



## **The Roles of Entertainment Media on Substance Abuse among Technical College Students in Nigeria and Its Impacts on Their Skills Development**

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### **Abstract**

Substance abuse, particularly among students of technical colleges, poses significant challenges to skills development and overall educational outcomes. Entertainment media comprising films, music, television, and social media has become a powerful influence in the lives of Nigerian youth. Unfortunately, the glamorisation of substance use by the media has influenced the normalisation of such behaviours among the youth, potentially leading students to engage in risky practices. This study aims to explore the intricate relationships between entertainment media consumption, substance abuse, and skills development among technical college students in Ogun state, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey carried out using a quantitative approach. Data from the respondents were collected using a research questionnaire. The study population consists of all the students of Ogun state-owned technical colleges of technical colleges however, the sample population is made up of 222 NTC 2 and 3 students randomly selected from 3 technical colleges one from each senatorial district. Findings from the study reveal that 41.1% of respondents agree there are cases of substance abuse among their mates. Furthermore, all the respondents agreed ( $\bar{x} = 2.61$ ;  $SD = 1.012$ ) that the portrayal and use of substances on screen can motivate them to want to try it out. Lastly, the use of psychoactive substances abuse by technical college students has a negative impact on the students' skills development quest. As a result, the following recommendations were made: schools should organise media literacy education, and positive media campaigns. Government should engage media creators to curb substance abuse glamorisation. Technical colleges should enhance their vocational guidance and counselling service. Lastly curriculum developers should incorporate Anti-drug abuse campaign in the curriculum.

**Keywords:** Entertainment media, Media influence, Psychoactive substance abuse, Technical college, Skills development

### **INTRODUCTION**

Substance abuse among students, particularly those in technical colleges, poses significant challenges to skills development and overall educational outcomes. In Nigeria, the increasing prevalence of substance use among young adults is alarming and may be

influenced by multiple factors, including entertainment media. The role of entertainment media in shaping perceptions and behaviours surrounding substance use warrants careful examination, particularly because technical college students are often at a critical juncture in their skill acquisition and career preparation. In recent years, entertainment media—comprising films, music, television, and social media—has become a powerful influence in the lives of Nigerian youth. Entertainment media glamorisation of substance use has influenced the normalisation of such behaviours among the youth, potentially leading students to engage in risky practices. Numerous studies

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suggest that exposure to substance use in entertainment media correlates with similar behaviours in audiences. In analysing Nigerian entertainment media's role, a study of 479 Nigerian video films found that 55.9% contained scenes portraying the use of one or more substances. Of these, 41.1% depicted alcohol use and 16.9% showed tobacco use (Guanah et al, 2023).

According to the UNODC (2018), 14.4% or approximately 14.3 million people aged 15 to 64 have abused drugs or psychoactive substances in the past year, with the highest prevalence found in the southern political zones. Fanned by entertainment cultures, this high prevalence of substance portrayal in entertainment media is significant because the media transmits ideas and new information that influences behavioral patterns in society (Omolola et al 2021). According to Primack et al. (2009), adolescents who frequently view substance use in films and music videos are more likely to initiate substance use themselves. This is particularly relevant in the context of Nigerian technical college students, who are often in a transitional phase of their lives where peer-influence and media consumption can significantly impact their choices. A study by Omoarin and Yaha (2019) found that exposure to substance use in entertainment media correlates with an increased likelihood of substance initiation among adolescents and young adults in Nigeria. This is particularly concerning in the context of technical colleges, where students must harness their skills and maintain focus amid challenges.

Substance abuse can severely impact students' cognitive abilities, emotional wellbeing, and social interactions, ultimately disrupting the skills development process. Research indicates that substance use is linked to diminished academic performance, adversely affecting skills acquisition and professional preparedness (Kumar et al., 2020). For students in technical institutions, where practical skills and hands-on training are critical, substance-induced impairments can lead to reduced concentration, motivation, and participation in learning activities (Elkins et al., 2019). Consequently, these factors can hinder their ability to master essential competencies necessary for their future careers.

The media has been accused of potentially influencing adolescents through drug advertisements and the use of celebrities in depicting drug use (Omolola et al 2021). This is particularly problematic as research indicates that students are exposed to illegal drugs through various channels including social media, friends, and their environment (Bappayo, 2023). Moreover, the consumption of entertainment media that portrays substance abuse can foster an environment where technical college students perceive drug use as a means to cope with academic pressures. This is concerning, as research suggests that students under stress may be more likely to engage in substance use as a maladaptive coping mechanism (Chung et al., 2020).

The use of psychoactive substances among technical college students is disheartening because the main purpose of establishing technical colleges is to develop a high level of Skilled human resources capable of filling the gaps of professional personnel needed for economic transformation and industrialization; people who are productive, competent, and self-reliant. The curriculum used by technical colleges apart from academic activities, emphasizes skill acquisition activities such as industrial attachment and workshop practices which are germane in ensuring that students graduating from such institutions are fit to fulfil the goal and objectives of TVET in Nigeria. Given the demanding nature of technical training programs, where students are expected to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, the implications of substance abuse on their educational experiences and skill development cannot be overstated.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Technical Colleges were created in Nigeria to cater for skill-based education which is necessary for industrialisation and economic prosperity of Nigeria. Students who enrolled in such colleges are expected to develop entrepreneurial competence that would enable them to be self-employed or fit to fill into technical skilled personnel pool of the nation, however many of these young individuals have been dragged into a dangerous world of psychoactive substance abuse due to media

influence. This study aims to explore the intricate relationships between entertainment media consumption, substance abuse, and skills development among technical college students in Ogun state, Nigeria. By investigating these dynamics, the research seeks to clarify how entertainment media influences substance use behaviours, and in turn, how these behaviours impact the essential skills necessary for career success.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Though objective of this study is to investigate the roles of entertainment media on substance abuse among technical college students in Nigeria and its impact on their skill development, however the specific objective is to investigate:

1. The common types of psychoactive substances that students of technical colleges in Ogun state abuse?
2. How the entertainment media portrayals of psychoactive substances influence students' use of the substance?
3. The impact of substance abuse on the students' skills development?

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the common types of psychoactive substances that students of technical colleges in Ogun state abuse?
2. How do the entertainment media portrayals of psychoactive substances influence students' use of the substance?
3. What is the impact of substance abuse on the students' skills development?

## METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study is a descriptive survey that adopts a quantitative approach. The study population consists of all the students of Ogun state-owned technical colleges of technical colleges. However, the sampled population was 222 NTC 2 and 3 students randomly

selected from three technical colleges. A research questionnaire was used to obtain data from the students (respondents) who participated voluntarily, without coercion or inducement. All the information provided by the respondents was treated with utmost confidentiality and was used only for the purpose of this study. The data collated were analysed using Pearson correlation and regression analysing tools. The findings are discussed as follows:

**Research Question 1.** What are the common types of psychoactive substances that students of technical colleges in Ogun state abuse?

Findings from the study **reveal** that 41.1% of respondents agree there are cases of substance abuse among their mates and that Palm Wine was the most commonly abused psychoactive substance among the students, this was closely followed by Beer, Hot/Gin, Cigarette, and Local herbal bitter Drinks. While the least abused psychoactive substances were Aerosol, Suck Away fume, and Ecstasy.

**Research question 2.** How do media portrayals of psychoactive active substances influence students' use of the substance?

Research question number two was phrased as: Watching music and movies celebrates using drugs/psychoactive substances on-screen motivating one to also use them. Surprisingly all the respondents agreed ( $\bar{x} = 2.61$ ;  $SD = 1.012$ ) that the portrayal and use of substances on screen can motivate them to want to try it out. This situation has caught the attention of society, especially the news outlets. According to This DayLive (2024), substance abuse in Nigeria's music industry is a longstanding issue, with many musicians openly discussing their drug use and even glorifying it in their lyrics. One of the reasons. The predominance of drug abuse in the music industry is the perception that drug enhances creativity and is a source of inspiration. Most artists believe drug helps them tap into their emotions, thereby pushing the boundaries of their artistic expression and dynamism. Furthermore, The Nation Newspaper (2023) said, that the

depiction of drugs by the industry is often positive and thus sends mixed messages to the audience and followers. There is no question that seeing or hearing about substance abuse through our sources of entertainment negatively impacts us. It is therefore crucial that those of influence in the entertainment industry are more careful about the messages they send to their followers.

**Research Question 3.** What impact does the use of these substances have on skills development?

On the question of whether psychoactive substance abuse has any impact on skill development, the respondents disagreed that taking drugs or psychoactive substances will help one to prepare adequately for practical class (1.57; SD=.626). They again disagreed that the use and abuse of drugs and substances enables one to be well organized during a skills development practical session (1.67; SD= .758). The students sampled disagreed with the statement that drug or substance abuse helps one to cope with the frustration that one may be experiencing during practical class (1.80; SD=.714), the respondents did not agree that drug abuse helps one to develop better thinking skills required for solving problems during a practical session (1.53; SD=.571), they however agreed that taking drug/psychoactive substances before a practical session can energize a person to cope with the intense stress associated with the physical activities of skills acquisition (2.63; SD=1.025). The respondents reject the statement that abusing drugs/substance enable one to strictly follow instructions laid down for workshop practice (1.83; SD= .699). They also did not agree with the statement that When students take drugs or psychoactive substances, it will enable them to obey safety rules and regulations in the workshop, (1.63; SD= .718), they were not of the opinion that Students who abuse drugs/psychoactive substances attend practical sessions promptly and regularly (1.73; SD= .583). The respondents did not accept that Students who abuse drugs perform better in their trade test (1.67; SD= .711) and lastly, they were not the opinion that drug and substance abuse help one to

master all the skills learned in a practical class (1.50; SD= .630).

## CONCLUSION

Nigeria's hope for socioeconomic prosperity rests on its teaming youth especially those with technical skills and competence, unfortunately, many of the youth have engaged in the use of illicit and dangerous substances and this has been a thing of concern to many well-meaning citizens. Many studies have indicated that entertainment media especially movies, TV and music are to be blamed for the proliferation of substance abuse among school-aged youth. No thanks to the culture of glamourizing substances by media celebrities on the screen. The consumption of these substances among the youth is been seen as a social norm despite significant consequences such as depression, cognitive impairment, attention deficit, lack of concentration truancy, and moral decadence. Painfully the use of these substances has deprived many technical college students the ability to participate in regular skill development programmes and workshop practice.

Findings from this study have shown that there is a relation between the use of psychoactive substances in entertainment media and the use of the same substances by students of technical colleges in Ogun state. Another key finding is that the use of psychoactive substances can strongly hinder a student from properly preparing and participating in workshop and laboratory practical sessions that would lead students to develop technical skills and competencies. Unfortunately, the absence of a proper intervention programme by the government or even the management of the institution is exacerbating the situation. As a result, of the key findings from this study, the following recommendations were made.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. **Media Literacy Education:**  
Technical Colleges need to implement programs in their schools that teach students how to critically analyze media content. This can help them recognize and understand the portrayal of substance abuse in

entertainment media and its potential impacts.

- ii. **Positive Media Campaigns:** The government through the National Orientation Agency should develop and promote positive media campaigns that highlight the successes of substance-free students. This can be done through social media platforms, campus events, and local broadcasting, showcasing role models who have achieved their goals without substance use.
- iii. **Engage Media Creators:** Educational administrators, managers, and proprietors need to collaborate with local filmmakers, musicians, and other content creators to produce entertainment that addresses substance abuse issues constructively. Engaging these creators can lead to content that resonates with students and promotes healthier choices.
- iv. **Vocational Guidance and Counselling Support Services:** As part of efforts to curb the drug menace in technical colleges, the State Government need to establish accessible vocational guidance and counselling services on campuses that address the risks of substance abuse influenced by media. Provide support groups that encourage open discussions about media influence and substance-related issues.
- v. **Health Education and Skill Development Workshops:** Technical College administrators need to offer workshops focused on health education and skills development that emphasise the importance of maintaining a healthy and productive lifestyle. Integrating skills training, a healthy lifestyle and discussions on avoiding substances can help reinforce these values.
- vi. **Incorporating Substance Abuse Awareness in Curricula:** Technical college curriculum should be revamped to Integrate substance abuse education into the academic curriculum, highlighting its impact on personal and professional development. This can help students understand the long-term consequences of substance use on their skills and career prospects.
- vii. **Parental and Community Involvement:** Parent Teachers Association (PTA) should encourage parents and community leaders to engage in discussions about the effects of entertainment media and substance abuse. Workshops or forums can help align community expectations with students' experiences and the influences they face.
- viii. **Research and Feedback:** TVET educators and researchers need to do more to conduct ongoing research to understand the changing patterns of media influence on substance use among students. Use findings to adapt educational programs and interventions to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- ix. **Policy Advocacy:** Vocational/technical education teacher associations should advocate for policies that regulate the portrayal of substance use in entertainment media, ensuring that the content distributed is responsible and not glamorizing drug use. Collaboration with regulatory bodies can help establish these guidelines.
- x. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Office of Education Inspectorate/evaluation and quality assurance agency needs to implement systems for monitoring the effectiveness of programs and campaigns addressing substance abuse in relation to media influence. Regular evaluation can help refine strategies and enhance their impact on students' skill development.

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