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SECURE ATTACHMENT, PARENTING STYLES AND RISK OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

*The thrust of this study was to examine secure attachment, parenting styles and risk of substance abuse among secondary school adolescent students in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried out accordingly. Ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. A sample of one thousand and sixty-three (1063) students from a population of twenty-one thousand, two hundred and sixty-six (21,266) students*was randomly selected through the stratified sampling*for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The reliability estimate of the instruments was established through Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Regression analysis and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were the statistical techniques employed to test the hypotheses under study. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that, secure attachment and parenting style significantly influence substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school in Cross River State. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that schools should incorporate attachment-focused counseling services aimed at strengthening the secure attachment style in adolescents. This could be achieved by offering sessions that help students build healthy relationships and develop emotional regulation skills, which may reduce the likelihood of substance abuse.*

Keyword: Secure Attachment, Parenting Styles, Risk of Substance Abuse, Adolescent

Introduction

The increase in the reported cases of substance abuse by secondary school students has alarmingly called for concern. It impacts negatively on the academic, social, psychological and physical development of abusers. Students in our secondary schools are fast joining the drug train, drinking and smoking away their future for the pleasure of getting high, hence, posing a threat to the health and safety of the adolescents, family, their

community and the country at large. Drug use by students has hampered education and management in Nigerian secondary schools. In Nigeria, recent statistics suggest that one in every three secondary school students consumes alcohol. Another 8.3% smoke cigarettes while almost one in every ten (9.1%) chew Miraa. About 3% smoke bhang and use hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, mandrax and tranquilizers (The Daily Times, 2004 in Ekpenyong, 2012). Drugs have varied physiological effects. Some adverse consequences include insomnia, prolonged loss of appetite, increased body temperature, greater risk of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS infection, death, various forms of cancers, ulcers and brain damage. Drug abuse also affects the brain, resulting in a major decline in its functions. (Perkinson, 2002 in Ekpenyong, 2012). Drugs can affect a student's concentration and thus interest in school and extracurricular activities. This leads to increased absenteeism and drop outs. Most psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of students, their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills. Drugs also interfere with an individual's awareness of their unique potential and thus their interest in their career development. Drug habits also affect individual's self-concept. Self-concept refers to the way an individual perceives himself or herself in a variety of areas for example academically, physically, and socially. Drugs are substances which when introduced into the body will alter the normal biological and psychological functioning of the body, especially the central nervous system (Escandon& Galvez, 2006 in Encomium Magazine 2013). The term 'drug' in a general sense includes all substances that can alter brain functions and create dependence. UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (2006) defines drug abuse as the self-administration of any drug in a manner that diverts from approved medical or social patterns within a given culture. Legal or licit drugs and substances are socially accepted and their use does not constitute any criminal offence. In Nigeria, these include alcohol and nicotine. Drug abuse among students is dominated by the use of overdose or abuse of these legal drugs and substances. Among the illegal drugs commonly used by students are cannabis, ecstasy, heroine, mandrax and lysergic acid diethylamide (NAFDAC, 2004). The adolescents are said to be the future leaders of our country, if then our youths are engrossed and involved in the use, abuse, cultivation and trafficking of drugs and psychoactive substances we can then imagine the type and caliber of leaders we are going to have and the kind of society our country would be like under such leaders, this is better said than imagined. The health educator has no doubt that drug and alcohol abuse among secondary school students have become a matter of concern to Nigerians. These substances not only alter the functioning of the body and mind but also affect the dimension of health. However, Encomium magazine, (2013) stated that the use of illicit drugs is not a new trend, rather it is growing at an alarming rate with more "leaders of tomorrow" embracing drug abuse for varying reasons. Government in a bid to

eradicate this giant problem of substance abuse in the country had set out measures, this processes includes: the aggressive annihilation of the sources of illegal drugs. Other methods employed by the government were to deploy counselors, psychologists to school and punishments given to defaulter, advertisement were also carried out on air way, to curb the spread of substance abuse. Parents on the other hand are not left out since every human being is said to belong to a family and this family environment moulds the individual's physical, emotional and psychological characteristic. It is from our family that we learn unconditional love, and also within this context that we understand right from wrong, gain respect, empathy, and self-regulation. The family environment in which children grow up has been considered a key 2 predictor of their future outcomes (Centre for Social Justice, 2010b). The degree to which family members are involved in each other's lives is an important factor in family functioning. Therefore, the importance of attachment within the family can never be undermined. The attachment creates bonds within the family, but in recent times it's been observed that parents practically has little or no time for their wards. These children are left in the hand of the caregivers and often, these caregivers are changed by their parents thereby leaving this children to view the world as an unsafe place. Therefore, parental attachment provides an explanation of how the parent-child relationship emerges and influences subsequent development in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development. Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby defined attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (p. 194). However, there have been in increase in psycho-social factors and the roles it plays on students' substance abuse. The factors mostly used on the studies were: age, residential location, social motivation. But for the purpose of this study, the researcher is looking at factors such as Secure attachment, parenting styles and risk of substance abuse among Secondary School Adolescent Students in Cross River State, Nigeria

Statement of problem

The high level of substance abuses among students in the secondary schools have beckoned on the attention of parents, educators, stakeholders and policy makers o the need to adopt holistic approaches in curbing this menace among secondary school students. There are growing concern towards the use and abuse of substances among adolescents in the secondary school. Substance abuse promotes crime in schools and society at large, such as robbery, rape, attacks on both students and teachers, insults on elders and violation of school's rules and regulations. In recent times, its been observed that secondary school students come to class drunk with high smell of cigarette and marijuana. And the most devastating incident is a student in Biase, who went mentally deranged as a result of the consumption of marijuana and alcohol with his colleagues in school during school

hours. Three months after this incident, he still roams the street mentally imbalanced. This eventually led to the death of his ill mother who had battled with hypertension for years. 3 Psychologist and counselors were sent to school to educate them against the need to abstain from substance abuse. Government on the other hand organizes programmes/seminars to both students and teachers. More so, private organization(NGOs) took it upon themselves to reach out at the grass root level and most times free medical attention and treatment are given. Despite the efforts made by the government, school authorities, psychologist and non-governmental organizations(NGOs)to curb the heart breaking situation, the problem still persists. Therefore, the researcher is motivated to carry out the study and find out if weak parental attachment, psycho-social variables could be responsible for the risk of substance abuse among secondary school adolescents' students in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of secure attachment style on student substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school.
2. There is no significant influence of parenting styles on student substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school.

Literature Review

Secure attachment style on drug abuse

Secure attachment style refers to a positive emotional bond that originates in early relationships, typically between children and caregivers, and has significant implications on an individual's relational patterns throughout life. Rooted in attachment theory, secure attachment has been defined by confidence in relationships, emotional resilience, and comfort with closeness (Borelli et al., 2017). A secure attachment fosters the development of healthy self-regulation, trust, and intimacy, which serve as protective factors against mental health issues and maladaptive behaviors, such as substance use. A substantial body of research indicates that a secure attachment style correlates negatively with substance abuse. Adolescents and adults with secure attachment demonstrate higher levels of emotional regulation and are less inclined to engage in drug use as a coping strategy (Schindler, 2019). 4 Research consistently suggests that attachment security plays a protective role against the risk of substance abuse. According to Zakeri and Karimpour (2019), securely attached adolescents report lower levels of stress and anxiety, often due to strong parental bonds that reduce the need for external coping mechanisms, such as drugs. Brumariu and Kerns (2018) emphasize the role of secure attachment in enhancing emotional regulation, which is crucial in preventing the onset of substance use. Securely attached individuals are less likely to experience severe stress responses, thereby avoiding substance use as an emotional escape. In a study conducted by Moreira, Gouveia, Carona, Silva, and Canavarro (2019) titled The Role of Secure Attachment on Adolescent Well-being and Substance Use, the researchers examined how secure attachment affects substance use

among adolescents in Portuguese secondary schools. The aim of the study was to understand the relationship between secure attachment styles and adolescents' tendency to engage in substance use. An ex-post facto research design was utilized, with a sample size of 600 secondary school students selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient established via Cronbach's alpha. Statistical analysis involved multiple regression to assess the relationship between attachment style and substance use, with each hypothesis tested at a .05 level of significance. The study revealed that secure attachment was associated with lower instances of substance use, as adolescents with secure attachments displayed more resilience to peer pressure and maintained healthier coping mechanisms. Another study by Suchman, Decoste, Castiglioni, McMahon, Rounsaville, and Mayes (2020), titled Attachment-Based Intervention for Substance Use Prevention in High-Risk Adolescents, focused on evaluating an attachment-based intervention in an urban, low-income population in the United States. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with pretest and post-test measures. The study's sample consisted of 200 adolescents identified as atrisk, selected via purposive sampling. Data were collected through observational assessments and self-report measures on substance use behaviors. The instrument's reliability was confirmed through the test-retest method. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests to examine 5 pre- and post-intervention outcomes at a .05 level of significance. The results showed a substantial reduction in substance use among adolescents who participated in the attachmentbased intervention, indicating that such programs could effectively lower substance abuse rates in vulnerable youth by promoting secure attachment as a protective factor.

Parenting styles and drug abuse

Parenting styles are generally classified into four types: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful, each of which varies in terms of responsiveness and control over the child's behavior (Baumrind, 1966). These styles have a profound influence on a child's development and can affect numerous aspects of their lives, including susceptibility to drug abuse. It is worthy to note that family support, understanding and communication are vital in creating a condusive environment for learning as well as foster positive mental health for learners (Ngban & Isogon 2023). Authoritarian Parenting involves high control and low responsiveness. Parents using this style impose strict rules and expect obedience without providing warmth or nurturing. Research suggests that this high-demand, low-support environment can lead to increased risk behaviors, including substance abuse, as adolescents may seek autonomy and emotional connection outside the home (Miller & Smith, 2018). Authoritative Parenting combines high responsiveness with high expectations, emphasizing both structure and support. This style has been shown to yield the most positive outcomes in adolescents, including

lower rates of drug abuse. Adolescents with authoritative parents are more likely to internalize their parents' values, leading to better self-regulation and less likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors, such as substance use (Johnson & Barrett, 2019). Permissive Parenting involves high responsiveness but low control, often resulting in a lack of clear boundaries. Permissive parents may prioritize their child's happiness over rules, potentially increasing the risk of substance abuse. Research has shown that adolescents with permissive parents often struggle with self-control, which is associated with higher rates of drug and alcohol use (Wright & Edwards, 2020). Neglectful Parenting, characterized by low responsiveness and low control, is associated with the highest risk of negative outcomes, 6 including substance abuse. Lack of parental involvement can lead adolescents to engage in drug use as a means of coping with emotional neglect (Miller et al., 2020). Authors in recent studies have extensively analyzed the impact of parenting styles on adolescent substance abuse. For instance, Wright and Edwards (2020) examined the relationship between permissive parenting and substance abuse, finding that the lack of boundaries in permissive households was strongly correlated with increased alcohol and drug use in adolescents. The study attributed this to inadequate self-discipline among children raised without strict guidelines. Similarly, Miller, Roberts, and Sanchez (2020) explored neglectful parenting and its association with higher rates of adolescent drug use. They argued that the lack of emotional support and guidance in neglectful households led adolescents to turn to substance use for emotional fulfillment. This study emphasized that neglectful parenting significantly predisposes adolescents to substance abuse as a coping mechanism. In a study by Johnson and Barrett (2019), titled The Impact of Parenting Styles on Adolescent Substance Use in Urban Communities, the researchers explored how different parenting styles influence drug abuse among adolescents in New York City. The study aimed to assess the extent to which authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles contribute to substance use in adolescents. The ex-post facto research design included a sample of 500 adolescents from public high schools, selected via simple random sampling. Data were collected through a self-report questionnaire, with reliability established using Cronbach's alpha. Statistical analysis using multiple regression assessed the effect of each parenting style on substance use, with each hypothesis tested at a .05 significance level. Results indicated that adolescents with authoritative parents showed the lowest rates of drug use, while those with permissive or neglectful parents were at a higher risk. 7 Another study by Miller, Roberts, and Sanchez (2020), titled Parenting Styles and Adolescent Drug Abuse: A Comparative Analysis in Suburban and Rural Areas, aimed to determine the role of parenting styles on adolescent substance use across different environments in Texas. This research employed a cross-sectional design and

included a sample of 400 adolescents recruited through stratified sampling to represent suburban and rural areas equally. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire validated through test-retest reliability. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square analysis at a .05 significance level. Findings indicated a significant difference in drug use across parenting styles, with suburban adolescents of neglectful parents showing higher instances of substance abuse. In contrast, rural adolescents with authoritative parents reported the lowest substance use, suggesting that parenting style and environment together influence adolescent drug use patterns.

Research Method

This research is targeted at covering the three educational zones in the state, namely: Calabar education zone, Ogoja education zone, Ikom education zone respectively. The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto design. The population of the study will consists all Senior Secondary School Two students in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The total population was twenty-one thousand, two hundred and sixty-six (21,266) students as recorded by Secondary School Education Management Board, Cross River State (2024). The sampling techniques adopted for the study was the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The simple random sampling was used to select the schools and students for the study in each Local Government Area and school respectively. The sample of this study consists of one thousand and sixty-three (1063) students from eight (8) selected secondary schools in Cross River State. Further breakdown on the figure showed that 628 were females; while 435 were males. Secure attachment, parenting styles and risk of substance abuse questionnaire (SAPSRSAQ) was the instrument used for data collection. This was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in measurement and evaluation. A trial tested on one hundred (100) students from secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State to establish the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instrument α = .73-.76. out of 1063 questionnaires administered, only 1024 were successfully completed and retrieved and were used as sample for the study. This process was facilitated by the researcher and two trained research assistants. The data collected was analyzed through simple regression analysis and One way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant influence of secure attachment style on student substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is secure attachment style; while the dependent variable is substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school. Simple regression analysis was the employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Simple regression result of the influence of secure attachment style on substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate		
1	.990(a)	.979	.979	.41115		
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	p-value	
Regression	8132.733	1	8132.733	48110.048	.000(a)	
Residual	172.763	1022	.169			
Total	8305.496	1023				
Variables	Unstandardized weight B	regression	Standardized weight	regression	Beta weight	t	p-value
(Constant)		-2.388		.175		-13.653	.000
Secure attachment style		1.777		.008	.990	219.340	.000

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the influence of secure attachment style on the substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .990and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .979 and an adjusted R^2 of .979. The adjusted R^2 of .979 indicated that the secure attachment styles account for 97.9% of the variance insubstance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that secure attachment styles are relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was F = 48110.048and the sig. value of .000 (or p<.05) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 1022. The implication of this result is that secure attachment style is a significant predictor ofsubstance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school.The identified equation to understand this influence was that substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school=-2.388 + 1.777 (secure attachment style).

Hypothesis two: There is no significant influence of parenting style on substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school in Cross River State.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is parenting style (autocratic, democratic and permissive); while the dependent variable is substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school. To test this hypothesis, substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school from parenting style autocratic, democratic and permissive were compared using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Summary data and one-way ANOVA of the influence of parenting style on substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school (N=408)

Parenting style	N	$\bar{x}$	SD		
Authoritarian	314	35.6115		2.78896	
Authoritative	456	35.6645		2.91780	
Permissive	128	37.2578		2.28051	
Neglectful	126	35.8730		2.89823	
Total	1024	35.8730		2.84934	
Source of variance	SS	df	Ms	F	Sig of F
Between group	286.772	3	95.591	12.159	.000
Within group	8018.724	1020	7.861		
Total	8305.496	1023			

* Significant at p <.05 level, df= 2, 220

The result on Table 2 revealed that the F-value of 24.406 at p=.000. Since the p (.000) is less than p (.005), the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implied that, parenting style significantly influenced substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school. Since parenting style had a significant influence on substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of Parenting style on substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school

Dependent Variable: substance abuse LSD

(I) parenting styles	(J) parenting styles	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Authoritarian	authoritative	-.05301	.20561	.797
	Permissive	-1.64635(*)	.29403	.000
	Neglectful	-.26155	.29568	.377
Authoritative	authoritarian	.05301	.20561	.797
	Permissive	-1.59334(*)	.28046	.000
	Neglectful	-.20854	.28219	.460
Permissive	authoritarian	1.64635(*)	.29403	.000
	authoritative	1.59334(*)	.28046	.000
	Neglectful	1.38480(*)	.35187	.000
Neglectful	authoritarian	.26155	.29568	.377
	authoritative	.20854	.28219	.460
	Permissive	-1.38480(*)	.35187	.000

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 showed that students whose parenting style was Autocratic were significantly different in their substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school from those whose Parenting style was either Democratic or permissive. Also students whose Parenting style was Democratic were significantly different from those who were permissive in substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school.

Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that secure attachment style significantly influence substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school in Cross River State.The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view ofZakeri and Karimpour (2019) who observed that, securely attached adolescents report lower levels of stress and anxiety, often due to strong parental bonds that reduce the need for external coping mechanisms, such as drugs. Moreira, Gouveia, Carona, Silva, and Canavarro (2019) also revealed that secure attachment was associated with lower instances of substance use, as adolescents with secure attachments displayed more resilience to peer pressure and maintained healthier coping mechanisms. A substantial reduction in substance use among adolescents who participated in the attachmentbased intervention, indicating that such programs could effectively lower substance abuse rates in vulnerable youth by promoting secure attachment as a protective factor.

The result of the second hypothesis revealedparenting style significantly influence substance abuse among adolescents in the secondary school in Cross River State.The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view ofJohnson and Barrett (2019) who indicated that adolescents with authoritative parents showed the lowest rates of drug use, while those with permissive or neglectful parents were at a higher risk. Miller, Roberts, and Sanchez (2020) also indicated a significant difference in drug use across parenting styles, with suburban adolescents of neglectful parents showing higher instances of substance abuse. In contrast, rural adolescents with authoritative parents reported the lowest substance use, suggesting that parenting style and environment together influence adolescent drug use patterns.

Conclusion

The study concludes that secure attachment style and parenting styles significantly influence substance abuse among adolescents in secondary school in Cross River State. Adolescents who experience secure attachments with caregivers are less likely to engage in substance abuse, likely due to feelings of emotional stability and positive self-worth. This highlights the importance of fostering secure attachment bonds early in life to promote healthier coping mechanisms and social behaviors. 9 Additionally, the study underscores the impact of various parenting styles on adolescents' likelihood of substance use. Parenting characterized by appropriate levels of warmth, supervision, and guidance

appears to reduce the likelihood of substance abuse, whereas overly permissive or authoritarian approaches may contribute to higher risks.

Recommendations

1. Schools should incorporate attachment-focused counseling services aimed at strengthening the secure attachment style in adolescents. This could be achieved by offering sessions that help students build healthy relationships and develop emotional regulation skills, which may reduce the likelihood of substance abuse.
2. Schools and social organizations should introduce training programs for parents that emphasize balanced parenting approaches. Such programs could guide parents on the impacts of authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parenting styles, equipping them with effective communication and discipline methods to discourage adolescent substance use.

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