

**PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF BENIN**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL
SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSc.)
DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work public perception of drug abuse among youths in the university of Benin was done by IMMANUEL CHUKWUSOM AGOLO with matriculation number SSC2004064 under the supervision of MR HILARY OSHIOKE AGBAIZA.

_____.

Mr HILARY OSHIOKE AGBAIZA.

(Project Supervisor)

Date

Confirmed by

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PROF .A. O. DOKPESI.

(Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, whose grace and mercy have guided me throughout this journey.

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Abstract

Drug abuse is a serious problem among university students. Many young people use drugs like marijuana and methamphetamine because of peer pressure, stress, or the desire to feel good. This study looks at how people view drug abuse among students at the University of Benin, Nigeria. It explores the types of drugs students' use, why they use them, and how society reacts to the issue.

The research was done through surveys and interviews with students and university staff. The results show that drug abuse is common, and many students use drugs to cope with school pressure or to fit in with friends. However, many people misunderstand the issue, and the stigma around drug use makes it harder for students to seek help.

The study suggests that universities should provide more drug education programs, better counseling services, and focus on helping students recover rather than punishing them. This research will help create better ways to prevent and reduce drug abuse among students.

KEYWORDS: Public Perception, drug abuse, University students, prevention.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Drug abuse is one of the most significant risk-taking behaviors among adolescents and young adults in the country. Despite global attention and educational efforts regarding psychoactive substances, self-medication, and the misuse of illegal drugs, many young people remain largely unaware of the harmful effects these substances can cause. The use of drugs dates back to the earliest days of human history, with people utilizing herbs, roots, barks, leaves, and various plants to alleviate pain and manage diseases. When used appropriately, drugs serve as a beneficial tool for humanity. However, it is important to recognize that some drugs produce appealing side effects, such as feelings of euphoria, elation, calmness, and power, which can lead to misuse. What initially begins as a method of relaxation can gradually develop into dependency and abuse.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), a drug is any substance intentionally introduced into the body to modify its normal function. Drug abuse, on the other hand, refers to the repeated and excessive use of substances for purposes other than their medically approved use. The impact of drug use on youth behavior is well documented. A 2021 study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlighted that drug abuse significantly contributes to school unrest, poor academic performance, and high dropout rates among students. Research also indicates that drug addiction fosters a violent environment, as it can create a false sense of superiority and power (UNODC, 2021). Factors such as curiosity, peer influence, and social pressure are frequently cited as primary reasons for substance abuse. Many public

secondary school students begin experimenting with substances known as "gateway drugs," such as tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana.

Drug abuse occurs when substances are consumed in a way that deviates from medical guidelines or cultural norms, often through self-administration. For instance, using prescribed medications like barbiturates to achieve euphoria in social settings qualifies as drug abuse. Some commonly misused substances include stimulants like amphetamines and depressants such as barbiturates, Valium, and Mandrax, which can significantly alter mental states and pose health risks.

The World Drug Report (WDR, 2023) estimates that around 296 million people worldwide use drugs, with the majority being young individuals. Among adolescents globally, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana remain the most widely consumed substances by both boys and girls (UNODC, 2023). The African Union's Continental Report on Drug Use (2022) highlights Africa's challenges with drug abuse, particularly the trafficking of illicit substances. Cannabis, heroin, methamphetamines, and alcohol are among the most commonly abused drugs on the continent. The injection of heroin is of particular concern due to its association with the spread of HIV/AIDS (AU, 2022).

In Nigeria, drug abuse is a growing issue, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Reports from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2023) indicate an increasing misuse of substances such as marijuana, codeine, tramadol, and methamphetamine. The National Drug Use Survey (2018) estimated that over 14 million Nigerians, predominantly young adults, have engaged in substance use. This rising trend presents a major challenge,

especially within university settings such as the University of Benin, where students face exposure to drugs due to various academic and social pressures.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Drug abuse among university students have become a pressing concern in Nigeria, with the University of Benin being no exception. Despite various efforts to address the issue, substance abuse continues to pose significant challenges to the well-being of students, the academic environment, and society at large. The rise in drug abuse among youths is linked to various factors, including peer pressure, academic stress, curiosity, and the availability of drugs on campus. This trend not only impacts students' health and academic performance but also leads to increased social and behavioural issues, such as crime and violence.

A major problem in combating drug abuse effectively is the lack of comprehensive understanding of public perceptions regarding the issue. How the public -including students, parents, university authorities, and the surrounding community - perceive drug abuse greatly influence how the problem is addressed. Misconceptions, stigma, and cultural biases may prevent students from seeking help or discourage the implementation of effective interventions. Furthermore, societal attitudes toward drug users often result in punitive rather than rehabilitative responses, which may not address the root causes of substance abuse among youths. Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the gap in understanding the public perceptions of drug abuse among youths at the University of Benin. By examining these

perceptions, the study aims to uncover how societal views impact both the prevalence of drug abuse and the effectiveness of policies and interventions aimed at reducing drug use among university students. Understanding public perceptions will help in developing more informed and effective strategies to prevent and address drug abuse in the university.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the common drugs likely to be abused by youths in the University of Benin?
2. What are the major reasons accountable for engagement of youths in drug abuse in university of Benin
3. What are the likely implications for youth's involvement in drug abuse?
4. What are the measures that can be used to eradicate drug abuse among University undergraduates

1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims to explore and analyze public perceptions regarding drug abuse among youths in the University of Benin, with the goal of understanding societal attitudes, knowledge, and the factors contributing to drug use among students.

The objectives for this study are as follows

1. To identify the common drugs abused by youths in the university of Benin.
2. To identify the reasons why youths engage in drug abuse.

3.To assess the implications of drug abuse on youths.

4. To examine the measures that can be used to eradicate drug abuse among youths in the University of Benin.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The issue of drug abuse among youths, particularly in university settings, is a growing concern that poses significant risks to individuals and society as a whole. The University of Benin, as one of Nigeria's prominent educational institutions, is not immuned to this challenge. Understanding public perceptions of drug abuse among its students is critical for several reasons. This study's significance can be categorized into several key areas:

1. Understanding Youth Behavior and Attitudes

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the attitudes and beliefs that influence drug use among youths at the University of Benin. By identifying the prevailing perceptions regarding drug abuse, the research can shed light on the motivations and rationalizations behind substance use. Understanding these factors is essential for developing targeted interventions that address the specific concerns and misconceptions held by students. Knowledge of the social, psychological, and cultural influences shaping students' perceptions can inform approaches to effectively engage them in drug prevention programs.

2. Informing Policy and Intervention Strategies

The findings of this study will serve as a vital resource for university administrators, policymakers, and healthcare professionals in crafting effective drug prevention and intervention strategies. By revealing how students perceive drug abuse, the research will inform the development of policies and programs that are relevant and resonant with the student population. Tailored interventions that consider students' views and experiences are more likely to succeed in reducing drug use and its associated harms. The insights gained from this study will help in shaping comprehensive campus health initiatives and preventive measures that address the root causes of substance abuse.

3. Addressing Stigma and Encouraging Help-Seeking Behavior

Stigma surrounding drug abuse often prevent individuals from seeking help or accessing necessary support services. By examining the extent and nature of stigma associated with drug users among the university community, this study will provide valuable insights into the barriers faced by students. Understanding the stigma can inform efforts to create a more supportive environment for individuals struggling with substance use issues. By reducing stigma, the study will promote help-seeking behaviors among students, encouraging them to access counseling and support services without fear of judgment or discrimination.

In summary, this study on public perceptions of drug abuse among youths at the University of Benin holds significant implications for understanding, preventing, and addressing substance abuse in the university setting. By illuminating the attitudes, beliefs, and misconceptions surrounding drug use, the research will inform policies, enhance educational initiatives, and promote a supportive environment for students. The findings will not only benefit the university community but also contribute to the broader discourse on drug abuse among youths in Nigeria,

ultimately fostering healthier, more informed individuals who can thrive academically and socially.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study encompasses several key aspects related to public perceptions of drug abuse among youths at the University of Benin. It will define the boundaries within which the research will be conducted and outline the specific areas that will be investigated. The study will primarily focus on the student population of the University of Benin. This includes undergraduate and postgraduate students from various faculties and departments, reflecting a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, the research will include insights from university staff, faculty members, and counselors to provide a broader perspective on perceptions of drug abuse within the university community. The research will be conducted within the confines of the University of Benin, located in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study will focus on the university's main campus and its immediate environment, acknowledging that the perceptions of drug abuse may be influenced by local cultural, social, and economic factors unique to this region. The study will assess current perceptions of drug abuse among youths, with a focus on data collected within the academic year. However, it may also draw upon historical context by referencing past studies and data to highlight trends and changes in perceptions over time. The research will seek to identify any shifts in attitudes towards drug abuse, particularly in light of recent developments in drug policies and societal attitudes. The study will also explore various types of drug abuse prevalent among youths, including but not limited to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, stimulants (such as amphetamines), sedatives, and other illicit drugs. It will aim to understand how perceptions differ based on the type of substance

abused, acknowledging that different drugs may carry different social stigmas and cultural meanings.

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Drug: A drug is a chemical substance that, when introduced into the body, alters normal physiological functions or processes.

Drug Abuse: Drug abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including illicit drugs, prescription medications, and legal substances such as alcohol and tobacco, in a manner that is inconsistent with medical guidelines or societal norms.

Youth: Youth generally refer to the period of life between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. While the exact age range can vary by culture and context, youth is often defined as encompassing individuals from approximately 15 to 24 years old, according to organizations like the United Nations.

Public perceptions: Public perceptions refer to the collective beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and views held by the general population regarding a particular issue, phenomenon, or group. These perceptions can be shaped by a variety of factors, including personal experiences, cultural norms, media representations, social interactions, and educational background. Public perceptions play a critical role in influencing behaviors, policy decisions, and societal attitude

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Preamble

The phenomenon of drug abuse among youths is a global challenge with profound implications for individuals, families, and societies. In Nigeria, the issue has reached alarming proportions, with universities often being epicenters of this crisis. The University of Benin, a prestigious institution known for its academic excellence, is not immune to the pervasive problem of substance misuse. The youth, as the cornerstone of any nation's future, are particularly vulnerable due to their susceptibility to peer pressure, socio-economic stressors, and the quest for self-identity.

This study seeks to explore public perceptions of drug abuse among youths within this academic community. Public perception is critical as it shapes societal attitudes, informs policy directions, and determines the efficacy of interventions aimed at combating drug abuse. Understanding how this issue is viewed within the University of Benin provides a window into broader societal dynamics and the unique pressures faced by Nigerian undergraduates.

By reviewing the extant literature, this chapter will uncover the multi-dimensional factors contributing to drug abuse, the substances most commonly misused, and the far-reaching consequences of this behaviour. The discourse will also highlight the gaps in existing interventions and the need for a comprehensive approach to address the menace of drug abuse within university settings. This endeavour is rooted in the understanding that tackling drug abuse requires a collective effort informed by robust empirical evidence and nuanced perspectives. It

takes into account the definition of various terms in relation to the topic of interest and analysis of these works.

2.1. THE CONCEPT OF DRUG ABUSE

The World Health Organization (WHO), (2022) defines a drug as any substance intentionally introduced into the body to modify its normal function. Drug abuse, in contrast, refers to the persistent and excessive use of substances for purposes beyond their medically approved functions. It involves the self-administration of drugs in ways that deviate from medical recommendations or cultural norms. For instance, taking prescribed medications such as barbiturates to induce euphoria in social settings constitutes drug abuse. Commonly misused substances include stimulants like amphetamines, as well as sedatives and tranquilizers such as barbiturates, Valium, and Mandrax. These drugs not only alter mental states but can also be harmful to users.

Drug abuse is characterized by the harmful or improper use of psychoactive substances, including illegal drugs, prescription medications, and even legal substances such as alcohol and tobacco, in a manner inconsistent with medical guidelines or societal norms. Among university students, drug abuse has become a significant public health and social concern. The university phase is often a period of exploration and experimentation, increasing the likelihood of drug use. Various social, psychological, and environmental factors—such as unemployment, financial instability, and inadequate mental health support—contribute to the vulnerability of young people to substance abuse.

According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2023), the misuse of substances like marijuana, codeine, tramadol, and methamphetamine is on the rise. The National

Drug Use Survey (2018) estimated that over 14 million Nigerians, many of them young adults, have engaged in substance use. This growing trend presents a significant challenge, particularly in university settings like the University of Benin, where students are exposed to drugs due to academic and social pressures.

2.2. COMMON DRUGS ABUSED BY UNDERGRADUATES

According to World Health Organization (WHO),(2022) the drugs commonly abused include cannabis sativa, (marijuana or Indian hemp), cocaine, heroine, morphine, opium, tobacco, alcohol etc. The sale and consumption of these drugs have caused a lot of problems in Nigerian society and in international community. Among Nigerian undergraduates, cannabis and alcohol are particularly prevalent, with Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2021) findings showing a surge in their misuse across institutions. Cannabis-derived substances like marijuana, locally known as "Igbo" or "weed," are widespread due to their affordability and availability. Studies by Adamu et al. (2022) confirm that marijuana is the most consumed psychoactive substance among university students, contributing to health and behavioural issues. Alcohol, another frequently abused substance, has dual effects, acting as both a depressant and stimulant of the central nervous system NIDA,(2022). It remains a significant concern for society, leading to addiction and adverse socio-economic outcomes Eze (2023). Alcohol is categorized as a psychoactive drug with a dual effect: it simultaneously depresses and stimulates the central nervous system. The issue of alcohol use and abuse among undergraduates in Nigerian universities and other institutions of higher learning has become a significant concern for society. Alcohol abuse often leads to addiction, and individuals affected by it are often referred to as alcoholics. This involves consuming alcohol in quantities that exceed societal norms, resulting in adverse effects on the drinker's health, relationships, and economic stability. Such individuals may find themselves

drinking unintentionally or consuming more than they planned. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that, while alcohol is legal in many countries, it can pose an even greater threat than substances like cannabis, cocaine, and heroin.

Marijuana, a derivative of cannabis, continues to be the most commonly used drug among undergraduates and remains one of the most controversial substances in popular use. Marijuana, also known as hemp or "Harshish," is referred to by various local names such as "Igbo," "Wewe," and "weed." It is locally cultivated and processed. Among university undergraduates, the use and abuse of marijuana are prevalent. Users typically smoke or consume the leaves of the marijuana plant to experience a sense of excitement or euphoria. While not everyone reacts to marijuana, particularly on their first attempt, its desired effects often include euphoria, heightened sensations, increased sexual arousal, changes in temperature perception, and distortions of time and space. These effects, however, are not always pleasant and are often accompanied by an enhanced appetite. Negative effects of marijuana use include memory loss, excessive risk-taking (which can lead to accidents), and a lack of emotional control.

Another commonly abused drug among undergraduates is heroin. Heroin is a powdery substance derived from the gummy extract of the opium poppy. Opium is prepared by boiling the raw gum and filtering out impurities. The final product can take various forms, including paste, powder, granules, or a solution. Within the addiction community, heroin is also referred to by various slang names such as "Horse," "Junk," "Smack," "Stuff," "Tat," "Button," and "Black Stuff," is typically consumed through sniffing or injection. Nasal use is commonly called sniffing, while subcutaneous injection is referred to as "skin popping," and intravenous injection is known as "mainlining." Within one or two minutes of intravenous injection, users experience a sensation described by some as comparable to an orgasm, though the feeling is concentrated in the

abdomen rather than the genital area. Heroin, heroin consumption through sniffing or injection can result in dependency and life-threatening health complications. Heroin users often become both psychologically and physically dependent on the drug. It suppresses appetite, leading many users to suffer from malnutrition. Women who use heroin face additional risks, including complications during childbirth. Babies born to heroin-addicted mothers are often smaller than average, prone to severe infections, and have high mortality rates. Some infants are born addicted and exhibit withdrawal symptoms shortly after birth.

2.3. REASONS FOR DRUG ABUSE

The question of the reason for drug abuse among undergraduate of Nigeria Universities or higher learning institutions has posed a question that seems hard. It is not impossible to offer an acceptable answer because the reasons vary from drug to drug and person to person. Some reasons are poor environmental and conditions, fear from minorities and other attempt to escape the power of “corporate state” peer pressure and pure pleasure. However, the major reasons for abuse of drugs by our undergraduates may include the following reasons:

1. **Peer Pressure and Social Influence:** Peer groups play a crucial role during university years as students seek acceptance and belonging. According to UNODC (2023), peer influence significantly drives substance use, as students often conform to the behaviours of their social circles. Stress from academic workloads also pushes students toward substances like stimulants to enhance performance (Oluwatosin & Nwankwo, 2022). Undergraduates often feel compelled to conform to the behaviors and expectations of their social circles. For Example, Party culture and social gatherings often encourage drinking or using substances like marijuana. Peer

influence can pressure students into experimenting with drugs to "fit in". This social acceptance leads to repeated drug use and, over time, dependency.

2. Stress and Academic Pressure: The rigorous academic demands of university life, coupled with financial and social stressors, can lead students to seek relief through substance abuse. For example, students may use stimulants like adderall or ritalin to stay awake and focus during exams. Others turn to alcohol or marijuana to relax after intense academic sessions. While these substances provide temporary relief, they often result in poor academic performance, health problems, and addiction.

3. Curiosity and Experimentation: University life provides a newfound sense of independence, which often fuels curiosity about new experiences, including drug use. Examples, A student might try marijuana or alcohol for the first time at a social event out of curiosity. Exposure to substances in media or through friends may encourage experimentation. Occasional use can escalate to regular abuse, especially if students lack self-control or awareness of the risks.

4. Accessibility and Availability: The availability and accessibility of drugs on university campuses exacerbates the problem. Research by Adeleke, (2022) highlights the easy availability of marijuana and alcohol near Nigerian universities. The: Universities and urban areas often provide easy access to drugs, making it simpler for students to experiment or continue usage. ExamplesAlcohol is readily available at bars or parties, Marijuana and other substances are often sold near campuses, sometimes by fellow students.Accessibility lowers the barrier to experimentation and increases the likelihood of abuse.

5. Coping with Emotional Distress: Emotional distress, such as loneliness or heartbreak, further propels students toward substance use as a coping mechanism (Okeke ,2021). Drugs become a

way to cope. Examples, A student dealing with a breakup may turn to alcohol to numb emotional pain. Those experiencing loneliness may use substances to feel better temporarily. While drugs provide a short-term escape, they often exacerbate emotional and mental health issues over time.

Influence of Media and Popular Culture:The portrayal of drug use in music, movies, and social media often glamorizes and normalizes substance abuse, making it appear trendy or desirable. Examples, Songs that glorify alcohol or drug use can encourage students to emulate these behaviors, Social media influencers showcasing partying and drug use can create a false perception of success and happiness linked to substance abuse. This cultural influence can lead students to underestimate the dangers of drug use.

2.4. IMPLICATIONS OF DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse has profound implications on individuals, families, and society. These effects can be categorized into health, psychological, social, academic, and economic consequences. The implications of drug abuse are far-reaching, affecting health, academics, and society. According to NIDA (2020), chronic substance use can lead to severe health issues such as liver damage, weakened immunity, and psychiatric disorders. A recent study by Volkow (2023) underscores the link between prolonged drug abuse and mental health deterioration, including anxiety and psychosis.

In the academic sphere, drug abuse results in poor performance and increased dropout rates. These effects are further confirmed by UNICEF Nigeria (2022), which emphasizes the need for multi-sectoral approaches to address the problem.

According to the National institute on Drug abuse(NIDA)(2020) prolonged substance abuse can lead to liver damage, heart diseases,lung problem, and weakened immunity. For example, chronic alcohol abuse can cause liver cirrhosis while smoking marijuana affects lung function.Drugs also worsen mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, or psychosis. Cocaine use, for instance, has been linked to paranoia and hallucinations Volkow(2016). Lastly Intravenous drug use increases the risk of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis due to shared needles WHO (2022).

Drug abuse can lead to significant psychiatric consequences, including confusion, restlessness, and, in severe cases, abnormal behavior or outright insanity. It is estimated that a substantial proportion of psychiatric cases are linked to the delirious effects of marijuana. Statistics reveal that 70% of patients receiving treatment for drug abuse in the country's psychiatric hospitals are undergraduates aged between 16 and 25 years. Additionally, drug abuse often results in poor academic performance, which can eventually lead to school dropout. Furthermore, it can cause aggressive behavior and depressive moods. Addressing the issue of drug abuse requires a multi-faceted approach involving individuals, families, institutions, and governments. Below are practical solutions to combat the problem:

2.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Structural Strain Theory is a sociological perspective that explains deviance and crime as a result of the disconnect between societal goals and the means available to achieve them. Proposed by Robert K. Merton in 1938, this theory is part of his larger framework of anomie theory, building on Emile Durkheim's concept of anomie (a state of normlessness in society). Robert Merton (1910–2003) developed the structural strain theory, which attributes deviant

behavior to the tension arising from the disparity between societal goals and the means available to achieve them. According to Merton, culture establishes goals for individuals, while social structures either facilitate or hinder access to the means needed to achieve these goals. He argued that poorer individuals are likely to share the same aspirations and values as the rest of society but often face restricted opportunities for success (Merton, 1978). Structural strain theory provides a framework for understanding the link between unemployment and crime patterns. Instead of blaming poor and unemployed individuals for failing to adopt middle-class values, the theory highlights the structural barriers and risks associated with such actions (Siegel, 1998). Social strain theory helps explain that drug abuse is not just a personal failing but often a response to societal pressures and structural inequalities. However, public perception tends to stigmatize individuals without considering the broader context of societal strain that may have contributed to their behavior. Drug abuse is a form of deviant behavior that arises when individuals experience a disconnect between society's goals and the means available to achieve them. The theory identifies how societal structures, pressures, and inequalities can lead individuals to turn to drug abuse as a way of coping with strain or escaping societal expectations.

2.6 STUDY HYPOTHESIS

The study was guided by the following hypothesis;

1. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness about drug abuse and the attitudes of students towards drug use at the University of Benin."
2. Students who are more aware of the health, academic, and social consequences of drug abuse are more likely to perceive it negatively.

3. Male and female students have significantly different perceptions of drug abuse in the University of Benin.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study will utilize a survey design. A survey design is a method used to assess and predict the opinions, reactions, or positions of a large group of people on a specific topic, such as the impact of drug abuse on Nigerian university undergraduates. In this approach, the researcher prepares a set of standardized questions, which are administered uniformly to participants, typically through interviews or questionnaires.

3.2 STUDY AREA

The research will be conducted at the University of Benin, Edo State. The University of Benin is located along Lagos Benin road, Ovia north local government area Benin city, Edo state. The University of Benin has about 77000+1 total population with about 15 faculties. The university of Benin was established in 1970.

POPULATION FOR THE STUDY

The target population for this research consists of students enrolled at the University of Benin. Currently, the present population of the university of Benin is 77,000+1.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

A total number of 100 respondents is used for this study and it involved student of the University of Benin as well as staffs and other members of the university community.

3.5 SAMPLE TECHNIQUE

A simple random sampling procedure was adopted in choosing the population of the study as it involves a fairly large community of the University of Benin which is the area under the research study, hence indicates a heterogeneous population.

3.6 INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaire and indepth interview guide was used for data collection. The questionnaire contains two sections. The Section “A” of the questionnaire contains items which were designed to give personal information about the respondent. The Section “B” of the questionnaire have items on how drug abuse can be associated with youthfulness and whether it is common among male undergraduates than female.

3.7 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data here will be analyzed using descriptive and statistical packages for the social science (DSPSS) , via tables, frequency and percentage

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared and administered to 100 students of the University of Benin. The researcher distributed a total number of 100 questionnaires and 85 out of 100 questionnaires were returned. Therefore I will base my analysis on 85 that were returned. The remaining 15 questionnaires were wrongly filled and mutilated and therefore rejected.

Table 1: Shows that the distribution and return of the questionnaire administered to students.

4.1. DISTRIBUTION/RETURN RATE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 1

Respondents	Distribution	Returned	Not Returned
Students / members of the university community	100	85	15
Total	100	85	15

Source: fieldwork 2025

The above table shows that out of 100 questionnaires distributed to the students and other members of the University of Benin, 85 was filled and returned and 15 was not **returned**.

PART 1 (SECTION A)

4.1.1 MARITAL STATUS

Table 2: Distribution of the marital status of the respondents

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Married	10	11.8%
Unmarried	72	84.7%
Widowed	3	3.5%
Total	85	100%

Source: fieldwork 2025

The above data shows that 10(11.8%) of the respondents were married, 72(84.7%)of the respondent were single and 3 (3.5%) of the respondents were widowed.

4.1.2 AGE

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
16 - 25	60	70.6%
26 - 35	15	17.6%
36 - 45	4	4.7%

45 - Above	6	7.1%
Total	85	100%

Source: fieldwork 2025

The above data shows the age distribution of respondents out of 85 respondents, 60 were within the ages of 16 – 25 years, 15 were within the ages of 26 – 35 years, 4 between the ages of 36 – 45 years, 6 between the ages of 46 – above.

4.1.3 SEX

Table 4: The Sex Distribution of the Respondents

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	40	47%
Female	45	53%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The table above shows that sex distribution of the respondents. The highest percentage 60 (60%) was recorded for the female respondents and the lowest percentage 40 (40%) was recorded for the male respondents. This means that more female respondents were selected for the sample.

4.1.5. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to their level of education

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SSCE	15	17.6%
Diploma/NCE	8	9.4%
Degree	58	68.2%
Other	4	4.8%
	85	100%

Source: fieldwork 2025

The above table shows the distribution of respondents level of education. It was deduced from the above table that the highest percentage 58 (68.2%) were respondents undergoing the Degree programme and 8 (9.4%) were those undergoing Diploma/NCE programme and 15 (17.6%) were those with SSCE and others 4(4.8%).

4.1.5. FACULTY

Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents according to their faculty

FACULTY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agricultural Science	1	1.2%
Arts/humanities	12	14.1%
Education	3	3.5%
Engineering	12	14.1%
Law	5	5.9%
Life Science	4	4.7%
Management science	11	13%
Medical college	5	5.9%
Social science	21	24.7%
Other	11	13%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows that 25 (25%) of the respondents were from the faculty of management science and another 25 (25%) from the faculty of Arts/Humanities, and 20 (20%) from the

medical college and 15 (15%) from the faculty of social sciences, 10 (10%) from the faculty of law and 5 (5%) from the faculty of education.

4.1.6. RELIGION

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their religion

RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Christianity	70	82.4%
Islamic	13	15.3%
Traditional worshipper	2	2.4%
Others	0	0%
Total	85	100%

Source: fieldwork 2025

The information on table 7 shows the frequency distribution of respondents according to their religious groups. The data indicates that the highest percentage 70(82.4%) were Christians, 13 (15.3%) are Muslims , 2(2.4%) are African traditional worshipers while the last category 0 (0%) belong to none of the religion.

4.1.7. RESIDENCE

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to their place of residence

RESIDENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Hostel	24	28.2%
Off Campus	61	71.8%
Total	85	100%

Source: fieldwork 2025

The above table shows that the highest percentage respondent as 61(71.8%) live off campus while 24(28.2%) live in school hostel.

4.2. SECTION B: SUBSTANSIVE ISSUES OF RESEARCH

QUESTION 1: What drug is mostly abused by University undergraduates?

Table 9

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Marijuana	36	42.4%
Methamphetamine	17	20%
Indian hermp	13	15.3%
Cocaine	9	10.6%
I have no idea	2	2.3%
Other	8	9.4%
Total	85	100%

Source : Field work 2025

The table above shows the type of drug that is mostly abused by the undergraduates. The table shows that a greater percentage 36(42.4%) of respondents agree that marijuana is the drug that is mostly abused by University undergraduates, 17(20%) respondents agree that methamphetamine (ice) is abused by undergraduates, 13(15.3%) respondents agree that Indian hemp is abused by undergraduates, 9(10.6%) agree that cocaine is mostly abused by undergraduates, 8(9.4) agree that other drugs are abused by undergraduates and the lowest percentage 2 (2.3%) agree that they

do not have an idea of drugs abused by undergraduates.

QUESTION 2: What makes youths engage in drug abuse?

Table 10

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
To get high	40	47.1%
To fit in the group	28	32.9%
I don't know	9	10.6%
Other	8	9.4%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

In the table above shows the greater percentage of respondents 40 (47.1%) indicated that youths abuse drugs to get high, 28 (32.9%) indicated that they abuse the drugs to fit into group, 9 (10.6%) indicated that they have no idea why youths abuse drugs and 8(9.4%) indicated that there are other reasons youths abuse drugs.

QUESTION 3: Is drug abuse associated with undergraduates only?

Table 11

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	7	8.2%
No	74	87.1%
I have no idea	4	4.7%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows that 74(87.1%) percent of the respondents indicated that drug abuse is not only associated with undergraduates while 7(8.2%) agreed that it is only associated with undergraduates while the lowest percentage 4 (4.7%) indicated that they do not have an idea.

QUESTION 4: What are the major reasons youths engage in drug abuse?

Table 12

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Academic problem	14	16.5%
For leisure	34	40%
To gain power	10	11.8%
To perform well	17	20%
All of the above	1	1.2%
Others	9	10.0%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table answers the question on the major reasons why students engage in drug. The result indicated that 1(1.2%) of the respondents believed that it is due to Academic problem, for leisure, to gain power and to perform well while 14(16.5%) believed that its due to academic problem, 34(40%) indicated that it is for leisure, 10 (11%) indicated that its to gain power, 17(20%) believed that its to enable them perform well and 9(10%) indicated that there are other reasons for drug abuse.

QUESTION 5: Do youths take drugs in the mist of friends or when alone?

Table 13

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Alone	20	23.5%
With friends	57	67.1%
I have no idea	8	9.4%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows the responses on whether the respondents take drugs when alone or with friends. 57 (67.1%) indicated that they take drugs when with friends, 20(23.5%) indicated that they take drugs when alone while 8(9.4%) indicated that they have no idea, this may mean that they don't take drugs at all.

QUESTION 6: What do you think is the effect of drug abuse among youths/undergraduates?

Table 14

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Beneficial	6	7.1%
Damaging	76	89.4%
Others	3	3.6%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The table above shows the responses on the effect of drug abuse among undergraduates, 76 (89.4%) indicated that the effect is damaging while 6 (7.1%) of respondents indicated that the effect is beneficial and 3(3.6%) have other opinions.

QUESTION 7: Does your association with others influence you to take drugs?

Table 15

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	21	24.7%
No	57	67.1%
I have no idea	7	8.2%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows distribution of respondents on whether association with others influence them to take drugs. 21 (24.7%) indicated yes which means their association with others influence them take drugs 57(67.1%) of respondents indicated No that their association with others does not influence them to take drugs and 7(8.2%) indicated they have no which means that their association may or may not influence them to take drugs.

QUESTION 8: Do you think drug abuse of youths/ undergraduates is associated with drug abuse by their parents?

Table15

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	8	9.4%
No	44	51.8%
Maybe	23	27.1%
I have no idea	10	11.8%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows the distribution of respondents on whether undergraduates drugs habit is associated with that of their parent, 44(51.8%) indicated No, 8 (9.4%) indicated Yes, 23 (27.1%) indicated maybe and 10(11.8%) indicated they do not have an idea.

QUESTION 9: What are the ways in which drug abuse can be reduced among youths/ undergraduates in the university of Benin.

Table 16

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Counseling	51	60%
Imprisonment of offenders	16	18.8%
Expulsion	13	15.3%
Others	5	5.9%
Total	85	100%

Source: field work 2025

The above table shows the response on the ways in which drug abuse could be reduced among University undergraduates 51(60%) indicated that it could be reduced by counseling, 13 (15.3%) indicated that it could be reduced by expulsion, that is expelling the students involved, 16 (18.8%) indicated that it can be reduced by imprisonment of the offender while 5 (5.9%) indicated that All of the above should be used in reducing drug abuse among University undergraduates.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that the respondent who are unmarried are 72 respondent with 84.7%, married 10 respondent with 11.8 % and widowed 3(3.5%) respondents. In age distribution, it was observed that respondents who fall into the age category 16 – 25 has the highest response with 60 (70.6%) respondents, followed by age category 26 - 35 which has 15 (17.6%) , followed by age category 36 - 45 which has 4(4.7%), and those with age category 46 and above which has 6(7.1%)respondents. In sex distribution, it was observed that the female

category has 45 (53 %) respondents and the male category has 40 (47%), in religion distribution, it was observed that the Christian religion has 70 (82.4%) respondents, Islam has 13(15.3%) respondent, African tradition has 2 (2.4%). In level of education distribution, it was observed that respondents doing degree programs has the highest response with 58(68.2%) respondents, followed by SSCE holders with 15(17.6%) respondents, diploma/ NCE with 8(9.4%) and others 4(4.8%).

In Faculty distribution, it was observed that Social sciences has 21(24.7%) respondents,, Art has 12(14.1%) respondents , Engineering has 12(14.1%) respondents , Management science has 11(13%) respondents, medical college has 5 (5.9%) respondents, law has 5(5.9%) respondents, life science has 4(4.7%) respondents, Education has 3(3.5%) respondents, and others has 11(13%) respondents. In resident distribution, respondents in school hostel has 24 (28.2%) and off Campus has 61(71.8%) respondents.

In examining the types of drugs that are commonly abused the result revealed that 36 (42.4%) of students abuse marijuana, 17 (20%) abuse methamphetamine (ice), 13(15.3%) abuse indian hemp, while 9 (10.6%) abuse cocaine, this findings is in line with the study by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2011) who found that the herbal form of marijuana is the most abused drug in West Africa, because it is likely cultivated all over the region and it is therefore affordable, marijuana appears to be the most commonly abused drug students.

In identifying if inherit gens from parents can lead to student drug habit, the result shows that 44 (51.8 %) disagreed, 8 (9.4%) agreed, 23 (27.1%), other responses shows “maybe” while 10(11.8%) were undecided.

In identifying the reason why students engage in drug in university of Benin, 34 (40%) responses are of the opinion that students engage in drug abuse for leisure, 14 (16.5%) responses shows that students engage in drug abuse because of their academic problems. The result also shows that 17 (20%) responses are of the opinion that they took drug to perform well, 10(11.8%) responses are of the opinion that students engage in drug abuse to gain power, 9(10%) of the respondents are of the opinion that there are other reasons why people engage in drug a abuse and 1(1.2%) respondent is of the opinion that all the reasons mentioned are reasons youths engage in deug abuse.

According to the findings, 14 (16.5%) of the students engage in drug abuse because of academic related problems, this agrees with the study by Emmanuel, Valentine, Terna, Habu, Chia, and Achukwu (2017) who found that drugs abuse affects student's concentration and thus interest in school and extracurricular activities. This may also implicate increased absenteeism and drop outs. Also, the study also agreed with a study conducted by Uchendu and Ukonu (2016), which revealed that drug abuse among students is tantamount to poor performance as the objectives of education to students are over run by aggressive behaviour, violence and withdrawal.

In investigating into the effects of drug abuse on students, the result shows that 6 (7.1%) of the students abuse drug in one way or the other due to the benefit that accrue from it. The result also shows that 76(89.4%) respondents agreed that drug abuse has damaging effect on student in the University of Benin. The result further revealed that 3(3.6%) are of the opinion that drug abuse has no effect on students.

In identifying if one's association influences them to engage in drug abuse, the result revealed that 21 (24.7%) agreed that the peer group influences drug abuse, 57 (67.1%) disagreed that peer

group can influence drug abuse and 7(8.2%) are uncertain if their association with others influence them or not to abuse drugs. In investigating if people use drugs in the mist of friends or when alone, the result indicate that 57(67.1%) agreed that they take drugs in the mist of friends, 20(23.5%) admitted that they take drugs when alone while 8(9.4%) do not have an idea which may mean they don't take/ abuse drugs. In investigating ways in which drug abuse can be reduced among university students, the result indicate that 51(60%) respondents suggested counseling, 16 (18.8%) respondents suggested imprisonment of drug abuser, 13(15.3%) respondents suggested expulsion of offenders while 5(5.9%) respondents suggested other measures.

The study's findings indicate that among respondents, 84.7% (72 individuals) were unmarried, 11.8% (10 individuals) were married, and 3.5% (3 individuals) were widowed. In terms of age distribution, the majority (70.6%) fell within the 16–25 age group (60 respondents), followed by 17.6% in the 26–35 age group (15 respondents), 4.7% in the 36–45 age group (4 respondents), and 7.1% aged 46 and above (6 respondents).

Regarding gender, 53% (45 respondents) were female, while 47% (40 respondents) were male. In religious affiliation, 82.4% (70 respondents) identified as Christian, 15.3% (13 respondents) as Muslim, and 2.4% (2 respondents) practiced African traditional religion. Educationally, most respondents (68.2%) were pursuing degree programs (58 individuals), while 17.6% held SSCE qualifications (15 individuals), 9.4% (8 respondents) had a diploma or NCE, and 4.8% (4 individuals) fell into other categories.

In faculty distribution, Social Sciences had the highest number of respondents (24.7% or 21 individuals), followed by Arts and Engineering, each with 14.1% (12 respondents). Management Sciences had 13% (11 respondents), while Medical College and Law each had 5.9% (5

respondents). Life Sciences accounted for 4.7% (4 respondents), Education had 3.5% (3 respondents), and 13% (11 respondents) were classified under "Other." Regarding residency, 28.2% (24 respondents) lived in school hostels, while 71.8% (61 respondents) resided off-campus.

On most abused drug, the study found that marijuana was the most commonly abused substance, with 42.4% (36 respondents) admitting use. Methamphetamine (ice) followed at 20% (17 respondents), Indian hemp at 15.3% (13 respondents), and cocaine at 10.6% (9 respondents). These findings align with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2011), which reported marijuana as the most abused drug in West Africa due to its widespread cultivation and affordability.

When asked whether inherited genes contribute to student drug abuse, 51.8% (44 respondents) disagreed, 9.4% (8 respondents) agreed, while 27.1% (23 respondents) responded "maybe," and 11.8% (10 respondents) were undecided.

Regarding reasons for drug abuse among students at the University of Benin, 40% (34 respondents) cited leisure as the primary reason, 16.5% (14 respondents) mentioned academic stress, 20% (17 respondents) believed drugs helped them perform better, 11.8% (10 respondents) associated drug use with gaining power, and 10% (9 respondents) suggested other reasons. One respondent (1.2%) believed all these factors contributed to student drug abuse.

The study further confirmed that 16.5% (14 respondents) used drugs due to academic challenges, supporting research by Emmanuel et al. (2017), which found that drug abuse negatively impacts concentration and leads to absenteeism and dropout rates. Similar findings were reported by

Uchendu and Ukonu (2016), who linked drug abuse to poor academic performance, aggressive behavior, and withdrawal from educational activities.

Examining the effects of drug abuse, 7.1% (6 respondents) acknowledged experiencing some benefits, while 89.4% (76 respondents) agreed that drug abuse had negative consequences for students at the University of Benin. A small percentage (3.6%, or 3 respondents) believed drug abuse had no impact.

On the influence of peer groups, 24.7% (21 respondents) agreed that peer influence played a role in drug abuse, whereas 67.1% (57 respondents) disagreed, and 8.2% (7 respondents) were unsure. When asked whether students used drugs alone or with friends, 67.1% (57 respondents) reported using drugs in social settings, 23.5% (20 respondents) used them alone, and 9.4% (8 respondents) were uncertain, potentially indicating non-users.

Finally, when asked about strategies to reduce drug abuse among university students, 60% (51 respondents) suggested counseling, 18.8% (16 respondents) recommended imprisonment for drug abusers, 15.3% (13 respondents) supported expulsion, and 5.9% (5 respondents) proposed other measures.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. SUMMARY

Drug abuse is a serious social problem in Nigeria because it has harmful effects on people's health, as well as their mental, physical, social, and educational well-being. The issue has become widespread, prompting researchers, professionals, social workers, and psychologists to seek possible solutions.

This research examines common but unproven beliefs about drug abuse among Nigerian university students. Many people, including religious and political leaders, parents, and the media, often assume that young people, especially undergraduates, are highly dependent on drugs. These opinions are widely shared by individuals, institutions, and organizations in society, and the media often portrays students as heavy drug users.

To better understand this issue, this study focused on drug abuse among university students, using the University of Benin in Edo State as a case study.

5.2. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that drug abuse is a major social problem, especially among young people. Many young individuals engage in taking hard drugs or misusing certain substances, which can harm their health and affect their bodies.

Drug abuse is particularly common among university students. Some take drugs to feel high, boost their confidence, or fit in with their peers, while others are influenced by friends or people around them. The study also found that male university students are more likely to abuse drugs than female students.

5.3. RECOMMENDATION

Drug abuse among Nigerian university students is a serious problem that harms individuals and the nation. To address this issue, the following steps can be taken:

1. **Keep Students Engaged:** Students should be kept busy with meaningful and interesting activities. If they are idle, they may turn to harmful habits like drug abuse. Providing good educational materials, leadership programs, and extracurricular activities can help keep them focused and productive.
2. **Rehabilitation Center:** The government should establish rehabilitation centers to help students struggling with drug addiction recover and reintegrate into society.
3. **Public Awareness and Education:** There should be widespread campaigns to educate people about the dangers of drug abuse. Community organizations, health agencies, and schools should identify at-risk groups and spread awareness about living a drug-free life.
4. **Creating a Supportive Environment:** Schools and universities should take the lead in discouraging drug use. They should introduce policies to prevent drug abuse, organize educational programs, and hold seminars for parents to help them recognize early signs of drug abuse in their children.

By taking these steps, society can help reduce drug abuse among university students and create a safer, healthier environment for young people.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Sociology,
University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo state.
6th January , 2025.

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the University of Benin I am carrying out a research work on public perception of drug abuse among youths in the University of Benin. I hope that you will be frank and honest in your response. Your answers will be treated in absolute confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Thanks for your co-operation. Please tick or fill.

Yours faithfully,
Agolo .C.Immanuel

SECTION A

PERSONAL DATA

PLEASE TICK [] WHERE APPLICABLE

(1) Marital Status: (a) Unmarried [] (b) Married [] (c) Widowed []

(2) Age: (a) 16 — 25 [] (b) 26 – 35 [] (c) 36 -45 []

(d) 46 — Above []

(3) Sex: (a) Male [] (b) Female []

(4) Level of Education: (a) SSCE (b) Diploma/NCE [] (c) Degree [] (d) Others (specify)

(5) Faculty: (a) Agricultural science [] (b) Arts/Humanities [] (c) Education [] (d) Engineering [] (e) Law [] (f) Lifescience [] (g) Management Science [] (h) Medical College [] (i) Social Science [] (j) Others (specify)

(6) Religion: (a) Christianity [] (b) Islamic [] (c) African Traditional Worshiper [] (d) Others (specify)

(7) Resident: (a) Hostel [] (b) Off campus []

SECTION B

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF THE RESEARCH

(8) What drug is mostly abused by University undergraduates?

(a) Marijuana [] (b) Methamphetamine (ice) [] (c) Indian Hemp [] (d) Cocaine [] (e) I have no idea [] (f) others (specify)

(9) What makes youths engage in drug abuse ?

a) To get high [] (b) to fit into the group [] (c) I Don't know [] (d) Other(specify

(10)Is drug abuse associated with undergraduate only?

a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) I have no idea []

(11)What are the major factors or reasons why students engage in drug abuse?

a) Academic problem [] (b) for Leisure [] (c) To gain power []

(d) To perform well [] (e) All of the Above [] (f) Others(specify)

(12) Do youths take drugs in the midst of friends or when alone?

a) Alone [] (b) With friends [] (c) I have no idea[]

(13)What do you think is the effect of drug abuse among undergraduates?

a) Beneficial [] (b) Damaging [] (c) others (specify)

(14) Does your association with others influence you to take drugs?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) I have no idea

15) Do you think drug abuse by undergraduates is associated with drug abuse by their parents?

a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) I have no idea []

(16)What are the ways in which drug abuse could be reduced among University undergraduates in Nigeria?

a) Counseling [] (b) Imprisonment of offenders [] (c) Expulsion [] (d) others (specify)