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Socio-Demographic Indices Of Drug Addicts And Crime Tendencies Among The Youth In Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study was to determine the influence of socio-demographic indices of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State. To guide this study, three research questions were raised and three null hypotheses were also formulated. The study adopted an analytical cross-sectional research design. The study population consisted of youths aged 18–40 years, estimated at about 5,040,000. A sample size of 2,000 youths was selected using a multistage sampling procedure for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Socio-demographic Indices of Drug Addicts and Crime Tendencies Questionnaire (SIDACTQ)," which covered demographic variables and crime tendencies. The instrument was validated by three experts and tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent t-test and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The finding of the study indicated that age, gender and educational attainment have significant influence on crime tendency of drug addicts. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that crime tendencies among drug-addicted youths in Akwa Ibom State are strongly shaped by their social and economic conditions rather than being mere individual choices. It was recommended among others that the government should prioritize policies that address youth unemployment and poverty, as these factors were strongly linked to higher crime tendencies among drug-addicted youths. Also, efforts aimed at improving access to quality education and creating sustainable job opportunities should be strengthened, as these will help reduce both drug abuse and criminal involvement among youths.
Keywords: Socio-demographic indices, Drug Addicts, Crime Tendencies, Youth, Akwa Ibom State

INTRODUCTION

Crime remains one of the prominent sociological menace that disturbed the socioeconomic fabrics of the twenty-first century society. Issues of crimes have become debilitating concern due to the emerging negative implications which often threatened the health, peace and progress of societal economy, as well as the individuals' psychosocial development. This becomes more worrisome as the prevalent of crimes is rising rapidly in many climes.

Globally, Sulaiman *et al*. (2023) reported that two in every 10 individuals experienced different degrees/levels of crimes. Statistics revealed that within the last decade, the World Crime Rate increased at

7.2 percent (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024). Africa as a continent contribute immensely to this rate. However, as part of the percentage contribution in the crime rate in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State exert remarkable number especially in the areas of theft, kidnapping, and cultism which are prominent among the youth (Abang *et al*., 2025)**.**

Youth population is a vital composite of Nigerian population due to it prominence, number, strength and constituting the economic workforce, and the defense system of the nation. Statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that youth constitute 70 percent of Nigeria population (Development Research and Projects Centres, 2024). This implies that youth population has the viability of coordinating successes in economic, social, agricultural, scientific research and development, as well as the defense sectors of the Nigeria's development. The benefits of this component of Nigeria's population can only be derived when the status of the youth viability is engaged in productive and profitable ventures. Unfortunately, the Nigeria's case tends to be unproductive as evidence in the rising level of unemployment resulting from unskilled labour and health challenges due to engagement/involvement in illicit drugs intake. A situation many argued to contribute to the rising level of youth involvement in crimes (Osa 2023), as compare to other components of the Nigerian population (Okoye and Mathias, 2024).

Illicit drug intake and drug abuse are widely associated with the rising level of crimes and other inimical health challenges. This is more worrisome when the situation of illicit drug intake and abuse becomes an addiction. Drug addiction according to Zou *et al* (2020) refers to the loss of control over drug use, or the compulsive seeking and taking of drugs despite adverse consequences. According to these authors, it is a neuropsychiatric disorder characterized by a recurring desire to continue taking the drug despite harmful consequences. It could be considered as the state wherein individual cannot regulate his or her behavioural patterns towards the intake of the illicit drugs. When this state is reached, the drug addiction may hijack the brain's reward mechanism and use it in the enforcement of negative behaviour. The changes in the behavioural patterns due to the addiction may contribute reasonable level of laziness, dizziness, and more longing for belongingness to the cadre of the addicts.

However, despite the debilitating effect of drug addiction and the pronounced advocacy to discourage the youth from intake of illicit drugs, the prevalence is still rising daily. For instance, World Drug Report (2024), on the prominent of drug addiction globally, revealed that 292million people indulged in daily illicit drug use. Out of this number, Africa contribute 87percent with Nigeria ranking the highest at the continental level due to poverty, weak governance and limited health infrastructure (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDC), 2021). This alarming rate of drug addicts are mostly found within the youth population in Nigeria (World Drug Report, 2024), and it rising pace tends to correspond with the rising level of criminality. The correspondence in the rising rate of drug addiction and crime in a seemingly proportionate level spurs the argument as to whether drug addiction at all times or some point could lead to crime tendencies among the youth.

The concept of socio-demographic indices has been one of the contentious variables in the psychosocial management of individuals. It is a concept which refers to the integration of social and demographic constructs for measuring a composite index of education, age, occupation, and the financial (income) level among others as well as in determining the social position in relation to others (Owan and Asuquo, 2021). This in other words entails the sociological, locational, psychological and economic variables that serves as situational indicators and determinants for the shaping of individual's behavioural and attitudinal patterns. Many variables are categorized into socio-demographic indices, but for emphasis, this study concentrate on age, gender, location of residence, educational attainment and occupation. Other categories of interest are marital status, religious belief and income level.

Age is a vital socio-demographic variable that may influence individual's decision making process, the belief system, and the attitudinal disposition. It is regarded as the duration of time an individual exist on earth. This duration of existence may have a way of shaping and reshaping one's maturity, enhancing experiential consistency, and promoting zeal for self-respect. In other words, one may argue that the older an individual becomes, the more experiences he or she gathers to reshape him or her perspective away from issues relating to crime irrespective of his or her drug addiction. Affirming this position, Oweibia *et*

al., (2025) emphasized that younger youth engages more in drug addiction which may correspondingly results to heighten tendency to crimes.

Individual's gender is another socio-demographic variables that may regulates behavioural patterns and attitudinal disposition towards acts, dealings and test. Lapite *et al*. (2023) eulogized gender as the social elaboration of biological sex that exaggerate biological difference, and it carries biological difference into domains. These differential attributes that uniquely determine male and female individual may equally constitute associational factors that shape the types of drug addicted to and the nature of crime involvement. Although statistics has shown that male drug addiction and crime tendencies are more prevalence than that of the females (Lapite *et al*., 2023), however, Leonard *et al*., (2015), argued that this depends greatly on the type of crimes, the opportunities created for the crime to occur, and the pressure an individual faced. In other words, when the addiction is not pressurized or pleasurable, and does not retard individual's mental thinking capacity, the tendency is high that it may not trigger crimes tendencies irrespective of gender.

Educational attainment is also a vital socio-demographic variable that may regulate individual's involvement in acts that are disrespectful and contravening to laws. It is considered as the level of education an individual attained towards advancing knowledge (Umukoro et al., 2024). Advancement in education has the potency of facilitating cognitive maturity and discouraging individuals in the adoption of debilitating lifestyle. In other words, a unit change in individual's educational attainment may correspondingly promote knowledge on the implication of drug addictions and crime. It may as well enlighten individual to employ legal avenues in accessing finance to fund the drug addiction lifestyle unlike others within the lower educational background. Oluwasanmi (2022) reinforced that advanced educational attainment creates avenues for a more productive individuals, improves individual's knowledge, skills, values, reasoning, effectiveness as well as financial resources.

It is based on the roles of socio-demographic indices of drug addicts of age, gender and educational attainment in influencing crime tendencies among the youths based on the background of the study that the researcher is motivated to conduct the present study on socio-demographic indices of drug addicts and crime tendencies among youths in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

The wellness of Nigeria is the function of her youth population. When this population is inflicted with psychosocial challenges, it does not only hamper their productivity, it translate to other groups in the population.

In Akwa Ibom State, the youth population is seriously affected by the issue relating to drugs and crimes. Every day in our local Newspapers, Radios and Television reports of crime among youths are very prominent. A situation is so acute that it has prompted different Akwa Ibom State's administration to establish diverse security units to curtail the rising status of crime. But the issues of crime and drug addiction still persist in a seemingly corresponding rate.

Unfortunately, these two social challenges (drug addiction and crimes) constitute not only in the area of health implications, its effect may transient to others State's sectors such as social disorderliness, loss of interest in productive ventures among the youth, loss of focus on self-development and societal development, loss of funds, and breakdown in societal values. Worst still, rising crime rate threatens the peace, harmony and tranquility of the State. Nevertheless, this issues of crime can only be managed if the actual primary causes are detected. Some studies attributed crime tendencies among the youth to several factors among which is the drug addiction (Rafaiee *et al.*, 2023), while some rebuffed the position that drug addiction contributes to crime tendencies, but others view it as lack of self-control and self-determination (Pezzin, 2024). Arising from these contradictory positions; it informed the contemplation of the researcher to ask: could the socio-demographic indices of the drug addicts influence their crime tendencies? This contemplation informs the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of socio-demographic indices of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. examine the influence of age of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State.
ii. determine the influence of gender of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State.
iii. examine the influence of educational attainment of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study when published could benefits the key stakeholders in government and health managers ranging from the state and local government, the ministry of youth development, and heath, the drug related agencies, the family and the youth and the reading public. To the government, the findings would generate firsthand information on the contribution of socio-demographic indices of drug addicts in facilitating or undermining crime tendencies among the youth. This could assist government in the promulgation of policies and programmes towards discouraging youth involvement in illicit drug use vis-a-vis promoting their health management, and as well, creating productive environment for sustainable living.

The recommendation arising from the findings could assists the Ministry of Youth Development, and the Health counterparts in strategizing avenues towards engaging youth in advantageous healthy lifestyle, enhancing health promotion and education for quality awareness, creations on the implications of drug addiction, and utilising effective mapping strategy to decongest addicts minds towards crimes. This in a long run could build formidable youth population that are versed with knowledge of drug addiction and its implications on the health and psychosocial constitution of individuals.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of age of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the influence of gender of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?
3. What is the influence of educational attainment of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses for the study were as follows:

1. Age of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Gender of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.
3. Educational attainment of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed analytical cross-sectional research design. This design is a quantitative research design which one collect needed data from the sample at one specific point in time. Therefore it is very suitable in this study because it enables the researcher to collect data on how socio-demographic indices of drug addicts influence crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State from the sample at a single point in time. The area of the study was Akwa Ibom State. The State was chosen because it is recently considered among the states in Nigeria with highest level of drug use among the youth as well as the crime. The population of the study is 5,040,000 youths being 70 percent of the estimate population of 7,200,000 people in Akwa Ibom State (Source: Akwa Ibom State Website on https://akwaibomstate.gov.ng/about-akwa-ibom/). The sample size for the study comprised 2000 youths. A multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size for the study.

The researcher designed instrument was used for data collection. The instrument was tagged: "Socio-demographic Indices of Drug Addicts and Crime Tendencies Questionnaire (SIDACTQ)". The instrument was duely validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo, to ascertain the content of the questionnaire as well as to ensure its relevance and adequacy in eliciting the required responses. Cronbach Alpha method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.82 for the SIDACTQ. Data was collected after presenting a letter of introduction and permission from the Head of Department, Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Uyo, to the respondents Head of Organization. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the influence of age of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 1: Mean Influence of Age of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Age	N	Mean	SD	Remark
18-30 years	1093	30.29	3.35	Influence
31-40 years	879	27.34	3.18	

Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 1 indicated the mean of influence of age of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State. As shown in the table, youth who are aged 18-30 years had a mean of crime tendency of 30.29, while those aged 31-40 years had a mean of crime tendency of 27.34. The mean difference between the two groups is 2.95 in favour of youth aged 18-30 years. This indicates that age of drug addicts influence crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State with age 18-30 years being more vulnerable.

Research Question 2: *What is the influence of gender of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 2: Mean Influence of Gender of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Gender	n	Mean	SD	Remark
Male	1111	31.24	2.62	Influence
Female	861	26.07	2.37	

Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 2 indicated the mean influence of gender of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State. As shown in the table, youth who are male had a mean crime tendency of 31.24, while those who are female had a mean crime tendency of 26.07. The mean difference between the two groups is 5.17 in favour of youth male. This is an indication there is influence of gender of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth in Akwa Ibom State with male youth being more vulnerable to crime tendencies than female.

Research Question 3: *What is the influence of educational attainment of drugs addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 3: Mean Influence of Educational Attainment of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Education	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Non-formal	664	31.02	3.02	
Primary/Secondary	952	29.23	2.78	Influence
Tertiary	356	24.49	2.379	

Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 3 indicated the mean on crime tendencies among youth of Akwa Ibom State having different educational attainment. As shown in the table, the mean crime tendency of youth who had no formal education of 31.02 was the highest, while those whose educational attainment was tertiary had the least mean of 24.49. The differences in the mean as shown in the result is an indication of influence of educational attainment on crime tendency among youths of Akwa Ibom State with unemployed being more vulnerable.

Hypothesis 1: Age of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Age of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Age	n	Mean	SD	t-cal.	Df	p-value	Decision
18-30 years	1093	30.29	3.35				
				19.89	1970	.000	Significant
31-40 years	879	27.34	3.18				

= Significant at .05 alpha level, Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 4 indicated that the calculated t-value of 19.89 for the influence of age of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance at 1970 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that age of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, age of drug addicts has significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2

Gender of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Independent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Gender of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Gender	n	Mean	SD	t-cal.	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	1111	31.24	2.62				
				45.29	1970	.000	Significant
Female	861	26.07	2.37				

= Significant at .05 alpha level, Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 5 indicated that the calculated t-value of 45.29 for the influence of gender of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance at 1970 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that gender of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, gender of drug addicts has significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3: Educational attainment of drug addicts have no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance of the Influence of Educational Attainment of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	9999.445	2	4999.723	639.089	.000	Significant
Within Groups	15403.897	1969	7.823			
Total	25403.343	1971				

= Significant at .05 alpha level, Source: Field Work (2026)

The result in Table 6 indicated that the calculated F-value of 639.089 for the influence of education attainment of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that educational attainment of drug addicts has no significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, educational attainment of drug addicts has significant influence on crime tendencies among the youth in Akwa Ibom State. To determine the groups that contributed to the significant difference, Bonferroni post hoc test was conducted and the result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Bonferroni Post Hoc Test of the Influence of Educational Attainment of Drug Addicts on Crime Tendencies among Youth

(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Non-formal	Primary/Secondary	1.78880*	.14142	.000
	Tertiary	6.52971*	.18373	.000
Primary/Secondary	Non-formal	-1.78880*	.14142	.000
	Tertiary	4.74091*	.17376	.000
Tertiary	Non-formal	-6.52971*	.18373	.000
	Primary/Secondary	-4.74091*	.17376	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result in Table7 shows the Bonferroni post hoc test for the influence of educational attainment of drug addicts on crime tendencies among the youth of Akwa Ibom State. As shown in the table, youths in all the various groups of educational attainment differ significantly from each other in their crime tendencies

Findings of the Study

From the Findings, it was observed that:

i. There is a significant influence of age of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth of Akwa Ibom State, with those 18-30 years indicating a higher crime tendency rate than those 31-40 years.
ii. There is a significant influence of gender of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth of Akwa Ibom State, with male indicating a higher crime tendency rate than female.
iii. There is a significant influence of educational attainment of drug addicts on crime tendencies among youth of Akwa Ibom State, with those with no formal education indicating higher crime tendencies.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of hypothesis one which shown that age significantly influences crime tendencies among drug addicts in Akwa Ibom State, with those aged 18–30 showing higher crime tendency than those aged 31–40, is not surprising. It suggests that younger drug addicts are more likely to engage in behaviours that put them in conflict with the law than older addicts. This may be because the younger age group is still in a more unstable stage of life, where emotions, peer pressure, risk-taking, and poor judgment are often stronger. At that stage, many young people are still trying to define themselves, and some easily fall into harmful friendships, street influence, and substance-using circles that encourage criminal behaviour. A likely reason for this result is that people between 18 and 30 are generally more active, more socially exposed, and more willing to take risks than those in their thirties. The findings of the study is in agreement with the submission made by Leal and Mier (2025) that most drug abusers who committed crime in their study were between 20 and 25 years. That closely supports the present result, since it points to young adulthood as a period of especially high crime risk among drug users.

The finding of hypothesis two shown that gender has a significant influence on crime tendencies among drug addicts in Akwa Ibom State, with males exhibiting a higher rate of involvement in crime compared to females. This result reflects a pattern that has been widely observed in many societies, where males are more likely to engage in risky and unlawful behaviours, especially when drug use is involved. One

possible reason for this finding is the role of social expectations and gender norms. In many communities, males are often encouraged, either directly or indirectly, to be bold, dominant, and risk-taking. These traits, when combined with drug addiction, can increase the likelihood of engaging in aggressive or criminal behaviour. The findings of the study is in lined with the submission made by Cotto *et al.* (2020) who reported that overall rates of substance use, abuse and dependence are significantly higher among males than females.

The finding of hypothesis three shown that educational attainment has a significant influence on crime tendencies among drug addicts in Akwa Ibom State, with those who have no formal education showing a higher tendency to engage in crime. This result points to the important role that education plays in shaping behaviour, decision-making, and life opportunities among young people.One possible explanation for this finding is that education helps individuals develop better judgment and understanding of the consequences of their actions. People who have gone through formal education are more likely to understand the legal, social, and health implications of drug use and criminal behaviour. In contrast, those without formal education may lack this awareness and may be more easily influenced by negative peer groups or harmful environments. The findings of the study is in agreement with the submission made by Khaliq *et al.* (2021) that individuals with lower levels of education were more likely to commit crimes compared to those who were educated.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that crime tendencies among drug-addicted youths in Akwa Ibom State are strongly shaped by their social and economic conditions rather than being mere individual choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

Government should prioritize policies that address youth unemployment and poverty, as these factors were strongly linked to higher crime tendencies among drug-addicted youths. Also, efforts aimed at improving access to quality education and creating sustainable job opportunities should be strengthened, as these will help reduce both drug abuse and criminal involvement among youths.

Families, religious organisations and community leaders should provide stronger social support, guidance, counselling, and rehabilitation services for youths affected by drug addiction to promote their recovery, discourage criminal behaviour and facilitate their successful reintegration into society.

Government and non-governmental organisations should improve access to affordable drug treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration programmes for affected youths to reduce drug dependence, prevent relapse, and minimise their involvement in criminal activities

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