

Effect of Life Skills Training Towards Prevention of Drug Abuse Among Adolescents in Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Drug abuse is becoming a public health problem in Nigeria and young people who are the most important human resource of any country are increasingly affected. Consequently, exposing them to some deviant activities like thugery, armed robbery, cultist and high killers operating with gun without fear. School-based intervention is an appropriate approach for improving adolescents' knowledge regarding drug abuse in an attempt to prevent or reduce such problem. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of Life Skill Programme as an intervention tool in the prevention of drug abuse among adolescents in Ikorodu Area of Lagos State Nigeria.

Materials and Methods: This quasi-experimental (control and experimental group) design was carried out in Ikorodu, Lagos State. A random sampling technique was employed to recruit a sample of 287 adolescents, 141 from control group and 146 from experimental group. A semi-structured questionnaire on perception, reasons for taking drug and the effectiveness of Life Skills assessment regarding drug abuse was developed while knowledge was assessed using a standard instrument (DAST-10). All were given face validity by the project supervisor while the reliability was carried out using Cronbach alpha and yielded 0.75, which was equivalent to 75% reliability. After the initial data collection, intervention programme was administered for six weeks then follow the second data collection. SPSS version 26 was used for data entry and analysis. Data was analyzed through descriptive (frequency and percentage, and mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (analysis of covariance and analysis of variance) to compare pre-test and post-test responses of the two groups.

Results: For experimental group, the mean score of the general knowledge of adolescent increased from 5.00 to 13.08, perception, from 3.67 to 9.84, and LSP efficacy, from 2.98±.58 to 15.66±1.48 while control group remains somewhat unchanged. The effect of the training shows a statistical significant different between the general knowledge, knowledge on prevention, and perception of adolescent before and after intervention at 95% CI. Also, adolescents' intentions for abusing drug significantly related with age, gender and family structure at 95% CI.

Conclusion: This study strongly suggests that the life skills training intervention is a useful strategy in preventing drug abuse. LST can promote interactive, decision making, problem-solving, critical thinking and stress management skills and lead to more social acceptability, which in turn reduce drug abuse tendency. Hence, it is recommended that schools in collaboration with the ministry of education and health incorporate LST training in the secondary school curriculum for effective drug abuse prevention in adolescence.

Keywords : Life Skills Training, Prevention, Drug Abuse, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is defined as the period of unrest between age 10 to 19 years (Ojone et al., 2015). This period has been classified as a time of development that begins at puberty and ends at emerging adulthood, or into the mid- to late 20s (Pringle et al., 2016) with changes in the person's biological, cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics. And their relationships with parents go through a period of redefinition

in which adolescents become more autonomous, and aspects of parenting, such as distal monitoring and psychological control, become more salient (Lansford, 2021). At this stage, they become closer to their peer, which makes them more vulnerable to drug abuse (Sánchez-Puertas et al., 2022).

Drug abuse among adolescents continue to be important public health problems and contributes greatly to morbidity and mortality rates globally, and rapidly increasing in developing countries (Ivanov et al., 2021). It is overindulgence and dependence on addictive substances (Prakash et al., 2021) leading to serious physiological damage and or psychological harm or death (Asikhia, 2018). Internationally, the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) reported 34.3%, 52.1%, and 73.4% increment in alcohol, drug, and opioid use from 1990 to 2010 respectively (Griswold et al., 2018). In Nigeria, drug abuse prevalence in adolescents was 40.3% (Soremekun et al., 2020) and about 20% of adolescents has consumed psychoactive drug at least once in time (Dankano & Garba, 2017).

In Nigeria, the only strategy known is peer education, in this strategy, adolescent representatives are selected and train (Okey-Orji & Ekenedo, 2019) The prevalence of drug abuse continues to rise among adolescent population despite peer education. This shows the ineffectiveness of the strategy in reducing drug abuse in adolescents.

Over the years, communities across the globe particularly in affluent society have used Life Skills Training (LST) as an intervention to curb the menace of drug abuse targeting adolescents. And more than a few studies have scrutinized their outcome with high success rate in different areas such as Australia (Jones et al., 2017) and Europe (Svensson et al., 2021). This program aimed at educating adolescents on self-reliance. However, in developing countries like Nigeria, programme like life skills programme is yet to be acknowledged and introduced as a component of health education in schools.

Despite the effectiveness of Life Skills Training Programme (Griffin & Botvin, 2010), no study has evaluated its strength and usefulness in Nigeria. Even though drug abuse continues reigning among adolescents, studies in Nigeria only utilize peer counselling programme as a preventive measure in schools (Dankano et al., 2017 ; Anyama, 2022 ; Okira, 2018). it is imperative to implement and measure its efficacy to ensure the best outcomes. Hence, this study evaluated the effect of Life Skills programme towards the prevention of drug abuse among adolescents in Ikorodu, Lagos State.

Material and Methods

Research Design: Quasi experimental design was employed in this present study.

Study Setting: This study was conducted in Ikorodu, Lagos state. The State is one of the five states in the South-western Nigeria.

Study Duration: June 2022 to September, 2022

Study Population: 972

Sample Size Calculation: The sample size was estimated using the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967) for finite population $n = \frac{N}{1+N(\epsilon)^2} = \frac{972}{1+972(0.05)^2} = 283$

Sample Size: 287

Subjects and Selection Method: The population for the study consisted of all the adolescents in the two selected secondary

schools in Ikorodu, Lagos State. A multistage approach was used to draw the required number of subject. First, clustered randomization was used to select two facilities and grouping (Odogunyan Senior Grammar School for experimental group and United Senior Grammar School for control group) then a simple random technique was used to select adolescents that were willing to participate in the study.

Inclusion Criteria

- The study will focus on senior secondary students in the selected schools only.
- It will be restricted to students of Senior Secondary 2 and 3 only for a better understanding of the questionnaire and cooperation.
- Only those who are mentally balance, sound and willing to participate were recruited.

Exclusion Criteria

- Those in lower classes will be excluded in the study to ensure accurate data.

Procedure Methodology

For ethical approval, the research proposal was sent to the two schools (the experimental and control group) for proper understanding of the aim of the study, reviewed and quality control. Ethical approvals, written and signed were obtained from the two schools.

The entire process of data collection and training lasted for two months (July and August). First week involved initial data collection before the training commence while the second phase was week eight, after the training. Upon initial data collection in first week, the training started on the second week through week seven for those only in experimental group. The training was carried out in a classroom, and it was an interactive class. During the training, the trained research assistants helped in coordinating the classes for a better audience. Each training, per day lasted for two (2) hours, thirty minutes (30mins.) break inclusive. In the last week (week 8), the same questionnaire was re-administered.

Statistical Analysis

Serial number was assigned to each questionnaire for both pre-test and post-test for easy identification and for correct data entry and analysis. A coding guide was developed to code and enter each question and the corresponding response into the computer for analysis. Statistical package SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, and mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics (analysis of covariance and analysis of variance) were utilized. Results were presented in tabulated and bar-chart form. Data was analyzed through descriptive (frequency and percentage, and mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Analysis of Covariance-ANCOVA and Analysis of Variance-ANOVA) were used to compare pre-test and post-test mean responses of the two groups.

Results

Personal Demographic Variables

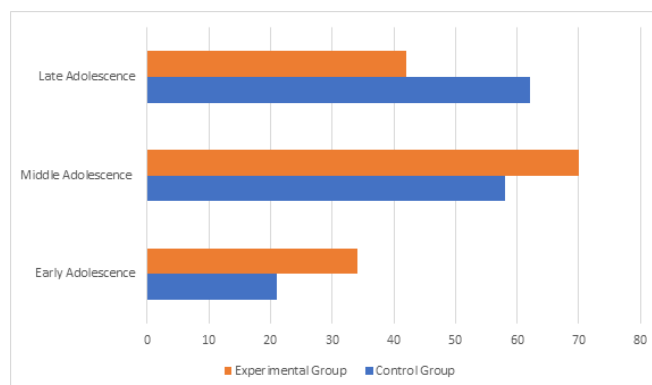
Table number 1 shows that male accounted for 89 (61%) and 91 (65%) in experimental and control group respectively. Middle adolescents dominates 70 (48%) in experimental group while late adolescents had 62 (44%) in control group. Adolescents from senior secondary two were the majority in

both experimental and control group (77 [53%] and 98 [70%]). Only fewer adolescents live alone, experimental group 7 (05%) and control group 12 (09%). Fathers were more educated in both experimental 89 (61% had degree) and control group 56 (40% had degree) than mothers (11 [08%] and 14 [10%] had degree) respectively.

Variables	Options	Experimental group N=146	Control group N=141
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	89 (61%)	91 (65%)
	Female	57 (39%)	50 (35%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)
Age Category	Early adolescent	34 (23%)	21 (15%)
	Middle adolescent	70 (48%)	58 (41%)
	Late adolescent	42 (29%)	62 (44%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)
Class level	SS2	77 (53%)	98 (70%)
	SS3	69 (47%)	43 (30%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)
Living with	Biological parents	92 (63%)	78 (55%)
	Foster parent(s)	47 (32%)	51 (36%)
	living a lone	07 (05%)	12 (09%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)
Father's education	None	05 (03%)	05 (04%)
	Primary	07 (05%)	14 (10%)
	Secondary	13 (09%)	23 (16%)
	Diploma	32 (22%)	43 (30%)
	Degree	89 (61%)	56 (40%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)
Mother's education	None	15 (10%)	11 (08%)
	Primary	23 (16%)	29 (21%)
	Secondary	60 (41%)	47 (33%)
	Diploma	37 (25%)	40 (28%)
	Degree	11 (08%)	14 (10%)
	Total	146 (100%)	141 (100%)

Table 1: shows the Distribution of the Personal Characteristics N=287

N; Number



General Knowledge of Drug Abuse Among Adolescents

Domains	Groups	Pre-test			Post-test		
		No	Mean	SD	No	Mean	SD
General Knowledge	Experimental group	146	5.00	1.46	146	13.08	1.46
	control group	141	5.08	1.54	141	6.03	1.48
Perception of the Adolescents	Experimental group	146	3.67	1.32	146	9.84	1.42
	control group	141	3.50	0.94	141	3.48	0.90
Reasons	Experimental group	146	2.10	1.12	146	6.52	1.16
	control group	141	2.26	1.16	141	2.37	1.08
Efficacy of Life Skills programme	Experimental group	146	2.58	1.36	146	15.66	1.48
	control group	141	2.94	1.71	141	2.99	1.10

Table 2: shows the Mean Scores of the Adolescents Pre and Post Training

Table number 2 shows that before training, the mean score of the general knowledge of adolescent regarding drug abuse stood at 5.00 ± 1.46 for experimental group and 5.08 ± 1.54 for control group. However, after the training, the mean score obtained among the experimental group doubled almost three folds (13.08 ± 1.46) with minor change in control group, just only 0.5 increase. Regarding the perception of adolescents on drug abuse, among the experimental and control group, adolescents means scores were 9.84 ± 1.42 and 3.48 ± 0.90 respectively in post-test while the mean score of experimental group was 3.67 ± 1.32 and control group 3.50 ± 0.94 before the test (see detail in table 2).

The reasons for drug abuse among adolescents shows that, the mean score of the experimental group tripled after the intervention (2.10 ± 1.12 before and 6.52 ± 1.16 after the intervention). Concerning the efficacy of life skills programme in preventing drug abuse among adolescents, the result shows a significant rise in the mean score among the experimental group, from 2.98 ± 58 to 15.66 ± 1.48 (see detail in table 2).

Research Hypotheses

Pre and Post-test on:	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P
Adolescents' knowledge of Drug Abuse	Treatment	5.67	1	5.67	2.81	0.033
	Error within	272.863	286	2.86		
	Total	278.533	287			
Adolescents' Perception of Drug Abuse	Treatment	8.47	2	4.84	3.10	0.002
	Error within	205.394	285	1.94		
	Total	213.864	287			
Adolescents' Knowledge of Drug Abuse Prevention	Treatment	10.384	3	7.84	4.20	0.027
	Error within	213.749	284	3.82		
	Total	224.133	287			

Significant at 0.05

Table 3: shows Summary of One-Way ANCOVA of Pre and Post Training on different parameters.

The table 3 depicted a significant difference in the general knowledge of adolescents, perception of adolescents towards drug abuse, and the impact of adolescents' knowledge of drug abuse prevention before and after training program. All tests were examined at the level of 95 % confidence interval (see the table 3 for detail).

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	Fcal	Sig.
Gender	.220	1	.220	1.123	.726
	410.194	230	1.783		
	410.414	231			
Age category	.761	1	.761	5.287	.022
	33.097	230	.144		
	33.858	231			
Class level	3.554	1	3.554	0.002	.006
	108.097	230	.470		
	111.651	231			
Family structure	.750	1	.750	1.084	.299
	159.142	230	.692		
	159.892	231			
Father's educational level	1.281	1	1.281	0.005	.007
	39.943	230	.174		
	41.224	231			
Mother's educational level	4.899	1	4.899	0.018	.027
	228.204	230	.992		
	233.103	231			

Significant at 0.05

Table 4: shows A summary of 2-Way ANOVA of Pre and Post Training on Adolescents' Demographic Characteristics and Prevention of Drug Abuse

Six demographic variables were examined against the prevention of drug abuse. The F-calculated (1.123, 5.287 and 1.084) yielded from the analysis of variance were higher than the tabulated value (0.726, 0.022 and 0.299) respectively at 0.05, the significance level on three variables (gender, age and type of family adolescents live). This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. To this end, adolescents' gender, age and family structure influence the prevention of drug abuse. Contrarily, other variables (class level, father's and mother's educational exposure) do not affect prevention of drug abuse.

Discussion

The present study indicated that, training has a significant effect on the knowledge of adolescent on drug abuse. While the results of the pre and post intervention relatively remained the same for control group, the experimental group had almost a threefold increase in knowledge of drug abuse after intervention. Also, the assumption on the relationship between effect of training on the general knowledge/ knowledge of prevention were significant. This shows that the intervention substantially improved the adolescent's knowledge of drug abuse. Some of the questions raised (DAST-10) were; have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons, possible implications, feelings and how to stop it. This result is not surprising because, similar result was documented in the study (Nagar et al., 2018), that there were statistically significant improvements in the level of knowledge after implementation of the programme in many forms, about tenth. Nurses have played a significant role in boosting the knowledge of adolescents. A report from Hadad et al., as cited (Nagar et al., 2018) stated that nursing intervention helped in improving students' knowledge, awareness, and their attitude

toward substance abuse, and abuser.

On the knowledge of prevention, this study shows a significant impact on adolescents' knowledge of drug abuse prevention. Significant improvement in the students' knowledge of prevention is consistent with what has been found in the previous studies that examined the effect of structured teaching programme on knowledge of prevention among nursing students regarding substance use and found that the intervention significantly improved students' preventive knowledge at one-week posttest (Mahmood et al., 2018 ; Kavitha, 2016). This means that, the use of life skill does not only expose the adolescents to what drug abuse is and its dangers but has enhanced their knowledge of prevention through self-confidence, self-efficacy and correct decision making. Kaur (Kaur & Joshith, 2021) has posited the importance of education about life skills as an emerging concept that focuses on healthy psychosocial development of youngsters, which has the potential to play a key role in the prevention of drug abuse. This study found a weighty statistical difference between the result obtained pre-training and post-training regarding the perception of adolescents towards drug abuse. After adolescents' exposure to the training on drug abuse, their level of perception on the consequences associated with drug abuse, need for help triplicated positively among the experimental group. Likewise, the hypothesis on the relationship between the effect of the training on perception confirmed significant. A comparable study that used the same intervention method from India indicates that the intervention delivered to the experimental group had a significant effect in bringing about a desirable shift in the adolescents' thoughts and approaches towards alcohol and drug abuse (Kaur & Joshith, 2021). Similar

report has been documented in several studies (Paz Castro et al., 2022 ; Haug et al., 2021). Another survey discovered a statistically significant improvement in adolescents' perception towards abuse and abusers especially on the perception of using hallucinogens, cannabis and heroin and the severity of addiction and abusers (Nagar & Hamed, 2018). They also found that adolescent perception of drug abuse correlates with the dominant cultural norms. In many countries substance use is perceived as a moral problem contributing to family shame and loss of prestige. Adolescent perception of drug abuse varies and correlates with the dominant cultural norms. Adolescents who perceived a strong parental disapproval of drug use were less likely to abuse drugs (Kaur & Joshith, 2021).

Previous studies (Nawi et al., 2021 ; Ozeylem et al., 2021) have established the common reasons why people, particularly adolescents engage in drug abuse. This present study has discovered an trajectory advancement in the awareness on the reasons why adolescents take drug abuse. This was the result upon comparing the mean of the scores (before and after the intervention) for both groups. That is to say, peoples' intentions for abusing drug are connected with the social-cognitive determinants which has direct effects both on initiation of and persistence in behavior (Eslami et al., 2018) as posited by Bandura (Bandura, 1986). And this describes the state of permanent interaction between a person's characteristics, their behaviors, and their environment (Sotoudeh et al., 2021). This impressive result could be due to extensive training they received on social-cognitive determinants. This study found that, age, gender and family structure influence the reason why adolescents engage in drug abuse. Similar findings have been reported that, social demographic variables such as age, gender, parental education and family structure influences the intention to take drug abuse among adolescents (Nagar, Hamed , 2018 ; Mahmood et al., 2018; Sotoudeh et al., 2021).

The present study compared the mean score of the two groups and the results show a significant rise in the mean score among the experimental group after the training. The outcome of this study depicts the effectiveness of Life Skill Programme as a tool in the fight against drug abuse among adolescents. The dramatic rise (from 2.98 ± 0.58 to 15.66 ± 1.48) within the short period of the intervention in the mean score shows that if properly introduced in various schools, it will go a long way in addressing the issue of drug abuse early enough in children. The effectiveness of Life Skill Training has been proved in many studies worldwide (Jones et al., 2017 ; Svensson et al., 2021 ; Kaur & Joshith, 2021 ; Paz Castro et al., 2022). Evidences have shown that, life skills enable the young people to handle various psychosocial skills that help them cope better in high risk situations and peer pressure (Nagar & Hamed, 2018 ; Kaur et al., 2022), heighten adaptive and appropriate behaviors that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World Health Organization, 1997). Also, Life skills programme empowers adolescents to make responsible and healthy choices, thereby paving the way for reduction in drug abuse (Bazrafshan et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is becoming an increasingly popular concept given its focus

on positive youth development (Murphy-Graham & Cohen, 2022). Life skills programmes empower youngsters to make responsible and healthy choices, thereby paving the way for reduction of substance and drug misuse among the youth (Bazrafshan et al., 2020). No study has recorded any negative result on life skill programme knowledge in prevention of drug abuse. However, studies have shown some intervention programs toward alcohol prevention among adolescents that has not had any significant effect on knowledge over time (Svensson, et al., 2021 ; Beckman et al., 2017).

Conclusion

The findings of this unique study conducted in Nigeria advocates adoption of Life Skills training in secondary schools in order to utilize its potential in reducing the prevalence of drug abuse by changing peoples' intention towards drug. It is believed that, if implemented in schools as part of their curriculum, it has the potential to help prevent drug abuse and issues related with it.

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