

Influence of Drug Abuse by Parents on the Academic Performance of their Children and its Cost Implication on the Nigerian Economy

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Abstract. This study examined the influence of drug abuse by parents on the academic performance of their children in school and its cost implication on the Nigerian economy. The study, which was a theoretical paper, examined the influence of drug addicted parents on their children's academic performance. It also assessed its cost implication on the Nigerian economy. The study found out that children of drug addicted parents tend to perform poorly academically due to lack of care and attention by their parents. The study also discovered that drug abuse affects a country's economy negatively. For instance, Nigerians spent ₦34 billion on drug abuse in year 2013, this has a negative influence on the country's GDP and economy generally. For this to be mitigated, it was recommended among others that parents being role models of their children, should avoid drug abuse, in addition, government at all levels should enlighten its citizens on the dangers of drug abuse on their health, children and the economy.

Key words: Drug abuse, parents, children, academic performance, economy

1. Introduction

Drug abuse by parents is a global problem which rarely has any positive influence on both parents and children. The rapid increase in the prevalence of this behavior among parents has remained a global concern with consequences on the child's education and the economy.

Education has been generally regarded by stakeholders as a vehicle for socio-economic development of any country. There has also been a growing commitment to education by government, individuals, communities and missionary bodies (Bettinger and Slonim 2007). This commitment on the part of government and other non-governmental organizations has extended to ensure that children are properly groomed and tutored on how best to effectively manage themselves in an ever-changing world. Indeed, Parents have a role to play in ensuring that their children perform well academically.

Drug abuse is generally viewed as the use of a substance that modifies mood or behavior in a manner characterized by a maladaptive pattern of use. Musto (2008) disclosed that substance abuse is the use of drug that can cause disorder characterized by the use of a mood or behaviour-altering substance in a maladaptive pattern resulting in significant impairment or distress, such as failure to fulfill social or occupational obligations or recurrent use in situations in which it is physically dangerous to do so or which end in legal problems. What this connotes is that it modifies behaviour. Drug abuse by parents in Nigeria has become an embarrassing phenomenon to relatives, schools, government authorities, and the society at large. Children of today are the leaders of tomorrow and they deserve good education in the right direction. The constant abuse of drugs by parents can cause psycho-social problems in the economy. This fear is not unfounded because of what

happens to be the frequent and rampant drug crises in Nigeria. It is in this connection that this study examined the influence of drug abuse by parents on the academic performance of children and its implication on the Nigerian economy.

2. General Overview

A child is generally regarded as a boy or a girl of any age between infancy and adolescence. However, a child in southern Nigeria is a person between the age of 0-14 years and between 0-12 years in Northern Nigeria (Acolagbe, 2005). Udoh and Ajalah (2006) viewed drugs as that which alter the chemical components of the body as well as affect the central nervous system. Hornsby (2006) defined drug as a substance used for medical purpose either alone or in mixture. Hornsby added that drug is a substance that changes the function of cells, organs or organism. Turner (2008) asserted that drugs are chemicals that influence or modify the action of the body's own chemistry. Adeniyi (2002) classified drugs as antibiotics (penicillin, streptomycin, tetracycline and so forth), stimulants (dexamphetamine, amphetamine, tea, alcohol and coffee), Sedatives (barbiturates, phenobarbitone, tranquilizers such as valium), narcotics, analgesics (phenobarbitone), hypnotics (phenega), hallucinogens (cysergic acid and Indian hemp).

Justification for drug abuse: Acolagbe (2005) opined that people abuse drugs because they believe that it is the only way to become part of the jet age sub-culture. Acolagbe went further to say that the decision to take alcoholic drinks, smoke cigarette or Indian hemp is a trip out of the curiosity. In addition, Oshodin (2003) posited that the availability of drugs as well as sociological and psychological factors have been identified as predispositions of drug use. Oshodin added that those who use drugs to the point of abuse have different reasons for doing so ranging from stress, pressure, curiosity and so on.

Effects of drug abuse: The effects of drugs on humans are not farfetched. Drugs are chemical substances that destroy the body cell, depending on how the drugs are used. Every drug is a potential poison. According to Orija (2008), a

drug dependent person unknowingly damages his/herself and the society. The effect is a deteriorating health, which may cause mental ill health, deformed babies and untimely death of the individual involved.

Drug addicts become more demanding with regard to funds, increased appetite and they complain often of aches and pains in the body. Drugs like Indian hemp have the power to impair mental activities. It decreases the male sex hormone called testosterone and as well as interfere with the menstrual cycle in women (Ogunsakin 2007). Ogunsakin further pointed out that when a man or woman smokes twenty sticks of cigarette a day for 25 years, there will be reduction of 21.5 percent of his/her life. That the risk of lungs cancer is between 8 and 15 times higher in cigarette smokers than non-smokers.

3. Influence of Drug Addicted Parents on their Children's Academic Performance

Drug addicted parents are adults who constantly and consistently abuse drugs or adults who pride in taking drugs as a way of life with consequent effects on their lives and loved ones. Studies have shown that drug abuse by parents can have negative consequences on the child's academic performance in school. When a parent abuses drugs, it leaves the child to fend and care for him/herself. Butler (2015) asserted that without the drive to achieve in school, which is often instilled by parents and the support of someone within the home to help the child with his/her school work, a child's performance can suffer.

A study on children of substance abusers which explored the life experiences of children opiate addicts in methadone maintenance by Kolar, Brown, Haertzen & Michealson (1994) revealed that 41 percent of addicted parents reported that at least one of their children repeated a grade in school, 19 percent were involved in truancy and 30 percent had been suspended from school. Similarly, Sher (1997) reported in a research on psychological characteristics of children of alcoholics that in general, children of alcoholic parents do less well on academic measures. That they also have higher rates of school

absenteeism and are more likely to leave school, be retained or be referred to the school psychologist than are children of non-alcoholic parents.

Furthermore, a research on pre-pubertal sons of substance abusers and influence of parental and familial substance abuse on behavioural disposition by Moss, Vanyukov, Majumder, Kirisci and Tarter (1995) found out that sons of addicted parents performed worse on all domains measuring school achievement, using the Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised (PIAT-R), including general information, reading recognition, reading comprehension, total reading, mathematics and spelling. In the same vein, Johnson, Boney and Brown (1990) in a study on evidence of depressive symptoms in children of substance abusers discovered that children of addicted parents compared to children of non-addicted parents were found at significant disadvantage on standard scores of arithmetic.

Winters (2015) in a report on how to prevent substance abuse on children asserted that six million children in the United States of America live with at least one parent who abuses alcohol or other drugs. The report further opined that children living with an addicted or substance abusing parent or other adult apart from being more likely to become drug addicted themselves, perform poorly in their academics, as they easily get in trouble at school or have falling grades, miss many days of school and do not finish school tasks. In addition, the Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (2013) showed that parents who abuse drugs are more likely to live in homes in which relatives, friends and strangers also use drugs, exposing children to possible emotional, physical and academic harm.

In Nigeria, a study on exploring parents and teachers perceptions on causes and effects of drug abuse on academic pursuit of students in selected secondary schools in Nasarawa state by Adamu and Lawal (2013) revealed that both parents and teachers who abuse drugs negatively affect children's academic achievements. Similarly, a study by Moses and Oriahi (2012)

on drug abuse, secondary school, adolescents' prevention and rehabilitation asserted that 48.6 percent of children who take drugs in Nigeria were influenced by their parents with negative effect on their academic performance.

On the whole, all the studies reviewed on Influence of drug addicted parents on their children's academic performance found out that, children of parents who abuse drugs perform poorly academically. However, none of the studies reviewed linked them with their countries' economies, which is the thrust of this present study.

4. Cost Implication on the Economy

Some studies have shown that drug abuse by a parent, apart from influencing the child academically, also affects the economy of the country. A country's economy is measured by the strength of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the United States of America for instance, the National Drug Intelligence Centre (2011) reported that in year 2007, the economic cost of drug abuse was estimated at \$193 billion, that in 2011, drug addicted people spent \$120 billion or 0.9 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The report further opined that in Australia and Canada, the countries lost 0.3 and 0.4 of their GDP's respectively to drug related costs. In those countries, the cost of lost productivity in their economies was estimated to be 8 times higher than health-related costs due to morbidity, ambulatory care, physician visits and other related consequences. This has a negative effect on their economies.

In the United Kingdom (UK), an investigation by Fazey and Stevenson (n.d) found that the identifiable costs of drug abuse amounted to \$3.2 billion in 1988, equivalent to 0.4 percent of GDP or about \$60 per capita. In Germany, the report disclosed that the cost of drug abuse by its citizens in 1995 was \$9.6 billion or approximately \$120 per capita, which is equivalent to 0.4 percent of its GDP. The study further disclosed that the calculated costs per drug abuser in Germany were approximately \$30,000 per annum. These findings show that

drug related costs negatively influenced their economies.

In Nigeria, Nyameh, Yakubu, Teru and Titus (2013) observed that drug makes people sick when abused and a sick nation must necessarily be a poor nation because of the lack of labour force occasioned by the incapacity of the drug abusers. They further opined that this has a negative effect on economic activities of Nigeria as it affects the country’s GDP negatively. In the same vein, Brown and Kreft (1998) posited that drug abuse has been found to be a factor creating a major economic problem in Nigeria. That a research in 1981 found that 3-6 million people out of the population of Nigerians could be classified as drug abusers. Thus, affecting the economic well-being of Nigeria.

Similarly, Botvin (1995) asserted that the involvement of Nigerians in drug abuse impairs the country’s image both home and abroad. That such people constitute a menace to the society and become social deviants and economically dependent which negatively affects the country’s economy in terms of productivity and GDP. This is in line with a report by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (2014) which disclosed that the cost of drug abuse by Nigerians in 2013 was estimated at N34 billion, an amount which is equal to the annual budget of many states in Nigeria. This has negative influence on the country’s economy.

A study by Nwoke (2009) on public perception of drug addiction and its socio-economic implications in Nigeria revealed that drug abuse affects the Nigerian economy negatively. Nwoke, who conducted the research in 2009, came up with details as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Perception of respondents on the type of Economic Implication of Drug Abuse by Parents.

Economic effect	Frequency	Percentage
Reduction of the nation’s manpower	145	38.4
Depletion of the nation’s finances	137	36.2
Lowers productivity level	96	25.4
Total	378	100

Table 1 revealed that 38.4 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that drug abuse reduces the Nation’s manpower, while those who held the view that drug addiction depletes the Nation’s finances constitute 36.2 percent. Finally, 25.4 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that drug addiction lowers the productivity level of the Nation.

These findings show that drug abuse does not only have a negative influence on the Nigerian economy but also affects the academic performance of the victims. This is in line with Maisto, Galizio and Connors (1999) who asserted that drug abuse by parents negatively affects the academic performance of their children and also depletes the Nation’s resources.

Generally, this present study has shown that there is a strong correlation between drug abusers, children performance academically and

the economy. This is because life-time prevalence in drug abuse by parents not only affects the child academically, but it slows down the growth of the country economically as well.

5. Conclusion

Children struggle to survive as best as they can while living with a parent who abuses drugs. The most troubling behaviour usually has its roots in the child trying to get a basic need met under difficult circumstances. One of such basic needs is the child’s academic performance in school, parental role is therefore crucial for the child to succeed in this regard. If the child performs academically and grows to become a good citizen, the economy benefits from it in the long run.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, the following are recommended:

- Since parents are their children's role models, they should be exemplary to them by avoiding bad behaviours or actions that will influence their children's attitudes negatively as this can affect them academically with a multiplier effect on the economy.
- Federal, state and local governments should consistently organize public enlightenment programmes aimed at enlightening the general public on the dangers of drug abuse to their health, children and the economy.
- Non-governmental organizations should live up to their responsibility of sensitizing the public and also rehabilitating drug addicts in the society.
- Counseling units should be established in schools so that children of drug addicted parents can be easily counseled on how they can overcome their trauma so that it won't affect them academically.

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