communities thus encouraging youngsters to engage in income generating projects and developmental projects.

## **Communities**

Communities will enforce healthy practices, physical, emotional and social activities which occupy the adolescents thus also educate them on the dangers of drug abuse.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The current study on the effects of substance or drug abuse is guided by the behaviorist perspective propounded by none other than B.F. Skinner whose behavioral principles centered on rewards, reinforcements and punishments. The behavior that the adolescents exhibit before and after substance abuse is explained as either being reinforced by the environmental stimuli which in this case is the availability of drugs within the Nyabira community. Intoxicating substances such as marijuana, bronclere and histalix among others have led the youths to engage in the use or abuse of these substances as they are readily available in communities they live. However, the punishment purported to enforce behavior change is not proportional to the act of drug abuse thereby enabling the youths to engage to maladaptive behaviors which are life and career threatening. The fact that the adolescents are somehow intrinsically rewarded when they drop out of school and engage in drug use or abuse has heard adverse consequences, which leads to loitering, trauma, aggressive behaviors, developing drug induced psychosis and other depressive symptoms exhibited by the adolescents who engage in drug use or abuse. Skinner advocates that any type of behavior that is rewarded can be repeated, which means an adolescent who drinks for the first time and feel rewarded by alcohol will definitely repeat drinking again.

## **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter looks on the related literature which is found in articles, text books and journals found within the field of psychology. It mainly focuses on researches which were done by other scholars and the findings taken from the objectives and research questions.

### **literature Overview/Conceptual Framework.**

According to the DSM-V criteria, substance use disorders are maladaptive patterns of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by two or more of the following occurring within a 12 month period. Among these is the recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfil major role obligations at work, school or home, recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous, withdrawal, substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended, important social occupational or recreational activities are given up or reduced due to substance use and there is craving or a strong desire or urge to use a specific substance. All these are strong aspects of drug abuse which impact negatively on both personality and social development of individuals.

### **factors associated with Substance Abuse**

There are quite a number of factors associated with drug use and abuse which include socio-demographic, psychosocial and economic factors.

### **Social-demographic factors associated with substance abuse.**

(Hafisa, 2011) reports that young adults are most likely to use cannabis despite the fact that it is used for medicinal purposes, the drug has been abused by individuals a lot to the extent of developing physical and emotional damages. The drug is mostly abused by the energetic age which is supposed to be engaged in national activities and development (Gund, 2006). In Zimbabwe this is the group which is loitering up and down the streets and bridges having completely nothing to do but spend their days drinking so called “Bronco” and “Musombodiya” these liquids are highly toxic. They engage in smoking cannabis and “crystalmath”.

However some studies have reported a correlation of religion and substance abuse (Hafisa, 2011) he postulates that Muslims are most likely to use cannabis than the Catholics.

One of the demographic factors includes the aspect of gender (Baba et al, 2013), indicated that the prevalence of substance abuse is higher among males than females. (White and Jackson, 2013) show that alcohol consumption is higher in males than females. Level of education also contribute to substance abuse. (Van Gundy, 2006) asserts that high school education and degree is actually a protective factor against the use of substance abuse. In America lack of education seems to increase the chances of alcohol abuse.

### **Psychological factors associated with substance abuse.**

Among young adults social anxiety is associated with cannabis use problems (Buckner et al, 2007). Extreme alcohol consumption also led to anxiety disorder in college students with drinking problems (Jackson et al, 2005). Peer pressure is also one of the leading causes of substance abuse (Buckener et al, 2007). Family discord and conflicts is also a factor resulting in adolescents engaging in substance use and abuse problems (Brook et al, 2005).

### **Economic factors associated with substance abuse**

Income and employment status has an influence on the abuse of substances. (Van Grandy, 2006) reports that the is a higher chance of illicit drug abuse on the group with low income status as compared to those who have higher paying jobs. The abuse of substance is higher among the unemployed followed by the part time and lastly the full time employment.

### **Major substance being abused**

Peltzer et al, 2010 showed that in South Africa the major abused drugs were cannabis, methamphetamine, cocaine, mandrax, heroin and over the counter drugs.

### **Impact of substance abuse**

Substance abuse has a negative effect on school performance as accorded by (DuPont, 2010). Students who get involved in the abuse of drugs are most likely to abscond school and attain lower grades because they spend less time at school. These adolescents are also involved in thieving and violent behaviors due to the affected cognitive function.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter shows the research methodologies applied in this research. It explains such methods which include research design and approach, target population, research instruments and sampling techniques.

### **Research Design**

It was employed to explore and gain knowledge on the concepts of drug abuse and its effects on adolescents. According to (Green, 1998) exploratory research design is used when the purpose of the study is to get an understanding of an idea or reveal a problem and ascertain ideas and insights in relation to the study.

### **Research Approach**

The current study applies qualitative research method. (Lee and Lings, 2008), define qualitative research as a process of systematic enquiry into meanings which people use to make meaning of their experiences and guide their actions. Through the use of qualitative approach the researcher used data collection methods which were more informal, relaxed and fun which probed the participants to participate voluntarily.

## **Target Population**

Target population is any group of individual with one or more common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Burns, 2000). The target population entailed of adolescents, police officers and psychologists. The total population used was 45. 30 adolescents, 10 police officers and 5 psychologists.

## **Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is a process of selecting a representation of the target population and that represent the characteristics from which it is drawn (Frida, 2002). This research applied to the purposive sampling technique which is non probability technique to select the sample from the population.

## **Purposive/Judgmental Sampling**

It is the application of one's judgement in choosing a sample (Shuwa, 2008). Therefore the researcher used her own beliefs in selecting the adolescents, police officers and psychologists. Psychologists and police officers who had the knowledge and experience with cases of drug abuse were selected. On selecting the adolescents the researcher used her own experience as she is a resident of Nyabira too.

## **Primary Data**

It is data collected for a specific purpose at hand (Shrapuv, 1999). The researcher for this research used interviews and observations to solicit data from adolescents, police officers and psychologists.

## **Research Instruments**

This research used interview guide to collect data from participants. (Kumar, 2005) expounds that interview is any person to person integration with a specific purpose in mind. The interviews provided the researcher with a platform to probe further the participants as well as the police officers and the psychologists. Interviews provided the reading of nonverbal cues which will not have been provided for by a questionnaire.

## **Secondary Data**

This is information which was already available which had been collected for other use other than the problem at hand. The researcher used secondary data into getting information on the effects of drug abuse. This included internet journals. Individual articles and court cases were used. Secondary data assisted the researcher in coming up with comprehensive literature review and the correct research methodology.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher developed and interview guide which contained questions on the research variables. This was so as to have direction and sequence in undertaking interviews. The researcher also got permission from the chairperson of the department of Social and Gender Transformation Studies. Appointment was made in visiting the Nyabira police officers and the psychologists at parirenyatwa.

## **Observations**

The adolescents will do anything to get money to acquire drugs. The young adults also hid their drugs in nearby bushes and they had nearby places which they could buy marijuana in the streets.

## **Validity and Reliability**

### **Pilot Study/Pretest**

A pretest study was conducted to test if the interview guide were going to ask what they were purported to ask. This assisted the researcher in developing clarity and avoiding ambiguity in the question asked.

## Ethical considerations

Participants signed a consent form to show their willingness to participate in the study. They were also made aware of their rights. Anonymity remained a priority throughout the study. Participants were assured safety and avoidance of harm during the interviews. Confidentiality was also prioritized as participants were never requested to mention their names instead pseudo names were used/

## Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis and presentation will be done mainly through qualitative methods. Data will also be represented in the form of charts as well.

## Summary

This chapter explored the different research methodologies explored and applied in the study.

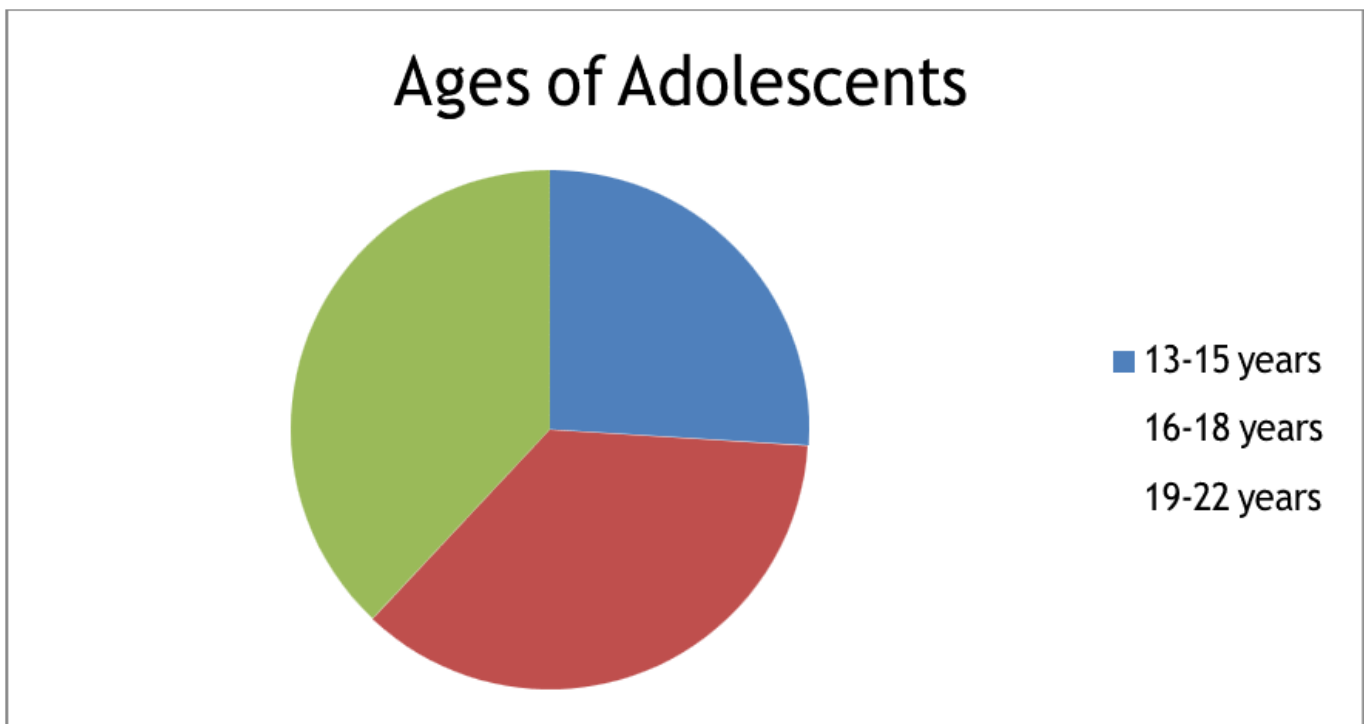
## DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This chapter shows the presentation, analysis and discussions of the data collected from participants through interviews and observations. Results were presented and analyzed thematically.

### Ages of Adolescents Respondents

The following figure depicts the general ages of adolescent that were interviewed and observed by the researcher.



### Types of Drugs Abused by Adolescents

The researcher found out that the adolescents Nyabira were engaged in Cannabis, glue, beer, “msombodhiya”, blue diamond whisky, “bronco” and histalix. The most abused was cannabis as this could be accessed from anywhere including bus terminuses.

## **Effects of Drug Abuse**

These include memory loss, depression disorders, and low morale, isolated and withdrawn. Adolescents develop suicidal ideations because of stress and depression. Adolescents also suffer from addiction

## **Causes of Drug Abuse among Adolescents**

Adolescents aired different views these were so that they can feel great and good about life, drugs caused them to forget about life's problems, peer pressure, for entertainment. Police officers alluded it to different cultural setups and abuse from the home.

## **Adolescent behavior after Drug Abuse**

The adolescents become confident "they feel like a king" and strangely brave. They also feel relieved from pain and they also engage in shoplifting and pick pocketing and also beg for money.

## **Drug Abuse and Eluviation Strategies**

Heavy and deterrent jail sentences should be drafted and sound policies should be drafted by the government so as to back up sound policing.

## **Discussion of findings**

Participants in this study were adolescents of Nyabira, police officers and psychologists who were directly involved in the dealings of drug abusers and psychotherapy. The abuse of substances has led to a number of problems including compromised developmental milestones. This is in agreement to what (Roizen, 1980), had reported that substance abuse had adverse effects and identified the four areas which drugs affect the user. These in which were termed the "4hs".

## **Summary**

The results of the collected data indicated that adolescents are involved in drug abuse due to various reasons amongst them to draw their pain and life problems. Some however feel good and happy after taking drugs since they have nothing else to do. Most of the effects were psychological and eventually these adolescents become addicts and cease to function without taking drugs. The next Chapters look at Summary of the findings, Conclusion and recommendations.

# **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Introduction**

This Chapter opens with a Summary of findings of the study as analyzed in the just ended Chapter. The conclusions are also summed up as these are derived from the results and objectives of the study. Finally, recommendations are made from the findings and conclusions which are interventions in order to make an attempt to curb or minimize substance abuse by adolescents.

## **Summary of findings**

Major thoughts, ideas and concepts from different scholars and researchers were reviewed and analyzed in journals, previous these and other various articles. The phenomenon helped the researcher to identify the information gap this study is trying to close. Different views gave the researcher an in depth view of a deeper understanding of various psychological effects of drug abuse and use and the concept of why adolescents abuse drugs as well as the different types of drugs which are commonly and frequently abused. The study discovered that glue which is being sniffed by adolescents was one of the most common drug which is being

abused. This is obtainable from every street in Nyabira suburb. Glue is also cheaper as a 150ml bottle was said to cost just a US\$1 and it can be bought from any shop without any difficulty irrespective of age. This was supported by <http://www.who.int/toh> who postulates that the widely known inhalant abused by street children is glue. [www.drugabuse.gov/researchreports/inhalants](http://www.drugabuse.gov/researchreports/inhalants) states that glue sniffing has become one of the most abused drug and one of the major coping strategies for street adolescents the world over. Adolescents in Zimbabwe abuse glue because it is cheaper to acquire.

## Conclusions

- That depression and anxiety were amongst the worst psychological effects of drug abuse, at times due to memory loss, loneliness and
- The study also concluded that the effects of drug abuse manifest in mental hallucinations the findings of the study led to the following conclusions;
- Adolescents engage in drug or substance use or abuse and the most abused drugs are marijuana, bronclere and alcohol, because of their
- The researcher also concluded and suicidal
- Adolescents abuse drugs because they want to conform and comply to peer pressure and the sense to belong with a

## Recommendations

In light of the findings and the conclusion a plethora of recommendations were arrived at;

- The Zimbabwean Government should carry out some awareness campaigns on drug use and abuse highlighting the negatives, effects and impact of drug abuse to desist from the
- Education on the effects and risks of drug abuse should be introduced through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education so as to “catch them young”.
- The government through the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) ought to deal with border post controls as well as try to “sniff” the distributors of the
- Advocacy on rehabilitation facilities should be vigorously carried out to alert parents and or drug abusers to have knowledge on where to get the necessary and life sustaining

## Further Research

It is further recommended that the effects of drug use or abuse be conducted applying a quantitative approach which calls for a larger sample which is representative of all the adolescent’s population so that the results could be generalized across the spectrum.

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