

# The influence of drug dependence on delinquent behavior essay



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CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 1. 0INTRODUCTION Behavior has many causes, as well as many forms. It is directly observable and has measurable actions. Behavior can be normal and abnormal. Abnormal behavior could be as a result of anomalies in one's biology, physiology or psyche. It is a part of human characteristics and it is hereditary. Some behaviors of course are learned (social learning); in fact most behaviors adopted by young adults today are learned and are self-injurious and sometimes injurious to others. Drug use is a behavior that is in vogue among young adults in modern societies of the world.

In Nigeria, which is a third-world and a developing country, the problem of drug abuse is quite common among youths, especially those who school away from home and their parent's supervision and the idle ones who neither attend school nor have jobs. The taking of drugs for social rather than prescribed medical reasons is said to be progressing at an alarming rate among Nigerian youths (Akindele and Odejide, 1974; Awaritefe and Ebie, 1975). The public, police, press, preachers, educationists, psychologists and parents regularly decry what they think are the evil consequences of drug use.

Indeed, nearly every delinquent and deviant act in society is directly or indirectly attributed to drug use. A drug is being abused if its use causes physical or psychological harm to the individual. This harm could range from liver damage, from alcohol use to declines in academic performance from the frequent use of marijuana. Other kinds of damage include brain damage from inhalants, heart attack and stroke from stimulants, loss of control of machinery; cars, motorcycles etc caused by depressants, violence caused

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when intoxicated and infections contracted by sharing of needles (hepatitis and HIV) while injecting drugs.

Although there isn't enough evidence but some researchers believe that drugs change neural functioning in ways that may increase the risk of serious mental problems. For example, early marijuana use may increase the risk of suicide and later, schizophrenia (Holden & Pakula, 1998; Arsenault & others, 2004). The various reports of rapid situation assessments of drug abuse and addiction in the country show a picture of widespread consumption of cannabis, followed by psychotropic substances (mainly the benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants) and to a lesser extent heroin and cocaine in both the urban and rural areas.

The use of volatile organic solvents is reported to be becoming popular, especially among the street children, in-school youth and women (NDLEA/UNDCP, 1999). Thus, concerns for the control of drug abuse and addiction have become a major issue. Drug use/abuse is the primary reason why many youths are incarcerated, as well as a source of crime and health problem in our society today. It has become an unprecedented problem in Nigeria that the number of youth incarcerated in various prisons across the country has increase dramatically over the last few decades.

As a matter of fact, majority of these youths have been arrested for drug offences, and/or have a drug abuse problem (Essien, 2010). In support of the above findings by Essien (2010), a research conducted by Siegel et al (2010) on the same subject suggested that delinquent behavior is as a result of various factors ranging from social disorganization to peer pressure, family,

genetic and emotional factors. Further research has shown that drug dependence and delinquent behavior among youth is highly correlated with the behavior of the group they are associated with, especially when parental supervision is weak (Siegel, 2010).

Youths who live in lower parts of urban areas and rural areas where feelings of alienation run high often come in contact with drug users who teach them that drugs provide an answer to their feelings of inadequacy and stress (Welsh, 2010). Based on facts gathered from previous researches and texts, at the end of this study it will be observed that indeed drug dependence influences delinquent behavior among youths in the society. 1. 1. 1

RESEARCH PROBLEM Substance abuse, as well as substance dependence is a major factor that has been negatively affecting the society as well as its development and security.

The problem has been in existence for quite some time and it is increasing as a result of global trends that surround our society. i. Individuals who have drug addiction/dependence problems suffer from withdrawal syndrome which occurs when the when the amount of substance required to produce intoxication is reduced or discontinued. ii. In order to get their hands on drugs, users go an extra mile to do whatever they can even if it goes against the laws of the society just to get high. They commit crimes ranging from stealing, vandalism to gang activities as long as it will get them the drugs or money to buy the drugs. iii. The individuals continue to use the substances despite knowledge of having persistent physical or psychological problems that is likely to have been caused by the drug. iv. They spend a great deal of time in order to get their “fix”. They visit multiple pharmaceutical stores and <https://assignbuster.com/the-influence-of-drug-dependence-on-delinquent-behavior-essay/>

doctors to get the substances, and spend longer periods to use the substances and to recover from its effect. For example, late arrival from work, school, and violation of curfews set by parents of young adults. 1. 1. 2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS This research intends to find answers to the following questions: i.

What are the causes of drug dependence? ii. To what extent does an individual become dependent on drugs? iii. How does dependence influence delinquent behavior 1. 1. 3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH A psychologist's job is to identify and proffer solutions to problems of the mind and mental processes. They carry out researches to update knowledge and to find answers to questions as well as solutions to problems of man and the society. Therefore the overall aim and objectives of this study is to: i. Determine the influence of drug dependence on delinquent behavior ii.

To identify the types of drugs abused iii. Administer questionnaires to individuals who are drug dependants so as to determine if it has influence on delinquent behavior iv. Recommend possible solutions to the problem of drug dependence and ways to manage delinquent behavior. 1. 1. 4

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY i. From the research problem and its objectives, it is apparent that the findings of this study could go a long way towards understanding the causes and influences of drug dependence on delinquent behavior and provide psychological explanation as well as solutions to the problem of drug dependence and delinquent behavior. ii. It could also provide an insight to parents towards the behavior of their children. iii. The result of this research will serve as a guide to policy makers on how to come up with ways of controlling drug abuse and dependence; <https://assignbuster.com/the-influence-of-drug-dependence-on-delinquent-behavior-essay/>

hence the control of its circulation. iv. The findings of this study will educate the society on dangers of substance abuse and dependence and its influence on behavior. v.

Finally, the study will serve as a window for carrying out further research in this area and it will contribute to knowledge and literature in this field of study. CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE 2. 0 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

**Psychotropic drugs** Psychotropic drugs are classes of drugs that alter conscious experience. They include depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens. **Drug abuse** Drug abuse, is a patterned use of a substance (drug) in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods neither approved nor supervised by medical professionals. **Drug dependence**

Drug dependence is defined as the frequent use of psychotropic drugs, where individuals come to crave them intensely and suffer intense withdrawal symptom when they do not take the drug. Withdrawal symptoms Withdrawal symptoms are the unpleasant feelings and physical effects that occur when the Tolerance Tolerance refers to increased amount of activity that is required to achieve the same effect. 2. 1 THEORETICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE The study has been guided by the biopsychosocial theories of drug abuse, and social strain and behavioral theories of delinquency.

The biopsychosocial theory of drug abuse focuses on biological, psychological and sociological factors that are crucial in determining why people abuse psychotropic drugs. While the social strain theory and social learning theory of delinquency focuses on how individuals violate the laws of

the society to achieve unattainable goals; and how individuals learn by simply observing and imitating negative activities. 2. 2 BIOPSYCHO-SOCIAL THEORY OF DRUG DEPENDENCE This theory explains the biological, psychological and sociological theories of addiction.

Each focuses on a different range of factors as crucial in determining why people use and abuse psychoactive substances. Biological Theory Biological theories are those that postulate specific physical mechanisms in individuals that impel or influence them either to experiment with drugs or to abuse them once they are exposed to them. Some are constitutional, that is, are based on mechanisms that are present at birth and vary from one person to another. Others are partly environmental; that is, inborn factors in conjunction with environmental factors generate drug-using behavior.

Two of these explanations are genetic theories and the theory of metabolic imbalance. Genetic theory Schuckit, (1980) wrote that the genetic makeup of individuals predisposes them toward drug abuse and alcoholism. A gene or combination of genes influences the specific biological mechanisms relevant to substance abuse such as being able to achieve a certain level of intoxication when using drugs, becoming ill at low doses as opposed to much higher doses, lowering or not lowering anxiety levels when under the influence, or having the capacity to metabolize chemical substances in the body.

Any and all these factors could vary from one individual to another or from one racial or national group to another, and could influence continued use. This “ genetic loading,” in combination with environmental and personality

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factors, could make for a significantly higher level of drug abuse or alcoholism in certain individuals or groups in the population. Although most researches attempting to demonstrate a genetic factor in drug abuse is focused on alcoholism. Schuckit, (1980) further explained that adopted children have rates of alcoholism closer to those of their natural parents than to those of their adoptive parents.

Metabolic imbalance Dole and Nyswander, (1965, 1980) in their theory of metabolic imbalance explained that it is a major factor in narcotic addiction. They argued that heroin addicts suffer from a metabolic disease or disorder, much as diabetics do. Once certain individuals begin taking narcotics, a biochemical process “kicks in,” and physiologically, they begin to crave opiate drugs in much the same way that the bodies of diabetics crave insulin. Repeated doses of a narcotic complete their metabolic cycle; narcotics act as a stabilizer, normalizing an existing deficiency.

The narcotic abuser can never be withdrawn from drug use because his or her body will continue to crave opiates, just as diabetics cannot be withdrawn from insulin; in both cases, the substance provides what the body lacks and cannot provide. Psychological Theories Theories relying on psychological factors fall into two basic varieties: those emphasizing the mechanism of reinforcement, and those stressing that the personalities of the drug user, abuser, and especially addicts are different from those of the abstainer, and are causally related to use and abuse. The mechanism of reinforcement is fairly straightforward.

People tend to maximize reward and minimize punishment; they continue to do certain things because they have a past history of being rewarded for doing them. Drug users are individuals who have been rewarded for use, and hence they continue to use. While reinforcement theories underplay personality factors, personality theories, as you might expect, emphasize their important role in causing drug use and abuse. The precise personality configuration that is said to determine drug use and abuse varies with the theorist; a range of personality factors is invoked here.

The key factor that binds these psychodynamic theories together, however, is that they postulate that certain individuals have a type of personality that impels them to drug use and abuse. Reinforcement A major psychological theory underplays the idea of personality differences between users and nonusers, and emphasizes the role of reinforcement. Even animals use certain drugs compulsively under the right experimental conditions, casting doubt on the need to invoke psychodynamic variables in the development of addiction (McAuliffe and Gordon, 1980).

In addition, experiments have shown that, independent of personality factors, human subjects who are administered opiates without knowing what they have taken wish to repeat taking the drug; their desire grows with continued administration (McAuliffe, 1975). There are two distinctly different types of reinforcement, positive and negative, and consequently two different theories that cite reinforcement as a mechanism in continued drug use. Positive reinforcement Occurs when the individual receives a pleasurable sensation and, because of this, is motivated to repeat what caused it.

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In brief, the pleasure mechanism may give rise to a strong fixation on repetitive behavior (Bejerot, 1980). With respect to drug use, this means that getting high is pleasurable, and what is pleasurable tends to be repeated. According to this view, the continued use of all drugs that stimulate euphoria is caused by their extremely potent reinforcing effects (McAuliffe and Gordon, 1980). Inferring from the way that users behave, it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction between a strong psychological and a physical dependency.

Indeed, physical dependence is not even a necessary mechanism for the proponents of the theory of positive reinforcement. What is referred to as addiction is simply an end point along a continuum indicating that a sufficient history of reinforcement has probably been acquired to impel a high rate of use in the user (McAuliffe and Gordon, 1980) Negative reinforcement Negative reinforcement occurs when an individual does something to seek relief or to avoid pain, thereby being rewarded and hence motivated to do whatever it was that achieved relief or alleviated the pain.

In the world of drug use and addiction, when someone who is physically dependent on a particular drug undergoes painful withdrawal symptoms upon discontinuing the use of that drug, and takes a dose to alleviate withdrawal distress, he or she will experience relief with the termination of the pain. Such an experience will motivate the addict to do what has to be done to obliterate the painful sensations associated with withdrawal. Bejerot, (1980) wrote that while positive reinforcement can occur with any euphoric drug indeed, with any pleasurable sensation.

The theory emphasizing the mechanism of negative reinforcement as a major factor in drug abuse is largely confined to drugs that produce a physical dependence, especially the opiates. Relatively little attempt has been made to apply this theory to explain either the continued use of nonaddicting drugs or the use of opiates that does not involve a literal physical dependence. However, some nonaddicting drugs, such as cocaine and marijuana, may provide relief from depression; this factor has also been mentioned as a reason for continued use. The argument invoking negative reinforcement goes as follows.

Initially, pleasure dominates as a motivating force in use. Hence, the first few weeks of narcotic drug use have been called the “honeymoon” phase of addiction. However, the user gradually becomes physically dependent without realizing it. Because of the body’s growing tolerance to narcotics, the user, in order to continue receiving pleasure, is forced to increase the doses—eventually to a point at which addiction takes place. If use is discontinued, whether because of arrest, disruption in supply, or lack of money to purchase the drug, painful withdrawal symptoms wrack the addict’s body.

Because the user recognizes that doses of a narcotic drug can alleviate these symptoms, an intense craving is generated for the drug over time.

**Inadequate Personality** Several psychological theories of drug use rely on the notion of a psychological pathology, defect, or inadequacy. There is something wrong in the emotional or psychic life of certain individuals that make drugs attractive to them. They use drugs as an escape from reality, as a means of avoiding life’s problems and retreating into euphoric bliss and drugged-out indifference.

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Euphoria, says one inadequate-personality theorist, is adaptive for the immature individual who lacks responsibility, a sense of independence, and the ability to defer hedonistic gratification for the sake of achieving long-range goals (Ausubel, 1980). Although drug use is adaptive for the defective personality in that it masks some of life's problems, it is adaptive only in an exclusively negative way. The problems never get solved, only covered up, and meanwhile, drug use itself generates a host of other, more serious problems.

Normal people, who do not share this inadequacy, do not find drugs appealing and are not led to use them. Of course, not all drug users share personality inadequacies and defects to the same degree; some will be impelled to experiment or use simply because of social pressure or availability. However, the more inadequate the personality, the greater the likelihood of becoming highly involved with drug use, and the more that use becomes abuse and eventually addiction. In short, for the weak, drug abuse is a kind of crutch; for the strong, experimentation leads to abstention, not abuse.

To the inadequate-personality theorist, drug abuse is an adaptation or a defense mechanism, a means of obliterating feelings of inferiority (Wurmser, 1980) One major approach to inadequate personality is Kaplan (1975)'s approach of self-esteem or self derogation perspective. This theory holds that drug use and abuse, like deviant and criminal behavior generally, are responses to low self-esteem and self rejecting attitudes. But it does not apply in societies in which the particular type of drug use being explained is practically universal and normatively accepted by the majority.

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Kaplan, (1975) further added that Low self-esteem could come about as a result of peer rejection, parental neglect, high expectations for achievement, school failure, physical stigmata, and social stigmata e. g. , disvalued group memberships, impaired sex-role identity, ego deficiencies, low coping abilities, and generally coping mechanisms that are socially disvalued and/or are otherwise self-defeating. Sociological Theory For most sociologists, the crucial factor to be examined is not the characteristics of the individual, but the situations, social relations, or social structures in which the individual is, or has been, located.

Anomie theory Robert K. Merton, (1930) generated what came to be referred to as the anomie theory of deviant behavior. In his view, deviant behavior illicit drug use included takes place when avenues to material success are blocked off. The anomie theory as Merton developed it, argues that in a competitive, materialistic, achievement-oriented society, success is encouraged as attainable for all members but actually is attainable to only a small proportion of the society. Individuals who do not succeed must devise “ deviant” or disapproved adaptations to deal with their failure.

Those who have given up on achieving society’s materialistic goals, whether by approved or disapproved means, become retreatists. An extension of this theory holds that the person most likely to become a drug addict has already attempted to use both legal or legitimate and illegal or illegitimate means to achieve success, and has failed at both. The addict is a “ double failure” who has “ retreated” into the undemanding world of addiction (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). 2. 3THEORIES OF DELINQUENCY Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura, (1977) wrote that human learning is a continuous reciprocal interaction of cognitive behavioral and environmental factors. Sometimes called observational learning, social learning focuses on behavior modeling, in which the child observes and then imitates the behavior of adults or other children around him or her (Weisner, Capaldi & Paderson, 2003). Bandura, (1977) also argued that acts portrayed in mass media can have tremendous negative impact on the behavior of certain types of individuals watching the shows.

He further stated that some individuals would observe and then imitate the behavior of the characters on the television screen. From these observations, it can be concluded that delinquent behavior is as a result of imitation of aggressive actions. Bandura determined that certain types of children learn to perform violent and aggressive actions by observing and then modeling their behavior after what they have seen. He referred to it as direct learning through instantaneous matching of observed behavior to the modeled behavior (Weisner et al, 2003) Social strain theory

Merton (1957) formulated a social strain theory of criminal involvement (Broidy, 2001). Merton proposed that the society instills in its citizenry aspiration for upward mobility and a desire for selected goals. However, when legitimate goal attainments are blocked, anomie or strain sets in, which in turn compels the individual to violate the law in order to attain these goals. Lower class persons are viewed by Merton susceptible to the ravages of anomie because they are more regularly thwarted in their effort to participate in the economic rewards of the wider society (Broidy, 2001).

Merton (1957) assumed in his theories that humans are conforming organisms who only violate the law when the dysfunction between goals and means becomes so great that the individual believes he/she can no longer pursue socially sanctioned goals via legitimate channels. Society and certain social variables are, according to strain theorists, responsible for majority of crime being committed in the world today. According to Merton (1957), society that emphasizes goals over the means to obtain these goals, and restricts access to opportunities for legitimate advancement, is establishing the conditions for anomie and future criminality.

Strain theorists have long argued that once a person is removed from a situation of anomie or frustration, negative behaviour will recede (Henry et al. , 2001). 2. 4. 0EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF LITERTAURE Essien (2010) pointed out that so many reasons have been advanced for drug use and abuse as a phenomenon with a complex etiology. For instance, if young men and women who are partially drug addicts continue to reside in the social environment in which past drug use has occurred, suggests that the use of such drug may continue.

This is because most cases of abuse emanates from an array of psychological reasons. Ahire (1990) added that personality disorders and socio-economic environments are the major determinants of victim's involvement in drug abuse. Other reasons adduced for drug abuse are the major determinants of drug use and abuse are to reduce stress, build self esteem, drug availability, and peer pressure and the desire to be sociable. As a matter of fact, vulnerability may be inherited in the form of heightened susceptibility of a certain drug.

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The abuse of various mood-altering substances has been reported to be prevalent among Nigerian youths (Lambo, 1960). Some substances alter the mind; change the user's feeling, perception and behavior when they are used because they exert action on the brain. Global studies on drug use and abuse revealed that early initiation of drug use is one of the best predictors of future drug abuse and dependence, for instance youths whose drug use started before the age of 14 are more vulnerable to drug problems later in life than those who started using drugs at the age of 21 and above (Morokonla, 2003).

According to Osayomi (1999), from ancient times the use of drugs has always been an inseparable part of occultism and the youth in tertiary institutions are deeply involved in this practice. There are two aspects of danger associated with drugs; the risk of addiction and adverse health and behavioral consequences. Drug abuse researches, related to those concerned with alcohol abuse have generally been stepped up to Nigeria, reflecting the increasing trends in the use and misuse of this substance. An interesting aspect of these researches in their focus on young people (Asuni, 1980; Onwuzuruike, 1988; Mbosowo, 1988; Obot, 1989)