

DRUGS ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS: CORRELATES TO INSECURITY AND DECLINE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to investigate drugs abused among youths and the correlation of drug use to insecurity and decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State. Two null hypotheses were generated for the study. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was Rivers State, and it covered all youths who are out of drugs in the State. a sample of 300 respondents was selected for the study. The selection was done through the use of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was content validated by professionals in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. Furthermore, the reliability value of 0.80 Correlation Co-efficient was obtained for the study. The statistical methods used for the study were percentage, frequency and contingency tables and a bar-graph as well as Chi-square (χ^2) for the study. Percentage was used to analyze biographical data of respondents' results as presented in a frequency table and a bar-graph for the study. Additionally, χ^2 was used to analyze the tested hypotheses for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analyses revealed that correlations (associations) exist between drugs abused among youths and insecurity as well as decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State in Nigeria. In congruence with the findings, the study recommended, among others, that the State Government should, through traditional and social media outlets

inform, educate and communicate with the public especially the youths on the dangers of abusing drugs and how to halt the psycho-social effects of same on them, and indeed on people in Rivers State.

Keywords: Drugs Abused, Youths, Correlates, Insecurity, Decline, Socio-economic Development.

Introduction

Drug abuse is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of our societies. The effects are cataclysmic as they cut across every race and social status (Eric, 2017). This is undoubtedly true because the effects of drug abuse have resultant consequences of insecurity that culminate in the decline in growth and socio-economic development of any country. In the circumstances, however, studies have found a close connection between drug abuse, criminal behavior and social attitudes (*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 1995*). These criminal behaviors arising from drug abuse lead to crimes such as killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, etc. that may as well lead to insecurity in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ireland, Slovenia, Canada, Belgium, India, Bangladesh, Colombia, Libya, Nigeria, etc. where drugs, specifically opium and marijuana seem to be prominent.

Apart from crime effects of drugs, they also have negative effects on the drug abusers income and the income of the family where he or she is a member. Worse still is that an addiction does not just affect the individual or those who are directly involved in their life (*Rehabilitation Centre, 2019*); the economy of nations, businesses, healthcare system, communities and families all face in varying capacities financial repercussions from drug and alcohol use. In congruence with the foregoing facts, it is obvious that drug abuse has become a dreadful cancer that affects security and development the world over. It is however based on these ugly trends that this study was conceived and carried out. In doing the latter, it sets appropriate objectives and hypotheses to address the correlations between drug abuse and insecurity as well as socio-economic development, besides the review of related studies on same.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are delineated for the study:

- i. To investigate the correlation (association) between drugs abused among youths and insecurity in Rivers State.
- ii. To ascertain the correlation (relation) between drugs abused among youths and decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses are formulated for the study:

- i. There is no significant correlation (association) between drugs abused among youths and insecurity in Rivers State.
- ii. There is no significant correlation (association) between drugs abused among youths and decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Drug abuse dates back to human existence in Nigeria. Before the colonial incursion into Nigeria, Nigerians cultivated opium and marijuana as well as produced wine from palm and raffia trees for leisure and economic use. Fortunately at this time, engaging in drug abuse was to the barest minimum in Nigeria. However, after independence in 1960, new techniques and methods of refining drugs were introduced by the West. This did not culminate significantly to abuse of drugs; since it was a period of economic boom from the sales of Nigerian crude oil.

Regrettably, as a result of decline in crude oil sale, many youths became frustrated and took to drug, which they subsequently abused for self gratification (self destruction) and destruction of the Nigerian State. In fact, to worsen the ugly scenario, Federal and State Governments did not have comprehensive laws and policies, or even the will power to implement the existing half glass of laws and policies, on employment for the youths in Nigeria. The resultant effects of the foregoing were high rise in youths' drug abuse and crimes in Nigeria.

In the circumstances of the volcanic rise in crime and subsequent decline in socio-economic development, Ekpenyong (2016) in his study entitled *Drug Trafficking and the Threat to Nigeria's National Security* found that drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime (TOC) posed a significant and growing threat to national and international security with dire implications and economic stability across the globe. Similarly, Nwannennaya and Abiodun (2017) in their study entitled *Illicit Drug Trafficking in Nigeria: Obstacle to National Development and Security* found that the menace of illicit drug trafficking poses heinous threats to human lives, national development and security.

In view of these studies, there were rising threats to security and socio-economic development, in which today the North and South of Nigeria are in the maze of insecurity and decline in infrastructural development in the country. Sadly, the deep concern is why the continuous threats to security and infrastructural development and social cohesion in all states (with specific reference to Rivers State) in Nigeria? It is the attempt to answer this question that spurred the study to investigate the nexuses between *Drug Abuse Among Youths and Insecurity as well as Decline in Socio-economic Development* in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Drug Abuse

There is no gainsaying the fact that drug abuse is a major challenge the world over. This is not farfetched; since some youths today abuse drugs not only to have sexual gratification, but for criminal tendencies that many countries, including Nigeria, are contending with the the world over. In congruence with the volcanic dangers of abusing drugs in human society, what then is drug abuse? According to Mandal (2019), drug abuse or substance abuse is the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain.

In accordance with these facts, *World Health Organization (WHO)* (2019) explains that substance is the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome- a cluster of behavioural cognitive and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically included a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling it 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 (WHO, 2019).

In concordance with *WHO* (2019), it is obvious that the drugs that are abused may be stimulants and/or depressants. Unfortunately, the drugs that are abused by the youths are mostly stimulants; since these drugs make them "high", in order to commit crimes of many "colours" which cut across rape, killings, kidnapping, and most regrettably terrorist attacks on government and private establishments as well as on humans which may adversely affect development in any society. Some of these stimulant drugs include cocaine, amphetamine, crack, methamphetamine and others. Again, some which are abused alongside the above drugs are tramadol, codeine and others which are mostly bought over-the-counter by youths in most developing countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, etc., without close monitoring of same by concerned health authorities (agencies, boards, commissions and ministries) in Africa.

Correlation between Drug Abuse among Youths and Insecurity

Drug abuse and insecurity are major challenges the world is battling with today. This is so because they pose major threats to countries; security the world over. Today, continents like Asia, South America, Europe and Africa are battling with drug abuse and its threats to security. However, continents that are worse hit by drug related insecurity are South America and Africa (specifically West and Central African countries); even though the former are overcoming these challenges today.

It is in the circumstance of the foregoing that the *United Nations (UN)* (2018) reports that the linkages between terrorism, illicit drugs and other forms of crime have been widely acknowledged, including by this council led by Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UNODC said, underlining the destabilizing impacts of the drug trade on governance, security, economic growth and public health. In concordance with *UN* (2018), drug abuse has various effects on the society which crisscross life security, property security, food security among others in any nation.

Regrettably, the above security challenges had been the aftermath of drug abuse among youths and those engrossed in religious-ideological beliefs to achieve the sects' interests. In the circumstances of the foregoing facts, many people have lost their lives in terrorist attacks, alongside their property as a result of attacks from drug abusers in different drug cartels, the world over. In line with these views, Shehu, Sani and Garba (2018) in their work entitled *Nigeria's National Security: Potent Threats of Drugs Abuse to Future's Socio-economic and Political Security* explain that escalation of drug abuse in Nigeria points that the country's future is in jeopardy with more socially disintegrated, mad, under-productive society and state. In support of this, Alabi (2015), speaking at an event to mark the 2015 International Drug Abuse Day, by the international community, explaining that the world drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat to public health safety and well-being of humanity, particularly young people, national security and sovereignty of states. Keeping with these facts, Ikoh, Smah and Okwanya (2009) in their study entitled *Factors Affecting Entry into Drug Abuse Among Youths in Lafia Metropolis: Implications on Security* found that drug abuse was significantly practice in the metropolis due to lack of parental control, easy access to drugs, and emerging street culture gangsterism. The implications of these on urban security were noted on incessant scuffle and street fighting, increased confrontation with the police, accidents and injuries, robbery and theft (Ikoh, Smah and Okwanya, 2019). The worrisome aspect of this fact is the culmination of drug abuse among youths that had spread like cancer to most states in the North of Nigeria, exposing them to enrolment into Boko Haram Sect; and subsequently into violent destruction of lives and property. In the dark of the situation, many residents in the North of Nigeria have relocated alongside those in private sector to safe places as no business thrives in atmosphere of insecurity.

Sequel to these facts, most youths who abuse drugs today depend on drug traffickers and peddlers to access them for crime. What is worse is the fact that the traffickers of substance abuse also sponsor drug abusers to dismantle the state apparatus that may negatively affect their drug trafficking business and religious beliefs to change the government of the day. Today, it is obvious that those who sponsor Boko Haram for insecurity in Nigeria are mostly allied terrorists' organizations who do same through drug traffickers. This is sad because this act is creeping into other parts of Nigeria, wearing different togas of crimes to perpetrate acts of insecurity in the country.

Correlation between Drug Abuse among Youths and Socio-economic Development

Drug abuse has been a major challenge of socio-economic development the world over. This is so especially when youths who abuse drugs disrupt the building of infrastructures by kidnapping workers for ransom. This is the case in most developing countries in Asia and Africa where youths who abuse drugs are used by rival politicians to ravage institutional facilities as well as to kill their opponents to register their superiority in

politics, especially when they lost elections. The dark side of this ugly trend is it leads to decline in socio-economic development in countries where drug associated crimes thrive. Given this background, Onchonga (2016) explains that:

Drugs and Substance Abuse (DSA) continue to endanger the health and welfare of youths throughout the world. Substance abusers pose a threat to economic and social development status, which undermines human socio-economic development.

In corroboration to Onchonga's (2016) views on effects of drug abuse on socio-economic development, Hall (2017) also explains that effects of drug abuse extend beyond users, spilling over into the larger society, imposing social and economic costs. Additionally, drug abuse is associated with decline in income of abusers as well as their families; since they depend on their parents, uncles and aunts to extort money, for same. What is more frustrating is the fact that the youths who abuse drugs sell their belongings, and even steal from people to buy drugs for self gratification, thereby negatively affecting their income and that of others in the society.

In consonance with the above views, Patrick, Wightman, Schoeni and Schulenberg (2012) in their study entitled *Socio-economic Status and Substance Use Among Young Adults: A Comparison Across Constructs and Drugs* found that the three indicators of family background, socio-economic status (SES) income, wealth, and parental education converged in describing unique patterns for smoking and for alcohol and marijuana use among young adults although functional relationships across SES measures varied. What is worse to these facts is young adults with the highest family background SES were prone to alcohol and marijuana use (Patrick, Wightman, Schoeni and Schulenberg, 2012). The culminative result of this is the drug abuse problem among youths is a global plague, affecting both developed and developing nations worldwide (Nyameh, Yakubu, Tenu and Titus, 2013); it is a problem that affects virtually every aspect of nations' political, social and economic life.

In Nigeria, drug abuse among youths is really a menace due to its devastating effects in the country. Today youths who interact among themselves on drug abuse acts develop drug abuse subculture. In mastering the drug abuse acts, they in some cases, use same to attack the whites people who explore and exploit crude oil in Nigeria. Thus, the effects can be physiological and psychological, which gradually penetrates the society and affects all productive endeavors both socially and economically (Eric, 2017). What is sad is the fact that the economic effect looks at the loss of potential manpower, low productivity, and creation of an unfavorable environment for investors which of course will affect the Gross National Income (GNI) of Nigeria (Eric, 2017).

Unfortunately, because of the damaging nature of drugs on the youths and Nigerian economy, Kawugana and Faruna (2018) delineates one of the economic effects of drug abuse on government as spending a of funds on security and settlement of IDPs created by insurgent as a result of drug abuse instead of using such funds to provide basic needs and infrastructural development. Equally important is the need for governments to use funds to create jobs for the army of unemployed youths with all intents and purposes to avert drug abuse and consequences of same on socio-economic development of any country.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Peer Clusters Theory of Drug Abuse: A Triangulation of Crimes and Downturn Security/ Economic Development

Oetting and Beauvais (1986) were among the first scholars who propounded the peer cluster theory in human society. Oetting and Beauvais (1986) see peer cluster theory as a theory that explains how peer group interactions could mould an individual's character either positively or negatively in the society. The theory

further explains that such peer group behaviors that are learned by a peer can influence an individual's acts on another or group of other peers in the society. Thus, agents of peer cluster are the family, school, religion and youths' sub-cultural cult- like crime and drug abuse groups. Based on this premise, the focus of Peer Cluster Theory is contrast to social control theory, suggests that peer clusters directly affect drug use and that the effect of peer clusters prevails over social control (Oetting and Beauvais, 1986).

According to Oetting and Beauvais (1986), peer groups, including pairs, dictate the shared beliefs, values and behaviors that determine where, when, and with whom drugs are used and the roles that drugs play in defining cluster relationship. Again, peer cluster theory incorporates those psychological factors that promotes or inoculate against drug use in youth (Oetting and Beauvais, 1986).

Regrettably today, drug abuse among youths had made youths-deviant peer clusters, in so far that they took to crimes as well as making their acts affect economic development negatively in Nigeria. Indeed, some youths who take drugs had formed crime sub-culture, in which they indulge in crimes such as rapes, killings, kidnapping, and bombing of infrastructural establishments (Boko Haram bombings) in Nigeria. Thus, why this is striving in Nigeria is the youths are engrossed in drug abuse, which has beclouded their sense of reasoning to differentiate bad from good moral; hence they are in one path way of crimes which has exposed the country to insecurity, and in turn affected negatively economic investment and infrastructural development.

Apart from this, drug related crimes, including drug trafficking have badly affected foreign investments in infrastructures like electricity, oil and gas, aviation, rail, ports and others are threatened by Boko Haram sects, and other criminals who rape, kill and kidnap foreigners and bomb establishment for selfish gratification in Nigeria. Sadly, this menace has made some industries in Nigeria to relocate to the West African countries, specifically Ghana, to do business. In the same view, those who want to invest in Nigeria are scared because of drug abuse-related crimes and insecurity in the country. The resultant effect of this is dwindling economic growth and development with the incessant drug abuse among youths which has culminated in drug abuse-related crimes in Nigeria.

Thus, to halt this menace in Nigeria, the theory posits that negative peer cluster should be discouraged as it leads to drug abuse and drug-related crimes. By so doing, youths who abuse drug will be pulled out of the maze of drug related crimes in Nigeria. The expounding benefits of the efforts will create healthy atmosphere for foreign investments, in so much that there will be improved socio-economic development in Nigeria. However, if the theory is ignored and not used to address the peer cluster negative influence in Nigeria, the country will continue to suffer insecurity and its attendant negative influence on economic development that arise from the powder keg by addressing drug abuse among youths in the country.

Methodology

Survey design is used for the study. The population of the study is Rivers State. It covers all youths who had cases of drug abuse, but are in sanity of mind at the period of the study. A Sample of 300 respondents is randomly selected for the study. The selection is done through the use of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Thus, simple random sampling technique is used to select one Local Government Area (LGA) in the State. In doing this, all the 23 LGAs in Rivers State were written down on paper and wrapped by the researchers. These were then put in a basket for picking. A research assistant was called to pick up the wrapped papers of the 23 LGAs for the study. Through this process, the person called upon picked Obio/Akpor for the study. In addition to this, respondents were independently selected in consideration of those who were out of drug use using purposive sampling technique. In achieving this, 300 respondents were selected in Obio/Akpor LGA. The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire. It is structured into Section A: biographic data with multiple question (items) based on age, sex, educational

status, and religion. Section B is based on the field responses on the hypothesis used in categorized items of ‘high’, ‘moderate’ and ‘low’ levels insecurity and socio-economic development in Rivers State.

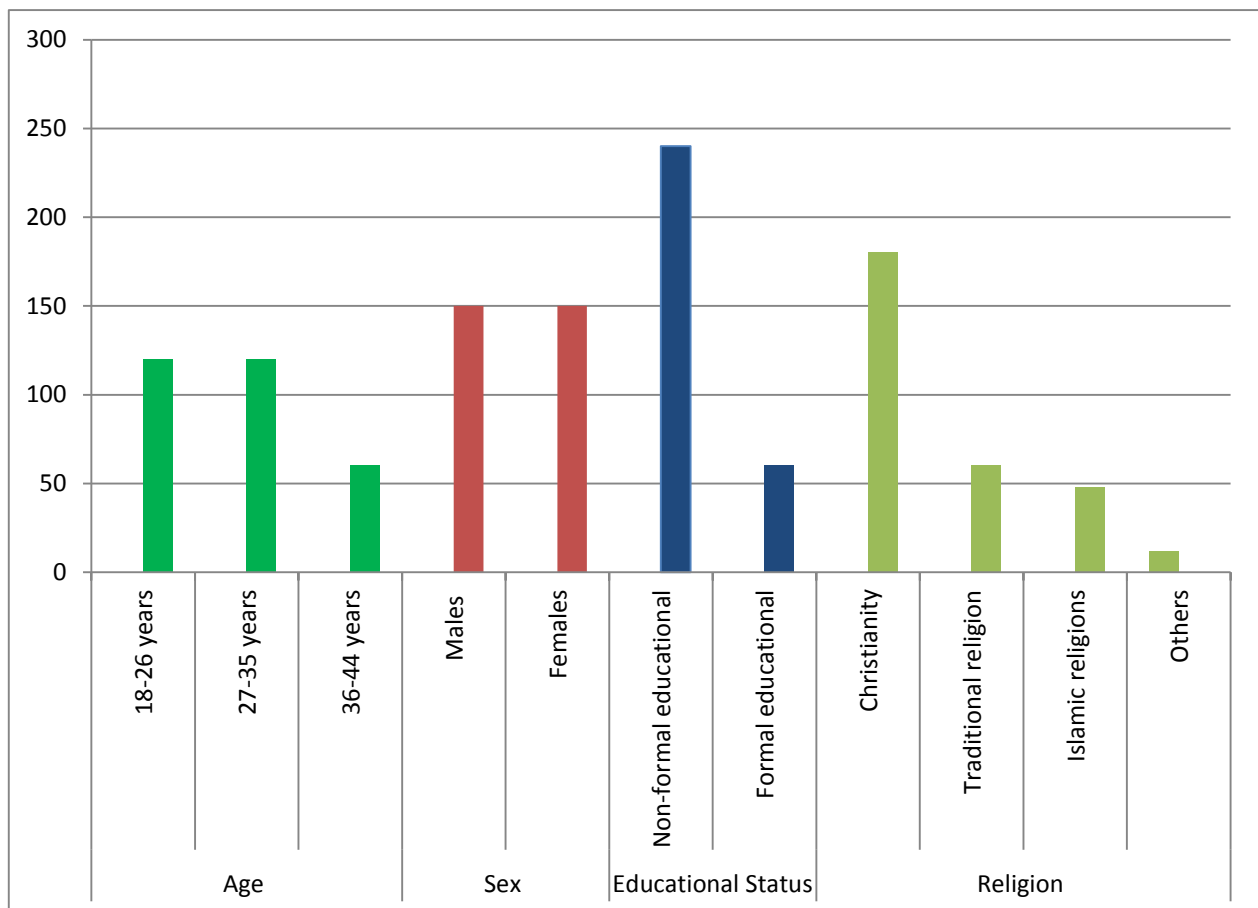
Content validity of the instrument is established by professionals in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. What is more is the fact that test-retest method of reliability is used to determine the reliability value of 0.80 Correlations Co-efficient for the study. The researchers administered the copies of the questionnaire with the help of a research assistant; and he collected same immediately the responses were completed by respondents. The statistical methods used for the study are percentage, frequency and contingency tables, and a bar graph as well as χ^2 . Percentage and a frequency table as well as a bar graph are used to analyze biographic data of respondents while χ^2 is used to analyze the tested null hypothesis for the study.

Results

Table 1: Biographic Data of Respondents

Biographic Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age		
18-26 years	120	40
27-35 years	120	40
36-44 years	60	20
Sex		
Males	150	50
Females	150	50
Educational Status		
Non-formal educational	240	80
Formal educational	60	20
Religion		
Christianity	180	60
Traditional religion	60	20
Islamic religions	48	16
Others	12	4

Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2019.



Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2019.

The results of age depicts that 120 respondents, representing 40% were from age 18 years to 26 years, 120 (40%) were also from age 27 years to 35 years, while 60 (20%) were from age 36 to 44 years. With regard to these results, the study used more youths between ages 18 years and 35 years. The reason is that these youths are very vibrant, in that they are within the age brackets of stress and storm in the study area. The implication of this is that they can engage in any negative behavior that affects the society, while those between ages 36 years and 44 years may not be very active in health compromising behaviours as they are approaching the adult age. For sex, the results that proved 150 respondents, representing 50% were males, while 150 (50%) were females. This shows equal representation of male and female youths without any form of gender bias in the study.

For educational status, the results delineate that 240 respondents, representing 80% were those who had non-formal education, while 60 (20%) had formal education. Based on the foregoing opinions of the respondents, it is clear that youths who had non-formal education were used more than those who had formal education.

The situation unfolds that youths without formal education used and abused drugs due to lack of knowledge about the dangers of drug in the study area. For religion, the results proved that 180 respondents, representing 60% were Christians, 60 (20%) were members of Traditional religion, 48 (16%) were Muslims, while 12 (4%) were members of other religions. With respect to these results, many Christians were used for the study than members of other religious organizations. This is truly so because of the location of the study within a predominantly Christian population.

Table 2: Analysis of the Correlation between Drugs Abused Among Youths and Insecurity in Rivers State

Respondents	Responses			Total
	High level of insecurity due drugs abused by youths	Average level of insecurity due drugs abused by youths	Low level of insecurity due to drugs abused by youths	
Non-formally educated youths who are out of drugs	85 (96.66)	80 (70)	35 (33.33)	200
Formally educated youths who are out of drugs	60 (48.33)	25 (35)	15 (16.66)	100
Total	145	105	50	300

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019.

Table 3: χ^2 In-depth Computation of the Analysis of the Correlation between Drugs Abused Among Youths and Insecurity in Rivers State

Serial Number (S/N)	Observed Frequency (OF)	Expected Frequency (EF)	OF-EF	(OF-EF) ²	(OF-EF) ²
1	85	96.66	-11.66	135.95	1.40
2	80	70	10	100	1.42
3	35	33.33	1.67	2.7889	0.08
4	60	48.33	11.67	136.1889	2.81
5	25	35	10	100	2.85
6	15	16.66	-1.66	2.7556	0.66
Total					0.66

Calculated $\chi^2 = 8.72 >$ table value = 5.99; level of significance = 0.05; degree of freedom (df) = 2

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019.

The result of the analysis presented in tables 2 and 3 depicts that the calculated χ^2 value of 0.05 is higher than the level of significance with df of 2. based on this fact, the result of the analysis is said to be significant, hence the calculated value is higher than the table value. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. In congruence with this fact, it means that there is a significant correlation between drugs abused among youths and insecurity in the study area.

Table 4: Analysis of Drugs Abused Among Youths and Decline in Socio-economic Development in Rivers State

Respondents	Responses			Total
	High level of decline socio-economic development due drugs abused by youths	Average level of decline socio-economic development due drugs abused by youths	Low level of decline socio-economic development due drugs abused by youths	
Non-formally educated youths who are out of drugs	90 (106.66)	75 (63.33)	35 (30)	200
Formally educated youths who are out of drugs	60 (48.33)	70 (33.33)	10 (15)	100
Total	160	95	45	300

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019.

Table 5: χ^2 In-depth Computation of the Analysis of the Correlation between Drugs Abused Among Youths and Decline in Socio-economic Development in Rivers State

(S/N)	(OF)	(EF)	OF-EF	(OF-EF) ²	(OF-EF) ²
1	90	106.33	-16.66	277.5556	2.60
2	75	63.33	11.67	136.1889	2.15
3	35	30	5	25	0.83
4	70	53.33	277.8889	277.8889	5.21
5	20	31.66	-11.66	135.9556	4.29
6	10	15	-5	25	1.66
Total					16.74

Calculated $\chi^2 = 16.74 >$ table value = 5.99; level of significance = 0.05; DF = 2

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019.

The result of the analysis in Tables 4 and 5 proves that the calculated χ^2 value of 16.74 is higher than the table of value of 5.99 at 0.05 level of significance with df of 2. In consonance with the foregoing facts, the result of the analysis is said to significant as the calculated χ^2 value is higher than the table value. In line with the above result, the null hypothesis is rejected. With regard to the foregoing analysis, it is clear that there is a significant correlation between drugs abused among youths and decline in socio-economic development in the study area.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the first hypothesis reveals that there is a significant correlation between drugs abused among youths and insecurity in Rivers State. This result is in congruence with UN (2018) drug abuse has varieties of effects on the society which crisscross life security, property security, food security among others in any nation. Also, the result of the foregoing hypothesis is in line with Alabi (2015) who, in speaking at an event to mark the 2015 International Drug Abuse Day, said that despite increased efforts by the international community, the world drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat to public health safety and well-

being of humanity, particularly young people, national security and sovereignty of states. Sadly, this is the situation in Nigeria where youth who abuse drugs use Boko Haram to perpetuate bombings that have today killed many persons in Mosques, markets and other public places in the North while the youths in the South South, bomb pipelines and valve stations under the cover of Niger Delta struggle, thereby exposing Rivers State and indeed the country to insecurity.

In the same vein, the result of the second hypothesis also reveals that there is significant correlation between drugs abused among youths and decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State. The result of the second hypothesis is in tandem with Onchonga (2016) who explains that substance abusers pose a threat to economic and social development status, which undermines human socio-economic development. It is on this premise that Hall (2017) also explains that effects of drug abuse extend beyond users, spilling over into the larger society, imposing social and economic costs. Today, this is the unfortunate situation, in that youths who abuse drugs in Rivers State have created a scenario of insecurity that has affected investment adversely in the state. What is worse is the fact that business men and women, alongside industries are leaving Rivers State, due to the ugly trend of insecurity that has currently left the state in the down trend of socio-economic development.

Conclusion

In concordance with the findings of the study, it is clear that there are correlations between drugs abused among youths and insecurity/decline in socio-economic development in Rivers State in Nigeria. These findings undoubtedly reflect the rising incidences of drug abuse among youths and the attendant insecurity as well as decline in socio-economic investment, which today have put Rivers State in the maize of states that is unsafe for businesses in Nigeria. Thus, in order to pull Rivers State off this unwanted list, the study suggests precise researchers on the relationship between inadequate plans for job creation and proliferation of youths' unemployment, and neglect of rising population of youths and the dangers of crimes and other vices in River State.

Recommendations

With regard to the findings, the following recommendations are made for the study:

- i. The State Government should, through its traditional and social media outlets inform, educate and communicate with the public, especially the youths on the dangers of abusing drugs, and how to halt the psycho-social effects of same on them, and indeed on people in the society.
- ii. The State Government should establish drug rehabilitation centres in the three Senatorial Zones, in order to rehabilitate youths who are engrossed in drugs, and may pose danger to the security and socio-economic development of the State. again, in order to sustain the foregoing, the State Government should, after the rehabilitation of youth who abused drugs, train them on technical skills for self-employment and dependency, instead of following fall back to drugs.
- iii. The State Government should domesticate and implement the existing Federal Government laws on drug abuse, trafficking and misuse to the fullest, in order to halt the volcanic abuse of drugs among youths in the State. in doing so, the State Government should amend the above laws for more stringent penalties against those who sell, abuse and traffic drugs, since they pose threats to human lives, and the socio-economic life of the State.
- iv. Religious organizations and traditional institutions should collaborate with Federal and State Governments' Agencies (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA]) and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control [NAFDAC]) responsible for halting drug sales, abuse and trafficking to incessantly check places where drugs are sold and apprehend the culprits for trial in courts, in order to give them maximum sentences. By this, there will be

reduction in drug abuse among youths with attendant decrease in insecurity which has become the bane of the socio-economic development in Rivers State.

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