

Student Perceptions on Factors and Effect of Drug and Substance Abuse: A Case of United States International University - Africa

Juliana Namada, PhD^{1*} and James Karimi, PhD¹

*United States International University- Africa - Nairobi, Kenya

*Corresponding Author:

Juliana Namada, PhD

*United States International University- Africa - Nairobi, Kenya

Email Address: jnamada@usiu.ac.ke

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to explore students' perceptions on drug and substance abuse at USIU-AFRICA. Specifically, the study sought to investigate factors influencing drug and substance abuse and find out the effect of drug and substance abuse on university students. The study adopted mixed method approach. Multistage sampling was used to get representation from all the five schools within the university. In each school, 30% of the programmes was computed and rounded off to the nearest whole number. Simple random sampling was used to pick the number of courses in programmes. Snowball sampling technique was used to identify the drug and substance users who were targeted for focus group discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed using common theming method. The study established that major factors influencing drug and substance abuse family background and upbringing. In terms of influence of drugs and substances, the results indicated that substance abuse impair student judgement, affect quality of sleep, and lower the performance of students both in class and outside class. The study recommended a turn round strategy by the university in dealing with drug and substance abuse to improve students'

performance, their retention and completion rates to graduate with their respective degrees in their areas of specialization.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse, Students, Student Performance, United States International University -Africa.

Introduction

Drug and substance abuse is a problem affecting universities. The consequences on the students are far reaching in their achievements of objectives. This has been aggravated by the rapid social and technological changes. Drug and substance abuse is a global problem, whose prevalence has remained unabated amongst youths (Hurst, 2019). Despite the proven dangers, drug use persists. Over the past year 2020, around 275 million people have used drugs, up by 22 per cent from 2010. Drug and Substances of abuse include pain relievers, stimulants, tranquilizers, sedatives, and all four drug classes combined (Oluwoye, Merianos & Nabors 2017). According to unodc.org glossary of terms, Drugs refer to psychoactive drugs and more specifically to illicit drugs.

Research has consistently reported that drug and substance abuse behaviors among students in institutions of higher learning commonly linked to already perceived norms. Ikoh Smah, Okwanya, Clement, and Aposhi (2019) identified factors such as peer pressure and media influence, need to release stress, desire to enjoy the drug, accessibility of drugs, desire to experiment, influence from guardians and siblings, poor parenting, having trouble in school as key factors influencing drug and substance abuse. Experts describe age 17 to 28 years old as the age of "window of vulnerability" because most youth are influenced into drug and substance abuse by their peers. The desire for social acceptance and the phobia of being sidelined and rejected by fellow peers has been proved to be a contributing factor to drug and substance abuse among youth (Ndegwa, 2017). Kiriru (2018) in a study found

out that drug awareness had helped some of the students stop abusing drugs.

Drug and substance abuse has impacted negatively on the academic, social, psychological, economical, and physiological development among the abusers (West & Graham, 2005). Studies have established a high prevalence of drug and substance abuse among the youths (Birhanu, *et al*, 2014). National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) has come up with prevention strategies to reduce the prevalence (Ronoh, 2014; Maithya, 2009). However, the strategies have not reduced the number of those taking drugs. It is against this background that this paper seeks to explore the factors influencing drugs and substance abuse among students at USIU-AFRICA and find out the effects of drugs and substance abuse on university students. This research contributes to realization of two sustainable development goals of health and wellbeing and quality education.

The rationale for this study was to explore the factors and effects that influence drug and substance abuse among university students and make recommendations that the university management can use to make decisions.

Methodology

Mixed method design was used for the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design which is useful when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, and habits. This study collected student perceptions on factors and the effect of drug and substance abuse. The study targeted students in all the schools USIU-A university. The respondents were drawn from the five schools of business, school of humanities, school of science and technology, school of pharmacy, school of communication, cinematics and creative arts. The table below represents the number of programmes per school and the total number of courses in each school. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), a sample size of 30 percent is adequate. In each school a 30% of the programmes being taught in the spring semester were randomly sampled and data collected from all the students who were present in that class on the data collection day. The number of sample courses was computed to the nearest whole number since the data was discrete. In total 27 courses were sampled in the whole university for the study.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AT USIU-AFRICA IN SPRING 2018				
School	TOTAL programmes	Number of Courses	Percentage Sampled	Sample courses
Chandaria School of Business	9	45	30%	14
School of Humanities and Social Sciences	7	14	30%	5
School of Science and Technology	3	9	30%	3
School of Communication, Cinematics and Creative Arts	4	8	30%	3
School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences	2	6	30%	2
TOTAL	28	82	30%	27

The sampling frame comprised of all programmes 30% of all the programmes and data collected from courses in Spring Semester 2018. The total number of students in 27 courses targeted for the study was 723. Structured questionnaires samples classes. Snowball sampling technique was used to identify students affected by drug and substances who were targeted for focus group discussions. A total of 9 focus group discussions were conducted; 3 were from the school of business, 2 from school of humanities, 1 from science and technology, 1 from communication, cinematics and creative arts while 1 was from school of pharmacy. 1 group comprised of masters students.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and percentages. Exploratory factor analysis was preferred because factor reduction capability. This approach enables the

study to segregate factors with significant factor loadings. The results were presented in tables, graphs and figures. Perceptions on the effect was computed in percentages and presented in tables where the attributes with higher percentages were interpreted and discussed. Qualitative data was analyzed using common theming method and results presented narratively in terms of the key themes emerging from the focus group discussions.

Data Analysis and Findings

Response Rate

The study targeted 723 students from all the schools. The total number of the targeted students who returned the questionnaires were

612. Therefore, the response rate for the study was 84.6% which was a good response rate. Kumar (2019) noted that a 60% response rate is acceptable, and a response rate of greater than 70% is considered good.

Factors Influencing Drug and Substance Abuse

The first objective focused on factors which influence drug and substance abuse. The analysis was done using three faced approach. The first step involved descriptive analysis where mean, standard deviation, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were carried out. The second step involved factor rotation where the factor loadings were established, lastly, extraction of the factors with eigen values above the threshold.

Table 1: Factors influencing Drug and Substance Abuse

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Drugs are used to obtain desired effects	3.1350	1.64953	612
Drugs are used to change experiences	3.1409	1.54022	612
Physiological intolerance	3.1409	1.45377	612
Previous experience of drug	3.1742	2.73162	612
The setting for use influence drug abuse	3.0196	1.67555	612
Susceptibility of the time of use	3.0020	1.37556	612
The residence affects drug abuse	3.0744	1.47074	612
Peer pressure influences	3.2485	1.59867	612
Moral upbringings affect use of drugs	3.1918	1.52958	612
Amount of money at student disposal	3.1213	1.53551	612
Family background affect drug use	3.1546	1.50996	612
Misplaced priority affect drug use	3.1663	1.54340	612

The average mean across all the factors ranged between 3.0 - 3.2 which implies that the respondents seem to agree with different factors affecting the use of drugs and substance abuse. However, in terms of deviation, in terms of previous experience affecting drug and substance abuse the respondents had varying views which deviated from the mean by 2.7. This implies that on this factor ideas from the respondents varied significantly.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Factors influencing Drug and Substance Abuse

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.937
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3748.581
	df	66
	Sig.	0.000

The KMO and Bartlett's Test shown above indicates sampling adequacy of .937 against a threshold of .500 which is very good. Test of sphericity is significant at 0 .000. This implies that the sampling of students at in all the schools were adequate for the study. Further the results were significant.

Table 3: Factor Extraction of Factors affecting Drug and Substance Abuse

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.786	56.547	56.547	6.786	56.547	56.547
2	.875	7.289	63.836	.875	7.289	63.836
3	.749	6.241	70.077	.749	6.241	70.077
4	.696	5.802	75.879			
5	.556	4.634	80.514			
6	.463	3.859	84.373			
7	.442	3.683	88.056			
8	.367	3.054	91.111			
9	.343	2.861	93.972			
10	.290	2.420	96.392			
11	.235	1.961	98.353			
12	.198	1.647	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

From the Table 3 above, one factor was extracted with Eigenvalue of 6.786 above the threshold is normally all the factors above 1(one). The factor extracted had 56.547 meaning that this factor explained the total variance 56.5% of all the factors considered in the study. This implies that the factor and the associated subcomponents influence drug and substance abuse among university students.

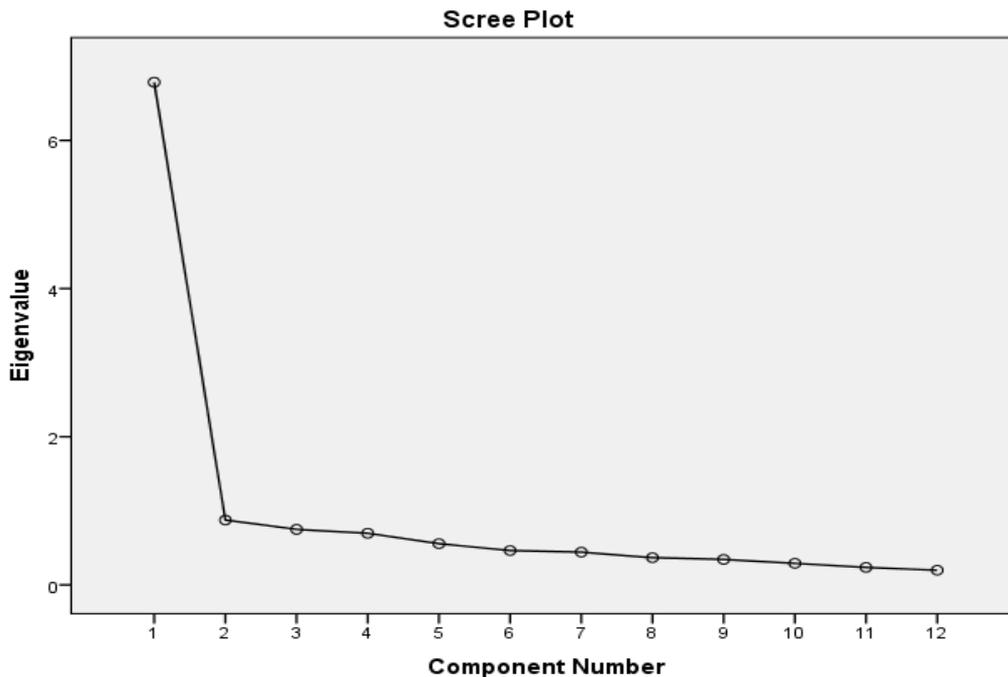


Figure 1: Scree plot of Factors influencing Drug and Substance Abuse

The scree plot shown indicates that one factor was 6.786 while the other nearest factors were 0.875 and 0.749 respectively. Therefore, only one factor out of a total number of 12 factors accounted for the considerable variance among the factors which influence drug and substance abuse among the students.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix of Factors affecting Drug and Substance Abuse

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX ^A			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Drugs are used to obtain desired effects (experience something uncommon)	.368	.785	.255
Drugs are used to change one's experiences	.271	.801	.267
Individual physiological intolerance leads to consumption of drugs	.359	.575	.400
Previous experience of drug influence drug abuse	-.025	.329	.707
The setting for use influence drug abuse	.314	.258	.653
Susceptibility of the time of use influence drug abuse	.490	.203	.675
The residence affects drug abuse	.530	.114	.648
Peer pressure influences drug abuse	.580	.568	.312
Moral upbringings affect use of drugs	.717	.347	.152
Amount of money at student disposal affect drug use	.731	.263	.217
Family background affect drug use	.790	.216	.265
Misplaced priority affects drug use	.698	.448	.201
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>			
<i>Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.</i>			
<i>a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.</i>			

The rotated component matrix was able to identify one factor with various components which had loadings greater than 0.5. Factor one had six components which were student's residence, peer pressure, moral upbringing of the students, the amount of money at the student's disposal, family background and misplaced priorities on the part of the student. The study established that family background and upbringing contributed significantly to the indulgence of drug and substance abuse. The main attributes of this factor were the moral values of the family, the amount of money a student is given and the nature of the family.

Qualitative Data on Factors influencing Drug and Substance Abuse

Peer pressure and upbringing came out strongly from all the focus group discussions as among the key factors affecting drug and substance abuse. In terms of peer pressure, students sought to fit into specific social groups for a sense of belonging and communal. They pointed out that social life, friendship, and companionship were among key considerations of students engaging in illicit behavior.

One student described the factors in the following words *"trends of the moment, curiosity and simply wanting to try something new"*

Some added that trends of the moment, curiosity and simply wanting to try something new were among the key drivers. Students who were joining

campus from different homes also felt a sense of too much freedom away from home especially those coming from a strictly supervised homes and those who had been closely monitored by parents and guardians.

Economic status of families and upbringing were mentioned as key catalysts to drug and substance abuse. Some of the students confessed having been brought up by absentee parents who were busy making money and not creating enough time for their children. Such parents to compensate for the absence gave lots of money to the students more than what was required for the campus upkeep. The result is that students used extra money to buy drugs and other illicit substances because affordability was not an issue.

Another described time factor in the following way *"too much time available for spending including the time between the classes and the weekends which are normally unoccupied with organized activities is normally filled up with experimenting with drugs and substances"*

Effects of Drugs and Substance Abuse on Student well being

The second objective focused on the influence of drug and substance abuse on the students. The analysis was done through descriptive statistics where mean, standard deviation and percentages. The findings were presented in Table 6 as shown.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the influence of Drugs on the students

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Users mental judgement is severely impaired	612	3.1228	1.63926
Addiction exposes the users to diseases	612	3.1874	1.61419
Drug abuse impairs persons thinking	612	3.1821	1.63196
Drug abuse potentially harm unborn baby and pregnancy	612	3.2674	1.72495
Impairment in attention, processing speed and sleep	612	3.1862	1.62200
Drug abuse increases risk of sexually transmitted infections	612	3.1385	1.61450
Drug abuse impairs participation and engagement in life	612	3.1800	1.59518
Drug abuse affects persons ability to think and communicate	612	3.1780	1.62458
Impairs performance in school, at work and to drive	612	3.2866	1.64267

Affects brain systems that are still maturing	612	3.1151	1.66064
Negative and lasting effects on their cognitive development	612	3.1875	1.64303
Drug users have negative and long-lasting effects on their cognitive development	612	3.1960	1.61249

As per the Table 6, the descriptive results indicated that there are very clear indications of what the effects of drug have on the students. This can be shown by the means presented on the Table of range 3.12 to 3.28. The most outstanding effect was "Impairs performance in school, at work and, make it dangerous to drive" with a mean of 3.286 and "Drug abuse potentially harm unborn baby and affect other pregnancy related issues" with a mean of 3.267 respectively.

Table 7:

Effects of Drug and Substance abuse on Student well being

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Users mental judgement	29.4%	8.1%	15.8%	14.2%	32.5%
Addiction exposes the users to diseases	25.8%	11.1%	15.2%	14.1%	33.8%
Drug abuse impairs persons thinking	27.8%	8.6%	14.6%	15.6%	33.4%
Drug harm unborn and pregnancy issues	29.8%	7.5%	10.7%	10.2%	41.8%
Impairment of speed and sleep quality	26.6%	10.3%	14.4%	15.1%	33.5%
Drug abuse increases diseases	27.5%	9.7%	16.1%	14.8%	31.9%
Drug abuse impairs engagement in life	25.0%	11.6%	16.5%	13.9%	32.9%
Impairs thinking, communication	27.3%	9.2%	14.9%	15.4%	33.2%
Impairs performance in school, work	26.1%	8.4%	14.2%	13.5%	37.8%
Affects brain systems	30.4%	7.2%	16.8%	11.5%	34.0%
Negative and long lasting effects on their cognitive development	27.3%	10.4%	13.5%	14.0%	34.9%

Out of the 612 respondents, 41.8% strongly agreed that "Drug abuse potentially harm unborn baby and affect other pregnancy related issues" followed by 37.8% who strongly agreed that, drugs "Impairs performance in school, at work and, make it dangerous to drive". This is a congruence of the mean results that indeed, the effects are dire. On the other hand, a small percentage of respondents between 10.7% and 17.5% had neutral observations which is also a worrying trend and shows ignorance of the situation languishing students in the university.

Qualitative Data on effect of Drug and Substance Abuse on Students well being

From the focus groups, the results reveal that the effects of substance abuse on the student's touches on affecting their physical, mental,

emotional health. Most of the students tend to miss classes, do not submit assignments, and isolate themselves from the universities activities which make them end up in dropping from school. Other effects include low self-esteem, violence, hallucination and low thinking capacity which all this affect their well-being and consequently leads to higher rates of university drop out or take longer to complete.

One student described the effect as "drugs and substance use causes short attention span making one not to complete assignments and group work"

Discussions

The study established that family background and upbringing are among the main factors which influence drug and substance abuse.

These findings were like a study investigating the relationship between drug use and substance abuse and quality of sleep among colleges and university students in Yemen and Saudi Arabia (Fadhel, 2020). The researcher found out that cultural factor plays a significant role in drug use and substance abuse.

A study by Yusuf (2010) found out that parental love, quality time, consistency and role modeling were mentioned in a study as fundamental in defining a youth's involvement in drug and substance abuse. Children from separated households are more prone to various vices in the society such as drug and substance abuse because majority of them have lacked parental care and supervision from an early age. The findings resonate with Schlarb, Friedrich, and Claben (2017) who observed that there is a significant evidence of sleep disorders and poor sleep quality among university students. Most of the sleep disorders are mostly linked to tobacco use and poor performance. They further explained that poor sleep quality had a significant effect on the level of drug use and abuse among University Students. Students who did not use drugs had a higher quality of sleep compared to students who used drugs who had poor quality of sleep more often. Some students in recent studies have confessed to taking stimulants such as Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine, Concerta, and Stratera to enhance their academic performance.

This study established that drug and substance abuse impairs performance in school, at work and, makes it dangerous to drive. In agreeing with the findings, DeSantis, Webb, and Noar (2008) noted that drug use and abuse these stimulants medications for both academic and recreational functions. For academic functions students believe that stimulants medication enables them to improve their GPA through helping them study and stay alert for long hours, enhance their concentration and focus and increase their energy level. For recreational function College and University Students it enables them get rid of fatigue and improve their social awareness

The findings of the research indicate that indeed drug and substance abuse affects students at USIU Africa and from other researches

done in other regions globally there is a great corroboration of these findings. In this particular study, the results indicate that drug abuse impairs performance in school, at work and, make it dangerous to drive, there is a great potential for Drug abuse potentially harm unborn baby and affect other pregnancy related issues. These findings are reflected by research conducted by (Njeru & Ngesu, 2014), who asserts that drug abuse to students is tantamount to poor performance as the objectives of education to students are over run by aggressive behavior, violence and withdrawal. It becomes impossible for such students to concentrate on studies or even interact with fellow students or lecturers

On the other hand, drug and substance abuse increases risk of sexually transmitted infections among the students which end up making them risk their young lives. As well, drug abuse impairs participation and engagement in life, affects person's ability to think and communicate rationally, recognize reality sometimes resulting in dangerous behaviour. These results have a bearing from the research done by (Bryan, Schmiede, & Magnan, 2012) who reported that drug abuse increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections. Ultimately, substance use can also impair participation and engagement in life, and can have effects on the individual, family, and community levels (Stoffel & Moyer, 2004).

Conclusions

This study therefore, family background was found to be major factors influencing drug and substance abuse among USIU-Africa students. Drug and substance abuse of drug by the students directly affects and impairs academic abilities of the students which limit their academic performance. The study recommends a multi-approach where different stakeholders are involved to curb this vice from the parents, lecturers, peers, counselors to follows preventive interventions aimed at improving academic engagement and broaden their focus beyond drug use in students. Community and family risk factors should also be targets of intervention.

The university needs to come up with mechanisms of dealing with peer pressure amongst students

to reduce instances of drug and substance abuse. The university need to partner with parents and accommodation providers around campus to tighten the rules governing student accommodation as a way of reducing the menace. Counseling education should be heightened in campuses to revive those who have already been engaging in the act and also the Government should strictly enforce its existing laws through NACADA against drug abuse through its regulatory agencies

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