



SOCIABILITY AND SHYNESS AS FACTORS FOR PRONNESS TO SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Substance use and abuse is a common issue among the youths. The relationship between substance abuse, sociability and shyness was what this study centered on, being issues that are common among youths. 200 undergraduates participated in the study. The result found a significant main effect of sex and shyness on substance use and abuse but no significant main effect of sociability. There is also no significant interaction effect of the three independent variables on substance use and abuse

Keywords: substance use and abuse, sociability, shyness

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a turbulence period in life, bringing along with it significant personal and social challenges. This period is characterized with some challenges which include transition to college, search for identity and purpose in life, social and academic pressure, separation from family, formation of new groups. While people managed the stresses and challenges of this period, some find it difficult to adjust, thereby ending up with emotional turmoil that led to the search for adventure and relief.

In a bid to determine what distinguishes the adolescents who could confront new life challenges with relative ease from those who succumb to substance abuse, researches point to a number of factors. Genetic and biological factors have been found to play important role in determining individual susceptibility to these problems, other factors which include personality, life experiences, values, beliefs, family background, and surrounding environment cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, Page (1990) reported shyness and sociability as the personality risk factors that predict illicit substance use in male adolescents. Shyness has long been described as a character trait, an attitude or a state of inhibition (Lewinsky, 1941) Page (1990) reasoned that high shy and high social individuals were at increased risk for substance use because these behaviours may help them to cope with an approach-avoidance conflict that they experience during and or in anticipation of social interactions. There is the pull from the environment towards social interaction – feeling belong - and the shyness that brings about avoidance, therefore in order to overcome the avoidance tendency as a result of shyness, substance use became a companion.

The effects of substance use and abuse on undergraduates are staggering in terms of substance dependence injury, illegal acts, poor academic performance, risky sexual behaviour and high cost to the surrounding communities. This research aims at examining the effect of sociability and shyness on substance use and abuse among undergraduates.

The specific purpose includes to:

1. Examine the behavioural pattern of undergraduates on substance use and abuse among undergraduates,
2. Assess the effect of sociability on substance use and abuse

3. Ascertained the influence of shyness on substance abuse and also assess gender influence on undergraduates' substance use and abuse

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study, a survey research made use of ex-post facto design. Two hundred undergraduates were drawn from Ekiti State University, consisting of 103 males and 97 females with the average age of 22 years.

Questionnaire comprising of four sections was used for the study. Single-item variables like sex, and age were contained in section A, section B has measures of substance use and abuse, section C has shyness scale and section D contains sociability scale.

The shyness scale developed by Melchor and Cheek (1985) contains 20 items with Likert response pattern ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed, having both direct and indirect scores. High scores indicate high level of shyness.

Sociability questionnaire is a 7-item questionnaire developed by Hanewicz and Bellamy (1988). All the items are scored directly and attracts 1-5 rating thereby making the scores to range from 7 to 35 with a mean 26.2

Drug abuse screening test is a 20-item questionnaire designed to be used in a variety of settings to provide a quick index of drug related problems.

Procedure: Cluster sampling method was employed to distribute the questionnaire among the undergraduates in their hostels so as to cut across students from different faculties of the university. Two hundred copies were used out of the retrieved copies; indicating 100% retrieval.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of scores on substance use and abuse among the respondents

Characteristics		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Sex	Male	103	24.52	2.63
	Female	97	23.40	2.39
Shyness	Shy	102	24.15	2.80
	Not shy	98	23.59	2.25
Sociability	Sociable	117	23.95	2.47
	Not sociable	83	23.77	2.68
Sex and Shyness	Male shy	52	24.59	2.70
	Male not shy	51	24.03	2.56
	Female shy	50	23.68	2.85
	Female not shy	47	23.10	1.77
Sex and sociable	Male sociable	64	24.29	2.76
	Male not sociable	39	24.36	2.44
	Female sociable	53	23.52	2.01
	Female not sociable	44	23.25	2.80
Shyness and sociability	Shy and sociable	55	24.07	2.61
	Shy and not sociable	47	24.23	3.04
	Not shy and sociable	62	23.84	2.36
	Not shy and not sociable	36	23.17	2.02

Based on results shown in Table 1 the mean indicates that those that are shy are more involved in substance abuse (mean = 24.15) than those that are not shy (mean = 23.59). Male are more involved than female but no interaction effect of sex and shyness as female that are shy (mean = 23.63) are not as involved in substance abuse as male that are not shy (mean = 24.03).

Table 2: 2x2x2 ANOVA showing the main and interaction effect of shyness and sociability and on substance use and abuse.

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F
Sex (A)	43.28	1	43.28	6.80*
Shyness (B)	23.99	1	23.99	3.77*
Sociability (C)	1.54	1	1.54	.24
AxB	.13	1	.13	.02
AxC	2.34	1	2.34	.37
BxC	11.63	1	11.63	1.82
AxBxC	6.25	1	6.25	.98
Error	1221.84	192	2.71	
Total	1301.87	199		

* sig at .05

Result as stated in Table 2 shows that there is a significant main effect of sex and shyness on substance use and abuse but no effect of sociability. There is also no significant interaction effect of the three independent variables on substance use and abuse.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA summary table showing the mean and standard deviation of student from each of the academic level on substance use and abuse

Level	N	Mean	Std Deviation
100 Level	40	23.60	2.29
200 Level	40	23.25	2.16
300 Level	58	23.91	2.39
400 Level	48	24.08	2.69
500 Level	14	25.57	3.78

F = 2.40 p<.05

Table 3 shows that the classes of the undergraduates significantly affect their level of substance use and abuse.

Table 4: Comparison of male and female on substance use and abuse, shyness and sociability

Variables		N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t
Substance use & abuse	Male	103	24.32	2.63	.26	198	2.57*
	Female	97	23.40	2.39	.24		
Shyness	Male	103	56.69	9.47	.93	198	.14
	Female	97	56.49	9.61	.97		
Sociability	Male	103	27.04	4.39	.43	198	1.29
	Female	97	26.29	3.78	.38		

* sig at .05

Table 4 revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female undergraduates on their perception of substance abuse [t(198)= 2.57, p< .05, but no significant difference on shyness and sociability was observed

DISCUSSIONS

The results revealed that shyness has a significant main effect on substance use and abuse among the undergraduates. The observation of the mean shows that those that are shy are more involved in substance abuse (mean = 24.15) than those that are not shy (mean = 23.59). Males are more involved than females but no interaction effect of sex and shyness as female that are shy (mean = 23.63) are not as involved in

substance abuse as male that are not shy (mean = 24.03). This could be explained with the fact that substance abuse is more of antisocial behaviour and from the literature males tend to be involved in antisocial behaviour than females. Substance use among male tends to be societally tolerated than with females and abuse most of the times start with use. Hence occurrence of abuse is more among male than female.

The work also went further to report that there is no significant difference in the sociability and shyness of male and female undergraduates, meaning that shyness and sociability is not a function of the sex.

There is no significant difference in the drug abuse of those that are sociable and those that are not.

There have been inconsistencies in the reports on the relationship between shyness, sociability and substance use. Cheek and Melchior (1990), Leary and Kowalski (1995) did not find a significant relationship between shyness and alcohol use. Cheek and Buss (1981) examined the relationship between shyness and sociability and demonstrated that that the dimensions were not only modestly related, contrary to lay judgments, shyness is not merely low sociability.

That an individual is high in shyness does not necessarily follow that he will be low in sociability. The difference between the two factors has also been established by the work of Schmitdt and his colleagues (1995) who reported that shyness and sociability are distinguishable on measures of central and autonomic psychophysiology.

Due to the impairment in interpersonal relations that may be present in individual that are high in shyness, the use of illicit drugs may be higher as reported in this study. This is in line with report by Page (1990) that high shy / high social individuals were at an increased risk for substance use because this will help them cope with an approach avoidance conflict that they experience during and /or in anticipation of social interaction, although this work did not find a significant interaction effect of shyness and sociability on substance abuse but on shyness alone suggesting that the individuals that are high in shyness are having interpersonal impairment. As university is a social environment, an undergraduate who may want to socialize and relate with others in social environment, may find solace in substance use so as to cope with the challenges posed by the personality problem of shyness. No significant difference in substance abuse was found between individuals that are sociable and those low in shyness. This bothers on the fact that low sociability is not synonymous to shyness.

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