

Life After Matric: The Impact of Drugs and Substance Abuse in South Africa and African Communities

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Abstract: Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. One of the key impacts of illicit drug use on society is the negative health consequences experienced by its members. For many young people across the world, substance misuse is a serious problem. There have been reports that alcohol misuse is widespread in South Africa. The purpose of this paper is to outline the elements that influence the impact of drugs and substance abuse in South Africa and African Communities. The findings of the study that was carried out in the unofficial settlement regions are presented in this essay. The findings of drug usage in the informal community serve as the foundation for the conclusions drawn in this article regarding substance abuse in South Africa. According to this report, young people in South Africa misuse and consume alcohol at significant rates. Unemployment, a lack of effective mentoring, a lack of family values, inadequate parental advice, and a loss of hope were some of the contributing reasons. To achieve the study's goals, a desktop research technique was used, and secondary data was evaluated and deconstructed. This study's major goal was to look at the causes and motivations behind young people's alcohol abuse. The inquiry concentrated on young people's excessive and unusual alcohol consumption.

Keywords: Social Justice, asset, engagement, intellectual enterprises, re-evaluate, Africanising curriculum, Epistemic injustice, disability.

Introduction and Background

According to this survey, South Africa's youth are the country's biggest alcohol consumers and abusers. The elements that contributed included unemployment, a lack of effective mentoring, a lack of family values, inadequate parenting advice, and a loss of hope. In order to achieve its goals, this study used a desktop research technique, analyzing and deconstructing secondary data. Investigating the causes and motivations behind young people's alcohol abuse was the major goal of this study. The inquiry centered on excessive and unusual alcohol usage among young individuals. However, youth drug use is becoming a bigger issue in rural regions. Violence and bullying are only a couple of the crimes that substance usage among students is linked to. Depending on the substance(s) taken, it has also been linked to a variety of mental disorders, while socially, it has been linked to social disorder, deviant behavior, and social engagement with deviant groups. Sexually transmitted infections are also likely to develop as a result of risky sexual behavior.

Family background has a bearing on substance abuse. Individuals who were raised in homes that were, for instance, affected by divorce and mental illness, and those who were raised in homes where illicit drugs and alcohol were consumed, are more likely to become users in adulthood. The logical basis is that life stressors in such homes may lead individuals to alcohol and other substances as a coping mechanism or an "escape" from their realities. Similarly, living in an environment in which drug use is commonplace may also contribute to addiction. People may see their neighbours buying drugs on the street, and they may walk by needles, vials and other drug paraphernalia on a regular basis. Calls from drug dealers might ring out through the night air, and the person might be approached by dealers on

a regular basis. Once again, this behaviour can normalise drug use and make the person feel as though abuse is both common and harmless.

Substance misuse has been linked to issues with classroom management, appetitive aggressiveness, and other issues in the school setting and academic context. These hinder students from achieving the desired educational results and have a negative impact on their academic performance, sometimes leading to school abandonment. Youth Networks Engaged Scholarship Project is a community engagement project in the College of Law housed at the School of Criminal Justice and tasked with the responsibility of engaging with communities on improving social conditions in communities. Amongst others the project will conduct research, write and publish journal articles in Criminal Justice and specifically on Drugs and Substance abuse among the youth in different communities. As academics, this symposium will be beneficial to Youth Networks Engaged Scholarship Project members since it will strengthen and The Youth Networks Engaged Scholarship Project is a community engagement initiative run by the College of Law's School of Criminal Justice. Its goal is to cooperate with local communities to improve their socioeconomic situations. The initiative will, among other things, gather data, compose, and publish journal papers on criminal justice, particularly on drug and substance addiction among young people in various areas. Members of the Youth Networks Engaged Scholarship Project will benefit from this symposium academically since it will reinforce and fill up any gaps or close gaps on.

Problem Statement

Substance abuse impacts negatively on the user, their families and communities. Alcohol and illicit drugs damage the health of users and are linked to rises in non-communicable diseases, including HIV and AIDS, cancer, heart disease and psychological disorders. There are no limits on the impact substance abuse has on the health of users. The social costs for users are exacerbated due to being ostracised from families and their communities. In acute cases, users are at risk of premature deaths due to ill health, people involved in accidents as well as innocent drivers, violent crime and suicide. Visser and Moleko (2017:23). claim that the burden of damage in South Africa is the proven health, social, and economic repercussions of problematic drug use. According to United States Department of State. (2020:np) the spread of HIV among young drug users, a high-risk demographic, is a serious issue in Africa, particularly South Africa, as well as other regions of the world. In addition, he argues that drug usage is particularly prevalent among young people, with a national abuse rate of an estimated 36.3%, and that it significantly contributes to HIV transmission. This, together with the comments stated in the preceding paragraphs, emphasizes the fact that the problem of drug use and misuse is a worldwide phenomenon that affects the health and social well-being of both young people and the general community. According to Terblanche and Venter (2019:98) family risk factors like domestic violence, drug use, parental criminal behavior, marital conflict, and child abuse disrupt parent-child relationships, family structures, and have a negative impact on the development of young people. Most young people who use drugs and do badly in school, the job, and other settings come from dysfunctional households (South African Police Service. 2020:np). Families that are dysfunctional and dealing with drug use issues tend to put more emphasis on addiction than on the needs of the kids. Young individuals who have family members who struggle with drug addiction endure neglect, poverty, and sometimes abuse.

Figure 1: Comparisons of illicit drug use epidemiology: Limpopo, Gauteng and Western Cape

Type of drug	Limpopo, 2020-2022) (18-25 yrs +) ¹		Gauteng, 2020-2022 (18-25 yrs+) ²		Western Cape, 2020- 2023 (18-25 yrs +) ³	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Current Use of: Cannabis (past month- Limpopo/Gauteng/Western Cape)	3.9	0.4	8.2	6.1	8.9	4.6
Inhalants	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1
Mandrax, sedative, pain reliever, tranquilizers	0.5	0.1	3.0	2.6	1.9	2.2

Type of drug	Limpopo, 2020-2022) (18-25 yrs +) ¹		Gauteng, 2020-2022 (18-25 yrs+) ²		Western Cape, 2020- 2023 (18-25 yrs +) ³	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Cocaine (crack)	0.4	0.2	1.3 (0.4)	0.7 (0.2)	0.4	0.3
Opiates, heroin	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	3.1	1.7
Club drugs/ amphetamine type stimulants	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.6	1.6	1.0

According to reports, there is a rising need for drug-related therapy in Cape Town, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga. Like in any other society, the majority of drug users who attend treatment facilities are men. Contrary to the scenario previous to 1994, more women and non-white groups are seeking treatment for heroin misuse at clinics. Methadone maintenance will remain prohibitively costly as long as official government policy forbids it. It is said that there is an upsurge in the need for drug-related therapy in Cape Town, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga. The majority of drug users who attend treatment facilities are men, as is true in all other civilizations. As opposed to what was the case before 1994, more women and people of color are seeking treatment for heroin misuse at clinics. Detoxification from heroin will continue to be expensive as long as methadone maintenance is virtually outlawed by government policy.

This means a substantial lack of information about illicit drugs and treatment success. The limited research that studied drug use trends post 1994 has concentrated mainly on adolescents and their use of alcohol. The South African government has no agency, like the American NIDA, that provides sustained funding to specifically support research projects studying illegal drug use. The duplication of certain services and the non-existence of others (like funding for innovative research), has led, in effect, to the mismanagement of meagre resources available and the failure to secure others (South African Police Service. 2020:np). Because there hasn't been a single, empirically supported strategy to address the drug problem, the war on drugs hasn't been properly or universally fought. There is growing public concern and pressure to take action in relation to illegal substances. Rocha-Silva (2014:67) argued that Law enforcement officials, experts on substance misuse, and service providers all agree that South Africa's recent political, economic, and social upheavals are substantially to blame for the country's rising levels of illicit drug trafficking, consumption, and related issues. In the light of the foregoing discussion and in its vision of building a drug-free society and to make a contribution to the global problem of substance abuse, this paper suggests in that South Africa needs to:

- The lack of a unified, empirically supported strategy approach to the drug problem has prevented the war on drugs from being effectively or universally conducted. Regarding illegal substances, there is growing public awareness and demand for action. Law enforcement officials, researchers on substance abuse, and service providers all agree that the nature and scope of illicit drug trafficking (South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), 2019:np). consumption, and related issues appear to be getting worse in South Africa, largely as a result of the political, economic, and social changes that have occurred there.
- By combining improved police, infrastructure improvements, and support of participation strategies like community policing for other community-based organizations, it is possible to enhance living conditions and community safety.
- To improve living conditions and community safety, a mix of improved law enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and support of participatory strategies like community policing for other community-based organizations is needed.
- Create and maintain a system collecting information on substance addiction that will aid in the implementation, assessment, and continual improvement of treatments for substance abuse.

To assist the implementation, assessment, and continuous development of drug addiction interventions, create and maintain a system of information about substance abuse.

Research Aim and Objectives

See Holloway and Wheeler (2013:111) according to Kumar (2014:34), the words "goal," "purpose," "objective," and "aim" are frequently used as synonyms for one another. The research goal outlines what the researcher hopes to accomplish via their investigation. Thus, the goals of a study highlight the particular problems that the research proposes to address; in other words, the measures that need to be followed to reach the purpose of the study, whereas the aim of a study reveals the biometrics-based solution to combat mobile fraud. The purpose of a research study, according to Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2010:02), is to analyze the various research methodologies that were employed to carry out the study. Considering the aforementioned concepts, the researcher came to the following conclusion:

- This paper aims to explore the impact of drugs and substance abuse in South Africa and Africa Communities.

The research objectives are as follows:

Maxfield and Babbie (2011:19) list five different types of research aim, including inquiry, description, explanation, and empowerment, to help realize this clear vision. According to Depoy and Gitlin (2016: 53), conducting research would be a purposeful, intentional, goal-directed activity done for a specific reason, such as researcher to address a particular question or query, (ii) to address a problem, (iii) to address a particular debate or issue. Denscombe (2012:98) adds that it's common to draw a line between critiquing or analyzing something, researching, creating best practices, and empowering others. Maxfield and Babbie (2011:19) list five different types of research aim, including inquiry, description, explanation, and empowerment, to help realize this clear vision. According to Depoy and Gitlin (2016: 53), conducting research would be a purposeful, intentional, goal-directed activity done for a specific reason, such as researcher to address a particular question or query, (ii) to address a problem, (iii) to address a particular debate or issue. Denscombe (2012:98) adds that it's common to draw a line between critiquing or analyzing something, researching, creating best practices, and empowering others.

The research objectives are as follows:

- To identify the impact of drugs and substance abuse in South Africa and Africa Communities.
- To implicate more weight on measuring the best practice to combat drugs and substance abuse.

Research Methodology

In view of the contextual background above, the non-empirical investigation followed a qualitative research design. This will help the researcher to learn about mobile fraud that is based on a real-life problem. The paper is non-empirical since it addresses a real-life problem and will make use of secondary data in the form of a literature review (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016:67). The information required for this paper will basically be qualitative in nature. Qualitative research usually initiates with the use of document review to collect information. Data will be collected from multiple sources, including relevant national and international literature, pertaining to investigation of mobile fraud (Maxfield & Babbie, 2013:102).

Documentary sources will be to develop an understanding around the theory of 'investigation of mobile fraud during lockdown in South Africa'. Closed mobile fraud case files will be conducted and analyses. Obtain the opinion and perceptions of the relevant stakeholders such as SABRIC, Auditor General (AG), Special Investigation Units (SIU), and Hawks.

The authors of this paper conducted a search for published and unpublished material (research reports, articles and conference presentations) pertaining to illicit drugs in South Africa using online searches (including electronic databases such as EBSCO, Medline and Science Direct), Google star. Search terms included illicit drug markets, drug related crimes, drug abuse and treatment, illegal drug prices, illegal, drugs in South Africa and drugs and crime. The authors found that agencies and organizations such as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the South African Police Services (SAPS), the South African Medical Research Council (MRC), the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU) provided major sources of information on drugs. International organizations including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Interpol, and the US Drug Enforcement Administration also provided international reports that included South Africa

Data Collection

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:12), stated that data collection is the systematic gathering of facts and figures. Kumar (2011:164), points out that the selection of a particular research method to data collection depends on the following aspects:

- The types of information collected;
- The purpose of data collection;
- The resources available;
- The skills and techniques of a particular method to collect data.

Result Analysis and Discussion

South Africa has a sophisticated and diversified economy including a first world infrastructure existing along widespread and severe poverty; the country offers the most attractive consumer market in the subcontinent. South Africa is by far the largest market for illicit drugs within sub-Saharan Africa (Nel, 2003). Its relative affluence in Africa makes it a tempting 'emerging market' in its own right (Peltzer, Cherian & Cherian, 2019:60). The influx of new international cultural trends among the more affluent segments of the population, are all associated with the increase in drug use and abuse as well as increases in violent and organized crime (Peltzer, Malaka & Phaswana, 2015:54). The political and economic isolation of the country under the apartheid regime in combination with a strong population growth resulted in an actual 0.6% decline in GDP per capita during the period 1975-97. By 2001, GDP growth was at 2.2%. This has occurred despite the high level of crime (drug-driven) and violence, perceived, among broad sections of the population, as being out of control (UNOCD, 2012:np). Address the root causes of drug abuse, such as poverty and unemployment. By providing education and job training programs, individuals can be empowered to break the cycle of addiction and poverty (Peltzer, Cherian & Cherian, 2019:42).

As COVID-19 continues to ravage economies, decimating livelihoods and altering lifestyles, another pandemic has been evolving with devastating effects. With anxiety around job losses, reduced incomes, disruptions in school calendars and ways of life, people are turning to drugs and alcohol for consolation (Parry, Myers, Morojele, Flisher, Bhana, Donson & Plüddemann, 2017:88). Doctors and psychologists have sounded the alarm over growing abuse of drugs during the pandemic period and decried the flourishing trade despite the disruption of traditional supply routes as nations move to tighten border surveillance to contain the pandemic. Increase public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of seeking help for addiction. Education campaigns that target both adults and young people can help to reduce the stigma around addiction and encourage individuals to seek help.

Strengthen law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking and distribution. By cracking down on illegal drug dealers, the supply of drugs can be reduced and the problem of drug abuse can be addressed at the source.

Drivers Of Substance Abuse

Urban Violence and Crime: An individual that abuses drugs or alcohol runs the risk of their life spinning out of control. Judgment gets cloudy, rational thinking goes out the window, and what they know is wrong when they are sober may not seem so bad then when are high. Globally drugs and alcohol are implicated in all types of crimes. It is estimated that approximately half of incarcerated persons were under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both when they committed their crime. Crimes of violence, for which inmates have been incarcerated, are particularly associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Most inmates serving time for a violent crime admitted being under the influence of alcohol and other drug at the time of their offense. In addition, drug-related violence takes three types: the systemic violence of drug-dealing organisations; the economic compulsive violence that results from securing money to purchase drugs; and psychopharmacological violence, which is caused by the excitability, irritability, aggression, or paranoia associated with the physiological action of drugs. Most drug abusers who enter the criminal justice system have limited resources. Unlike middle- or upper-class users, whose salaries allow them to purchase drugs, these inmates come mostly from the lower socioeconomic strata of society. They typically are unemployed or underemployed and have no savings or investments. And all the common ways for indigent drug abusers to get drugs put them at high risk of arrest. They can sell drugs and then keep some for their own use or use their earnings to buy other drugs. Addicts can also commit property crimes to get the money to buy drugs. Almost 80% of inmates who are incarcerated for property crimes, their offense to get money for drugs, were under the influence of drugs at the time, and/or have a history of alcoholism, alcohol abuse, or regular drug use. Property offenders are more likely than other types of offenders to have committed their crime for drug money.

Gender-based Violence: The relationship between substance abuse and gender-based violence in South Africa is acknowledged and well-documented. Studies linking alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence (IPV) have found that 45% of men and 20% of women were drinking during episodes of IPV. In 2006 in South Africa, 70% of domestic violence cases were alcohol-related and a fifth of offenders arrested for rape reported that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime.

Research shows that intimate-partner violence (IPV) is five times higher in relationships where one or both partners abuse alcohol. Alcohol abuse among men, as well as intimate-partner violence, is often a manifestation of an underlying need for power and control related to gender-based inequalities and insecurities. A key entry-point in dealing with gender-based violence, crime and urban violence may be in addressing drug and alcohol abuse. While substance abuse is not the underlying cause of such violence, it is often a critical catalyst for violence in South Africa. This issue is further exacerbated in areas where gangsterism is prevalent, for example in the Western Cape. Indeed, the three-pronged challenge of gangsterism, substance abuse and violent-crime requires multipronged intervention strategies that include drug abuse components.

Table 1 summarizes the major illicit drugs commonly used in South Africa and provides a brief history for each substance, the typical names and common use practices, and retail unit prices in the nation. The South African names are relatively unique *Dagga* for marijuana (dried herbal cannabis), *Tik* for methamphetamine, and *Mandrax* for methaqualone. Likewise, the *White Pipe* (combining tobacco, cannabis, and methaqualone smoked through a broken bottleneck) is largely unknown among drug users in other societies.

Table 1: Overview of illicit drugs commonly used in South Africa

Illicit drug	Introduced/production	Use practices	Price *
Cannabis/Dagga	16/17th century; Cultivation of illicit drugs appears confined to the widespread cultivation of cannabis (but not opium nor coca) in the eastern half of South Africa and in some northern areas. SA generates a surplus cannabis crop, some of which is exported to Europe and other countries, but most is consumed in SA.	Smoking, eating	R1 per one gram (<u>Drugaware, 2006</u>) [14 US cents.] A kilogram of cannabis can be bought on the streets of South Africa for about \$20, but in the US, the same kilogram is worth about \$2 300, and the UK, \$3,400. (<u>Drugaware, 2006</u>)
Mandrax/Methaqualone	Late 1980s During the late 1980s and early 1990s, apartheid agents reportedly produced one thousand kilograms of both mandrax and MDMA (henceforth ecstasy) Now produced and sold illegally in South Africa	The most serious form of abuse occurs when Mandrax is combined with diazepam. These pills are often crushed and smoked with a mixture of tobacco and ‘magat’ (low grade cannabis, often dried with a volatile solvent), usually smoked from a broken bottleneck - this form of use is called <i>white pipe</i> (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:35)	R25 - R65 (per tablet, <u>Drugaware, 2006</u>).
Cocaine/Crack	Cocaine HCL not commonly available in South Africa prior to 1994 and the first arrest	Crack is cheaper than cocaine powder (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)	R150 - R250 per gram, but is available on street level at R50 for a

Illicit drug	Introduced/production	Use practices	Price *
	for it occurred in 1995 (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:77). All is illegally imported.		“Snatch” (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:45)
Heroin	During the 80’s, heroin was a relatively unknown drug in South Africa. All is illegal imported.	(Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)	(Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)
Methamphetamine (known as <i>tik</i> in South Africa.	This is a white, odourless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that readily dissolves in water or alcohol. The drug can easily be made in clandestine laboratories (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)	(Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)	(Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)
Ecstasy	Effectively it started only in 1994 following the opening up of South Africa to the outside world from the UK in 1980s.	Ecstasy has made the biggest impact of all illicit drugs in South Africa since the early 1990’s. It is widely associated with the rave scene (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39).	Retailing at around R60 per tablet and for most people one tablet is enough to create the desired effect (Parry, Bhana & Bayley, 2017:39)

Price trends for illicit drugs in SA have demonstrated some changes since the mid-1990s, contributing to the general availability and increased demand for the less customary drugs of choice. While the SAR price remained somewhat stable, if expressed in US\$, the price of both heroin and cocaine fell by more than 75% between 1992 and 2001. This meant that a much wider range of consumers were able to afford these illicit drugs previously out of their price range. This price drop has negative implications, as a much wider range of consumers was able to afford drugs previously out of their price range, and the potential for increasing drug use among lower-income and youth markets (UNODC, 2016:np).

Economic and social change

The current South African economy generates enough revenue so that the government can begin to address the enormous inequalities from the Apartheid era that remain, especially for black Africans. Probably a third to half of the SA population live in urban townships and informal settlements, about 90% are black Africans who live in poverty. Muller and Lombard (2019:76) mentioned that the vast majority of residents in these impoverished communities lack full time jobs and stable incomes. To supplement income, people in informal settlements and townships rely primarily upon the informal economy. This could be as simple as domestic work in households, selling goods at the roadside, to watching parked cars, to selling illegal drugs (Nel,2023:np) Moreover, these poorest communities exist without, or have few, governmental services (including police, health care facilities, alcohol/drug treatment programs, schools, statistical data, etc.) an ongoing legacy of apartheid. Such governmental services are more commonly targeted into middle class communities.

Drug use correlates strongly rapid modernization and the decline in traditional social relationships and forms of family structure. Epidemiological surveys in South Africa suggest that high proportions of drug consumers experienced especially difficult family circumstances as children (Odejide, 2016:44). The expansion of public education is uneven and contributes to anxieties about the loss of control over youth; unfilled expectations and early disillusionment are considered by many as key factors that encourage experimentation with drugs among the young (UNODCCP, 2019:np).

Hawthorne (2020:np) suggests that a major sector of South African adults find themselves in a social environment conducive to drug use, i. e., an environment in which there is a fair degree of social support for drug use, exposure to such use and limited discrimination against it. These social factors seem to be generally strengthened by certain psychological factors, namely tolerance towards drug use, a personal need for or attraction to drug intake. Illicit drugs are used in a fairly uncontrolled environment, namely in privacy, i.e. not in the company of other people (when it occurs in company, friends and/or relatives are mostly the company of choice) and at home (in the general population, public use mostly occurs in metropolitan centres and towns bordering these centres, with clubs/discotheques mostly the places of choice; among offenders, the street (in the case of cannabis) and the place of a drug dealer (illicit drugs other than cannabis) are fairly common places of use (UNODCCP, 2019:np). Particularly common reasons for using illicit drugs (at least among people of African cultural background) seem to be mood-changing and coping; among people admitted to drug-related treatment, matters such as habit, lack of energy and sleeping problems seem to particularly motivate their drug use; solvent users in particular associate their solvent use with getting high and breaking the monotony of their daily life (indeed, the popularity of mood-changing and coping with hardships as reasons for illicit drug use among African groups and indications that African households (especially female-headed households) have the lowest average income in South Africa substantiate the above conclusion that illicit drug use could increase among socio-economically marginalized sectors) (UNODC, 2016:np).

Another factor contributing to the increased prominence of illicit drug use in South African society is high unemployment. Among the non-White population, social injustice and the weakened family bonds which resulted from decades of apartheid policies have created an environment in which temporary escape from the harsh reality of everyday life is often sought through the consumption of psychoactive substances. Among the White population, anecdotal evidence also supports a connection between increased substance abuse and both increased availability of drugs and the psychological consequences of adjusting to life in the “new” South Africa (UNODC, 2012:np).

Historically, the controlled use and consumption of cannabis among the African population was ubiquitous throughout Southern Africa. Cannabis was an integral part of the culture of traditional communities. Strict rules and values governed the circumstances under which it could be used. Availability was usually controlled by tribal elders. However, in the context of a modernizing, increasingly urbanized society, where traditional community controls are breaking down, the use of cannabis has now become the domain of the younger user and the poly-drug user. In South Africa, cannabis use is now often associated with alcohol and mandrax use. Over the past few decades’ cannabis use has also gained in popularity among all ethnic groups (Eide & Acuda, 1997; UNODC, 2012:np).

Cannabis consumption has been principally a male practice, though this is starting to change, with consumption now reaching increasingly into different gender, age and religious groups.

One reason for this expansion of consumer groups is due to the rise in “functional” drug use, including:

Those doing physically demanding or dangerous work this includes consumption by construction and other labourers, dockers, drivers, farmers and farm labourers, whose “functional” reasons for using cannabis are that it enables them to stay awake, to work longer without eating and that it generally enables them to continue working. Those confronting social danger involving transgression of taboos, whether formal (legal) or more widely social and cultural (including sex workers, criminals, street children).

Those wishing to escape conditions of social and/or personal misery; this includes many sections of the urban underclass in townships and the slums and other poor areas of the cities. In such conditions, use of drugs may be “functional” as it provides a form of release or escape not only for the large numbers of unemployed (especially young men) who may also feel they are unemployable, but for the precariously self-employed of the burgeoning informal sector as well (Fisher & Ziervogel, 2020:77). A broad base of recreational consumption exists, especially in the higher-income groups. One high-profile category of recreational use/users is musicians and artists, whose rationale is inspiration and creativity and the need to overcome social inhibition when performing publicly. Drug consumption by musicians in this regard demonstrates how functional and recreational uses of cannabis can become blurred and difficult to distinguish (UNODCCP, 2019:np).

South Africa is the most highly urbanized country in sub-Saharan Africa and the only one with over half its population recorded as urban (55.4% in 1996). Gauteng (96.4%) (Johannesburg/Pretoria) and the Western Cape (Cape Town) are the most highly urbanized provinces and have the highest rates of drug abuse (Frank & Fisher, 2020:43). Cities are characterized by high rates of urbanization, limited employment opportunities, expansive informal sector exchange and, an erosion of so-called traditional values and family cohesion. The proportion of female-headed households in urban areas has been rising steadily, and is now estimated at approximately one-third of all urban household. They are

overwhelmingly concentrated in the poorest social and economic communities (Drugaware Dagga or Cannabis, 2016:np). Parents often return home late, leaving their latchkey children with inadequate adult supervision for much time each day. The process of urbanization leads to higher rates of unemployment in the cities, which exacerbates the social and economic pressures that underpin both the illicit supply and demand for drugs, all in an informal environment that state authorities are unable to monitor, let alone effectively control (UNODCCP, 2019:np).

Crisis of epidemic proportions

In Africa, while drugs and alcohol abuse has traditionally raised concerns, the pandemic-induced reliance on drugs has reached epidemic proportions as travel bans, social distancing, quarantine and government directives alter supply chains, patterns of use, availability and price of the substances.

Global authorities now say that a spike in drug use in Africa shows that the continent is not just a transit point (the Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria ports have traditionally been used to ship drugs to US and Europe), but has become a key market on its own as demand grows.

The ease with which home delivery of various products are being done to minimise human interaction to contain the spread, has seen a spike in demand for alcohol and drugs, which is having a ripple effect on societies and families.

“With alcohol and drug abuse happening in homes and people trying to deal with the uncertainties that have come with the pandemic, that change of lifestyle has had an impact on the family setting,” said Martha Njune, a Kenyan psychologist. “Children who look up to their parents are resulting to doing what their parents are doing, which is fanning the drug abuse cycle. We have also noted a worrying increase in domestic violence cases at homes, which can be attributed to the drug abuse problem”.

Kenya’s National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse has raised the alarm over the growing exposure of children to alcohol and drugs, especially in the COVID era.

In various suburbs in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, residents have complained of an increasing number of teenagers who chew khat, smoke cigarettes and bhang, consume alcohol and use other substances like jet fuel as a hobby (Eliseev & Maughan, 2016:np).



South Africa Police arrest (Photo by Rodger Bosch / afp)

In Zimbabwe, methamphetamine has recorded a huge rise in demand during the COVID period, as unemployment levels soar and children remain out of school. A Provincial Law Enforcement officer holds a packet containing 20 small packets of the illegal drug 'Tik', also known as methamphetamine, in Mitchells Plain in Cape Town on March 05, 2021, during a joint operation between SAPS and provincial Law Enforcement officers which are part of the

Western Cape government's Law Enforcement Advancement Plan (LEAP). - In the previous week ten people have been shot, with six killed in Mitchells Plain, in what is widely believed to be gang related violence.



International Day Against Drug Abuse in Nigeria- (Photo by Olukayode Jaiyeola/NurPhoto via Getty Images).

Convener of the campaign, Bodex Group International, Ms Florence Bodex-Hungbo, and other volunteers hold a placard under a bridge during a one Day sensitization program in commemoration of the 2020 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Lagos on June 26, 2020.

Drug Policy Alliance (2017:np) stated that suppliers and peddlers easily obtain drugs from neighbouring South Africa due to the porous borders. “With the continued impact of COVID-19 diverting the interdiction and surveillance capacities of law enforcement bodies in the region, there is significant likelihood that Afghan meth flows will penetrate beyond the initial South African sink, seeping along traditional smuggling routes to establish new footholds in neighbouring illicit drug markets across the region,” notes a report dubbed *A Synthetic Age: The evolution of methamphetamine market in Eastern and Southern Africa* by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Department of Health and Human Services. 2015:np).

With the drug abuse crisis occasioned by COVID-19 spiraling out of control, experts warn that Africa is not well equipped to handle the expected mental health issues that may have devastating impacts for the continent. “Even pre-pandemic, various African countries were ill prepared to handle mental health. With rising cases of drug abuse, depression and gender-based violence, we are staring at a catastrophe that will take a toll on nations if the right investment is not put in place to prioritise mental health issues” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2015:np)

Life after matric: Drugs and Substance Abuse

Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. One recent marijuana study showed that heavy marijuana use in youth life and continued into adulthood can reduce IQ up to as much as 8 points. High school dropout rates have also risen as a result of substance abuse. A study of teens in 12th grade (16-18 years of age) who dropped out of school before graduation are more likely than their peers to be users of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and other illicit drugs.

Illicit drug use among dropouts was higher than for those in school (31.4 percent vs. 18.2 percent). Dropouts were more likely to be current marijuana users than those in school (27.3 percent vs. 15.3 percent) and non-medical users of prescription drugs (9.5 percent vs. 5.1 percent). Teens who smoke, drink alcohol, binge drink or use marijuana or other drugs are more likely than non-users to drop out of school and less likely than non-users to graduate from high school, attend college or obtain a college degree. One study found that nearly one-third of school dropouts indicate that their use of alcohol or other drugs was an important contributor in their decision to leave school.

Below is a full list of potential effects that substance use might have on high school performance:

- Drop in grades and academic performance;
- Inability to concentrate or retain information;
- Decreased performance on tasks that require executive functioning;
- Skipping school or other related activities;
- Dropping out of school completely.



Youth-Network ES Project together with WEPCos teachers and learners



Drug and Substance Abuse: (Youth-Network ES Project, 2023:np)

Engaged Scholarship project:

- To address learners' challenges with parents and basic education;
- To empower current matriculants and post matric youths;
- To combat drugs and substance abuse amongst youths' life.



Life after matric: (Youth-Network ES Project, 2023:np)

Young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems (including mental health), poor peer relationships, and involvement with the Centre of Drugs Rehabilitation. For the 2023 academic year, Youth-Network ES Project aim to work with different stakeholders around South Africa (Mokopane), in combating drugs and substance abuse as well as life after matric among youth participants. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community, and the entire society. The impact of the drugs and substance abuse on a young participants' life and life after matric:

- To encourage youth to upgrade and further their studies for a better life;
- Network with different stakeholders.

Methods of Data Analysis

Taroni, Bozza, Biedermann, Garbolino and Aitken (2010:4), state that data analysis is a process of reviewing, cleaning, changing, and categorising or demonstrating data with the goal of understanding the data. Furthermore, to identify patterns, critical events and irregularities, describing events, and highlighting useful information (Maxfield & Babbie, 2013: 112). The process of analysis goes through certain stages common to many approaches (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013: 282). After the data collection process, the researcher used the following steps recommended by Creswell (2013:36) in Leedy and Ormrod (2013: 158-159) to analyse the data. The process of analysis goes through certain stages common to many approaches. After the data collection process, the researcher will use the following:

Organisation: The researcher will divide the data into paragraphs, sentences and keywords. Categories will be identified in relation to relevant themes and key concepts, namely (i) mobile fraud, (ii) procurement fraud, (iii) investigation, (iv) tender fraud, (v) financial fraud, (vi) maladministration, (vii) analysis and (viii) MO. The researcher will open different folders in word document format and save the documentation in files and folders on a computer.

Perusal: The researcher will read the data several times to get an overview of what the information as a collective entail.

Interpretation: Literature, documents and other data will be examined for relevance to the topic/theme. The researcher will assemble the collection of data and form a clear understanding of the information. The data will be coded by conducting content analysis and searching for specific words from themes to identify ML.

Identification of patterns: The researcher will scrutinise underlying themes, and other patterns that will describe the topic being investigated more accurately than a single piece of information would reveal. The different data items from the literature will be summarized and recorded. As a result, it is envisaged that themes and patterns in the data will be identified (Brown, & Holloway, 2013:32).

Synthesis: The researcher will combine all separated data to formulate the overview of the study before arriving at conclusions.

Preliminary Literature Review

A research literature review, according to Brown, and Holloway (2013:19) is a systematic, clear, and repeatable approach for locating, assessing, and synthesizing the body of finished and documented work created by researchers, academics, and practitioners. The findings of a research review are based on the pioneering work of academics and researchers. Creswell (2014:28) elaborates on and supports the aforementioned claim by saying that a literature review is a required element of any research report or thesis. Its major goal is to build a connection between the project and the subject by giving background information and context for the investigation (Gray, 2014:34).

The review may include the following:

- Background information that establishes the existence of the problem to be investigated.
- Previous research on the topic or related topics;
- Theory of relevance to the 'why' questions; and
- Research paradigm(s) as a source of ontological and epistemological assumptions.

The researcher will identify research previously conducted on drugs and substance abuse – for example the following: According to Mwansa and Rocha-Silva (2014:23) the issue of drug use has been in existence for thousands of years. It is as old as human beings and has been an integral part of most societies. Currently, drug abuse is a problem experienced by both young and old, although its impact tends to be particularly intense among the young people. Drug Advisory Board (2019:np) indicates that drug abuse is one of the top problems confronting the nation today especially among the youth. Furthermore, drug abuse is not confined to young people in certain geographical areas or from particular social-economic backgrounds. Eliseev and Maughan (2016:55) note that substance abuse knows no boundaries. It affects people irrespective of race, political and economic standing, gender and sexual orientation, socio-educational standing, age and place of residence.

- Implement a strong community awareness;
- Community reflection on drugs and substance abuse efforts;
- The above literature will help the researcher to understand what has already been written on the subject, including addressing the gaps.

The researcher will obtain insight into concepts related to the research problem by doing the following:

- Checking South African literature on combat drugs and substance abuse and life after matric;
- Checking Google Scholar books, including other online books;
- Checking journal articles;
- Conducting a general search on key concepts on the Internet; and
- Creating alerts from Google on topics of research interest.

Research Findings

Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2010:45) mentioned that the following findings were prepared regarding other relevant points that the researchers came upon during the research:

- Historical perspective of drugs and substance abuse;
- Conceptualisation of drugs and substance abuse;
- Perpetrator in drugs and substance abuse;
- Theoretical explanation of the factors contributing to drugs and substance abuse;

- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic in drugs and substance abuse;
- Drugs and substance abuse policies at South Africa.

The increase in COVID-19-related to drugs and substance abuse, such as fraud, cybercrime, misdirection or exploitation of government funds or international financial assistance, is creating new sources of proceeds for illicit actors (Interpol, 2020:np). Measures to contain COVID-19 are impacting on the criminal economy and changing criminal behaviour so that profit-driven criminals may move to other forms of illegal conduct.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also impacting government and private sectors' abilities to implement anti-mobile fraud and counter terrorist financing (AML/CFT) obligations from supervision, regulation and policy reform to suspicious transaction reporting and international cooperation.

Recommendations

The purpose of this research paper is to generate new knowledge with the purpose of empowering engaged scholarship that work with societies to combat drugs and substance abuse. The researcher is of the view that amongst communities and other different stakeholders can achieve this by gathering the relevant knowledge which includes necessary training or educating youth about drugs and substance abuse as well life after matric.

The research has focused on the subject of identification methods in drugs and substance abuse cases. A number of the findings from the community's analysis with clearly reflect the absence of effective identification methods during engagement. The research has been an attempt to find out what good practices exist for effectively identifying the various aspects that need to be identified during drugs and substance abuse and, in addition, to equip researchers with new knowledge in that respect. If passed into law, drugs and substance abuse operators will have access to engage' community's data. The data would be bound to users' researchers have observed increases in substance use and drug overdoses in the United States since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared a national emergency in March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic also presents unique challenges for people with substance use disorders and those in recovery. For example, people with substance use disorders are at increased risks for poor COVID-19 outcomes. Because of these factors, NIDA plays an important role in the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Youth-Network Engaged Scholarship Projects conclude that drugs and substance abuse impacts negatively on the user, their families and communities. Alcohol and illicit drugs damage the health of users and are linked to rises in non-communicable diseases, including HIV and AIDS, cancer, heart disease and psychological disorders. Research shows that there is a definite link between teen substance abuse and how well you do in school. Teens who abuse drugs have lower grades, a higher rate of absence from school and other activities, and an increased potential for dropping out of school.

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