

Parental Care and Academic Stress: Implications on Adolescents Substance Abuse in Rivers State Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated parental care and academic stress as predictors of adolescent substance abuse in Rivers State Nigeria. Using random sampling technique, 250 participants were selected from 4 secondary schools in the state. The participants comprised of 130 males and 120 females with age range of 12-18 years with a mean age of 14.8 years. Participants were administered with 3 instruments which include Parental Care Scale developed by Baumrind (1971), Student Academic Stress Scale developed by Busari (2011) and Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) developed by Skinner (1982). A cross sectional survey was employed and A Multiple Regression analysis was used for data analyses. Result indicates that parenting style and academic stress do not predict adolescent substance abuse in Rivers State Nigeria. The significance of the study borders on the need for parents to watch out for other significant environmental factors like peer pressure as the inducing factors to substance abuse as they do their best to train their children

Keywords: Parental care, academic stress, adolescent, substance abuse.

1. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the general decrease in the prevalence of the non-medical use of most legal and illegal drugs in recent years, the abuse of alcohol and other substances among adolescents at early adulthood remains a serious public health problem (Johnson, 1979). The term substance could be referred to as a chemical that has known biological effect on human or other animals. Substance use refers to the use of more than one substance that could lead to clinically significant impairment or distress. Within the purview of pharmacology, a substance is a chemical used in treatment, cure and prevention or diagnosis of diseases or used to enhance psychical or mental wellbeing. Two types of substances used by people can be classified as legal and illegal. The legal substances are approved by law for sale over the counter or by doctor's prescriptions. These include caffeine, alcoholic beverages, nicotine and inhalants. Illegal substances include cocaine, marijuana, heroin and hallucinogenic substances. The drugs that are considered illegal are those substances that are not approved by government or the law for sales over the counter. They are not prescribed by the doctor, and they act primarily in the central nervous system where they affect the brain functioning, altering perception, mood, consciousness, cognition and behaviors. Prescription drugs such as tranquilizers, amphetamines, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, steroids and analgesics can be knowingly or unknowingly overprescribed or otherwise used improperly. Prescription drugs are considered illegal when diverted from proper use.

Substance disorder occurs when a substance is used in such a way that the user's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is in some way impaired or when the drug results to harm either to self or society. The upsurge in the use of substance seems to be a global phenomenon; it has been found that adolescents who use substances have problems in development. Substance abuse hinders the development of the adolescent as he advances to adulthood (Fawa, 2003).

Substance abuse refers to the over use or dependence on a drug, leading to effect that are detrimental to physical and mental health or the welfare of others. Substance use before 18 years is associated with an eight-fold greater likelihood of developing substance dependence in adulthood (Odejide (2000)). Substance dependence is a maladaptive state that develops from repeated drug administration and upon cessation of drug use, withdrawal symptoms cause the recipient to be helpless. Drug dependence is one of the global threatening problems especially, due to its devastating effects on human lives, economy, civilization and governance. In the past, cases of substance abuse were linked to adult populations; it was in the 1980s when the world began to witness spread of psychoactive drug use to the younger generation. The youths take drugs to feel high, eliminate frustration, conquer anxiety, academic stress and gain self-identity, once they succeed at enhancing such performance through substance; it is accompanied with high excitability, fearlessness, unnecessary calmness, aggressiveness and loss of interest in academics, family and job demands. Most adolescents use substance to compensate for lack of rewarding personal relationships instead of developing a sense of empowerment for healthy personal development.

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal end when psychological; adult identity behaviors sets in or are accepted and this period corresponds to the period between 7 and 21 years .During adolescence, it is normal for young people to begin to separate from their parents and establish their own self-identity. In some cases it may occur without a problem from the parents and other family members. However, in some families the adolescent rebellion may lead to conflicts as the parents try to keep them in control. A common thing about adolescent stage is that, it is a period when teenagers form personal identity, self-conscious desire to feel important and enjoy social acceptance. Young adolescents start indulging in abuse of substances as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants and psychoactive drugs; if the adolescent consistently consume these substances, they become addicted to them.

The extent of control and interventions in addressing the urge of adolescents to take drugs greatly depend on the skills of the parents and their knowledge and level of education. Researchers have found that nurture is positively related to many other impact areas evolving through parents-child relationship. For example Mba (2008) found that parents who were attentive, nonrestrictive and warm fostered intellectual development in their children. Children have been found to respond to the guidance of nurturing parents more positively than that of non-nurturing parents (Eisenberg & Fabes 1992). Additionally, there are indications that a strong linkage exists between nurturing by parents and positive social behaviours of children. Conversely, lack of parental nurturing leads to child incompetence and self-help development problems (Dekovic & Janssens 1992)).

Researchers suggest parental nurturing of children may be the most significant contribution parents can make to their positive growth and development. Children who experience a good nurturing home environment are more likely to develop into healthy, capable and fully functioning adults. Parents who are nurturing are warm, affectionate, good at listening, respectful and attend to basic care and well-being of their children (Smith,Cudaback,Goddard & Wals,1994) .

However, nurturing can be challenging especially to a family's emotional resources. In addition, it is sometimes difficult for parents to understand that children have different needs and different preferences for parental nurturing. Parenting programs should focus on the need to help parents learn how to attend to their children's need by building positive relationships and by sending consistent messages of love and support.

Rollins and Thomas (1979) define parental nurturing as "behavior manifested by a parent towards a child that makes the child feel comfortable in the presence of the parents and confirms in the child's mind a sense of attachment. Ainsworth,(1991) stresses that parents should be prompt and sensitive in responding to child needs.

Academic stress entails a mental distress associated with the anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure (Hess & Copeland 2006)

Nigerian academic environment is filled with many problems like incessant strikes by both academic and non academic staff, political instability, poverty and many social and economic frustrations.

Raina (1983) defined academic stress as a demand related to academics that tax or exceed the available resources (internal or external) as cognitively appeared by the student involved. According to her, academic stress reflects perception of individual's academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety.

Four components of academic stress are deduced as follows: Academic frustration is a state caused by harm of some academic goals. Academic conflict is the result of two or more incompatible response tendencies to academic goals. Academic pressure occurs when a student is under heavy demands of time and energy to meet academic goals and academic anxiety is apprehension of harm to some academic goals. Adding his notes to academic stress, Misra and Michell, (2000) further identified sources of academic stress to include fear of falling behind with coursework, finding the motivation to study, time pressure, financial worries, and concern about academic ability. Additionally, students report stress over struggling to meet academic standards, time management worries, and concerns over grades (Kouzma & Kennedy, 2004).

As these troubles overwhelm students, reliance on drugs to provide false fulfillment becomes the acceptable norm. Denham's (1989) review on substance abuse concludes that infants and toddlers cope poorly with academic stress when others are emotionally non responsive or express negative emotions. Similarly six-year olds are more likely to be reported by their teachers as having behavioral problems in school (Cohn, 1990). Other negative outcomes have also been found to be related to poor parental nurturing.

Statement of the Problem:

Adolescent substance abuse is a negative health problem in contemporary Nigeria especially in Rivers State. In most corners of the state, people within the age delimitation of this study are seen abusing one form of drug or the other; and nearly half of the adolescents in Rivers state have one way or the other engaged in the use of substance. Despite the harmful effects of substances, adolescent parental relationship has been an important variable in predicting negative developmental outcomes and determines how adolescents use substances. Some scholars have hinted that the devastating nature of the environment due to oil pollution and the attendant neglect by the government are necessitating factors. Others premise it on total abandonment of family roles by parents. More so, stressful curriculum and the environment in which such knowledge is impacted have been a major factor that can profoundly influence the misuse of drugs. Therefore this study seeks to know if parental care and academic stress will predict substance abuse among adolescents in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study:

This study seeks among other things

- 1 To determine if parental care will influence substance abuse among adolescents
- 2 To know if academic stress will impact on substance abuse among adolescents

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

- 1 Parental care has no statistically significant influence on adolescent substance abuse
- 2 Academic stress has no statistically significant influence on adolescent substance abuse.

2. METHOD

Participants:

The participants in this study were selected through simple random sampling from 4 secondary schools in Rivers State Nigeria. They were 250 drawn from Ikwerre Secondary School, Obi-Akpor Secondary School, Etche Secondary School and Rumuodomaya Comprehensive Secondary school. Participants comprise 130 males and 120 females within the age range of 12- 18 years with average age of 14.8 years.

3. INSTRUMENTS

Three instruments were used this study. They are: Parental Care Scale, Students Academic Stress Scale, Drug Abuse Screening Test. Parental Test Scale was developed by *Baumrind* (1971) and contains 20 items which were scored by awarding 1 point for each response in each of the three categories of parenting style measured by authoritarian, permissive and authoritative. Correct point for each of the style categories and added together to obtain the participants score for the particular parenting style. *Baumrind* (1971) reported on internal consistency alpha coefficient of .86 while Omoluabi

(2002) obtained alpha concurrent reliability coefficient of .87. The norm for authoritarian is 7.87, permissive: 13.20, authoritative: 7.72, permissive: 12.82, authoritative: 7.44. The number lower than the norm shows poor parental care towards a child, the score higher than the norm indicates the dominance of parenting style. The general norm for this Scale is 11.11.

The second instrument is the Student Academic Stress Scale developed by Busari (2011) which contains 50 items. The measured stress response is the affective, behavior, cognitive and physiological domains. It uses 5 Point Likert Scale of (1)None of the Time (2), A little of the time (3) Some of the time (4), Most of the Time (5), All of the Time . Higher scores indicate a greater stress response. Busari (2011) provided the psychometric property for Nigeria sample. He reported an internal consistency of .65-.96. The SASS produced excellent reliability using Cronbach alpha for the overall SASS Scale and all alpha were above .80. This indicates that the SASS is a reliable measure for academic stress response.

The third instrument is the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) developed by Skinner (1982) which contains 28 items. A score of 1 was given for each YES response except for item 4, 5, 6, for which a NO response is given a score of 1. Skinner (1982) provided the original psychometric properties for American sample.

He reported internal consistencies of .92 – .94 and a test re-test reliability of .78. A value of more than .90 indicates that DAST is a highly homogeneous test.

Uba (2013) obtained the Nigerian norm and reliability. A general norm of (N=40) =5.1, female (n =22) =6.2, male (n =18) = 3.67 with the cronbach alpha reliability of 0.72.

Procedures:

The researcher wrote to the principals of the secondary schools in order to notify and obtain permission to use a selected number of students for the study. When the permission was granted, introductions were made and assurances were given to the participants on the confidentiality of the research. The schools were selected through simple random sampling technique. The participants were selected through simple through simple random sampling done by collecting the class register and each class from ss1 to ss3 and applying the table of random techniques. For every 7th name that was called was selected to participate.

Design/Statistics:

A survey design was used for the study because large samples were used. A multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. This is because the study sought to predict criterion variable based on its relationship with two predictor variables.

4. RESULT

Table 1: Model and ANOVA Summary Table

Model	R	R ₂	ADJR ²	df	F	Sig
	.17	.03	.02	2	2.8	.05

The F value above indicates that parenting style and academic stress do not predict adolescent substance abuse (R = (250), F - = 2.88, P>.05).

Table 2: Multiple Regression Summary Result of Parenting Style and Academic Stress on Adolescent Substance Abuse

Model	B	t	Sig
Constant	11.59	1.93	.05
Parenting style	.49	1.59	.12
Academic Stress	.06	.12	.09

The regression analysis above indicates that parenting style does not predict adolescent substance abuse. Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that parenting style will not statistically predict adolescents substance abuse is accepted (R^2 , (2500), $t = 1.59$, $P > .05$).

Similarly, the second hypothesis which stated that academic stress will not significantly predict adolescent substance abuse is accepted (R^2 , (250), $t = 1.66$, $P > .05$). This denotes that academic stress has no influence on teenage substance abuse.

5. DISCUSSION

Parenting style and academic stress as predictors of adolescent abuse was examined. The first hypothesis which stated that parenting style will not significantly predict adolescent substance abuse was accepted. The study of Sambo (2008) supported this finding that there was no significant effect of parenting style as predictor of adolescent substance abuse. After assessing the adolescent with multi-dimensional personality questionnaire and assessing substance disorders through diagnostic interviews, he found out that parental substance use and abuse do not predict adolescent substance use. Thus, adolescents who lack proper parenting style are less likely to engage in the abuse of substance.

The study by Okoye (2001) investigated family process and peer influence on substance use among adolescents. The result showed that the adolescents who have parents who are authoritarian were more likely to smoke. Having parents who drink and smoke were seen as the major and dominant contributor to adolescent substance abuse. The researchers are of the view that parenting style does not predict adolescent substance abuse; abuse of substances is greatly influenced by an individual's personality and environment, and not parenting style or the upbringing an adolescent had. There are good and well-mannered adolescents who still engage in substance abuse who had very good and disciplined parents.

The second hypothesis which stated that academic stress will not significantly predict adolescent substance abuse was accepted. This result shows that adolescent academic stress does not predict their involvement in substance abuse. This finding is in line with the work of Osikoya (2006), who studied substance misuse among Nigerian adolescents. After in-depth interviews of two adolescents with drug abuse they identified psychosocial substance dynamics as issues surrounding psychoactive drugs use. They found out that both in and out of school, adolescents still engage in drug abuse. Adolescents who experience academic stress in school are not likely to engage in substance abuse. Some other environmental factors like peer influence and geographical location can influence their engagement in substance abuse. Another contradictory finding is the one by Ubom (2004) that dwelt on parental monitoring and peer influence on adolescents. Parental monitoring was associated with substance abuse. The study revealed that poorly monitored adolescents were more likely to use drugs and also revealed that parental care has an effect on adolescence substance abuse. The study stresses that poorly monitored adolescents were more likely to use drug. Another study by Okorodudu and Okorodudu (2004) Okorodudu also contradicted the second finding. Enakpoya (2009) studied addictions and its academic implications. The result showed that academic stress is a major cause of drug addiction. Some other factors include parental influence, school related factors, peer group effects and government factors.

One plausible reason for this finding is that adolescents are most likely to be influenced by peers to abuse substances instead of academic stress. Adolescents try to identify with each other so as not feel left out or inferior. Some adolescents experience rejection by fellow adolescents, when they rejected to take drug to calm their nerves and get high.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study showed that parenting style does not predict adolescent substance abuse. This implies that it is not about the parents of the adolescents, or the style which they employed in bringing up their children that makes their children to engage in substance abuse, even after giving them the best of parental care and love, some other factors can also influence the child involvement in drug abuse like peer pressure on the adolescent and the geographical location of their house, these factors can contribute to adolescent substance abuse.

The second finding of this study implies that academic stress has no influence on adolescent substance abuse. Thus, adolescent involvement in substance abuse is not a function of academic stress as adolescents both in and out of school engage in substance abuse. Some adolescents who do not experience academic stress also engage in substance abuse.

Some of the socially acceptable drugs like cigarette are abused by adolescents on daily basis whether they are in school or out of school.

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that parents and academic institutions look at other variables like personality and peer pressures in the search of causes of substance abuse.

Substance abuse preventive programs should be introduced in the school curriculum. Counseling centers for drug control should be established in every secondary school and community by government. Finally, parents should be educated on the importance of adopting the positive parental style that would aid in promoting their children's development.

7. SUMMARY

This study examined Parenting Style and Academic Stress as Predictors of Adolescent Substance Abuse among adolescents in Rivers State. The study was carried with two hundred and fifty (250) participants. They were drawn through simple random sampling technique from four secondary schools in the state. The data collected showed no significant effect of parenting style on adolescent substance abuse. Similarly, the data collected also showed no significant effect of academic stress on adolescent substance abuse.

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