

# **SOCIAL FACTORS AND DRUG ADDICTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN AKWA IBOM STATE**

**Akpan, Isong Solomon**

Department of Psychological Foundations University of Uyo, Uyo

Faculty of Education

08063210982

revisongakpan@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

The study examined social factors and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. Three objectives were formulated to guide the study. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives. The correlation research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 33942 undergraduate students from Akwa Ibom State University and University of Uyo of the 2023/2024 academic session. A sample size of 400 students was selected for the study using multi-stage sampling technique. The sample for the study consisted of 400 year three students selected from the two universities. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the selection of the students. A researcher-developed instrument tagged “Social Factors and Drug Addiction among University Students Questionnaire (SFDAUSQ)” was used for data collection. Face validity was established for the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained for the instrument, using Cronbach Alpha. Values of R and R<sup>2</sup> of Simple linear regression analysis were used to answer the research questions while the F-value was used to test the hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that peer group significantly predicts drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State; social media significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State; and moral belief significantly predicts drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social factors predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. It was recommended among others that, mental health professionals should offer counseling services that focus on building resilience against peer pressure and provide strategies for students to develop a positive self-identity that is not reliant on harmful group behaviours.

**Key words:** Social Factors, Drug addiction, University Students

## **Introduction**

University education equips individuals with skills, techniques, tools used to gain empirical knowledge about life. University education develops an individual in social, mental, physical,

emotional and physiological aspects of life (Ofor-Douglas, 2023). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023), University education is expected to: Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; strengthen national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction.

These objectives can only be achieved if university students indulged in prosocial behaviours that will promote effective teaching and learning. Fabian (2024) remarked that the use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances constitutes one of the most important risk-taking behaviour among young adults in tertiary institutions. The most commonly used drugs among students include tobacco, Miraa, Cocaine, Tranquilizers, Kuber and Marijuana. According to Ekpang and Abuo (2015), common drugs that are often abused by students include alcohol, heroin, cocaine and marijuana Tarig, Cathrine, Alaa, Hala, Fatima, Asma, Eiman, & Wael (2016), lamenting that there are recent indications of an increasing trend globally of students in tertiary institutions indulging in this unhealthy habit of drug abuse. Drug abuse is a maladaptive pattern of drug use that causes physical and emotional harm with the potential for disruption of daily life. The abuse of these drugs can lead to addiction among these students.

Omaku, Ogah, & Godiya (2024) alleged that drug addiction among university students is often driven by the desire to cope with academic stress, social pressure, and emotional instability. Many students resort to drug use as an escape mechanism from the challenges of university life, such as financial struggles, relationship issues, and the pressure to meet academic expectations. Nwambam, Mgboro, Otubo, & Nickolas (2019) observed that substances like alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that dulls the brain and make learning a difficult task. When students abuse alcohol, their reasoning becomes impaired and education becomes of less priority in their life. It is evident from the ongoing that substance abuse affects the brain, resulting in a significant decline in its functions which invariably affect academic activities of the addict. Substance abuse can affect a student's concentration and thus the interest in school and extracurricular activities. This leads to increased absenteeism and drop outs.

Most psychoactive drugs influence the decision-making process of students, their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills. Medications also interfere with students' awareness of their unique potential and thus their interest in their career development (Attah, Baba, & Audu, 2016). This gradually leads them to social, emotional and physical problems such as feelings of guilt, despair and helplessness which predispose the student to anti-social behaviours that may eventually lead to dropping out of the school. Ofor (2020) averred that incidence of drug addiction among tertiary institution students can be attributed to social factors. Simon (2019) noted that social factors are factors that affect people's behaviour and thoughts and they include but not limited to peer influence, social media as well as moral beliefs.

Okon (2015) examined societal variables and prevalence of substance abuse in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. In order to achieve this purpose, four objectives, four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The ex-post facto research

design was used for the study. This design was considered suitable for the study because the variables under study are assumed to have occurred and could not be experimentally manipulated in the course of the study. The population of this study comprised 371,022 youths of Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas of Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample of this study consisted of 1000 youths. Simple random sampling technique was used for this selection. An instrument titled 'societal variables and prevalence of substance abuse among youths Questionnaire' was used for data collection'. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis were the statistical tools used for data analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that there are significant relationship between tradition, availability of substance agents, peer group as well as government security agents and the prevalence of substance abuse among youths. Based on this result, it was concluded that societal variables contribute to the prevalence of substance abuse among youths. It was recommended that government should arrests and punishes substance abusers.

Ibrahim (2016) investigated social factors as determinants of students' involvement in drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A population of 13,601 from which 388 (194 male and 194 female) students in Six Public Senior Model secondary schools were sampled for the study. Data for the study were collected with a questionnaire. The methods used in validating the instrument was face validity and split-half method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.78 for the instrument. The statistical technique used for result analyses was simple linear regression. The results of the study showed that there was a significant influence of family type on students' involvement in drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. The finding also showed that there was a significant influence of spiritual beliefs on students' involvement in drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. The finding further showed that there was a significant influence of peer group on students' involvement in drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. The study recommended among others that school counsellors should take drug and substance abuse among students into consideration when designing preventive programmes.

Adie (2017) carried out a study on social factors as predictors of incidence of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abi local Government Area, Cross Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. A sample size of 300 senior secondary school students was selected for the study using simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was subjected to face validity and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the instrument using split-half method. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Results revealed from the study indicated that, there is significant influence of social media on drug abuse among secondary school students. The finding further revealed that there is significant influence of moral beliefs on drug abuse among secondary school students. Based on the results of these findings, it was concluded that socio-cultural factors served as predictors of incidence of drug abuse in Nigeria

Offor (2020) investigated causes of drug abuse among secondary school students in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made of 32125 Senior Secondary School students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample of 300 students -was involved

in the study. The sample was composed using the simple random sampling method. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by researchers. The questionnaire was duly validated; two experts in Sociology of Education and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, validated the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha with a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses formulated at .05 level of significance. Findings showed that peer group significantly influences drug abuse among secondary school students. The finding also showed that social media usage significantly influences drug abuse among secondary school students. Based on the findings, appropriate recommendations were made.

Fabian (2024) investigated environmental determinants of drug abuse among secondary school adolescents in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. Three research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. The subject of the study was 150 adolescent secondary school boys and girls. The instrument for the study used in collecting data was questionnaire. Mean score and t-test statistics were used for data analysis. The result revealed environmental factors such as family type, family income, social media and peers are the major determinants of drug abuse among secondary school adolescents in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The result also showed that there is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students as regards involvement in drug abuse.

Previous empirical studies have shown that, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no research has been conducted on the social factors and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. This gap in the literature led to the current study, which aimed to empirically investigate social factors and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

University education plays a crucial role in personal, social and economic development. It provides individuals with knowledge, skills, and opportunities that contribute to their success and society's progress. This therefore calls for the need for students to exhibit prosocial behaviour that will lead to the achievement of the goals of university education. This however does not seem to be the case as many students are addicted to drugs and substance use. The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2019) confirmed that drug abuse is a major problem in schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria. Observations by the researcher in the study area revealed there is an upsurge of drugs and substance abuse among tertiary institution students, such drugs like heroin, cocaine, cannabis and even alcohol have in recent times become so easily accessible and used by students. This is a critical problem which affects the society as it hampers the academic performance of students at the tertiary level who are expected to develop and become leaders of tomorrow. However, in order to proffer solutions to the problem of drug addiction among some tertiary institution students, there is need to examine factors that could influence drug addiction among tertiary institution students. It is therefore against this background that this study investigated social variables as predictors of drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine social factors and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. examine how peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.
2. determine how social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.
3. examine how of moral beliefs predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to direct the study:

1. How does peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?
2. How does social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?
3. How does moral beliefs predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?

## **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to direct the study:

1. Peer group does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Social media does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.
3. Moral beliefs do not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

## **Methodology**

The correlation research design was adopted for the study. This design is used to discover or clarify relationships by using correlation coefficients. It usually studies the relationship between measures of different variables obtained at almost the same time. It is also used for predictive studies. The population of the study consisted of all the 33942 undergraduate students which comprised 14,915 students from Akwa Ibom State University and 19,027 from University of Uyo of the 2023/2024 academic session (Academic Planning Units, 2025). The sample for the study consisted of 400 year three students selected from the two universities. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the selection of the students. A researcher-developed instrument tagged “Social Factors and Drug Addiction among University Students Questionnaire (SFDAUSQ)” was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B while section A was used to measure the Social Factors in the areas of peer group, social media as well as moral beliefs and consisted of 15 items, section B was used to measure drug addiction among university students and consisted of 15 items. The instrument was designed on a 4- point rating scale as follows: strongly Agree (SA,) Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). Face validity was

established for the instrument. This was done by giving copies of the instrument developed by the researcher to an expert in Measurement and Evaluation and two experts in Psychology of Education, all in the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, University of Uyo, who independently assessed the items in the instrument to ascertain their relevance to the variables under study. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined by administering the instrument to 30 students who were selected from the population of the study but were not included in the study sample. The scores obtained from the respondents were analysed using Cronbach Alpha to obtain a reliability coefficient of .83 for the instrument. The researcher first of all visited the universities to obtain permission from the authorities to carry out the research. The researcher with the help of two briefed assistance administered copies of the instrument to the respondents and adequate explanations were made whenever the need arose. Four hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and three hundred and eighty-nine was correctly filled and returned. The process of administration and retrieval of the questionnaires lasted for a period of three weeks. Values of R and R<sup>2</sup> of Simple linear regression analysis were used to answer the research questions while the F-value was used to test the hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question One

How does peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 1: Summary of R and R<sup>2</sup>- values of how peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State (N= 389)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Peer group	0.812	0.659	0.652
Drug addiction			

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the R-value of 0.812 as the strength of the relationship between peer group and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. The R<sup>2</sup>-value of 0.659 also shown in Table 1 indicates that only 65.9 percent variation in drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by peer group. This means that peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

### Research Question Two

How does social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 2: Summary of R and R<sup>2</sup>- values of how social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State (N= 389)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Social media	0.747	0.558	0.556
Drug addiction			

The result presented in Table 2 revealed the R-value of 0.747 as the strength of the relationship between social media and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. The R<sup>2</sup> – value of 0.558 also shown in Table 2 indicates that only 55.8 percent variation in drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by social media. This means that social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

### Research Question Three

How does moral beliefs predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 3: Summary of R and R<sup>2</sup>- values of how moral belief predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State (N= 389)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Moral belief	0.683	0.466	0.464
Drug addiction			

The result presented in Table 3 revealed the R-value of 0.683 as the strength of the relationship between moral beliefs and drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. The R<sup>2</sup> – value of 0.466 also shown in Table 3 indicates that only 46.6 percent variation in drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by moral beliefs. This means that moral belief predicts drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

**Hypothesis One:** Peer group does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State

**Table 4: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of how peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State (N= 389)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2846.62	1	2846.62	72.95	.000
Residual	15101.00	387	39.02		
Total	17947.62	388			

The result in Table 4 shows the F-ratio of 72.95 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 387 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than

.05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result in Table 4 also shows an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 1.11 which indicates that for every unit rise in peer group, drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State increases by 1.11. Furthermore, the result in Table.4 shows the t-value of 21.59, with its corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies peer group significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

**Hypothesis Two:** Social media does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State

**Table 5: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of how social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State (N= 389)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2106.30	1	2106.30	51.46	.000
Residual	15841.32	387	40.93		
Total	17947.62	388			

The result in Table 5 shows the F-ratio of 51.46 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 387 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result in Table 5 also shows an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 1.05 which indicates that for every unit rise in social media, drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State increases by 1.05. Furthermore, the result in Table 5 shows the t-value of 17.39, with its corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that social media significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State

**Hypothesis Three:** Moral belief does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State

**Table 6: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of how moral belief predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State(N= 389)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1782.15	1	1782.15	42.67	.000
Residual	16165.47	387	41.77		
Total	17947.62	388			

The result in Table 6 shows the F-ratio of 42.67 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 387 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result in Table 6 also shows an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 1.01 which indicates that for every unit

rise in moral belief, drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State increases by 1.01. Furthermore, the result in Table 6 shows the t-value of 14.47, with its corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that Moral belief does not significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The finding of how peer group predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State revealed that peer group significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is possible in view of the fact that university settings often provide more freedom and exposure to different social groups, some of which may encourage drug use. The availability of substances within these social circles may increase the likelihood of experimentation and eventual addiction. The finding is in line with that of Offor (2020) who found that peer group significantly influences drug abuse among secondary school students. The finding lend credence to that of Fabian (2024) whose finding showed that environmental factors such as family type, family income, social media and peers are the major determinants of drug abuse among secondary school adolescents.

The finding of how social media predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State revealed that social media significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is possible in view of the fact that social media fosters a culture where students seek validation through likes, comments, and shares. If drug use is portrayed as trendy or associated with social status, students may engage in it to gain online recognition or fit into a particular social group. The finding aligns with that of Adie (2017) whose finding indicated that there is significant influence of social media on drug abuse among secondary school students. The finding also aligns with that of Offor (2020) who found that social media usage significantly influences drug abuse among secondary school students.

The finding of how moral belief predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State revealed that moral belief significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State. This finding can be attributed to the fact that moral beliefs can shape an individual's understanding of right and wrong. Students with strong moral convictions are more likely to resist drug use, while those with weaker moral foundations may be more susceptible to peer pressure and substance abuse. The finding is in line with that of Ibrahim (2016) who found that there was a significant influence of spiritual beliefs on students' involvement in drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. The finding is also in line with that of Adie (2017) who found that there is significant influence of moral beliefs on drug abuse among secondary school students.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that peer group and social media significantly predict drug addiction among university students in Akwa Ibom State, highlighting the strong influence of social interactions and digital platforms on students' behavior. However, moral belief

does not significantly predict drug addiction, suggesting that personal values alone may not be sufficient to deter drug use in the presence of strong social influences.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Mental health professionals should offer counseling services that focus on building resilience against peer pressure and provide strategies for students to develop a positive self-identity that is not reliant on harmful group behaviours.
2. University management should amplify surveillance of sales of alcohol and other identified substances within university campuses while issuing out stiffer penalties to offenders and drug dealers within the school environment in order to serve as a deterrent.
3. Policy makers should implement public awareness campaigns targeting the moral and ethical aspects of drug use. These campaigns should emphasize the importance of personal responsibility, moral values, and their impact on public health.

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