

Survey of Family Size on Substance Abuse among Undergraduate Students of One Public University in the Lake Region of Kenya

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Abstract The present study investigated the influence of family size on substance abuse among undergraduate students of one public university in the Lake Region of Kenya. The researcher adopted the Triangulation Research design. The target population comprised 15,767 undergraduate students, the Dean of Students and three University Counselors in one selected public university in Kenya. The sample size of undergraduate students is 1,603 which was obtained through Stratified Sampling Technique. The sample size also included the Dean of Students and three University Counselors who were sampled using Purposive and Saturated Techniques respectively. The Undergraduate Student Questionnaire and Interview Schedule for University Counselors and Dean of Students were used to collect data. Validation was in terms of content and face validity with the aid of the supervisor from the Department of Psychology & Educational Foundations of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST) who reviewed the instruments. The study employed Cronbach Alpha Formula to estimate internal consistency and a reliability co-efficient of r of 0.727 was reported. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to test hypotheses. Qualitative data was analyzed using the Thematic Framework. The findings indicated that there was an average positive relationship ($r = .542$) between family size and substance abuse among undergraduate students. The university Administration should enlighten parents on better and supportive ways to students for maximum productivity while studying.

Keywords Family size, Substance abuse, Undergraduate students, Public university, Lake Region, Kenya

1. Introduction

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substances use can lead to dependence syndrome – a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state (World Health Organization, 2011). The current trend of drug and substance abuse among the youth in the Universities is a major national concern, as it has been reported to pose

derogatory effects on their health, academic performance and behaviours (Sambo, 2008). Research in the USA in 2003 has shown that 5000 young people under the age of 21 die from alcohol-related injuries each year (NHTSA, 2000). An estimated 1600 (32%) of these deaths are as a result of homicide fuelled by alcohol. And in 2005, another American study showed that some 700,000 university students are assaulted each year by students who have been drinking (O' Neill, 2005).

In Australia, a report released by the government in 2011 stated that people age 10-14 years who had engaged in binge drinking in the previous two weeks were five times more likely to have been violent than non-drinkers (Bonomo, 2004). The negative effect of alcohol consumption was most pronounced on educational attainment in University among those students who were ranked as high academic performers during their high school years (Wood *et al.*, 1997). Other studies have also documented blackouts among university students who drink to excess (Buelow and Koepfel, 1995). Traditionally, cultural values and discipline of the African society prescribed the circumstances under which drugs and intoxicants could be obtained, used and consumed. Due to

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social, economic and other changes, censure and control at the family level has reduced and there is less stigma associated with the use of intoxicants. The education system is one of the most pervasive agents of socialization with the use of drug abuse. Inadequate supervision and easy access to alcohol and drugs in schools for instance, may act as risk factors for initiation of alcohol abuse while alcohol education offered in the school may increase the Child's initiation of drug abuse (Kibui, 2011).

According to Tesfai (2016), the South African university students are not different from other students around the globe. Alcohol in particular is a widely used psychoactive substance with dependence properties. Alcohol and other substance use and abuse are associated with serious physical and psychological consequences. The study found that alcohol, smoking and cannabis use were as the most common substances used. Even though the life time alcohol usage (68%) and usage within the past three months (57%) was high, 17.5% of the students were found to be engaged on hazardous alcohol drinking. Male students were more at risk for risky substance use, and significantly different on smoking and cannabis use from female students. White and Coloured students were also found to be risky alcohol and smoking users. In South Africa, Govender, (2017) revealed that university students, especially undergraduates, experiment with alcohol, which can lead to physical, social, emotional and academic problems. Hence, alcohol use by female university students can be harmful to the progress of their tertiary education. As undergraduate students are away from parental or caregiver supervision, they are likely to have an unrealistic sense of independence and may misuse alcohol. A tertiary institution in South Africa reported that males and females have similar drinking patterns in terms of when they drink, how much they drink and the types of alcohol they drink. Some students considered excessive drinking by both males and females as problematic.

This study was guided by Social Cognition Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1986). According to this theory, behavior is determined by a person's thought processes, the environment and behavior itself. This means that individuals determine their own behavior while being influenced by the environmental factors and their own behavior. The Social Cognitive Learning Theory perspective emphasizes social cognition and not simply copying. Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory tends to focus on cognitive expectancies, vicarious learning and self-regulations as explanatory mechanisms of drug and substance abusers. Barbara, Kim, Toumbouro, and Hemphill, (2011) compared hypotheses derived from harm-minimization and zero-tolerance policies regarding the influence of family context and supervised drinking on adolescent alcohol use and related harms among adolescents in Washington State, USA, and Victoria, Australia, two states that have respectively adopted zero-tolerance and harm-minimization policies. Adult-supervised settings for alcohol use were associated with higher levels of harmful alcohol consequences. Furthermore, Lonczak et al (2007) found that

family structure was associated with substance use risk in their sample of Seattle youth, but they did not examine the potential influence of extended family members living in the parental household. Chappel, Ashley, (2013) studied Associations between Adolescents' Family Stressors, Life Satisfaction and Substance Use. Results indicate that experiencing major life events and inter-parental conflict were unique predictors of life satisfaction, and all the family stressors combined accounted for 37% of the variance in life satisfaction.

Ani (2015) study identified the factors or determinants of substance abuse among Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Mainland Local Government, Lagos. Result identified that there is a significant association between family size and structure of respondents and their use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana. The reviewed study was carried out in Nigeria while the present study was done in Kenya. Essian, (2010) carried out a study on Drug use and Abuse among students in Tertiary Institutions, a case study of Federal University of Technology, Mann Nyiooh. Students from resulting families were found to command the highest number involved in drug use and abuse because of the excess financial allowances given to them by their parents. Akanni and Adayonfo (2016) studied the characteristics of adolescents that use gateway substances. This knowledge shall be utilized in preventive programs. The findings indicated that polygamous family background was significantly associated with tobacco use. Olufolahan and Adeyemi (2016) determined the prevalence and correlates of alcohol use among a sample of Nigerian semirural community dwellers in Nigeria. Current alcohol use was more prevalent among the families with many members. The reviewed study was carried out in Nigeria while the present study was done in Kenya. Bello, Fatiregun, Ndifon, Oyo-Ita, and Ikpeme (2011) aimed at assessing the social determinants of alcohol use among drivers of commercial vehicles in Calabar, Nigeria. The results indicated that the determinants of any alcohol use include the family size and use.

Ndwedwe (2013), presented a research paper on preventive strategies used by institutions of higher learning to fight alcohol and drug abuse in Kisii County at Kasarani Gymnasium in 2013, during the 2nd National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse organized by NACADA. One public Kenyan University is located in Kisii County and has an Anti-Drug Abuse (ADA) unit under the Deputy Chancellor (Administration, Planning and Finance), a committee appointed by the University Management Board and has enacted a workplace policy on alcohol and substance abuse, 2015. Thus, the present study investigated the influence of family size on substance abuse among undergraduate students of one public university in the Lake Region of Kenya. The present study was on a survey of Family Size on Substance Abuse among Undergraduate Students of One Public University in the Lake Region of Kenya.

2. Research Methodology

The study adopted the concurrent triangulation research design under mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative data was used to overcome the limitations of a single design. In concurrent triangulation research design, only one data collection phase is used, during which qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis are conducted separately ye concurrently. The target population comprises 15767 undergraduate students. The target population also included the Dean of Students and three university counselors. The sample size of undergraduate students was 1,603 which was obtained through stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire were used to collect quantitative data from students. Validation was in terms of content and face validity with the aid of the superior from the Department of Psychology of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) who reviewed the instruments. The overall reliability coefficient for the items in the questionnaire was $\alpha = 0.728$. Considering the threshold of 0.7 for social sciences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009), the questionnaire was thus found to be reliable as $\alpha = 0.727 > 0.7$. To collect qualitative data, the study used interview guide to conduct in-depth face to face interview. The administration of this instrument and data collection took place in the offices, and each interview section was planned to take at most 30 minutes. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze data. Qualitative data was analyzed using the Thematic Framework.

3. Findings & Discussions

Table 1. Correlation output for Family Size and substance abuse among undergraduate students

		Family Size	Substance abuse among undergraduate students
Family Size	Pearson Correlation	1	.542**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034
	N	1561	1561
Family Size	Pearson Correlation	.542**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
	N	1561	1561

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In order to determine the relationship between Family Size and substance abuse among undergraduate students, a Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted between the two variables. Since data for Family Size and substance abuse among undergraduate students were measured and the summated scores for each respondent were obtained for each of the two scales. The corresponding scores for each respondent were used as data points for the 1561 participants (undergraduate students). The correlation output is presented

in Table 1.

The findings in Table 1 shows that there is an average positive relationship ($r = 0.542$) between Family Size and substance abuse among undergraduate students which was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This implies that there was significant association between use of drugs and Family Size. Larger families get limited parental care and attention hence deviant behavior among the children.

However, from qualitative findings, it was also reported that some students from poor households also engage in reckless abuse of substances since they cannot afford to purchase the moderate drinks. This has affected their health and some even drop out of university. One respondent reported that:

“Some students from poor families also abuse substances which are quite harmful to their health. Such students buy local hard drugs since they don’t have enough money to buy beer and some end up spoilt because of the nature of the alcohol that they take” (university counselor, 2)

From the interview excerpt, it can be concluded that the students from bigger families have relatively low level of income and engage in purchase of low class drinks which in most cases are very harmful to their health. This finding agrees with Essian, (2010) who reported that family size contributed mainly to inability of the parents to control their children.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

There is an average positive relationship between family size and substance abuse among undergraduate students which was statistically significant. This implies that there was significant association between use of drugs and family size. From the qualitative findings, the family size was reported to be a determinant of indulgence in substance. It was reported that smaller family size influenced this behavior, in that students from such families, seemed to have more financial resources and were largely involved in substance abuse while at university. Such students have more than enough financial resources which make them indulge in such activities. It was also reported that some students from poor households also engage in reckless abuse of substances since they cannot afford to purchase the moderate drinks. The limitations of the study was that the study was done in one university, but the mixed methods design used enables it to overcome validity issues due to triangulation of results. It’s recommended that the university counselling department should provide education to students on management of peer and sibling influence. This would assist the students to manage their social lives appropriately. This is because it was reported that there was significant association between use of drugs and whether the respondents’ family member used drugs.

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