

Psychosocial Factors Influencing Drug Abuse Among Youths In Informal Settlements: A Case Study Of Mathare Slums, Nairobi County, Kenya

Zephaniah Navangi Makokha, Dr. Enos Barasa Mukadi, Dr. Robert Mwebi
Bisonga

School of Education, Laikipia University, Kenya

ABSTRACT

Many youths in informal settlement in Kenya are involved in a number of social vices. These vices may include but not limited to robbery with violence, early marriages, dropping out of school and joining outlawed gangs. Youth involvement in social vices presents great concern to parents, government and non-governmental organizations. With increased prevalence of social vices in informal settlements in Kenya, this study was motivated to investigate the influence of psychosocial factors on drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements of Nairobi County, Kenya. This study sought to determine the effect of peer pressure as a psychosocial factor on drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlement. The unit of analysis were persons of both gender falling between 18 years and 35 years of age. The target population was 17,894 youths of which a sample of 391 respondents was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling method. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using the linear regression analysis where hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was utilized for the purposes of validity. The validity of the instruments was checked by the researcher who also sought the opinion of experts from the School of Education in Laikipia University. The reliability coefficients for questionnaire was estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha for youth questionnaire was $r = .827$. The questionnaires were considered reliable after yielding a reliability coefficient alpha of at least 0.70. Both the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was used by the study. The descriptive statistics that was used included the mean, standard deviations and frequency distributions. From the data analysis it was evident that peer pressure contributes to 2.6% of drug abuse cases among youth in Mathare informal settlements. The study recommends that county Government of Nairobi in collaboration with NACADA should engage experts or qualified personnel with right information to have face to face meetings with local community leaders who will relay information to the youths on the harmful consequences of abusing drugs. Mass media approach can also be used through magazines, radio and roadside advertising hoardings to serve as infotainment technique.

KEYWORDS: Drug Abuse, Informal Settlements, Peer Pressure, Youth, Psychosocial factors.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The youth are vital within the psychosocial development of the country. The youth are the backbone of the economic development within the country. However, abuse remains a significant challenge for the youth. Drug abuse in modern-day is extraordinarily widespread across the world amongst individuals of numerous demographic characteristics (Bissessar, 2014). Masese (2014) indicated a drug could be a substance that, because of its chemical nature, affects physical, mental and emotional functioning. It will enter the body through mastication, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin, or injection. Wahler (2012) indicates that a drug is any substance that once introduced into the body can alter the conventional biological and psychological functioning of the body particularly the central nervous system. Ekpenyong and Island (2012), argues that abuse involves the employment of medicine for non-medical functions or the misuse of any mind-bending substances leading to changes in bodily functions, therefore moving the individual socially, cognitively or physically. The medicine abused will be either legal or not legal in nature.

Drug abuse has been defined as the use of any substance whether legal or not legal for any reason aside from its supposed medical purpose which can successively injure one's mental or physical health, ability to figure or perform commonly within the society (Bissessar, 2014). Finally, conceptualization of abuse because

the deliberate uptake of medicine, ends up in numerous health risks attributed to abuse as well as diseases like TB, carcinoma, and psychotic disorders like schizophrenic psychosis, catatonia and delusion (Njonjo, 2014).

It is an unattainable task to define 'drug' in today's idiom. Linguistic references are ambiguous and visit multiple things at a similar time; or, perhaps, language is precise enough and also the drawback lies within the politics of definitions. After all, 'drug' within the West Germanic language refers to an outsized type of 'substances', which have, or may not have, therapeutic, wholesome or alternative psychophysical effects. The employment of adjectives like 'narcotic', 'stimulant', 'illicit' or 'psychoactive' is meant to clarify the ethereal nature of words like medicine and substance. The words medicine associated substances will solely be quickly discharged of their ambiguity with the employment of an attribute: illicit or not illicit. That conforms to America that the character of medicine in fashionable societies is inherently political, for medicine are tied to a political classification enunciated through legal means: the prohibitionist regime. (Ghiabi, 2019)

Humankind has used medicine since earlier period for numerous functions as well as healing and non-secular functions (Bwanika, 2014). In keeping with Kamiti, Mulwa, and Kombo (2010) in their study on abuse awareness campaigns in Kenya, the traditional medicines were in types of herbs, roots, bark, leaves and plants that were used for medicative functions. The study more noted that with time humankind's use of drug evolved to use of medicine for relaxation functions resulting in the matter of abuse.

There is historical evidence of drug abuse involving Cannabis Sativa among the Chinese by 2700BC, Opium drug abuse among Egyptians since 1500BC, heroine has been abused since 1890s, morphine since 1800s, Cocaine since 1855, Marijuana since 2800 BC and Hasish since 2800 BC. There are diverse aspects in modern day that lead to drug abuse including ease of availability and low cost of drugs, experimentation amongst the youths, lack of role models and lack of parental supervision. The youths living in informal settlements are extremely vulnerable to drug abuse due to the socio-economic environment in which they live. This is according to study on drug abuse in Katwe Slums of Uganda, (Bwanika, 2014).

A slum is a household located in urban area and lacks one or more following characteristics. Durable and permanent housing, enough space so that more than three people do not share a room, easy access to water at a reasonable price, access to basic sanitation services including a toilet shared by a reasonable number of people and tenure security that secure the tenants from forced evictions. Browne (2013) offered this characterization.

In the Kenyan context, Mwau (2013) describes the characteristics of slum as a way of defining them. Mwau (2013) indicates that the Kenyan slums are characterized by high population densities per unit area of land, poor provision of infrastructure and related services due to poor physical layout of the houses, little or illegal connection to water and electricity, and houses constructed of temporary materials such as roofing sheets, mud and cardboards. Other defining characteristics are the accommodation layout being on a room-by-room basis with majority of households occupying single rooms, and low-income status of the residents (Dang & Pheng, 2015).

In a study on India, Raman, Namita and Chaturvedi (2010) found that smokeless tobacco was more prevalent in the area that is 43.7 per cent, while smoking tobacco were 21 per cent, alcohol was 12.2 per cent, charas 5.9 per cent, ganja 2.5 per cent, Brown sugar 1.7 per cent and opium and others were 0.8 per cent. The study also found that there is use of alcohol, charas, ganja, Brown sugar and opium in combination as opposed to single habit. The study linked drug abuse in the informal settlement in Mumbai to low education levels leading to lack of employment opportunities for the youths.

The reasons for drug abuse included peer pressure, to reduce stress and forget about problems, lack of role models at home, breakdown of families, and influence from media as cited by 45.3 per cent, 38.7 per cent, 38.7 per cent, 24.0 per cent, and 9.3 per cent of the respondents respectively (Simango, 2014). Other aspects that were cited included conflicts with parents and friends, too much money, and lack of education with 1.3 per cent for each of the aspects cited.

In a study on drug abuse among the youths in Katwe Slums of Uganda, Bwanika (2014) noted the diverse reasons on why youths engaged in drug abuse. The study indicated that the availability and low cost of drugs such as marijuana, khat, and alcohol was a major factor leading to drug abuse. The youths often saw their role models such as older siblings engaging in drug abuse and leading to experimentation due to low cost of drugs as well as accessibility. The study also cited the cases of absentee parents. Due to the low psychosocial factors of the parents, a majority of the parents are unavailable to give proper guidance to their teenage children, which makes it easy for them to get into drugs. The influence of the family and community in which drug abuse was widely practiced was also a reason for the cause for drug abuse amongst the youths in Katwe slums.

NACADA (2018), Ndung'u (2015) and Njonjo (2014) revealed that the rate of drug abuse among the youths in informal settlements and more specifically Mathare slums in Kenya was rising annually by 13 per cent due to challenges of unemployment and availability of drugs. Similarly, another survey conducted by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018 pointed out majority (27%) of youths in informal settlements in developing countries and more specifically in Kenya are abusing multiple drugs such as cocaine (09%), bhang (05%) and

alcohol (13%) thus pertinence of this study in Mathare slums in Nairobi to bridge this research gap. The research was used to bridge this gap by establishing and pointing out psychosocial factors influencing drug abuse among the youths in the slums. The psychosocial factors that were considered include influence of peer pressure, emotional stability, stress level and role of family structure on drug abuse among the youths.

It may be tough to find a comprehensive picture of the worldwide patterns and trends in illicit drug consumption. At the worldwide level, one mechanism exists that's designed to assemble a summary of world drug use situation, namely, part II, entitled "Extent, patterns and trends of drug use" of the annual reports questionnaire (Revision of part II of the annual reports questionnaire, 2001). This picture of the worldwide drug situation is as the result of the questionnaire data in conjunction with other published material on drug consumption, and relies heavily on data provided by national and regional drug information systems (United Nations, Drug information systems, 2000)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer pressure has an influence on drug abuse amongst youths within Informal Settlements. Peer pressure is one aspect driving youth towards drug abuse across the world. Tulu and Keskis (2015) undertook a study that amongst other aspects examined the role of peer pressure on drug abuse. The study was undertaken amongst second year students of Makelle University in Ethiopia. The study found that 55per cent of the respondents ranked peer pressure as the major factor leading them to drug abuse. The study attributed the role of peer pressure in drug abuse to aspects of modeling, imitation and fear of isolation (Agbonghale and Okaka, 2014).

In Nigeria, Agbonghale and Okaka (2014) undertook a study that sought to amongst other aspects seek to examine the role of peer pressure on drug abuse aspects. The study found that 87.15per cent of the respondents indicated that peer pressure influenced the drug abuse amongst the students. However, this study will seek to address the research gaps by seeking to examine the effect of psychosocial factors influencing drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County, Kenya.

In a study, Adekeye (2015) confirms that peer influence is the potential predator of substance abuse among the youth; this comes from the fact that the youth as well as teens are more susceptible to peer pressure, attitude as well as encouragement from their fellow peers. Cronin (2005) in a study undertook to determine influence of peer pressure on drug abuse reported that students with peers are with higher levels of drinking compared to non-student peers.

Focusing on secondary students in Makueni in Kenya, Muoti (2014) examined the role of peer pressure on drug abuse aspects. The study found that the respondents moderately agreed that peer pressure had influence on the drug abuse due to a mean of 2.453. In this context, the study indicated that the peer pressure influences drug abuse through becoming a source of information and drugs for the youth. The peers exchange information and drugs amongst themselves. The study also noted that the peer groups also provide models for drug usage, teaching its members when, where and how to the drugs.

Focusing on informal settlements in South Africa, Simango (2014) examined the role of peer pressure on the drug abuse in the settlements. The study found that 45.3per cent of the respondents considered peer pressure as the cause of drug abuse aspects. The study further examined the manner in which peer pressure impact on drug abuse. The study found that peer pressure impact on drug abuse through provision of drugs (48per cent), initiation into drugs (40per cent), model drugs using behaviors (14.7per cent), and shape attitude towards drugs (13.3 per cent)

In Mombasa Masivai (2013) examined the role of peer pressure on the drug abuse amongst public secondary schools in Mombasa. The study found that 88.9per cent of the respondents agreed that peer pressure influenced drug abuse in their schools. The study noted that the lack of positive role models leads to easy influence of students to negative peer influence across the schools.

According to Opukiri (2013) if an adolescent associate with other adolescents who use drugs, the risk of involvement with drugs is further increased. Another survey of youths in southern Nigeria by Abudu (2008) also found out that the source of drugs for drug using-students was friends in the same or neighboring schools, and students who reported using drugs had more drug using than abstinent friends (Agbonghale & Okaka, 2014). Onyango and Tostensen (2015) argues that peer pressure influences youths to use substances under the misunderstanding that some drugs stimulate appetite for food, increase strength and provides wisdom as well as courage to face life.

According to Abudu (2008) drug users, like people seek approval for his or her behavior from their peers whom they plan to convince to hitch them in their habit as a way of seeking acceptance. Whether peer pressure features a positive or negative impact depends on the standard of the coevals. Unfortunately, an equivalent peer pressure that acts to stay a gaggle within an accepted code of behavior also can push a susceptible individual down the incorrect path.

According to Kasundu, Mutiso, Chebet and Mwirigi (2012), social pressures often reinforce drug-taking as a sign of adult behavior. In addition, as youngsters get older, they become more economically independent and group involved. As a result, they're more likely to enjoys substance abuse. The reasons given for indulging within the vice are, amongst others, to relax, to point out independence, to be a part of a gaggle, to alleviate stress, to satisfy curiosity, to copy role models, to be rebellious, to overcome boredom, to cope up with problems and to keep up with the crowd (Milkman & Wanberg, 2012).

Peer pressure is the most commonly assumed mode, in which peers exert direct attempts to impose attitudes or behaviors' that can either be negative or positive (Pomery, 2009). Peer can influence individual 'decision making' process even without direct interaction. Pristein and Wang (2005) found that youths and adolescents seek favor with their peer groups and want to be accepted hence result to drug abuse to fit in and be accepted by their peers.

According to a research conducted by Clark (2001) among four participants in a rehabilitation centre in Australia aged 18, 23, 27, 29 years, peers influenced them into drug abuse by suggesting and persuading them into trying out the substances such as marijuana and cocaine as well as alcohol. Then providing them with the source until participants learnt the way to get to the source themselves. This study's results are consistent with the meta-analysis that concluded peer use of drugs to be more influential than any other form of influence that leads to drug abuse (Brody, 2003).

In a research conducted among adolescents in Nigeria, Baylesia state Adesina and Ekpo (1957) in their studies dwelled extensively on reasons why the youths and adolescents use drugs which include social acceptance and initiation of peers because they did not want to feel left out. Idowu (1987) found that students smoked and used drugs at the instance of peers and that the adolescents as well as the youth were very susceptible to the influence of their peers.

Youths in informal settlements are more prone to influence by peer pressure to result into drug abuse due to presence of gangs. According to a study carried out by Onyango (2015) in Nyalenda village, Kisumu County, youths indulged in drug abuse mainly due to influence among their peers and the need to fit into different groups to satisfy a certain sense of belonging. A cross sectional study conducted by Otieno and Ofulla (2006) in Kisumu targeting nine secondary schools, youths in the region revealed astonishing cases of drug abuse due to influence among their peers. The age group most at risk was 16-18 years, the age at which most students are in secondary schools.

In one way or another, peer pressure is involved in around half first-time substance use. This doesn't imply that teens are being backed into walls and made to use. It's a blanket term to explain any influence from friends or classmates. Keeping up with peers and "fitting in" are subtle and sometimes subconscious ways in which teens finish up entangled with drugs and alcohol. If your son or daughter is at a celebration and someone hands them a beer or a joint, they'll take it without even thinking. If they decide to not, they'll worry about what the reaction would be, or that they're missing out on something that everyone gets to experience. Peer pressure may be a daily fixture of middle and high school life, and it helps to understand this when trying to elucidate your teen's actions (Camille Renzoni, 2019).

Verkooiken, Vries and Nielson (2005) identified the impact of group identity on the use of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana among 3956 adolescents. The study found that identification with hippie groups links to higher probability of substance use while identification with quiet religious groups links to lower probability of substance use. Individuals who perceived group members as likely to use substance were more likely to misuse the substance themselves due to peer pressure. However, this study will seek to examine the effect of psychosocial factors influencing drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County, Kenya.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework gives the theories that support this study. The theories that support this study are social strain theory.

The social strain theory was advanced by Robert King Merton in 1938 (Maria, 2005). The theory is based on the notion that each society has a dominant set of values and goals and acceptable means of achieving these values and goals. However, due to diverse challenges not all the members of the communities are able to achieve these values and goals (Frone, 2005). The gap between the approved goals and the means people have to achieve them creates social strain. Therefore, social strain occurs as a result of individuals facing a gap between their goals such as finances and their current status (Santa-Maria, 2005). The youths are also influenced with this desire to achieve and be like their peers. The Social Strain has also been conceptualized as the state of dissatisfaction arising from a sense of discrepancy between the aspirations of an individual and the means that the person has available to realize these ambitions. The aspirations of the individuals such as the youths could be furthering education, saving money, starting a family, improving the family life and so on which would lead to material success and enhanced social status (Sagoe, 2014).

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables Extraneous Variables Dependent Variables

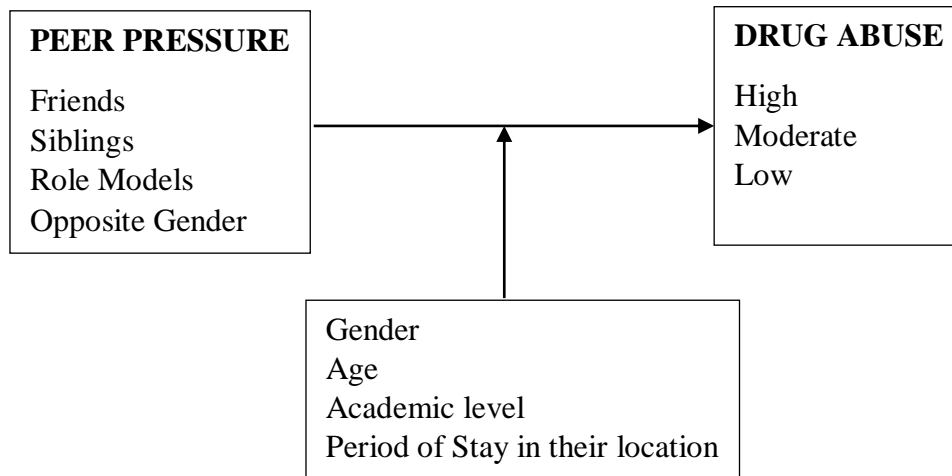


Figure 1: Interrelationships between variables in the study

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design was used due to several advantages associated with the research design including the ability to describe and portray characteristics of an event or situation.

The descriptive research design also describes the state of affairs as it exists without any manipulation of the variable (Mugenda, 2003). The descriptive survey also allows for the gathering of information, summarizing, presentation and interpretation of data for purpose of clarification (Kothari, 2004). The descriptive research design was critical in examination of peer pressure on drug abuse amongst youths in informal settlements Nairobi County.

The target population of the youths in Mathare informal settlement was 17,894. The sample size for this study was 391 respondents derived from an observed value calculated using the Yamane (1967) simplified formula. However, due to anticipated high non-response rate on account of the nature of the population parameters, a (15%) proportion of the sample size (59 respondents) was added to the result in a final sample of 450 as recommended by Devi, Azfar and Tanwar (2018). Out of the 450 questionnaires issued, 431 questionnaires were returned. Out of these, 15 were not fully filled and were eliminated during data cleaning as non-responses. The final sample responses were 416 resulting in a response rate of 92.4%.

The study used the structured questionnaire as a means of data collection. The overall objective of the study was to determine the peer pressure as psychosocial factor on drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County. The researcher carried out a pilot study to establish the reliability of research questionnaires. The pilot study was undertaken in Naivasha Karagita slums, which have similar characteristics as the Mathare slum area of Nairobi County. According to Orodho (2003), at least 10 per cent of the sample size should be used for the study that is 391 respondents that was to be used for the study. Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency. Reliability of questionnaires was determined using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reliability coefficients for questionnaire was estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha for youth questionnaire was $r = .827$. The questionnaires were considered reliable after yielding a reliability coefficient alpha of at least 0.70

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to investigate the following research questionnaire on how peer pressure influence drug abuse among youths in Mathare informal settlement;

1. Youths friend's engagement in drug abuse influences them also to abuse drug.
2. Youths sibling's engagement in drug abuse influences them also to abuse drugs
3. Youths role model's engagement in drug abuse leads them to abuse drug
4. Youths need to take drugs to fit in their youth groups

5. Youths need to take drugs to be attractive to members of the opposite gender
6. Youths take drugs to demonstrate that they are adults
7. Youths take drugs to be rebellious youths

To achieve this objective, the null hypothesis was tested at .5 level of significance:

The null hypothesis stated that peer pressure has no significant influence on drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County, Kenya. Therefore, to establish the contribution of peer pressure on drug abuse among the youth of informal settlements in Mathare, the researcher conducted a regression analysis on the two variables.

Table 1: Influence of Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse among the Youths

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.167a	.028	.026	.488

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure

Regression data presented in Table 1 indicates that $R^2 = 0.026$ which implies that 2.6% of the variance in drug abuse among youth in Mathare informal settlements can be explained by the variable of peer pressure. In other words, peer pressure contributes to 2.6% of drug abuse cases among youth in Mathare informal settlements.

In order to establish whether the model could be able to predict drug abuse, an ANOVA analysis was run and results are as presented in table 2

Table 2: Influence of Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse among the Youths - ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.830	1	2.830	11.908	.001 ^b
	Residual	98.398	414	.238		
	Total	101.228	415			
a. Dependent Variable: Drug Levels						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure Levels						

ANOVA model from the regression analysis is shown in table 2. The results indicate that the model was a significant predictor of the dependent variable; $F(1,414) = 11.91 \leq .05$, thus making the regression model a good fit for prediction.

In order to determine the individual variable contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable, a partial regression for the coefficients was analysed as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse among the Youths - Coefficients

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.523	.107		.000
	Peer Pressure Levels	.159	.046	.167	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Drug Levels					

The coefficients in table 3 resulted from the regression analysis. From the unstandardized coefficient table, it can be observed that a one-unit change in the abuse of drugs could be explained by a change of .159 on peer pressure levels, $t(415) = 3.451$; $\beta = .159$, $P \leq .05$. this therefore implies that peer pressure significantly influenced the abuse of drugs in the study region. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that peer pressure has no significant influence on drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County, Kenya was rejected and conclusion made that there exists a significant influence of peer pressure on abuse of drugs in Mathare informal settlements.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made. Peer pressure as a psychosocial factor influences youths in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi County to abuse drugs. It was further concluded that Youths friend's engagement in drug abuse was the major influence of youths in involvement in drug abuse

in Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi County among other factors under influence of peer pressure. The study recommends that drug abuse among the youths in Mathare informal settlements can be prevented by providing young people with opportunities, skill and information that advises against risky behaviour and in favour of healthy lifestyles. County Government in collaboration with NACADA should engage experts or qualified personnel with right information to have face to face meetings with local community leaders that will relay information to the youths on the harmful consequences of abusing drugs.

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