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Influence Of Communal Crisis On Heroin And Cocaine Abuse Among Out- Of- School Adolescents In Gwer-East Local Government Area Of Benue State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated influence of communal crisis on cocaine and heroin abuse among out- of -school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of two hundred and fifty nine (259) respondents were used from a population of 4,320 out- of- school adolescents. The study employed multi-stage sampling procedure. Four point rating scale instrument for data collection was used. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions and Chi-square goodness of fit to test the hypotheses. The study found among others that; communal crises have significant influence on heroin and cocaine use among out -of- school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. The study recommended that communities affected by communal crises should prioritize the establishment and reinforcement of support systems for adolescents who were victims of drug abuse arising from communal crisis. These could include establishing youth centers, offering group counselling, and community outreach programmes aimed at providing a safe space for adolescents to seek guidance services.
Keywords: Communal Crisis, Cocaine Abuse, Heroine Abuse, Out -of- School Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

The use of illicit substances is a major public health problem in high income countries like the US. However, this problem of illicit substance use has spread rapidly to include middle and low income countries where most of its youth and adolescents are actively engaged in this illegal practice (Aliyu, 2014). Heroin and cocaine abuse are harmful substances for mood altering purposes which lead to frequent and serious problems. These problems can affect performance at school, work or home. Many times, relationships (such as with friends and parents) begin to suffer due to substance abuse. Individuals that engaged in abusing substances often have trouble with the law. Youths occupy a prominent place in any society as they are one of the greatest assets any nation can have. Apart from being the leaders of tomorrow, they out-number the middle-aged and the aged. The youth are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, and active and the most productive phase of life as

citizens. Generally, substance are helpful when they are used under prescriptions and destructive when they are misused or abused, but most youth are found guilty of substance abuse (Mohammad, 2014).

The problem of substance abuse is worse in African countries in the 21st century, as the uses of these substances are accompanied with a lot of risk behaviours such as crime, violence and suicide (Nsimba, 2010). For heroin and cocaine drug injectors, often have high chances of contracting infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C, abscesses and other ill-health problems, such as drug dependence, which manifests with complex set of behaviours related to mental illnesses. The amount of harm associated with the use of these substances, are increasing in Nigeria and other middle and low income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; as well as high income countries like the US (Aliyu, 2014). A lthough majority of the youth according to Ekpenyong (2012) have a good understanding of the consequences of substance abuse, there is still a high prevalence of this phenomena occurring in Africa.

In Nigeria, a large number of the population mostly youth buy substance without any physician's prescription (Mohammad, 2014). Substance abuse started becoming a serious problem in Nigeria in the 1960s among various professionals such as drivers, farmers, armed robbers, and hardened criminals (Jibril, Olayinka, Omeiza, & Babantunde, 2008). Substance abuse has several effects. There is general belief that problems of substance abuse can be categorized into medical, physical, psychological, social, educational, and economic implications and can be from experimenting substance to drug dependence (Ahmed, 2012). The physical, psychological, social and economic consequences of substance abuse among youth are becoming more obvious and disturbing (Yusuf, 2010, 2013). Young people who persistently abuse substances experience many problems. These include academic difficulties, health related problems including mental health disorders, poor peer and family relationships and involvement in social vices which include violence, stealing, bullying, secret cult activities which have negative consequences on the family, community and the society (Yusuf, 2010, 2013; Ahmed, 2012). Intoxication with a substance can cause physical effects; intoxication with heroin, sedative or hypnotic substance can cause marked sleepiness and slowed breathing. Also, cocaine intoxication can cause rapid heart rate, or tremors, while, seizures can occur due to alcohol withdrawal syndrome (Edwards, 2014).

Communal crisis, as defined by numerous experts, is the result of a struggle between two or more parties over ideals and claims to status, power, and valuable scarce resources, with the intention of neutralizing, harming, or eliminating their adversaries (Hanior & Akume, 2016; Abass, 2018). Akpenpuun (2013), also view crisis as a state of disagreement or confrontation between multiple parties vying for possession or control of scarce and highly coveted resources. Hanior and Tor-Anyiin (2016), describes crisis as an escalated competition between groups at any system level, each striving to outperform the others. Crisis manifest as disagreements, arguments, fights, and even wars, occurring among individuals, communities, and nations.

Smith & Williams, (2019) investigated the role of heroin abuse on theft behaviors among high school students in UK. This study aimed to investigate the role of Heroin on stealing behaviors among high school students. Three research questions guided study. The researchers conducted a survey among 500 high school students aged 14-18. Interview list was used as method of data collection. Data was analyzed using frequencies and mean. The results showed that heroin was a significant predictor of stealing behaviors among high school students. The study found that students who had friends who engaged in stealing were more likely to engage in stealing behaviors themselves. Furthermore, the study found that the stronger the friendship between students and their stealing friends, the more likely they were to engage in stealing behaviors. The study concluded that heroin is an important factor in predicting stealing behaviors among high school students. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing stealing behaviors among students should focus on addressing heroin and encouraging positive peer relationships. This study is relevant to the present study because it also investigated the influence of communal crisis on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents.

Ghanima, (2018) conducted a study on effect of cocaine abuse on bullying behaviour among student of Zanzibar school of health. Specifically, the objectives of study were to investigate the causes of cocaine abuse on bullying behavior among students of Zanzibar school of health, Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. 104 respondents were sample

from a total population of 2,032 students, using random sampling technique. Questionnaires were used as research instruments for this particular study. Data was analyzed using frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The study found out that cocaine abuse has greater influence on student's social behaviors and it has a greater effect in their academic life.

Smith & Williams, (2019) investigated the role of heroin abuse on theft behaviors among high school students in UK. This study aimed to investigate the role of Heroin on stealing behaviors among high school students. Three research questions guided study. The researchers conducted a survey among 500 high school students aged 14-18. Interview list was used as method of data collection. Data was analyzed using frequencies and mean. The results showed that Heroin was a significant predictor of stealing behaviors among high school students. The study found that students who had friends who engaged in stealing behaviors were more likely to engage in stealing behaviors themselves. Furthermore, the study found that the stronger the friendship between students and their stealing friends, the more likely they were to engage in stealing behaviors. The study concluded that Heroin is an important factor in predicting stealing behaviors among high school students. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing stealing behaviors among students should focus on addressing Heroin and encouraging positive peer relationships.

Esbensen and Carson, (2009) conducted a study on communal crises and drug use among urban adolescents in Kyenya: Family structure and parental monitoring as protective factors. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of peers on substance abuse among students. Three research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The study used a longitudinal design to investigate the relationship between communal crises and drug use among urban adolescents. The participants were 5,139 students from 7th to 12th grade in an urban school district in the Midwest. The study collected data from students at three different time points over a two-year period using self-report surveys. The study analysed the data using logistic regression analysis to examine the effects of communal crises on drug use while controlling for family structure and parental monitoring. The study found that communal crises was a significant predictor of drug use among urban adolescents. However, family structure and parental monitoring were found to be protective factors that can mitigate the negative effects of communal crises.

Akaan and Hanior (2024) investigated influence of communal crisis on marijuana and alcohol abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of two hundred fifty nine (259) respondents were used from a population of 4,320 out of school adolescents. The study employed multi-stage sampling technique. Four point rating scale instrument for data collection was used. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions and Chi-square goodness of fit to test the hypotheses. The study found among others that; marijuana and alcohol have significant influence on communal crisis among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area.

Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse among youth, has long been a critical topical issue of national discourse on public health and security concern in Nigeria, especially in the wake of current security situation that bedeviled the hitherto peaceful communities of Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. Social crimes and vices such as theft, burglary, rape, armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, out- of- school and broken families are common security threats in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. Unfortunately, these crimes are believed to be possibly facilitated under the effects of substance abuse, including heroin and cocaine. Records of arrest of criminals such as kidnapping and armed robbery suspects by the law enforcement officers, with large quantities of substance, suggest possible linkage between substance abuse and heinous crimes in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. There is therefore the need for an empirical study to ascertain how communal crisis influence heroin and cocaine abuse among out -of -school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. For now, there seems to be scarce evidence on this phenomenon in the area of study and this has provoked the researchers to investigate the phenomenon.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of communal crisis on heroin and cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. The specific objectives included to:

1. Investigate the influence of communal crisis on heroin abuse among out - of - school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area.
2. Ascertain the influence of communal crisis on cocaine abuse among out - of - school adolescents in Gwer-East Local government

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of communal crisis on heroin abuse among out - of- school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area?
2. What is the influence of communal crisis on cocaine abuse among out - of - school adolescents?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Communal crisis has no influence on heroin abuse among out - of - school adolescents in Gwer East Local Government
2. Communal crisis has no significant influence on cocaine abuse among out - of - school adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design is a way of organizing data and looking at the object to be studied as a whole. The target population for this study comprised all 4,320 out of school adolescents within the 17 council wards in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. A sample size of 259 respondents was taken from the total population of out- of -school adolescents, representing 10% of the total population. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for this study. In the process of randomization of the respondents, hat and draw method are used where every student was given a number after which it is squeezed and raffled in a container. The researchers picked the sampled number randomly without replacement, this is because it give every students equal opportunity to be selected without bias.

The instrument for this research was a twenty (20) items structured questionnaire titled “Communal Crises and Substance Abuse Questionnaire (CCSAQ)". The instrument was subdivided into two (2) clusters based on the variables used in the study namely; Cluster ‘A’ contained 1 -5 items which elicited information on heroin and communal crises. Cluster ‘B’ contained 6 -10 items which solicited information on cocaine and communal crises. The items were stated in simple and clear language. The desired responses was tabulated on a four point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was personally administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The responses collected from the respondents were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The cut-off point of 2.50 was used to determine positive influence while anything less than 2.50 will be regarded as no influence. Chi-square of goodness of fit was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the influence of communal crisis on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area?*

Table 1: ***Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for communal crisis and heroin abuse among out of school adolescents***

Item	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1. I decided to be taking a little of heroin to help me fight for my right.	251	2.69	1.080	Accepted
2. I learnt how to take heroin through my friends.	251	2.79	1.034	Accepted
3. I decided to be taking heroin because it makes me fearless.	251	2.76	1.055	Accepted
4. I can face any kind of violence when I take a little heroin.	251	2.82	1.005	Accepted
5. I only take heroin when there is crises, so that I can charge myself.	251	2.84	1.005	Accepted
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation		2.78	1.02	**Accepted**

Table 1 revealed mean scores and standard deviation of respondents as 2.69, 2.79, 2.76, 2.82 and 2.84, with their corresponding standard deviations of 1.080, 1.034, 1.055, 1.005 and 1.005, respectively. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point with a cluster mean and standard deviation of 2.78 and 1.02. This implies that communal crisis have influence on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area, Benue State.

Research Question 2*: What is the influence of communal crisis on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents?*

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for communal crisis and cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents.

Item	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1. Cocaine makes me fearless when defending myself.	251	2.88	.928	Accepted
2. My friends and I takes a little cocaine to prepare for attack from our enemies.	251	2.73	1.116	Accepted
3. Cocaine is hard to find but it makes someone strong in terms of violence.	251	2.91	1.006	Accepted
4. I do not fear any weapon when I sniff cocaine.	251	2.96	.977	Accepted
5. Cocaine makes someone fearless when faced with danger.	251	2.82	1.002	Accepted
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation		2.86	0.98	**Accepted**

Table 2 revealed mean scores and standard deviation of respondents as 2.88, 2.73, 2.91, 2.96 and 2.82, with their corresponding standard deviations of 928, 1.116, 1.006, .977 and 1.002, respectively. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point with a cluster mean and standard deviation of 2.86 and 0.98. This implies that communal crisis have influence on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East, Benue State.

Hypothesis 1: Communal crisis has no influence on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer East Local Government.

Table 3: ***Chi-Square Test for communal crisis and heroin abuse among out of school adolescents***

Reponses Mode	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Sign	X^2	P-value	Decision
SA	368	62.8	3	0.05	551.614	0.00	Rejected
A	441	62.8					
D	249	62.8					
SD	197	62.8					

Table 3 revealed $X^2 = 551.614$, at df = 3, and P= 0.00. Since the P- value = 00.00 < 0.05, the Null hypothesis which states that Communal crisis has no influence on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer East Local Government Area, has been rejected. This implies that communal crisis have significant influence on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Communal crisis has no significant influence on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test for communal crisis and cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents

Reponses Mode	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Sign	X^2	P-value	Decision
SA	398	62.8	3	0.05	374.398	0.00	Significant
A	440	62.8					
D	244	62.8					
SD	165	62.8					

Table 4 revealed $X^2 = 374.398$, at df = 3, and P= 0.00. Since the P- value = 00.00 < 0.05, the Null hypothesis which states that Communal crisis has no significant influence on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents, has been rejected. This implies that communal crisis have significant influence on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first hypothesis revealed that communal crisis have significant influence on heroin abuse among out of school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area, Benue State. Adolescents responses indicated that; they decided to be taking a little of heroin to help them feel bold to fight their enemies. A good number of them agreed that they learnt how to take heroin through their friends, while others decided to be taking heroin because it makes them fearless. Also many of them agreed that they can take on any kind of violence when I take a little heroin. This finding is in line with Smith & Williams, (2019), who found that students who had friends who engaged in stealing behaviors were more likely to engage in stealing behaviors themselves, since some of them agreed they had learnt drug abuse and violent behaviour from friends. This implies heroin abuse is an important predictor of communal crises among out of school adolescents.

The second hypothesis revealed that communal crisis have significant influence on cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents. Mean scores from respondents revealed that; cocaine makes them fearless when defending their territories. Others agreed that themselves and friends and sometimes takes a little cocaine to prepare for attack from their enemies. Some actually agreed that cocaine is hard to find but it makes them strong in any event of violence. A good number of them revealed that they do not fear any weapon when they sniff cocaine, it makes them fearless when faced with danger. This finding is in line with Oreeditse, (2015), whose study found that peer pressure to conform to their cocaine influence coerced them to do anything to pass the loyalty test. This perceived pressure influenced many students to persistently bully, even to the extent of initiating others to bully.

CONCLUSION

Communal crises has significant influence on heroin and cocaine abuse among out-of- school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State. The study have found that communal crises is one among other factors that influence heroin and cocaine abuse among out of school adolescents. The study has revealed specifically that communal crises triggers heroin and cocaine abuse among out- of- school adolescents in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Counsellors can collaborate with community leaders and organizations to develop outreach and education programmes aimed at raising awareness about the link between communal crises and heroin and cocaine abuse among adolescents. These programmes can include workshops, seminars, and informational sessions that provide parents, teachers, and adolescents with the knowledge and skills to recognize signs of substance abuse and access appropriate support services.
2. Counsellors should adopt a trauma-informed approach to counselling, recognizing that out – of – school adolescents affected by communal crises may have experienced significant trauma. By providing trauma-informed counselling services, counsellors can help adolescents process their experiences in a safe and supportive environment, reducing the likelihood of turning to heroin and cocaine abuse as a coping mechanism.
3. Counsellors should collaborate closely with mental health professionals and substance abuse specialists to ensure comprehensive support for adolescents affected by communal crises. By working together, counsellors can provide integrated care that addresses both the mental health needs of adolescents, utilizing evidence-based interventions and treatment approaches tailored to their unique circumstances.

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