The Causes and Effects of Drug Abuse on Pupils Academic Performance: A Case Study of Mindolo Secondary School in Kitwe, Zambia

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ABSTRACT: The study analyses the causes and effects of drug abuse on academic performance of pupils at Mindolo secondary school in Kitwe District, Zambia. This study used a descriptive survey design to find out the causes and effects of drug abuse on pupil's academic performance. Questionnaire and interviews were the instruments used to collect data and data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS). The mean and the standard deviation were used to see the trends in the data. The results of the study reviewed that Alcohol was frequently abused by pupils at Mindolo secondary school and that factors such as peer pressure, low self-esteem, and availability of drugs contributed to the abuse of drugs. The abuse of these drugs has led to poor performance, absenteeism, and low concentration in class amongst pupils. The other effects of drug abuse were suspensions, dropping out of school, and failure to participate in various school activities.

KEYWORDS: Drug abuse, academic performance, Mindolo secondary school, causes, effects, case study

I. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse has been a thorn issue and has been a growing problem among adolescents and the youths although it is also experienced by other age groups. Chesang (2013) indicated that drug abuse is one of the top problems confronting nations today, especially among the youths, some of them also happen to be learners and Zambia is not an exceptional. The term drug abuse refers to a substance taken for both therapeutic and abused purposes (Kwamanga, et al 2003). When the drug is taken for therapeutic purposes it is legal but when it is abused it becomes illegal. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), drug is any substance other than those required for maintenance of normal health, which when taken into the living organism, may modify one or more of its functions. Like many other countries, the situation of drug and alcohol use among young people in Zambia is growing at an alarming rate (DEC, 2012), and Schools have been posed with drug related issues of indiscipline rate. According to Ngesu, et al., (2008), there are a lot of factors in schools that can influence students to use drugs such as how the school administration manages students' affairs, high handedness, and lack of freedom. Failure to address pupils concerns as well creates stress which can lead to abuse of drugs. Drug abuse affects the freedom and development of youth who are the world's most valuable asset (UNODC, 2002).

According to the world's Drug report, a total of 180 million people abuse drugs world- wide and the majority of these are youths (Lakhampal and Agnihotri, 2007). In Zambia drug abuse prevalence has been recognized by different organizations such as the Ministry of General Education, Ministry of Health, Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and Faith-Based Organizations'. There has been a fight against drug abuse in Zambia through sensitization on the effects of drug abuse by various organizations in order to bring about increased knowledge on drug abuse. Despite the efforts directed towards sensitization on the effects of drugs, there has been rapid escalation of incidences of drug and alcohol abuse among school-going children.

The Zambian Drug Enforcement Commission's (DEC) report, states that out of 288 persons attended to in 2013, 159 were learners. In 2014 out of the 302 persons counseled, 176 were learners, while in 2015, 271 learners out of 415 persons were counseled for drug and alcohol abuse related problems (DEC, 2014 and 2015).From these statistics, it is evident that drugs are highly abused by the teenagers who mostly are of the school going children ages. This is supported by the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) report which shows that 60% of students abuse drugs. In 2018, the DEC handled at least 5,000 drug-related offences which included those of 295 juveniles, aged between 11 and 17 years.

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The study aimed at finding out the factors that influence drug abuse on pupil's academic performance; it further determines the effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance at Mindolo secondary school and explores the common drugs abused by these learners.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The escalating of drug abuse among pupils in Zambian schools has become a major concern. Many educators and researchers have recognized that drug abuse is a major barrier to one's Education. Masiye and Ndhlovu (2016), show evidence of drug abuse among youths and pupils in schools.

(Masiye et al 2015) further states that drugs are more likely to be used by learners in secondary schools, if they derive some form of subjective benefits. He states that in boarding secondary school learners may use drugs to provide them with entertainment when they are bored, to gather courage to do certain actions, or to reduce physical and emotional pain. According to Masiye, some learners may get involved in drug and alcohol abuse because they lack knowledge on the harmful effects of drugs, they lack resistance or refusal skills and the belief that drugs will make them think intelligently or they simply have low self- esteem

(Azuz 2012, Kassandra, 2009, Ngesu et al; 2008 Oketch, 1997), attribute drug abuse to peer pressure. Kassandra argues that despite the earnest guidance of parents, some youth succumb to pressure and influence from the peers. According to Ngesu, a friend or peer group is likely to be the source of information for drug users about the availability of drugs and the alleged effects. (NACADA, 2006) acknowledges that the peer subculture also facilitates the behavior by making the substances available and by providing an appropriate setting and instructions

Azuz (2012) asserts that young people may be under pressure from family or friends to perform beyond their capacity in any field related to academics, sports or winning over friends and under the false impression that drugs may help them. Learners in schools may influence their peers that when they take drugs, they become intelligent and perform better in class. On the other hand,Kassandra observes that poor grades are one of the major factor that leads to drug abuse among pupils and it creates a negative feeling among students, therefore, to ease the pain and low morale, students resort to drug abuse as a remedy to their failures in effort to gain self-confidence. According to (Oketch, 1997), the interest and expectation of the peer groups have an important bearing-on whether or not a person will try dependence or be tempted to taking drugs. Ondieki and Mokua (2012) found that peer influence played a major role in learners' use of drugs with 45% of alcohol users and 33% of the smokers having copied the habit from their friends.

Adelekan (2005) states that social media is a universal factor influence on drug abuse among students in developed and developing countries. This is most common in urban centers where young people are more exposed to television, internet access, radios and other forms of media which are bombarded with adverts promoting drugs like tobacco and alcohol.

Shibalika (2021) in his study 'the causes and effects of drug abuse among primary school learners in Shibuyunji district of Zambia' states that the causes of drug abuse in Shibuyunji district were peer pressure, lack of recreational activities, curiosity and amusement, lack of parental supervision, prevalence of drugs in the locality and poverty, and that the effects of drug abuse were deviant behavior, predisposing crime, drug addiction, rebellious behavior towards authority, lower academic performance and expulsion or suspension from school. He further recommends the need to strengthen guidance and counseling in schools, and to enhance communication between administration and learners about the need for drug-free school environments.

Kaluwe (2019) reveals that peer pressure, genetic, curiosity and depression were factors leading to drug abuse by school pupils hence affecting their academic performance. He further states that learners stay in communities where drugs were being sold and easily accessed and therefore, Community interventions targeting drug abuse should be put in place thereby addressing drug abuse problem and creating more positive social networking.

(Hayatbakhsh, et al 2008) states that drug abuse can result into mental health and behavioural problems.Depressive symptoms, psychosis, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide are some of the mental health problems found to be related to drug abuse (Onyeka, et al. 2013). A study by (Sihvola et al 2008) has shown that a depressive disorder at the age of 14 years was positively associated with levels of addictive drug abuse by boys and girls.

According to the world drug report by UNODC (2014), illicit drugs undermine economic and social development and contribute to crime, instability, insecurity and the spread of HIV. The risk of dropping out of school as well as suspension of school pupils was high among school learners who use illegal drugs. It can be noted that drug abuse has always existed in the past and its consequences have had negative impacts on pupils' academic performance. The literature shows that there is need to research more and find realistic strategies to solve the problem of drug abuse among school ongoing pupils.

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III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Learning Theory

This study was informed by Bandura (1977), social learning theory. In his theory Bandura suggests that all behaviors were learnt through observation and imitation. He believes that learning is a behavioral and cognitive process, which motivates learning of behaviors and takes place in a social context (Edinyang, 2016). This theory attest to the ability of learners to observe and imitate behaviors exhibited within their environment. According to Bandura behavioral change is influenced by environment, people and behavior. This is supported by Nabayi (2014) who states that children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents, characters on mass/social media, friends, peer groups, religion, other members of the society, and the school. Children learn from these agents of socialization by observing the behaviors and through imitation of peers. It provides a more comprehensive model that can be used to explain a wide range of behaviors in the real world. Bandura acknowledges in his social learning theory that one of the causes of drug abuse among pupils is observing and modeling. This theory supports the view that pupils abuse drugs upon observing and modeling. When pupils see their role models from movies stars to musicians or television personalities abusing drugs, they are most likely to abuse drugs meanwhile ignoring the dangers of drug abuse.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research design

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The Survey research data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. The research was carried out at Mindolo Secondary School, which is located in Kitwe, Zambia and is a co - gender school.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select the pupils. The sample size was one hundred and ten participants (110). One hundred and five pupils (105) pupils were randomly selected from grade ten (10) to grade (12) and purposive sampling was used in selecting five (5) teachers.

Ninety (90) pupils answered the questionnaire whereas fifteen (15) pupils and five (5) teachers were interviewed. The respondent's sample included the following sets of data; gender, grades and age of the respondents.

The table below was used to summarize the demographic of the participant

Table 1: Demographic of participants

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	48	53.3
	Female	42	46.7
	Total	90	100
Age group	Below 15	6	6.7
	15-18	55	61.1
	18-20	19	21.1
	20 and above	10	11.1
	Total	90	100
Grade	Grade 10	30	33.3
	Grade 11	30	33.3
	Grade12	30	33.3
	Total	90	100

N=90 Source; pupils' questionnaire

V. DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of two parts; the demographic and questions concerning drug abuse in school. A Likert scale was used to determine some of the responses that were collected from the respondents. The variables were measured on a 1-5 Likert scale; strongly agree (1), agree (2) Not Sure (3), Disagree (4) and Strongly Disagree (5). Therefore, items with mean values below 3 implied that on average the respondents agreed/ strongly agreed to the statements. Likewise, items with mean values greater than 3 implied that on average the respondents disagreed/ strongly disagreed to the statements.

Interviews were used in order to obtain more information in relation to the causes and effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance.

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VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed using statistical package for science (SPPS). Qualitative data was analyzed by grouping the emerging themes. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize data by finding the mean and standard deviation. Tables and a pie chart were used to interpret and display data collected.

VII. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS

The findings were based on the specific objectives which were outlined for the study. To give direction to the study, the following research objectives were set;

- To find out factors that influence drug abuse among pupils at Mindolo secondary school.
- To determine common drugs abused by learners at Mindolo secondary school.
- To determine the effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance at Mindolo secondary school.

A. Pupils that take drugs

From the research conducted, it was realized that some pupils abuse drugs and the table below shows that pupils at Mindolo secondary school abuse drug.

Table 2: Pupils that take drugs

Pupils take drugs in your school	Frequency	Percentage
YES	81	90.0
NO	9	10.0
TOTAL	90	100.0

Source: pupil's questionnaire

B. Drugs commonly abused by pupils

The study recognizes the drugs commonly abused by learners as alcohol, marijuana (weed), cigarettes, cocaine and heroin as presented in the table and pie chart below.

Table 3: Drugs commonly abused by pupils

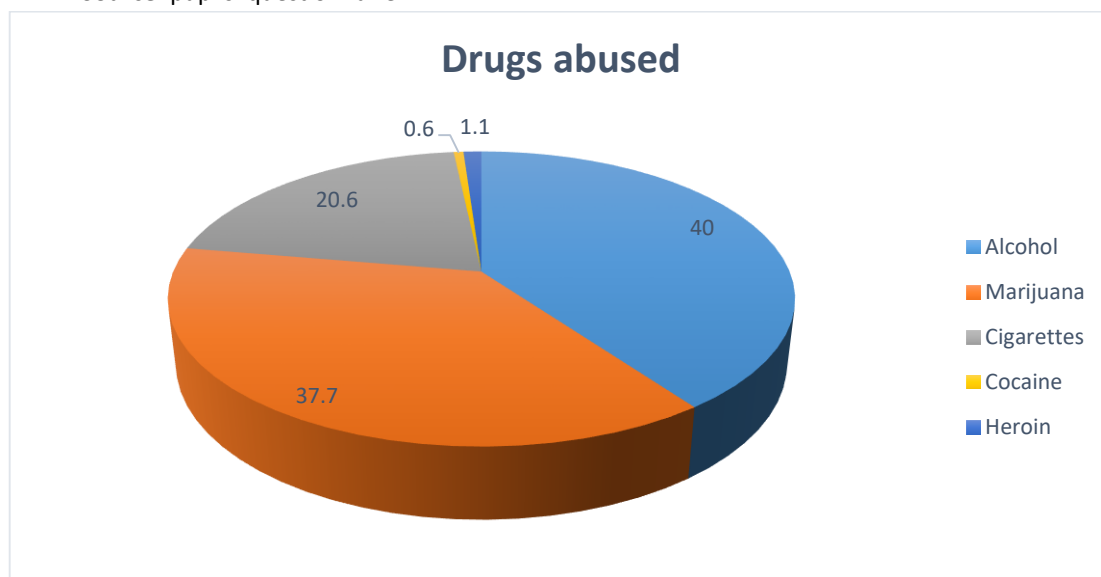| Names of drugs	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol	70	40.0
Marijuana	66	37.7
Cigarettes	36	20.6
Cocaine	1	0.6
Heroin	2	1.1
		100.0

Source: pupils' questionnaire

Figure 1: Drugs that are abused by learners

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From the analysis, it was found that alcohol was the most commonly abused drug by learners at 40%, followed by Marijuana at 37.7% and cigarettes at 20.6 while cocaine and heroin were less abused. It is evident that the rate at which pupils abuse these drugs at Mindolo Secondary School calls for concern because pupils often abuse these drugs as illustrated below;

Table 4: The table below illustrates how often pupils use drugs

How often do pupils abuse drugs	Frequency	Percentage
Very frequently	24	26.7
Often	41	45.6
Rarely	6	6.7
Not sure	21	21.1
Total	90	100.0

Source: pupils' questionnaire

C. Factors that influence drug abuse among learners
Table 5:

NUMBER	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Reason 1	Peer Pressure	1.28	.58
Reason 2	Availability of drugs in school	2.80	1.19
Reason 3	They want to perform better in school work	3.40	1.28
Reason 4	They have a lot of pocket money	3.51	1.16
Reason 5	Parental influence	3.12	1.51
Reason 6	Low self esteem	2.21	1.16
Reason 7	Idleness	2.02	.98

Source: pupils' questionnaire

The following were the causes of drug abuse which were identified
A. Peer pressure
Results from the table above show that peer pressure was the main reason why pupils take drugs in school. This is shown by the mean that came out to be 1.28 showing that pupils agreed to the statement. Most pupils are influenced by friends to engage in drugs. They tend to imitate the behaviors of friends. This is in agreement with Kassandra (2006) who pointed out that one of the reasons why pupils abuse drugs is due to peer pressure.
B. Availability of Drugs
The study also shows that availability of drugs in school is the reason why pupils engage in drug abuse as evidenced in the mean that came out to be 2.80 indicating participants strongly acknowledging that fact. Those interviewed admitted that they easily get drugs within the school and the nearby community because they have created links with people to supply them especially Marijuana and cigarettes.
C. Low self esteem
The study also reveals low self-esteem to be one of the reasons why pupils abuse drugs as seen by the mean of 2.21 indicating participant's agreement to the statement. In extreme addiction of these drugs, health issues creep in such as depression, withdrawal and apathy which in turn create one's low self-esteem.
D. Idleness
Idleness is one other reason why pupils abuse drugs as seen by the mean which come out to be 2.02 indicating participants' agreement to the statement. There is a belief by young people that once they take drugs they would get high and more alert especially when they are bored.

The study further showed that pupils disagreed to the statements as seen in the means which came out to be 3.40 for wanting to perform well in school, 3.51 for having a lot of pocket money and 3.12 for parental influence respectively

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D. Effects of drug abuse on pupil's academic performance.

Table 6:

NUMBER	EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	YES	NO	TOTAL
1	Poor performance	80 88.9%	10 11.1%	90 100%
2	Absenteeism	72 80.0%	18 20.0%	90 100%
3	low concentration in class	85 94.4%	5 5.6%	90 100%
4	Dropping out of school	70 77.8%	20 22.2%	90 100%
5	Often suspended	67 74.4%	23 25.6%	90 100%
6	Failure to do home work	75 83.3%	15 16.7%	90 100%
7	Failure to take part in co-curricular activities in school	71 78.9%	19 21.1%	90 100%

Source: pupils' questionnaire

A. Low concentration in class

The study reveals that pupils who abuse various drugs usually have low concentration in class this is in support with (Dube, et.al 2011) who stated that abuse of drugs (i.e. smoking) affects school achievement of pupils. Pupils who have smoked are more likely to decrease attentiveness, cognitive, memory functions, and have difficult remembering information and verbal learning impairment.

B. Poor performance

Poor performance was found to be one of the effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance as seen by the percentage of (88.9%). This causes them to have low grades in test and examinations as such there are increased potential for dropping out of school.

C. Failure to do homework

It's clear that pupils who abuse drugs fail to do their homework as seen by the percentage at (83.3%). Most pupils lack commitment to school for they find themselves into hide outs where such activities take place.

D. Absenteeism

Pupils who abuse drugs in most cases have a tendency of missing classes, this can be seen from table which indicates that (80.0 %) of participants were in agreement. They tend to dodge and skip class.

E. Failure to participate in co-curricular activities

Pupils who abuse drugs usually lack motivation as a result they do not involve themselves in co- curricular activities such as joining school clubs like jets or debate. This is in agreement with WHO (2004) who stated that abuse of drugs leads to one lacking motivation.

F. Dropping out of school

Dropping out of school was found to be one of the effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance. This is seen from table which shows that most pupils at (77.8%) were in agreement with the statement.

G. Suspension

Suspension was found to be among the effects of drug abuse on pupils' academic performance, pupils who engage in abuse of drugs are often suspended from school this can be seen from the above table were participants were in agreement with the statement (74.4%). Normally there is a high rate of truancy among pupils who abuse drugs.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

The research results reveals that pupils often abuse drugs at Mindolo secondary School, with alcohol being the most abused followed by marijuana (i.e. weed), cigarettes (tobacco). The study notes that some of the major reasons that have led to the abuse of drugs in school are peer pressure, idleness, low self-esteem, availability of drugs in school. Some pupils disagreed that having a lot of pocket money, wanting to perform better in school and parental influence cannot lead to abuse of drugs

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Furthermore, the study found out that abuse of drugs has a lot of negative effects on pupils' academic performances. Pupils who engage in the abuse of drugs usually experience a lot of academic challenges such as low concentration in class which leads them not to grasp simple and important concepts during teaching in class, poor performance in tests and examination, failure to do homework, absenteeism, suspension, dropping out of school and failure to participate in co-curricular activities in school.

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