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DRUG USAGE, ABSTRACT INTELLIGENCE, AND FEELING OF SECURITY AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT

The use of drugs, non-verbal Abstract Intelligence, and feelings of security was studied on 240 students, 120 males and 120 females Tobacco smokers only and non users. Comparison of the level of non-verbal Abstract Intelligence and degree of security among different degree of drug users revealed that there were significant differences in Abstract intelligence and degree of security among drug users and non users. Non significant difference were obtained in the level of Abstract Intelligence and degree of security among the sexes within groups differing in the use of drugs. It was concluded that feelings of insecurity, and inadequacy could be one of the underlying causes which lead an individual to take drugs. Vital suggestions were offered for intervention.

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse today has assumed grave and alarming proportions in the world, particularly in Nigeria. There is a growing demand for hard drugs from the younger generation in most countries of the world. However, the Nigerian youth's desire for drugs can be attributed to two factors;

- (i) insatiable desire of the youths to become wealthy, and
- (ii) the unemployment situations that have engulfed the youths in the country today.

Many attempts have been made from time to time to find the effect of drugs, both physical and psychological on the individuals. The physical effects of different drugs have most extensively been studied. Most research findings are that these drugs are mood elevating. Kramer and Cameron (1975) found also that personal curiosity about drug effect, a wish to experience

improved 'understanding', 'creativity' and escape from some problem are also responsible for drug abuse.

Scaps and Sanders (1970) have found that Marijuana was the most widely and frequently used drug. Their subjects who reported confrontation with law enforcement agents as their only danger, rarely described themselves as 'criminals' and described police as 'awful' or 'immoral'. Kramer and Cameron (1975) found ease with which a drug is obtained in a given locality and social acceptance of it to relieve discomfort and modify mood as a facilitating and initiating factor in drug abuse. Kohn and Mercer (1971) have shown that marijuana is usually the first experience of drug abuse.

The psychological variables studied in relation to drug usage could broadly be grouped into personality variables, cognitive functions, and sensory - motor functions. Research studies dealing with drugs and cognitive function can be divided into three categories. Research conducted upon (a) chronic and advance cases of alcoholic and drug usage, after administering particular drugs, and (b) subjects with habitual moderate drug use in the absence of drug intoxication.

Studies dealing with habitual moderate drug use in the absence of drug intoxication indicate impairment of cognitive functions. Memory and recall (Amatu, 1979; Aggarwal, Sethi, & Gupta, 1976; Kolansky & Moore, 1971); word and object recognition tasks (Monty, Hall & Rosenberger, 1975); Perception (Kolansky & Moore, (1971), and forming judgements (Arnold & Srivastara, 1991). Lopez and Manuel (1973) reviewing literature on the use of narcotic drugs have concluded that there is a broad agreement among the researchers that prolonged use of narcotics impairs the cognitive functioning of adolescents.

Studies dealing with drugs and personality variables have found drug addicts to be immature, inadequate, having psychopathic traits, depression, tensions and high anxiety (Smart & Jones, 1970).

The objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of certain drug's usage on intellectual capacity and feelings of security as it exists among the Nigerian Youths especially, the University Population.

METHOD:

Sample:

A total of 240 youths (120 males and 120 females) participated in the study. The sample included 140 undergraduate introductory psychology

course students and 100 university science remedial students from University of Calabar, Nigeria. The subjects completed the questionnaire and the test in their lecture rooms.

Selection of the sample was based on three criteria - drug users other than tobacco, tobacco users only, and non users. Each group as stated above consisted of 40 males and 40 females.

- (a) Drug users were those students who have been taking drugs regularly at least for the last 6 months. (Drugs mostly used were cannabis, mendrax and dexamphetamine).
- (b) Tobacco smokers are those students who have been smoking ordinary tobacco (cigarettes) regularly for at least one year but are not drug users.
- (c) Non-users are those students who have never smoked cigarettes nor taken drugs.

In the selection of the three groups, accidental sampling was used. The use of accidental sampling can not be defended in any way, other than the ease it provided for data collection. In order to compare the three groups due consideration was taken only of the discriminating variable which is drug or tobacco use and non use. Other demographic variable were of necessity held constant. The subjects ranged from 17 - 25 years of age.

Test Materials:

The Raven's standard **Progressive Matrices** was used as a measure of Abstract Intelligence (Raven, 1958). A high score means a high level of intellectual capacity. To access the feelings of emotional security, Maslow's Security - Insecurity inventory adapted by the author was used. Maslow (1952) has defined security as "the feelings of being liked, loved, belongingness, safety, friendliness and acceptance." A high score indicated a high degree of insecurity. Dhillon (1977) did same for the student population of Delhi.

PROCEDURE:

Data were collected from subjects in two sessions. In the first session, subject, completed the Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1958). In the second session, approximately 2 weeks later, Maslow's Security - Insecurity was administered. All the subjects gave their consent for continuous assessment for participation in the tests. The tests were self-explanatory, and were completed by the subjects with ease.

Data Analysis

In data analysis, the scoring procedure followed was that prescribed in the manual of Raven's progressive Matrices and Maslow's Security - Insecurity Inventory. Besides the mean scores, standard deviation were calculated for males and female Drug users, tobacco smokers and non-users respondents separately. The statistics was then used to compare the mean scores of the three groups with respect to each of the dimensions under-study.

RESULTS

The results of the data analysis involved the comparisons of Abstract intelligence and feelings of security - Insecurity scores of drug users, tobacco smokers and non-users. The first set include Abstract Intelligence score and the second set included security - Insecurity scores.

The first set of comparisons (Table 1) reveals the following differences. Non-users had a significantly higher intellectual level than tobacco smokers and drug users. When scores of male and females were analysed separately it was found that, among males, non users had a higher intellectual level than the drug users and tobacco smokers. However, this was not observed in the case of females. Non-users had a significantly higher intellectual level than drug users but there was no significant difference in the intellectual level of non-users and tobacco smokers.

TABLE 1: SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAN DIFFERENCE ON NON-VERBAL TEST OF ABSTRACT INTELLIGENCE OF GROUPS VARYING IN THE USE OF DRUGS

S/No	Group Comparisons	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P<
1.	Drug users & Tobacco smokers	80 80	48.75 55.85	7.89 6.57	158	3.86	.01
2.	Drug users & Non users	80 80	48.75 55.20	7.98 4.09	158	6.33	.01
3.	Tobacco smokers & Non users	80 80	52.85 55.20	6.55 4.09	158	2.37	.05
4.	Drug users, males & Tobacco smokers, males	40 40	49.40 51.70	7.62 8.4	78	1.11	NS.
5.	Drug users, males & Non users, males	40 40	49.40 55.23	7.62 4.15	78	3.68	.01

TABLE 1 (CONTD)

S/No	Group Comparisons	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P<
6.	Tobacco smokers, males	40	51.70	8.64	78	2.05	.05
	& Non users, males	40	55.23	4.15			
7.	Drug users, females & Tobacco smokers	40	45.76	8.19	78	5.34	.01
	females.	40	54.36	3.60			
8.	Drug users, females & Non users, females	40	45.76	8.19	78	5.69	.01
		40	55.16	4.06			
9.	Tobacco smokers females & Non users, females	40	54.36	3.60	78	0.08	NS.
		40	55.16	4.06			
10.	Drug users, males & Drug users, females	40	49.40	7.62	78	1.78	NS.
		40	45.76	8.19			
11.	Tobacco smokers, males	40	51.70	8.64	78	1.59	NS.
	Tobacco smokers, females	40	53.36	3.60			
12.	Non users, males & Non users, females	40	55.23	4.15	78	0.06	NS.
		40	55.16	4.06			

There was a significant difference in the intellectual level of females belonging to the drug user group and tobacco smoker group. Female belonging to the tobacco smoker group had a higher intellectual level than females of the drug user group. However, no significant difference was found in the intellectual level of males belonging to the two groups-Drug users and tobacco smokers, respectively.

There was a non significant difference in the intellectual level of males and females within groups: drug users, tobacco users and non-users.

The second set of comparisons of the various groups on the security-insecurity scores are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAN DIFFERENCES ON FEELING OF SECURITY-INSECURITY OF GROUPS VARYING IN THE USE OF DRUGS

S/No	Group Comparisons	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P<
1.	Drug users & Tobacco smokers	80	50.75	19.64	158	10.19	.01
		80	21.01	9.84			
2.	Drug users & Non users	80	50.75	19.64	158	10.55	.01
		80	19.08	12.48			
3.	Non users & Tobacco smokers	80	19.08	12.48	158	1.38	NS.
		80	21.01	9.84			
4.	Drug users; Males & Tobacco smokers, males	40	49.83	14.29	78	9.69	.01
		40	17.60	11.37			
5.	Drug users males & Non users, males	40	49.83	14.29	78	8.14	.01
		40	23.76	10.16			
6.	Tobacco smokers, males & Non users, males	40	17.60	11.37	78	2.21	.05
		40	23.76	10.16			
7.	Drug users, females & Tobacco smokers, females	40	52.10	13.41	78	10.74	.01
		40	20.30	9.18			
8.	Drug users, females & Non users, females	40	52.10	13.41	78	9.40	.01
		40	21.16	12.08			
9.	Tobacco smokers, females & Non users, females	40	20.30	9.18	78	0.31	NS.
		40	21.16	12.08			
10.	Drug users, males & Drug users, females	40	49.83	14.29	78	.63	NS.
		40	52.10	13.41			
11.	Tobacco smokers, males & Tobacco smokers, females	40	17.60	11.37	78	1.01	NS.
		40	20.30	9.18			
12.	Non users, males & Non users, females	40	23.76	10.16	78	0.90	NS.
		40	21.16	12.08			

Drugs users feel more insecure than tobacco smokers and non-users. When scores of Males and Females on the security-insecurity inventory were analysed separately it was also found that drug users were more insecure than tobacco smokers and non-users.

There was a non-significant difference in the feelings of insecurity of tobacco smokers and non-users among females. However, there was a significant difference in the feelings of security of tobacco smokers and non-users. But there was a significant difference in the feelings of security among males and females of the drug user group. Female drug users felt more insecure than male drug users.

A non significant difference was obtained in the feelings of security among the sexes within the groups - tobacco smokers and non-users. But there was a significant difference in the feelings of security among males and females of the drug user group. Female drug users felt more insecure than male drug users.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that there was a significant difference in the intellectual capacity of drug users and non-users; drug users were intellectually average, tobacco smokers were definitely above the average in intellectual capacity and the non-users were intellectually superior. In other words, non-users have definitely greater capacity for observation, clear thinking, reasoning by analogy, and forming comparisons than the drug users and a little better than the tobacco smokers. In this study it had been found that drug use and intellectual capacity were related, that is, students using drug use and intellectual capacity were related, that is students using drugs had less intellectual capacity as compared to the students who were non-users and a little better than the tobacco smokers. In this study it had been found that drug use and intellectual capacity were related, that is, students using drug use and intellectual capacity as compared to the students who were non-users and tobacco smokers only. Mohan et al. (1980) found that school children who were academically bright ones took to alcohol less as compared to the average and the less bright ones. However some research evidence also indicated impairment in cognitive functions as a result of drug addiction (Aggarwal et al, 1976; Kolansky & Moore, 1971).

The results also indicated that drug users felt emotionally very insecure as compared to their colleagues who were tobacco smokers and non-users. Insecurity means that drug users had strong "feeling of rejection, isolation of being unloved or even despised, high anxiety, hostility, inferiority and helplessness". Other investigators have also found drug addicts to have feelings of

inferiority and inadequacy, (Arnold and Srivastava, 1991). As feelings of security or insecurity are acquired early in life according to Maslow (1952), it seems that people who feel insecure take to drugs to overcome the feeling of rejection, helplessness etc.

The scores indicated that females who take to drugs or tobacco smoking feel slightly more insecure than the males from the two groups. However, the differences were not significant. This is understandable since our culture frowns at females who smoke and drink, this could explain their insecurity as compared to the males.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from the results of the study that besides other factors, feelings of insecurity and inadequacy could be one of the underlying causes which lead an individual to take drugs in order to escape from the world of reality or face the world by gaining confidence, real or imagined by the use of drugs (Kramer & Cameron, 1975). The average level of intellectual capacity probably further enhances the feelings of inadequacy and the desire to overcome these feelings and hence the use of drugs. Thus, the use of drugs seems to be a vicious circle - inadequacy, insecurity, besides other factors lead to drug use and drug use further produces, insecurity and other psychological effects.

RECOMMENDATION

Education and information about the hazards of drug abuse should be intensified through counselling both in the tertiary institutions, and by the government through appropriate gingles. The law enforcement agencies should be strengthened, trained, and equipped to tackle the problem of drug abuse. Finally, alternative strategies could be evolved with the help of the behavioural scientists.

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