NAU Journal of Technology & Vocational Education, Vol. 9, No. 1, July 2024.

PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS AND EFFICACY OF COUNSELING SUPPORT TECHNIQUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Joachim Amobi Udechukwu[1], Kingsley Chukwuemeka Okeke[2] & Henry Onyeka Okoli [3]
[1,2]Early Childhood and Primary Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze
[2]Department of Educational Psychology, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze,
obiandgold2@yahoo.com

Abstract
The study examined the efficacy of counselling support techniques adopted in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. In this study, survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 312 guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 guidance counsellors for the study. A-24 item questionnaire validated by experts in the field of education was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha method, which yielded alpha values of 76 and .88 for counselling support techniques and efficacy respectively. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to analysis data collected. Some of the findings revealed that guidance counsellors to a high extent adopt enforcement of corporal punishment, having students sign undertaking on behavioural change, and zero-tolerance policies resulting in suspension or expulsion as support techniques for reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. The findings also revealed that majority of the counselling support techniques listed have high efficacy in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. Furthermore, it was found that years of experience was a significant factor on guidance counsellors' adoption of counselling support techniques in this regard. It was recommended among others that; Anambra State government should organize regular capacity training programmes for guidance counsellors in public secondary schools to enable them learn current drug intervention techniques.
Keywords. Drug abuse, adolescent, efficacy, counselling support techniques

Introduction

Since the dawn of humankind, drugs have been used to treat and manage ailments using herbs, leaves, and plants. Drug usage in, and of itself carries no inherent risk because, when used properly, drugs have accelerated the recovery from illness. However, persistent drug use can harm an adolescent's physical, mental, and emotional development seriously and sometimes permanently (Oparaduru and Makinde, 2018). Drug use may be detrimental depending on the method of administration according to Oparaduru (2021). Drugs refer to compounds that have the potential to alter biological function through their chemical activities. They are also regarded as substances that alter thinking, feeling, perception, behavior, and other bodily processes Balogun (2016). Drug abuse is a maladaptive pattern of substance use those results in clinically substantial impairment or distress (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2018). Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) defined drug abuse as the intentional use of specific drugs to produce pleasurable effects on the brain. In the same vein, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2018) saw drug abuse as excessive and prolonged self-administration of a drug without respect for medically or culturally approved patterns.

Globally, the prevalence of drug abuse is a serious public health issue (WHO, 2021). Both developed and developing countries face the challenge of drug abuse. According to the World Drug Report, 275 million people use drugs worldwide in 2021, while 284 million people between the ages of 15 and 64 use drugs in 2019, representing a 25% increase from previous decades. Similar issues are currently being faced by Nigeria, whose citizens use drugs despite the country's adoption of a national drug policy in 1990 intended to prevent illicit drug availability, supply, and distribution (Olanrewaju, Olumide and Owolabi, 2022). Despite the efforts, between 2010 and 2019, the percentage of drug users in Nigeria rose to 22%, and by 2021, when it stood at 14.4%, it was significantly higher than the world average. In agreement, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) report showed that Nigeria ranks among the highest users of dangerous drugs.

Nigeria has around 30 million who are between the ages of 10 and 19, accounting for roughly one-third of the total population (Esiet, 2019). The rate of drug addiction among these adolescents is frightening. Adolescents are young people between the ages of 13 and 19, most of whom attend secondary schools. It is a crucial phase of development between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents are defined by the WHO (2019) as people aged 10 to 19. Adolescent period is the span of life between childhood and adulthood, extending from the ages of 10 to 19 years. According to Ofiaeli, Udigwe, Ndukwu and Emelumadu (2022), traditionally, the age ranges for adolescents and young adults are 10 to 19 years, 15 to 24, and 10 to 24 years, respectively. Adolescents experience hormonal, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that affect how they feel, think, make decisions, and interact with their environment. Oparaduru (2019) noted that adolescents like to live alone and without any adult supervision. As a result, they commonly engage in delinquent behavior such as drug addiction, rape, cultism, robbery, and vandalism. Many students in secondary schools in Nigeria who fall into the age category of adolescents struggle with mental health, either momentarily or over an extended length of time due to drug abuse. Similarly, the impact of drug abuse among these adolescents has been a peril of moral decadence, violence, banditry, assault, madness and murder WHO (2021) claimed. Furthermore, drug abuse among adolescents pose a threat to the entire country as well as to families, homes, schools, and communities Oparaduru (2021) pointed out. NDLEA (2022) noted that drug abuse causes the adolescents' absences from class, poor academic performance, cult membership, theft, and other deviant behaviors. It also usage jeopardizes adolescents' ability to contribute to a more thriving Nigerian economy.

Adolescents in Nigeria are exposed to a variety of uncensored material as a result of an expanding wave of westernization, the internet, mobile phone technology, and electronic media. These materials make them to succumb to peer pressure and engage in risky sexual, drug, and substance use behaviors (Landry, Turner, Vyas, and Wood, 2012). Causes of drug abuse include decline in family values and economic hardship that causes families to disintegrate while pursuing individual survival. As a result, adolescents in Nigeria who are of secondary school age are more likely to abuse drugs. It is worth noting that the high rate of drug abuse among secondary school adolescents is due to their availability in Nigeria and spill over into the streets from drug traffickers who use Nigeria as a conduit to transport drugs from South East-Asia (the Golden Triangle) and South America (Boliva, Peru, and Brazil) to Europe and North America (WHO, 2021).

Adolescents abuse a variety of drugs such as caffeine, tramadol, marijuana, LSD, heroin, codeine, and opioids, valium, alcohol, promotazine, and chloroform. Others are glues, spot removers, tube repair, perfumes, chemicals, Librium, and others (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC, 2018). Despite the efforts of the Nigerian

government's various levels and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to stop the epidemic in Nigeria, the number of cases has continued to rise, particularly among adolescents between the ages of 10 and 25 (NDLEA, 2021). Therefore, there ought to be counselling supporting techniques for these adolescents in to prepare them for productive living because they are potential candidates for national development of Nigeria.

In secondary schools, to counsel adolescents about the negative effects of drug abuse, guidance counsellors can work with school principals, teachers, at-risk families, and the community to establish drug-free clubs, theater productions, role plays, and conduct drug misuse intervention programmes. Guidance counselors can also use different counseling strategies to reduce or eliminate drug use in secondary schools. These techniques include; open-ended questions to encourage discussion, therapeutic interventions, dynamic interactions, and non-directive counseling techniques (OOfiaeli, Udigwe, Ndukwu and Emelumadu, 2020). Additionally, guidance counselors can also use the cognitive restructuring intervention strategies such as challenging and instructing adolescents on how to put abilities learned independently into practice. Cognitive restructuring is an insight technique for identifying and altering unfavorable ideas, behaviors, and beliefs (Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya and Ugwuozor, 2016). This strategy uses cognitive techniques to assist adolescents in reaching a degree of reasonable consciousness. An organized cognitive restructuring technique can give adolescents the chance to talk to counsellors about themselves, their drug use, and other issues. The risks associated with drug misuse and addiction, how to cease drug abuse, and the development of logical thought are likely to be topics of conversation between the adolescents and the counsellors. Onwuasoanya (2014) opined that the cognitive restructuring intervention raises the adolescents' rational thinking to participate fully in the educational environment and achieve higher learning and academic success.

Years of counselling experience could influence the adoption and efficacy of counselling support techniques by guidance counsellors in reduce drug abuse among adolescents. Years of counselling experience is the number of years of professional practice as a counsellor. Because counsellors learn from both successful and unsuccessful counselling practices throughout their careers, this study will investigate their perceptions on adoption and efficacy of counselling support techniques based on varying levels of experience (l - 5 years, and 6 years and above). Efficacy refers to a measurable impact of counselling support techniques in reducing drug abuse among adolescents. It is also the capacity of the techniques to eliminating or reducing the prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents. Anambra State has high prevalence of drug abuse among youths due to its commercial nature as traders from different parts of Nigeria and across Nigeria come to the state to transact one business or the other (Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya and Ugwuozor, 2016). Different products are traded in Onitsha, Anambra State, such as local and foreign fabrics, shoes, men and women wears, cosmetics, jewelries, electronics, building materials, sports, and drugs. The researcher cursorily observed that many adolescents of secondary schools in Anambra State are exposed to different types of drug as a result of the existence of Onitsha main market. Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya and Ugwuozor (2016) noted that the high rate of involvement of youths in drug abuse in Anambra State. Against this background, the researcher investigated the adoption of counselling support techniques and their efficacy in reducing drug abuse in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, there are reported cases of secondary school students (adolescents) in possession of Indian Hemp by NDLEA officials. This shows the high prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools. Due to the rapid development, advent of social media,

and decline in family values, drug use has become common among adolescents which have led to poor academic performance. Despite the worldwide concern and intervention strategies to tackle drug abuse, the rates of drug abuse among students of secondary schools have continued to increase in Nigeria. Many students have dropped out of school and others opted to engage in criminal activities thus endangering the lives of the people living in their communities. The professional guidance counsellors in secondary schools are expected to lead the charge in the fight against drug abuse among students by providing counselling support programmes. There are numerous counselling support techniques available for guidance counsellor to adopt, however, it appears that they are not leveraging on theses support intervention techniques in view of the increasing rate of adolescents who engages in drug abuse in Nigeria especially Anambra State. The problem of this study is that the inability of guidance counsellors to adopt appropriate counselling support techniques in reducing of drug abuse among secondary schools students will have a significant negative effect on the potentials of students, parents, society and the economic development of Nigeria. This study therefore, specifically ascertained (1) extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for reducing of drug abuse among adolescent students, (2 extent of efficacy of counselling support techniques in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are counselling support techniques adopted for reducing of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the extent of efficacy of counselling support techniques employ by counsellors in reducing drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. Guidance counsellors do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for reducing of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools, Anambra State based on their years of experience (1- 5 years and 6 years and above).

Method

This study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 312 guidance counsellors in 261 public secondary schools in Anambra Education system. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 guidance counsellors used for the study. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Prevalence of Drug Abuse and Efficacy of Counseling Support Techniques (PDA-ECSTs). The questionnaire consisted of two sections; A and B. Section A contained item on demographic information of the respondents such as years of counselling experience while Section B contained 24 items in respect to the two research questions, and structured on a five-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 5, High Extent (HE) = 4, Moderate Extent (ME) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1. Face validity of the instrument was determined using the opinions of two experts from Department of Early Childhood and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot-test and data collected were calculated with Cronbach's alpha formula and coefficients of .76 and .88 were obtained for scales that measure techniques adopted and efficacy of the techniques respectively. The researcher with the

help of three research assistants administered the questionnaire to the respondents in their schools. Out of 100 copies of questionnaire distributed, 87 was correctly filled and returned giving an 87 percent return rate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' opinions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the alpha value but accepted where the p-value is greater or equal to the alpha level. The analysis was carried out using SPSS 23.0.

Results

Research Question 1. To what extent are counselling support techniques adopted for reducing of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1.

Mean ratings and standard deviation on the extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for reducing of drug abuse

S/N	Adoption of Counselling Support Techniques	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Creating students' counselling-friendly programmes	3.35	.78	Moderate Extent
2	Teaching of anti-social management strategy skills	2.40	.81	Low Extent
3	Enforcement of corporal punishment	4.32	.50	High Extent
4	Provision of accurate moral education	3.27	.62	Moderate Extent
5	Establishment of drug-free clubs	2.32	.49	Low Extent
6	Use of behavioural therapies (changing how one respond to thoughts behaviour)	3.15	.73	Moderate Extent
7	Organizing peer group counselling in the schools	3.37	.91	Moderate Extent
8	Use of cognitive therapy (changing the way one think)	2.49	.66	Low Extent
9	Having students sign undertaking on behavioural change	4.39	.85	High Extent
10	Bibliography strategy (providing students with books that can enhance their lifestyle)	2.17	.56	Low Extent
11	Zero-tolerance policies resulting in suspension or expulsion	4.11	.75	High Extent
12	Using open-ended questions to encourage discussion between counsellors and students	2.49	.88	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	**3.15**		**Moderate Extent**

Data in Table shows that out of 12 items listed on counselling support techniques for reducing drug abuse among adolescent students, respondents rated items 3, 9 and 11 high extent with mean scores ranging between 4.11 and 4.39, items 1, 4, 6 and 7 are rated moderate extent with mean score of 3.15 to 3.37 while the remaining five items are rated low extent. The cluster mean of 3.15 shows that on the whole, guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Anambra State to a moderate extent adopt counselling support techniques for reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2. What is the extent of efficacy of counselling support techniques in reducing drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2.
Mean ratings and standard deviation on the efficacy of counselling support techniques for reducing of drug abuse

S/N	Efficacy of Counselling Support Techniques	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
13	Creating students' counselling-friendly programmes	4.35	.71	High Efficacy
14	Teaching of anti-social management strategy skills	4.40	54	High Efficacy
15	Enforcement of corporal punishment	2.31	.60	Low Efficacy
16	Provision of accurate moral education	4.00	.73	High Efficacy
17	Establishment of drug-free clubs	3.72	.47	High Efficacy
18	Use of behavioural therapies (changing how one respond to thoughts behaviour)	3.85	.73	High Efficacy
19	Organizing peer group counselling in the schools	3.97	.91	High Efficacy
20	Use of cognitive therapy (changing the way one think)	4.49	.66	High Efficacy
21	Having students sign undertaking on behavioural change	1.39	54	Very Low Efficacy
22	Bibliography strategy (providing students with books that can enhance their lifestyle)	4.17	.76	High Efficacy
23	Zero-tolerance policies resulting in suspension or expulsion	2.11	.75	Low Efficacy
24	Using open-ended questions to encourage students to talk about the issues they are facing in life	4.49	.81	High Efficacy
	Cluster Mean	**3.60**		**High Efficacy**

Table 2 shows that respondents rated items 13, 14 16, 17 18, 19, 20, 22 and 24 high efficacy with mean score ranging between 3.72 to 4.49, items 15 and 23 are rated low efficacy with mean score of 2.11 and 2.31 while the remaining one item (item 21) is rated very low efficacy. The cluster mean score of 3.60 shows that guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Anambra State indicated that majority of the counselling support techniques listed have high efficacy in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Hypothesis 1. Guidance counsellors do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for prevention of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools, Anambra State based on their years of experience (1- 5 years and 6 years and above).

Table 3.
The t-test analysis on difference in the mean ratings of guidance counsellors by experience on the extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for reducing drug abuse

Years of Experience	N	X	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
1-5 years	30	2.69	.58	85	1.10	.01	Not Significant
6 years and above	48	3.47	.51				

Table 3 shows that the t-value of 1.10 with 85 degree of freedom has p-value of.01 which is less than the alpha level of.05 (P-value =.01 < .05). This means that guidance counsellors differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of adoption of counselling support techniques for prevention of drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools, Anambra State based on years of experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study show that guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Anambra State to a moderate extent adopt counselling support techniques for reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. Findings of the study specifically revealed that guidance counsellors to a high extent adopt enforcement of corporal punishment, having students sign undertaking on behavioural change, and zero-tolerance policies resulting in suspension or expulsion as drug intervention reduction techniques while they adopt other techniques to either a moderate or low extent. Findings of this study is not surprising to the researcher who have previously regretted the overly use of threat and punishment as a deviant behavior modification strategy among guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Anambra state. Ehiane (2014) stated that the adoption of discipline techniques do not curb drug abuse among adolescent students, rather, increases students' indulgence in illicit drug. Ofiaeli et la. (2020) pointed out that students friendly counselling support techniques are not being highly adopted in reducing drug abuse among youths in Anambra State. Findings of the study also indicated that guidance counsellors differ in their adoption of counselling support techniques in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students based on years of experience. The differences in their mean perception could be attributed to differences in training programmes attended such as workshops, seminars, and conferences. It could also be that guidance counsellors with longer years of experience possess more counselling skills and competencies compared to those with lesser experience who new in the profession. These could have cause the differences in the adoption of counselling support techniques.

Findings of the study further showed that guidance counsellor indicated that the efficacy of majority of the counselling support techniques listed in reducing drug abuse among adolescent students in secondary schools in Anambra State is high. This concurs with the findings of Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya and Ugwuozor (2016) which revealed high efficacy of cognitive restructuring technique in identifying and reducing drug abuse among adolescent students. This agrees with the earlier findings of Onwuasoanya (2014) which revealed that the cognitive restructuring intervention raises the adolescents' rational thinking to participate fully in the educational environment and achieve higher learning and academic success. The researcher however wonders why the guidance counsellors are not adopting these techniques despite the fact that they agree to their efficacy. The researcher postulated that it could be due to low/lack of counselling skills, inadequate exposure to how to effectively adopt these techniques among guidance counsellors or fixed and rigid attitude in using disciplinary strategies in curbing drug abuse among students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that guidance counsellors do not highly adopt counselling support techniques that have high efficacy in reducing prevalence of drug abuse among adolescent students in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

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

1. Guidance counsellors should embark on additional professional training programmes to up-date their counselling techniques/skills. This will help them adopt appropriate and effective counselling support strategies to reduce prevalence of drug abuse among adolescent students in Anambra State secondary schools.
2. Anambra State government should organize regular capacity training programmes for guidance counsellors employed in public secondary schools to enable them learn current drug intervention techniques. This will help them adopt these strategies to curb drug abuse among adolescent students.
3. Guidance counsellors in secondary school in Anambra State should build positive relationship with students so that they will have confidence in them to confide or talk about their drug abuse challenges they are facing in their lives.

References

Ananya, M. A. (2019). What is drug abuse? Retrieved from: https://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-Drug-Abuse.aspx

Esiet, A O. (2019). Adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Nigeria. Retrieved from: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/ files/Esiet%20Presentation.pdf

Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya, A. B. and Ugwuozor, F. O. (2016). Effect of cognitive restructuring counselling technique and critical thinking on attitude towards okada rider's drug abuse behaviour in Onitsha Urban, Anambra State. *Journal of Applied Science, 16*, 338-343.

Klein, A. (2018). Trapped in the traffic: growing problems of drug consumption in Lagos. *J Mod Afr Stud., 32*, 657-677.

Landry, M., Turner, M., Vyas, A. and Wood, S. (2017). Social media and sexual behavior among adolescents: Is there a link? *JMIR Public Health Surveill, 19*(3/2), 28-34.

Lokoja, E. A. (2021). Three killed as youths, police clash in Kogi over handling of bank robbery suspects. Retrieved from: https://www.sunnewsonline.com/three-killed-as-youths-police-clash-in-kogi-over-handling-of-bank-robbery-suspects/

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2022). NDLEA seeks community support against drug abuse. Retrieved from: com/ndlea-seeks-community-support-against-drug-abuse/

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), (2021). *Drug collection*. Lagos. Drug Demand Reduction Unit.

NAFDAC (2018). A hand book on prevention of drugs and substance abuse in Nigeria.

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, (2019). Drug data collection and research, Abuja: Drug demand reduction unit, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.

Obiechina, G. O. and Isiguzo, B. C. (2016). Curbing the menace of drug abuse among secondary school students in Nigeria. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences, 4*, 53 – 64..

Ofiaeli, O. O., Udigwe, I. B., Ndukwu, C.I. and Emelumadu, O. F. (2020). Knowledge and indulgence in substsance abuse among adolescents in Anambra state, South-East Nigeria. *African Health Sciences, 22*(1):227-33. https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ahs.v22i1.29

Onwuasoanya, P. (2014). *Behaviour Modification Techniques in Counselling*. Great AP Express Publishers Ltd., Nsukka, Nigeria.

Oparaduru, J. O. (2021). Drug abuse among Nigerian adolescents in secondary schools: Strategies for counselling in the 21st century.

Oparaduru, J. O. and Makinde, B. O. (2018). The effect of peer-grouping on juvenile delinquent behaviours. *International Journal of Educational Research, 5*(1), 95-102

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report (2019). Executive Summary; Conclusions and Policy Implications. [Accessed 2020 April]. Available from: https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/en/exsum. html

World Health Organization (WHO) (2019). Drugs (psychoactive). Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/health-topics/drugs-psychoactive#tab=tab_1

World Health Organization (2021). Expert committee on drug dependence twenty-third report (Geneva: World Health Organization) Tech. Rep. Ser: 741.