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Drug Abuse among "Okada" Riders Business Youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated drug abuse among okada, riders business youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue state. Six specific objectives and four hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of all okada riders' business youths in Katsina-Ala LGA. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 214 respondents. The instrument for data collection was researchers designed titles Drug Use Questionnaire (DUQ). Results of the study indicated that drugs commonly abused were: alcohol (84%), marijuana (64%), tramadol (56%), codeine (42%) and inhalant (34%). The reasons for drug abuse were: to feel strong and feel good (66%), relieve stress (60%), take away fear (56%) and due to peer influence (26%). There were no significant differences in drugs commonly abused based on: Age (X^2 cal. value = 0.17 < X^2 cal. value = 9.49); Location (X^2 cal. value = 0.13 < X^2 crit. value = 9.49). Furthermore, there were no significant differences in reasons for drug abuse based on: Age (X^2 cal. value = 0.015 < X^2 crit. value = 9.49); Location (X^2 cal. value = 0.14 < X^2 crit. value = 9.49). The study concludes that alcohol, marijuana, tramadol, codeine, and inhalants were commonly abused for various reasons such as to relieve stress, feel strong, feel good and take away fear among okada riders' business youths in Katsina-Ala LGA. The researchers recommended among others that NDLEA should collaborate with the Local Government Authority to investigate and destroy marijuana farms in different locations in the LGA if any is found.
Key words: Drug abuse, Alcohol, Tramadol, Codeine and Marijuana

Introduction

Drug abuse has been a major challenge of youths over the years and has attracted the concern of government and the entire society. Drug abuse is reported all over the world, Greenfacts (2018) reported that about 20 million people worldwide abuse drugs, and majority of these people are between 15 years and above. Onifode, Somoye, Ogunwobi, Akinhanmi and Adamson 2011), reported that Nigeria has the highest one-year prevalence rate of drug abuse (14.3%) in Africa. Abanobi (2005) stated clearly that it is one of the major causes of teenage deaths in Nigeria and in most countries of the world.

Drug abuse is a cause of millions of serious injuries and illnesses; it plays a role in many social problems such as drug driving, violence, rape, robbery and sexual promiscuity (WHO, 2012). Ajila (2017) emphatically attributed the incessant unrest in many Nigerian education campuses, unwanted confrontations between students and school authorities, cultism and many other atrocities in the country to drug abuse. It appears that most social violence and unrest in different parts of the country are masterminded by youths who indulge in drugs to help them remove the natural inhibition to carry out the wicked acts.

Drug abuse is a pattern of repeated drug use that often interferes with health, work and social relationship. Morekwe, Seipone and Kegemoditse (2014) define drug abuse as habitual use of drugs not needed for therapeutic purposes, but solely to alter one's mood, state of consciousness or to affect a body functioning. According to Natasha (2017) drug abuse is compulsive, excessive and self-damaging use of habit forming drugs or substances leading to addition, dependence, serious physiological injury or psychological harm. In this paper, drug abuse means habitual use of drugs for the purpose it is not meant for; this could be prescription or non-prescription drugs, legal or illegal drugs. Some drugs are easily available and can be commonly abused.

Drugs commonly abused include alcohol and tobacco in different forms; others are sleep inducing drugs (hypnotics), analgesics (pain killers), antibiotics, vitamins and stimulants. Ajila (2017) listed the extensively abused drugs in Nigeria by youths to include cocaine, marijuana (Indian hemp), alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizers and heroin. These drugs are known to alter mood and change consciousness. Greenfacts (2018) stated that drugs that

change consciousness, mood and thoughts of those who take them are easily abused, and mentioned tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and heroin. Their use is growing rapidly and contributing significantly to the global burden of disease. Reporting further among these drugs that are abused by people aged 15 years and above cannabis top the list followed by amphetamines, opiods and cocaine.

Morekwe, Seipone and Kegemoditse (2014) reported alcohol as the most frequently abused legal drug (59.1%), marijuana was the most prevalent reported illicit drug used (74%). Results further showed that there were differences in the use of illicit drugs based on location. Odo, Nwagu and Mba (2017) reported that in-school adolescent' abuse drugs (54%); those aged 14-22 years (65.5%) and 10-13 years (29.4%) abuse drugs. Their result further showed that there was association between age of the students and the practice of unhealthy lifestyle. In the study area, it appears that people of all age grades irrespective of their location are into drugs especially the so called social drugs such as alcohol. This paper is interested in the abuse of alcohol, tramadol, codeine, marijuana (cannabis and Indian hemp) tobacco and inhalants.

Alcohol is a drug that is used for relaxation and to be more comfortable in social situations. It is a clear colourless, volatile intoxicating liquid that forms the intoxicating part of wines beers, whisky available. It produces some form of intoxication that alters judgment, perception, attention and physical control, it is observed to be the most commonly abused drug in Katsina-Ala. Both young and old, men and women, even children take it. It is accepted as being normal for relaxation and it is served in almost all occasions. It can be taken to the level of intoxication without people frowning at it. Igbende, Adi, Terwase and Anhange (2016) reported that the reasons for drinking alcohol were the urge to find friends, to be alert, reduce tension and attain higher goals. There was no significant difference in the reasons for drug abuse by location. Side effects of alcohol abuse include alcoholism, malnutrition, chronic pancreatitis, alcoholic liver disease and cancer. Others are cardiovascular diseases, visuospatial abilities and gait, balance and brain damage (Natasha, 2017).

Tramadol –it is a strong pain killer that appears to be used by youths after a day hectic work. It produces the euphoric high and feeling of goodness. It has many side effects such as agitation nausea, vomiting, constipation, dry mouth, high headedness or dizziness. In extreme cases, seizures occur leading to loss of co-ordination (Natasha, 2017). Chukwu, Pius, Fiase, Haruna, Chia and Achukwu (2017) reported that secondary school students between 15 and 19 years (53.6%) more than those 10 and14 years had abused drugs. Tramadol was abused by 22.9 per cent of the students studied. Reasons for drug abuse were reported as curiosity (10%) and peer influence (22.7%).

Codeine is a moderately strong pain killer used in pain relief and for suppression of cough. It also treats diarrhea and diarrhea predominant irritable bowel. There is increase tolerance when use goes on for long. This means the desire to take more than what was previously taken else the symptoms may not be relieved. Signs of abuse include vomiting, constipation, itches, and light headedness.

Marijuana (Cannabis Indica Daga) Indian hemp has various names in many cultures – pot ganja, Mary Jane, grass, shunk, lala, Igbo – It produces increasing creative to mystical experiences to heightening the capacity to feel, sense and share. It is the second most popular of the recreational drugs after alcohol (Natasha, 2017). It impinges on the central nervous system interfering with normal communication between the neurons which cause easy forgetfulness (Natasha, 2017). It is used for relaxation.

Tobacco is taken in many forms – sniffed as snuff, smoked, eaten, drank. The reasons for taking tobacco include pleasure, increased performance, vigilance relief of depression, curbing hunger. The smoke contains thousands of chemicals that affect both the smoker and those around him. Hazards include heart diseases, lung cancers and emphysema, peptic ulcer and stroke diseases (Asila, 2017).

Inhalants are commonly abused. This group includes solvents that emit vapour causing intoxication when inhaled. The abuser intentionally the vapour from a container, bag or rag soaked with the substance and placed over the mouth or nose. It intoxicates quickly and does not last long – that's why it has to be repeated severally. Symptoms are similar to alcohol intoxication and are dizziness, clumsiness, slurred speed, elation, tiredness, slow reflexes, thinking and movement, shaking, tremors, blurred vision, stupor or coma, chrome mental illness can occur. It damages the brain, heart, liver kidney (Greenfacts, 2018).

These drugs when taken, presents many side effects to the user which do not promote health. Youths who indulge in these drugs do so, not for the purpose they are meant to but for various other reasons.

People including youths abuse drugs for various reasons which could be personal or group of association of the abuser. The Sober Media Group (2018) stated that youths indulge in drug abuse to relieve stress, boredomness, due to peer influence, depression, curiosity, weight loss, low self-esteem and to enhance experience. Other people indulge in drugs for the fact that it is culturally normal. Ede (2016) reported that drug abuse was

used by terrorists, arm militia to commit crimes, and such other activities. Drugs abuse for whatever the reason may manifest adverse effects.

The adverse effects of drug abuse on the youths are enormous. Prominent among such is mood swings declining health status which increases morbidity and mortality now and in later years decreasing the quality of life (Sule, 2010). Natasha (2017) reported that adolescents who indulge in drug abuse find it difficult to concentrate on studies; exhibit tremors and are depressed. Some are destructive and are frequently involved in accidents. Despite the adverse effects of drug abuse, it appears that Okada riders in Katsina-Ala LGA of Benue State who are mostly youths and are future leaders, and constitute the large population indulge in drug abuse.

Reports by Ede (2016) regarding drug abuse in Benue State clearly states that drug abuse has caused increased mental imbalance, cultism, cattle rustling, armed militia, nicest, militancy, terrorism, low productivity capacity in workforce, family disintegration and crimes in the country and Benue State in particular. Ede further reported that 178 (164 males and 14 females) persons including youths have been arrested for drug related offenses in Benue with addictive drugs weighing 6,085.9074kg of cannabis sativa, 350.392kg psychotropic substance and 1.4kg of cocaine.

Furthermore, Swankpharm (2018) reported that a truck load of tramadol was impound in the state, while metro (2018) reported that police intercepts 509 parcels of cannabis in Benue. These reports show high level of availability and probably abuse of drugs of addiction in the state. Ayade (2015) earlier reported that there was a spike of cocaine consumption among Benue Youths.

Natasha (2017) asserted that psychoactive substances have been widely abused by both men and women of all age grades with the highest rates among 15-29 years. This trend they reported existed both in the urban and rural areas especially when the drugs are accepted for socialization purposes. Otienu and Ofulla (2010) noted that age group mostly at risk of drug abuse is 16-18 years when they are immature psychologically. The authors reported the reasons given for drug abuse as experimentation (38.2%), enjoyment of feeling (47.3%), and influence from: friends (8.7%); relatives (2.1%). The study further reported higher (30%) number of drug abuse for urban dwellers compared to rural (21.6%) dwellers.

Ongwae (2016) reported that 63% of the students who hailed from urban than those in the rural (23%) had abused drugs. Reasons for drug abuse by the students were reported as peer pressure (38%), curiosity (25%), availability (23%) and belief to pass examination (14%). The situation might not be different in Katsina-Ala L.G.A. and among okada business youths which necessitated the study.

Okada riding business in Katsina-Ala is very lucrative and easy to operate. Once you can ride "okada", you are qualified for the business. Following from the country's recession, there have been no employment of youths in the state and many of the schools' leavers in Katsina-Ala have turned to okada riding business. There is no town in Katsina-Ala LGA including the headquarters with town service cars, so that okada becomes the readily available transport service within the LGA. Recently, there has been an observed upsurge of kidnapping, cattle rustling, communal crises, cultism, and riots all over in Katsina-Ala LGA and the surrounding LGAs. It appears that perpetrators of these acts use Okada riders to carry out their operations. One wonders whether these are done under the influence of drugs. It is on this note that the researchers embark on this study to actually find out what is obtainable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out drug abuse among Okada riders business youths in Katsina-Ala LGA of Benue State.
Specifically, the study was set to:

1. Identify drugs commonly abused among okada riders in Katsina-Ala LGA
2. Identify reasons for drug abuse among okada riders in Katsina-Ala LGA
3. Determine drugs commonly abused based on age.
4. Determine reasons for drug abuse based on age.
5. Determine drugs commonly abused according to location.
6. Determine reasons for drug abuse according to location.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference in drugs commonly abused based on age.
2. There is no significant difference in the reasons for drug abuse based on age.
3. There is no significant difference in drugs commonly abused base on location.
4. There is no significant difference in the reasons for drug abuse base on location.

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Methods

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study – According to Nworgu (2006) the design is used to describe the situation as it exists in its natural setting. The population of the study consists of all Okada riders business in Katsina-Ala LGA numbering 1,001 (BEMOA Office, Katsina-Ala, 2018). The sample size of 214 was drawn through a simple random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was researchers designed called Drug Use Questionnaire (DUQ) and was validated by 3 experts in the department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, College of Education Katsina-Ala. The reliability of the instrument was established through split half method .A sample of twenty okada riders from Kwande LGA were exposed to the instrument, results were split into half using even and odd numbers Results of the two groups were correlated Cronbach Alpha Statistic which showed a reliability co-efficient index of .78 which was substantial for use in the study.

Data was collected from the respondents in Benue Motorcyclist Hires Association (BEMOA) offices across the LGA. Respondents filled and returned the completed questionnaire on the spot to avoid loss. Data were analysed using frequencies and percentages to answer research questions, while hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistic at .05 level of significance.

Results
Table 1
Drugs Commonly Abused by Okada Riders (n = 214)

S/no	Drug	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
3	Alcohol	180	84	34	16
4	Tramadol	120	56	94	44
5	Codeine	90	42	124	58
6	Marijuana	137	64	77	36
7	Inhalant	73	34	141	66
	Overall %		**56**		**44**

Results in Table 1 indicate that (56%) of Okada riders have abused drugs. The most commonly abused were: Alcohol (84%), marijuana (64%), tramadol (56%), codeine (42%) and inhalant (34%). Table further show that the most commonly abused drug was alcohol (84%).

Table 2
Reasons for Drug Abuse Among Okada Riders (n=214)

S/no	Drug	Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
8.	To relieve stress	128	60	86	40
9.	To take away fear	120	56	94	44
10.	To feel strong	141	66	73	34
11.	Due to peer influence	56	26	158	74
12.	To feel good	141	66	73	34
	Overall %		**54.8**		**45.2**

Results in Table2 show the reasons for drug abuse as: to feel strong and to feel good (66%), to relieve stress (60%), to take away fear (56%), due to peer influence (26%). The Table further shows the most common reasons for drug abuse is to feel strong and to feel good (66%).

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Table 3
Drugs Commonly Abused Among Okada Riders Based on Age.

S/no	Drug	15 - 35 years (n=169)				Above 35 years (n=26)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
3.	Alcohol	158	93.49	11	6.51	21	80.77	5	19.23
4.	Tramadol	60	35.50	109	64.50	13	50.00	13	50.00
5.	Codeine	73	43.20	96	56.80	13	50.00	13	50.00
6.	Marijuana	90	53.25	79	46.75	13	50.00	13	50.00
7.	Inhalant	60	35.50	109	64.50	13	50.00	13	50.00
	Overall %		**52.19**		**47.81**		**56.15**		**43.85**

Data in Table 3 generally show that drugs were more commonly abused by above 35 years than 15 – 35 years okada riders (above 35 years = 56.15% > 15 – 35 years = 52.19%).

Table 4
Reasons for Drugs Abuse Among Okada Riders Based on Age

S/no	Drug	15 - 35 years (n=169)				Above 35 years (n=26)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
8.	To relieve stress	107	63.31	62	36.69	17	65.38	9	34.62
9.	Take away fear	107	63.31	62	36.69	17	65.38	9	34.62
10.	To feel strong	120	71.01	49	28.99	21	80.77	5	19.23
11.	Fear influence	56	33.14	113	66.86	9	34.62	17	65.38
12.	To feel good	120	71.01	49	28.99	21	80.77	5	19.23
	Overall %		**60.36**		**39.64**		**65.38**		**34.60**

Results in Table 4 generally show that Okada riders in aged above 30 years had higher percentage score than those 15-35 years in reasons for drug abuse (above 35 years = 65.33% > 15 – 35 years = 60.36%).

Table 5
Drugs Commonly Abused Among Okada Riders Based on Location.

S/no	Drug	Urban (n=169)				Rural (n=26)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
3.	Alcohol	116	90.63	12	9.38	60	93.75	4	6.25
4.	Tramadol	43	33.44	85	66.56	30	46.88	34	53.13
5.	Codein	60	46.81	68	53.19	30	46.88	34	53.13
6.	Marijuana	64	5O.16	64	49.84	39	60.94	25	39.06
7.	Inhalant	39	30.09	89	69.91	34	53.13	30	46.88
	Overall %		**50.23**		**49.78**		**60.31**		**39.69**

Results in Table 5 generally show that okada riders who are in the rural areas abuse drugs more than those in the urban areas (rural = 60.31% > urban = 50.23%).

Table 6
Reasons for Drugs Abuse Among Okada Riders Based on Location

S/no	Drug	Urban (n=169)				Rural (n=26)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
8.	To relieve stress	86	67.19	42	32.81	34	53.13	30	46.88
9.	Take away fear	73	57.03	55	42.97	4	6.25	60	93.75
10.	To feel strong	103	80.47	25	19.53	34	53.13	30	46.88
11.	Fear influence	34	26.56	94	73.44	30	46.88	34	53.13
12.	To feel good	103	80.47	25	19.53	39	60.94	25	39.06
	Overall %		**62.34**		**37.66**		**44.06**		**55.94**

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Results in Table 6 generally show that okada riders who are in the urban than in the rural indicated various reasons for drug abuse (urban = 62.34% > rural 44.06%).

Table 7
Chi-square (X^2) Output on Drugs Commonly Abused Based on Age.

Age	N	X^2 cal. Value	Df	X^2 crit. value	Decision
15–35 years	169				
		0.17	4	9.49	Accept
Above 35 year	26				

Results in Table 7 show the calculated x^2 value with its corresponding table value at 4 degrees of freedom for drugs commonly abused (x^2 cal = 0.17 < x^2 crit = 9.49). Since the calculated x^2 value was less than the table x^2 value, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that significant differences did not exist in the responses of okada riders for drugs commonly abused based on age.

Table 8
Chi-Square (x^2) Output on Reasons for Drug Abuse Based on Age.

Age	N	X^2 cal. Value	Df	X^2 crit. value	Decision
15–35 years	169				
		0.015	4	9.49	Accept
Above 35 year	26				

Results in Table 8 shows the calculated x^2 value with its corresponding table value at 4 degrees of freedom of reasons for drug abuse (x^2 cal = 0.015 < x^2crit = 9.49). Since the calculated x^2 value was less than the table x^2 value, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that significant differences did not exist in the responses of okada riders on reasons for drug abuse based on age.

Table 9
Chi-Square (x^2) Output on Drugs Commonly Abused Based on Location.

Age	N	X^2 cal. Value	Df	X^2 crit. value	Decision
15–35 years	169				
		0.015	4	9.49	Accept
Above 35 year	26				

Table 9 show the calculated x^2 value with its corresponding table value at 4 degrees of freedom for drugs commonly abused (x^2 cal = 0.13 < x^2crit = 9.49). Since the calculated x^2 value was less than the table x^2 value, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that significant differences did not exist in the responses of okada riders on drugs commonly abused based on location.

Table 10
Chi-Square (x^2) Output on Reasons for Drug Abuse Based on Location.

Location	N	X^2 cal. Value	Df	X^2 crit. value	Decision
Urban	128				
		0.13	4	9.49	Accept
Rural	64				

Table 10 show the calculated x^2 value with its corresponding table value at 4 degrees of freedom for drugs commonly abused (x^2 cal = 0.40 < x^2crit = 9.49). Since the calculated x^2 value was less than the table x^2 value, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that significant difference was accepted. This implies that significant differences did not exist in the responses of okada riders on drugs commonly abused based on location.

Discussion

Table 1 indicated that okada riders' business youths abuse alcohol, tramadol, codeine, marijuana and inhalants. However, the most commonly abused drug was alcohol. This is in line with the findings of Morekwe, Seipone and Kegemoditse (2014) who reported alcohol as the most frequently abused legal drug, marijuana as the most prevalent illicit drug abuse. Drug abuse is a cause of declining health status, it increases morbidity and mortality rates (Sule, 2010). It damages the brain, heart, liver and kidney.

Table 2 indicated the various reasons for the abuse of drugs as to relieve stress, take away fear, feel strong, due to peer influence, and to feel good. However, the most common reasons were to feel strong and to feel good. The finding was in line with that of Sober Media Group (2018) which reported that youths abuse drugs to relieve stress, bordomness, due to peer pressure, depression and curiosity. The report further confirmed that of Otieno and Ofulla (2010) which reported reasons for drug abuse among the studied subjects to include experimentation, enjoyment, influence from friends and relatives. This finding is not healthy since most of the drugs abused have adverse health effect on the users now and later in life. The okada riders need health education in order to find other positive means of feeling good and strong such as going to the gym and promote health.

Table 3 indicated that the okada riders above 35 years abuse drugs more commonly than those 15 – 35 years. This result does not promote health and especially among those already in the age grade that favour degenerative diseases. This age grade is supposed to be bringing up children and younger adults in health promoting way; it is rather not encouraging as they are into drugs. This result conforms to findings of Odo, Nwagu and Mba (2017) who reported that youths 14 – 22 years more than those 10 – 13 years had abused drugs. Further results on the Table showed that youth 15 – 35 years had abused alcohol more than those above 35 years. These differences were however not significant.

Table 4 shows that okada riders of various age groups had abused drugs for various reasons; with those above 35 years more than 15 – 35 years to feel strong, to feel good and to take away fear. This might be to commit crime, engage in armed militia, cattle rustling and cultism as it is currently rampant in the study area. The differences in the reasons for drug abuse were however not significant.

Table 5 indicated that okada riders who reside in the rural (60.31%) than in the urban (50.23%) areas abused drug. This is not surprising because it is observed that there is more crime, militia, and cattle rustling in the rural areas. This may be masterminded by those who engage in drug abuse. This result contradicts that of Ongwae (2016) who reported higher percentage of urban than rural secondary school students in drug abuse. The differences were not significant. However, Morekwe, Seipone and Kegemoditse (2014) reported that there were differences in drug abuse based on location. The subjects in the rural and urban locations need health promoting education to tame the menace.

Table 6 shows differences in percentage okada riders' responses in reasons for drug abuse based on location. Further statistics show that the differences were not significant.

Conclusion

The study concluded that alcohol, marijuana, tramadol, codeine, and inhalants were commonly and widely abused. The reasons given for indulging in drugs were to relieve stress, feel strong, feel good and take away fear. There were no significant differences in age and location of 'okada riders' business youths with regards to drugs commonly abused and the reasons for drug abuse in Katsina-Ala LGA.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings and discussion of the study, the following recommendations are made:
1. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should intensify campaigns on anti-drug themes to youths at parks to reduce the menace.
2. NDLEA should collaborate with the Local Government Authority to investigate and destroy marijuana farms in different locations in the local government if any is found.
3. The Road Safety should collaborate with the Benue Motorcycle Association (BEMOA) to educate members of the association on the effect of drug abuse.
4. BEMOA should caution its members and sanction those who involve in abuse of drugs.
5. The society through faith based organizations, traditional council, school, town unions should be educated on the ills of drug abuse to in turn educate their members to reduce the menace.

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