

# A Study on the Causes and Impacts of Drug Abuse Engagements by University Students: A Case of DMI ST Eugene and Chreso University Students

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**Abstract**— *Drug abuse is one of the major problems facing the world and the youths and University students in particular are one of the categories greatly affected by drug abuse. University students in Zambia are not spared from this challenge. Therefore this study was conducted to assess the causes and impacts of drug abuse amongst University students at DMI ST Eugene University and Chreso University. The researcher employed a descriptive research design and the respondents were selected using probability sampling techniques. The key results of the study shows that drug abuse is a major challenge in the two Universities and drug abuse is having significant impact on the academic performance and the wellbeing of the students. The researcher recommends that the two Universities should put in programs robust programs to address the challenge of drug abuse in these Universities.*

**Keywords**— *Drug, Drug abuse, Impact, University, Students.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol and drug use has been a part of human societies throughout recorded history, however, for the past several decades; it has increased in prevalence particularly among college students. Research findings by (Dunn & Wang, 2003; Peltzer & Malaka, 2001) have identified that the majority of students who use drugs at university first did so prior to entering, but a significant number of students start to do so after entering university. In the researcher's point of view, the reason for this paradigm shift is because, going to college or university can be a very exciting period but one where young people can face a number of challenges. Many students may face a wide range of challenges on an individual, interpersonal, academic, and social level for the first time in their lives, including as leaving home, establishing autonomy, making new friends, and peer pressure, which may put them at risk of substance usage (Larimer et al., 2005). Furthermore, risk variables such as drug-using peers, parental substance misuse, and mental health issues continue to play a substantial influence as contextual, individual, personality, and family factors (Canning et al., 2004).

A drug is defined as a substance that causes addiction, habituation on a marked range in consciousness (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 1993). The definition is very comprehensive as it includes substances such as marijuana, alcohol, cocaine, cannabis and psycho-tropic substances as described in Mbatia (1994). It is important to note that some drugs are believed to be beneficial if taken within the normal limits. However the excessive use of the drugs can lead to

substantial negative impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of the abusers. Drug abuse and substance abuse are terms that are used interchangeably. However, it is important to note that the term 'drug' is mainly used to refer to 'medicine', while substance abuse may include chemicals other than drugs (Hendrikz, 1986). Drug abuse is a major problem and is more evident in the youths. University students are also not excluded from this problem as literature has shown that a lot of University students abuse drugs. Various researchers has come up with reports on the causes of drugs abuse and these includes peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, freedom, alcohol abuse and other factors. However the researcher did not come across any study in Zambia that was done to compare the causes and impacts of drug abuse in two Universities in Zambia. Therefore this comparative study was conducted to find out the causes and impact of drug abuse in two Universities

## II. OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 General

To examine the causes and impacts of drug abuse engagements by University students.

### 2.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess the awareness levels on drug abuse amongst students
- To find the causes of drugs on the abusers in the university
- To find the impact of drugs on the abusers in the university
- To assess the effective of programs addressing the abusers in the university
- To provide recommendations on how to address the challenges of drug abuse

## III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are glowing concerns amongst various education stakeholders on the impact of drug abuse amongst students. Students at DMI ST Eugene and Chreso Universities are often at the leading edge of social change; and this has been particularly true in the case of drug use. The massive upsurge in illicit drug use by students is becoming an area of great concern which needs to be addressed urgently. Therefore this study is important as it brings to light the causes and impacts of drug abuse in relation to University students. The study recommendations will be useful to the administration and

policy makers as the results will provide the much needed evidence in the development of effective programs and policies to deal with the challenge of drug abuse at the University level.

**IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher used a descriptive research design for the study as it was deemed appropriate in that this design enabled the researcher to accurately portray the characteristics of the phenomena which is drug abuse. The researcher used probability sampling techniques to select the respondents for the research. In this case the researcher used categorical sampling method and which was followed by Simple Random Sampling method. The sample size is for the research was 50 respondents comprising of 25 respondents from DMI and 25 from CHRESO. Semi-Structured Interviews were conducted through the use of the questionnaire to collect the data which was analyzed with the support of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

**V. STUDY KEY FINDINGS**

This chapter summarizes the findings, recommendation and conclusion on the causes and impacts of drug abuse in higher learning institutions.

*The awareness levels on drug abuse amongst students*

The researcher through the questionnaires tried to find out the awareness levels on drug abuse among students at DMI and CHRESO University. The results of the study shows that 45% knows all the drugs, 24% only know marijuana, 17% alcohol and about 14 knows cigarette. This result demonstrates that almost half of the students know all the drugs and this shows a high awareness levels on the types of drugs. In term of knowing other students who take drugs in the university, 84% reported that they know someone who takes drugs at the University which shows that majority of respondents know someone who takes drugs at the University indicating. This result shows that the prevalence of taking drugs at the two Universities is very high. This is an area of concern for stakeholders and there is need of developing actions and programs that can address the challenge of drug abuse at the two Universities

*The causes of drugs on the abusers in the university*

There are a wide range of causes for drug abuse as highlighted in the various literatures that is available across the globe. This study therefore sought to establish the reasons for drug abuse among students at these two Universities. The most commonly perceived reason for drug abuse by students was peer pressure of which is was reported by about 59% of the respondents. The other reasons for drug and alcohol abuse among students were coping with school and family problems, need for acceptance by friends, lack of knowledge about the dangers of drug abuse, easy availability of drugs, low cost of drugs, excessive pocket money, the wish to increase intelligence and lack of concern by school administrators. 21% of the respondents also reported that boredom is also a major cause of drug and alcohol abuse. . From the questionnaires, the

reason for boredom were established as, farness from town (DMI-ST. EUGENE UNIVERSITY) and lack of extracurricular activities (CHRESO UNIVERSITY).

*The impact of drugs on the abusers in the university*

In terms of whether students knew the dangers of abusing drugs, it was evident that they were aware of the effects of drug abuse. They gave these as lack of concentration on studies, withdraw from school, memory loss and other many more, however the most preferred answers that was given was lack of concentration which was about 51% of students who responded and about 44% responded withdraw from school. Therefore it is evident that majority of the respondents were aware of the negative effects of the drugs

The researcher further conducted a cross tabulation on the impacts of drug abuse at the two Universities in order to have University specific information on the impact of drug abuse at the University level and the results are presented in the table below:

Name of your university? * What impacts do drugs have on the abusers in university? Cross tabulation					
Name of your university?	What impacts do drugs have on the abusers in university?				
	Withdraw from school	Lack of concentration	Memory loss	Total	
DMI-ST.EUGENE UNIVERSITY	12	11	2	25	
CHRESO UNIVERSITY	9	14	1	24	
Total	21	25	3	49	

Under the cross-tabulation table above, it indicates that at DMI-ST. EUGENE UNIVERSITY the highest reported impact is withdrawal from school which was reported by 48% of the respondents. As of CHRESO the highest was lack of concentration from school as reported by 58%. This shows that across the two schools the main reported impacts are withdraw from school and lack of concentration

*The effective of programs addressing the abusers in the university*

In order to deal with the challenge of drug abuse it is important for Universities to develop and implement effective programs on how to address the challenge of drug and alcohol abuse. These programs need to be supported by relevant University policies as the implementation of programs aimed at addressing the challenge of drug abuse at the University level is very important in dealing with the challenge of drug abuse. The research results showed that 68% of students from both UNIVERSITIES (DMI and CHRESO) indicated that they are not aware of any programs addressing the issue of drug abuse among students. This implies that majority of the students are not aware of the programs addressing the challenge of drug abuse at the University level. This further explains why there are high cases of drug abuse at these two Universities as the Universities has not put in place robust programs dealing with the challenge of drug abuse.

The general perception of the Students indicates that the programs are found wanting as 90% of the Students felt that the methods were not effective and only 10% said they were very effective. However the results showed that the University management is not effective in taking action against drug abusers as 82% of the respondents reported that the actions taken against drug abusers are adequate.

Name of your university? * Are you aware of programs addressing drug abuse in the university? Cross tabulation				
		Are you aware of programs addressing drug abuse in the university?		Total
		Yes	No	
Name of your university?	DMI-ST.EUGENE UNIVERSITY	4	21	25
	CHRESO UNIVERSITY	10	15	25
Total		14	36	50

It is well interpreted here on the cross tabulation table that from both UNIVERSITIES that is DMI-ST. EUGENE and CHRESO UNIVERSITY about 90% of students are not aware of any awareness programs at DMI-ST. EUGENE and about 70% from CHRESO UNIVERSITY are not aware of any programs addressing the issue of drug abuse. Therefore it can be concluded that from both Universities the majority of students are not aware of programs addressing the challenge of drug abuse

**VI. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, despite being Universities with a small population with full time students, alcohol and drug abuse is becoming a major issue at Chreso and DMI University Campus. Drug abuse has threatened the lives of the youth of 29 years and below. Among young people aged between 18 and 29 years, the rate is estimated to be between 44.8% and 52% among students including those in the universities (Haworth & Nyambe 1980). This shows that drug abuse is a reality among students and the youth at large especially in Zambia. Change can only happen if all parties involved recognise the need for it and make an informed decision to bring it about. The elimination of drug addiction is thus the collective duty of all stakeholders, ranging from parents to students to university administration.

**VII. RECOMMENDATION**

The Researcher recommends that universities should;

- The two Universities should develop and implement programs addressing issues of drug abuse in the university
- The two Universities should consider the full range and impact of the consequences of heavy drinking, drug abuse from hangover and missing class to dropping out, damaging property, and alcohol poisoning.
- The two Universities should recognize that a single approach is unlikely to work for everyone on campus. Because there are multiple reasons for excessive drinking and drug use, multiple points of intervention are needed to address them.
- There is greater need for the two Universities to involve all the stakeholders.(Students, university presidents) in the fight against drug abuse
- As majority of the students reported that boredom is a major cause of drug abuse. There is need to offer social programs such as Chess, Debate, and other social activities.
- The two Universities should Enforce strict punishments for those who are found abusing drugs within the University premises as this will be a lesson to others

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