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Effects of drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe. A case of Epworth Ward 3.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the effects of youth drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe, a case of Epworth Ward 3. The literature review articulated the health, relationship, and financial effects of youth drug abuse on parents. The study used cognitive theory as a theoretical framework. The study used the qualitative research paradigm. The researcher used a case study as a research design. The target population for this study was the parents of teenagers who abuse drugs in Epworth. The researcher used judgemental or purposive sampling and non-probability sampling methods as sampling techniques. A sample of 40 respondents was selected. The research used questionnaires and structured interviews to collect data. The first objective of the study was to examine the health effects of youth drug abuse on parents and it revealed that drug abuse by Youth causes many mental problems to parents. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship effects of youth drug abuse on parents. Research findings showed that most of the drug users do not have a good relationship with their parents. The third objective was to examine the financial effects of youth drug abuse on parents. The research findings showed that drug abuse by youth makes them aggressive thus changes in behaviour make them steal for their parents, families, and community. Financial Strain can occur when parents pay illegal fees for their drug-addicted children. The study concluded that drugs do not affect users only but they affect the people around them mainly parents in most cases become victims. It is recommended that not only drug abusers need help but parents of youth who abuse drugs also need help to cope with their youth behaviour so that they can attain all the help needed. Areas for further study should focus on ways to reduce the effects of youth drug abuse on parents and the role of Pastors in handling parents with children who abuse drugs.

Keywords; Drug, abuse, adolescents, parents, effects

DECLARATION

I, Moses Phiri, hereby declare that this dissertation is titled "Effects of drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe. A case of Epworth Ward 3." is the result of my original research work. I affirm that all sources used have been appropriately acknowledged and cited.

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DEDICATION

My dear parents, your love and guidance have been the driving force behind my pursuit of knowledge. You have instilled in me the value of hard work and perseverance, and I am forever grateful for your sacrifices. To my partner, your unwavering support, patience, and understanding have been my rock during the most difficult of times. Your belief in me has fueled my determination to achieve my dreams. I dedicate this research study to both of you, for you have made it possible for me to pursue my passion and make a difference in the world.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EYDA-P- Effects of Youth Drug Abuse on Parents

ECDDT- Epworth Community Development Trust

EYDAP- Effects of Youth Drug Abuse on Parents

EYDA Impact - Effects of Youth Drug Abuse Impact on Parents

MoHCC- The Ministry of Health and Child Care

YDAP- Youth Drug Abuse Parenting

YDAPE-Youth Drug Abuse Parental Effects

YDA- Parents: Youth Drug Abuse - Parents

Youth DAP- Youth Drug Abuse Parental

YDAP Influence - Youth Drug Abuse Parental Influence

ZNSA- Zimbabwe National Council on Substance Abuse

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The escalating issue of youth drug abuse in Zimbabwe isn't just affecting the young generation; it's also taking a significant toll on parents. As highlighted by Nyoni (2018), the problem is worsening, with a shocking 75% of Zimbabwean youth reported to be involved in drug abuse, leading to severe mental health issues. This alarming statistic paints a grim picture for parents who are witnessing the deterioration of their children's well-being firsthand. Recent reports from News Day (February 12, 2024) reveal the harsh reality faced by parents as Epworth ZRP data from the same year indicates that a staggering 70% of drug-abusing youth fall between the ages of 15 and 25. The news of ten students from Epworth High School being caught consuming mbanje, a banned substance in Zimbabwe, further underscores the distressing situation parents find themselves in.

The Ministry of Health's findings in 2024 add to the burden, with substance and alcohol abuse being identified as major catalysts for the effects of drug abuse on their parents, and mental health crises. This has prompted discussions within the government about tightening regulations on alcohol sales, with considerations being made to restrict sales to supermarkets only. Moreover, the ministry's confirmation that around 60% of admissions to psychiatric institutions are linked to drug abuse amplifies the anguish felt by parents as they grapple with the devastating effects of their children's substance misuse. In this scenario, parents are not only witnessing the physical and mental decline of their children but also bearing the emotional weight of seeing their hopes and dreams shattered by the scourge of drug abuse.

Dennis C (2014) underscores the profound effects of youth drug abuse on the social fabric, directly reverberating into the lives of parents. The resulting disorders not only lead to medical complications and disabilities but also escalate the risk of fatalities, be it through drug misuse or heightened susceptibility to suicide. These effects intensify parental distress. Moreover, drug

abuse contributes to social dilemmas such as housing disputes and criminal activities, placing added strain on parents. Dealing with these issues exacts a heavy economic toll, demanding substantial financial resources for addiction treatment, healthcare, welfare assistance, and legal interventions.

In Zimbabwe, law enforcement officials observed in 2023 that many individuals resort to drug abuse as a means of self-medication for physical ailments, potentially resulting in ignorance of proper dosage and subsequent mental health effects. A local clinic in Epworth ward 3 reported in 2023 that 70% of its mental health patients belonged to the youth demographic, aged 16-26. Despite the dearth of data on the effects of youth drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe, Manayiti (2006) shed light on the detrimental effects of illegal drug use among Zimbabwean youth on the brain, stressing the imperative of establishing a comprehensive understanding of these effects.

Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, the prevalence of youth drug abuse is alarming. Cannabis emerges as the most commonly used drug among youths, primarily due to its affordability compared to less frequently abused substances like cocaine and heroin (Zimbabwe Newsletter, 2014). Nevertheless, the scarcity of comprehensive data on youth drug abuse in Zimbabwe poses a significant obstacle in addressing this issue. Nonetheless, research has identified symptoms associated with drug abuse, including uncontrollable vomiting, constipation, drowsiness, confusion, dry mouth, changes in mood, facial flashes, and sweating, among others (Manayiti, 2016). It's paramount to acknowledge that Zimbabwe's high unemployment rate significantly fuels youth drug abuse. Parents shoulder the weighty responsibility of managing their adolescents' substance use and abuse. Recognizing the emotional and personal toll of having an adolescent grappling with substance abuse is crucial for parents.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Substance abuse is a significant health problem among adolescents in Zimbabwe, with research indicating a rising trend in substance use and abuse (Chipunza, 2017). If left unaddressed, drug abuse can lead to fatalities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, violence, and trauma. The effects of drug abuse on parents of young people struggling with addiction are profound and multifaceted, and can even lead to premature death (Siegel, 2013). However, today's youth often

lack awareness of these effects, highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of the issue from various perspectives. Epworth is a high-density suburb located in Harare Province, Zimbabwe. The area is characterized by a high population density, limited resources, and a predominantly low-income population. The residents of Epworth face various social and economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and limited access to healthcare and education. The people of Epworth are predominantly Shona-speaking, with a strong cultural heritage. However, the area is also home to diverse ethnic groups, reflecting Zimbabwe's multicultural landscape. The community is known for its resilience and resourcefulness, with many residents engaged in informal trade and entrepreneurship to make ends meet. This study aims to examine the effects of drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe, particularly in Epworth Ward 3, where the problem is exacerbated by limited resources and support services. Organizations that will benefit from this project include, The Zimbabwe National Council on Substance Abuse (ZNSA), The Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) - The Epworth Community Development Trust (ECDDT) and Local healthcare providers and support groups. These organizations will benefit from the research findings, which will inform the development of targeted interventions, support services, and policy frameworks addressing drug abuse among youth and its effects on parents.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to examine effects of drug abuse parents on in Zimbabwe. Using case of Epworth ward 3.

1.4. Research objectives

- i) To examine how drug abuse by youth affects the health of their parents.
- ii) To examine how drug abuse by youth affects the relationship between parents and adolescents on drug misuse.
- iii) To examine how parents are affected financially by adolescents who abuse drugs.

1.5 Research questions

- i) How youth drug abuse affects their parent's health?
- ii) How are parents affected by substance abuse of their adolescents on the relationship between parents and adolescents?
- ii) How does drug abuse by adolescents affect parents financially?

1.6 Assumptions

- i) Parents' health may be negatively affected by the drug use of their adolescent children due to stress, worry, and potential conflicts arising from the situation.
- ii) The relationship between parents and adolescents may be strained or disrupted by the adolescent's drug abuse, leading to communication breakdowns, trust issues, and conflicts related to drug misuse.
- iii) Parents may face financial burdens as a result of their adolescent children's drug abuse, including expenses for treatment, legal fees, and potential loss of income due to time spent addressing the issue.

1.7 Significance of the study

Adolescent substance abuse is a significant public health concern that poses various negative consequences for individuals, families, and society as a whole. Parents of adolescents who engage in substance abuse face numerous challenges that affect their emotional well-being, family dynamics, and parental responsibilities (Brook et al 2004). The study's outcomes will offer vital support to researchers, families grappling with youth drug abuse, and the Epworth Ward 3 community, shedding light on the effects of youth drug abuse on parents. It will aid the Ministry of Health in devising measures to alleviate these burdens while assisting the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in enhancing legislation to address the issue effectively. The recommendations provided in Chapter 5 will serve as a roadmap for the government and researchers in tackling the repercussions of youth drug abuse on parents.

1.8 Limitations of the study

One of the main hurdles in this study is the veil of secrecy shrouding drug abuse, particularly due to its sensitive nature among individuals. This secrecy often leads to reluctance to share vital information, especially for parents of drug-abusing youth. To address this, stringent measures were put in place to ensure confidentiality, yet some respondents still hesitated to disclose fully, fearing potential repercussions or legal consequences. Consequently, there were instances where questionnaires and interviews yielded incomplete or skewed data, impeding a comprehensive understanding of the issue. However, employing a mix of research methods helped alleviate these challenges to some extent, enhancing the reliability of the findings concerning the effects of youth drug abuse on parents.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study is centered on the effects of drug abuse among youth in Epworth Ward 3, particularly in the Domboramwari section, which is known for its high prevalence of substance abuse. By focusing on this community, the research aims to highlight the challenges faced by parents and families of drug-abusing youth, shedding light on the specific effects within this context. When considering the socioeconomic factors intertwined with youth drug abuse in Epworth Ward 3, Domboramwari section, it's crucial to understand how these issues affect parents directly. High unemployment rates and low household incomes can place immense financial strain on parents, making it challenging to afford the necessary resources for their children's well-being, including education, healthcare, and recreational activities. This economic instability may exacerbate feelings of helplessness and frustration among parents, as they struggle to provide for their families while grappling with the emotional toll of their children's substance abuse. Moreover, limited access to quality education and recreational facilities in the community can heighten parents' concerns about their children's future prospects. Without adequate educational opportunities or positive outlets for their energy and creativity, youth may be more susceptible to peer pressure and involvement in substance abuse. This reality compounds the stress and anxiety

experienced by parents, who may feel powerless to protect their children from the negative influences prevalent in their environment. Additionally, the lack of sufficient healthcare facilities and mental health resources in the community further complicates the situation for parents of drug-abusing youth. They may encounter significant obstacles in accessing affordable and culturally sensitive healthcare services for their children, including treatment and support for substance abuse issues. The stigma and discrimination associated with drug addiction may also isolate parents, preventing them from seeking assistance and connecting with others who understand their struggles.

1.10 Definition of key terms

i) According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (2020) Abuse refers to the habitual misuse of drugs, including both illegal substances and prescription medications, leading to negative consequences on physical health, mental well-being, and social relationships.

ii) World Health Organization, (2023) Youth refers to individuals in the age range of adolescence, generally between the ages of 12 and 18, although definitions may vary slightly depending on cultural and legal contexts.

iii) Merriam-Webster, (2024) defines parents as biological or legal guardians of a child or youth, responsible for their upbringing, care, and well-being.

vi) Effects refers to the outcomes or consequences resulting from a particular action or event (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). In this context, it refers to the impacts of drug abuse by youth on their parents.

1.11 Chapter outline

Chapter One

This section initiates a research investigation into the effects of adolescent substance abuse on parents in Epworth Ward 3. The study begins by offering insight into the context of the research, presenting a well-defined problem statement, study objectives, and research questions. It then highlights the importance of the study and discusses the methodology employed. The research also acknowledges both the boundaries and constraints faced. Additionally, it clarifies key terms through the explanation of keywords.

Chapter Two

This section aims to emphasize the effects of youth drug or substance abuse on parents. It stresses the need for research that allows parents to share their effects on caring for their children struggling with addiction. This research can provide insights into how adolescent substance abuse affects parents and help in developing effective support mechanisms. The subsequent section will delve into existing literature and offer a theoretical perspective on this topic.

Chapter Three

Chapter three concentrates on the methodologies employed to gather crucial data concerning the effects of adolescent substance abuse on parents and outlines the research's work plan. The chapter delves into the research paradigm, design, population sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four

This chapter outlines information gathered from participants regarding substance abuse, obtained through questionnaires and interviews. It commences by detailing the characteristics of the respondents, then proceeds to discuss the study's discoveries concerning the impact of adolescent drug abuse on parents. Visual aids such as tables and pie charts will facilitate the analysis.

Chapter Five

This chapter aims to provide an in-depth examination of the analysis conducted in Chapter four. It delves into the outcomes derived from the preceding chapter, drawing conclusions and offering recommendations based on the identified issues and the study's findings. These recommendations are tailored for both parents and institutions, aligning with the observed problem and the study's results.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature on the effects of youth drug abuse on parents, specifically within the context of Epworth Ward 3. In the initial stages of this research, an extensive review of the literature was conducted, drawing from academic sources such as journals and books. The literature review, as outlined by Goddard (2004), involves compiling relevant resources that directly address the research problem. This chapter covers essential aspects including the health, relationship, and psychological impacts experienced by parents due to their children's drug abuse. Additionally, it presents a theoretical framework and concludes with a summary of the chapter's key insights into the effects of youth drug abuse on parents.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The present study is underpinned by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1996), which offers valuable insights into human behavior. According to this theory, individuals' actions are not solely determined by their internal thoughts and behaviors but are also influenced by external factors and social interactions. Bandura posits that parents' responses to their children's substance abuse are shaped by their cognitive processes, including their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding drug use. For instance, parents who view drug abuse as a personal failure may grapple with feelings of guilt or shame.

Additionally, environmental influences play a crucial role in shaping parental reactions to their children's substance abuse. Factors such as community norms, social support systems, and access to resources can significantly affect how parents navigate this challenging situation. Furthermore, Bandura's theory suggests that behavioral responses are intertwined with cognitive processes and environmental factors. Parents may respond to their children's substance abuse by seeking support from peer groups, participating in counseling or therapy sessions, or

implementing disciplinary measures. Moreover, Bandura emphasizes the significance of self-regulation in behavior. Parents may need to regulate their emotional reactions and employ coping mechanisms to effectively address the stress and difficulties associated with their children's substance abuse.

In summary, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how parents' cognitive processes, environmental influences, and behavioral responses interact to shape their bears and reactions to their children's substance abuse.

2.3 Health effects of drug abuse on parents

Youth engaging in substance abuse can heighten the stress and anxiety levels that affect their parents, as they are often preoccupied with concerns regarding their child's well-being (Harold & Sellers, 2018). Parents of adolescents involved in drug abuse frequently encounter sleep disturbances and insomnia, attributed to worries about their child's safety and prospects (Cornelius et al., 2017). Financial strain is a common repercussion for parents of substance-abusing youth, as they may find themselves responsible for covering expenses related to treatment, legal matters, or damages stemming from their child's actions (Shim et al., 2019).

The stigma attached to having a child involved in substance abuse can result in social isolation and psychological distress for parents (Lander et al., 2018). Family relationships can also suffer strain due to youth drug abuse, leading to conflicts, breakdowns in communication, and feelings of guilt or shame among parents (Beydoun et al., 2017). Additionally, parents of adolescents with substance abuse issues face an increased risk of developing depression and other mental health challenges due to the persistent stress and emotional toll of grappling with their child's addiction (Wagner et al., 2017).

2.3.1 Parents and Depression

Drug abuse by youth have effects on parents, including depression (Siegel, 2013). Research has shown that parents of adolescents struggling with substance use disorders experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than parents of adolescents without substance use issues (Hall et al., 2019). A study conducted in Zimbabwe found that parents of youth with drug use

disorders reported higher levels of depressive symptoms, including feelings of hopelessness and despair (Mambanda, 2017). Depression in parents can have long-term consequences, including, reduced ability to cope with stress, decreased parenting capacity and increased risk of mental health problems (Wang et al., 2020)

2.3.2 Parents and Guilt

Drug abuse by youth have effects on parents, including feelings of guilt (Siegel, 2013). Parents of adolescents struggling with substance use disorders experience higher levels of guilt, self-blame, and shame (Hall et al., 2019). A study conducted in Zimbabwe found that parents of youth with drug use disorders reported feelings of guilt and responsibility for their child's behavior (Mambanda, 2017). Parents may experience guilt due to, feelings of failure as a parent, perceived lack of control over their child's behavior, and belief that they should have prevented the drug abuse (Liu et al., 2019). Guilt can have long-term consequences, including, decreased self-esteem and self-worth (Wang et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Parents and Anxiety

Drug abuse by youth have effects on parents, including anxiety (Siegel, 2013). Parents of adolescents struggling with substance use disorders experience higher levels of anxiety, worry, and fear (Hall et al., 2019). A study conducted in Zimbabwe found that parents of youth with drug use disorders reported high levels of anxiety and stress related to their child's behavior (Mambanda, 2017). Parents may experience anxiety due to, fear of their child's safety and well-being, and concerns about the effects of drug abuse on their child's future (Bjarnason et al., 2016). Anxiety can have long-term consequences, including, an increased risk of mental health problems and, a decreased ability to cope with stress (Huang et al., 2019).

Although the literature reviewed above includes numerous studies regarding how drug abuse by youth affects health of their parents. There is a lack of studies to specifically examine the health effects on parents such as immune system functioning, cardiovascular health and mental diagnoses. Therefore to address this gap the researcher suggest that conducting longitudinal studies to examine health effects over time, cognitive functioning, social connection and

nutrition and eating habits. Developing and testing stress management interventions for parents could provide valuable insights and support for this population, ultimately informing the development of targeted interventions and support services to mitigate health effects of drug abuse on parents.

2.4 Relationships effects of drug abuse on parents

The effects of youth drug abuse on parent-child relationships is profound, notably leading to a breakdown of trust. Parents often feel betrayed and deceived by their children's actions, resulting in a significant erosion of trust (Fisher et al., 2018). Substance abuse also erects communication barriers within families, with youth becoming less inclined to share their thoughts and experiences with parents, thereby straining relationships (Van Ryzin et al., 2012). Moreover, drug abuse frequently fuels conflicts within families. Parents may intervene or impose consequences on their child's behavior, sparking heightened tension and discord (Chassin et al., 2013). Many parents also bear significant emotional distress due to their child's substance abuse, grappling with feelings of guilt, shame, and helplessness (Kelly et al., 2011). Financial strain is yet another effects of youth drug misuse. Families often face economic burdens as resources are redirected toward addressing the fallout of the child's substance use, including treatment costs and legal expenses (Hser et al., 2015).

2.4.1 Parents and absence of trust

Drug abuse by youth lead to a breakdown of trust between them and their parents (Hawkins et al., 2017). The lying, secrecy, and deception often associated with drug use can damage the parent-child relationship, eroding trust and communication (Kaufman et al., 2014). A study conducted in Zimbabwe found that parents of youth with drug use disorders reported feeling betrayed and mistrustful of their child (Mambanda, 2017). The absence of trust can lead to increased conflict and arguing, decreased parental involvement and support (Liu et al., 2019).

2.4.2 Parents and deterioration of bonds

Drug abuse by youth lead to a deterioration of bonds between them and their parents (Hawkins et al., 2017). This deterioration can manifest in various ways, including emotional distancing (Kaufman et al., 2014) - Decreased quality time together (Bjarnason et al., 2016). According to Hawkins et al. (2017), the substance use can create a rift in the parent-child relationship, leading to a breakdown in communication and trust. Kaufman et al. (2014) also note that drug abuse can lead to emotional distancing, making it difficult for parents to connect with their child. Bjarnason et al. (2016) found that drug abuse can also lead to decreased quality time together, as the youth may prioritize drug use over spending time with family. Liu et al. (2019) also note that conflict and arguing can increase, further straining the relationship.

2.4.3 Parents and Loss of Familiarity

Drug abuse by youth lead to a loss of familiarity between them and their parents (Hawkins et al., 2017). This can manifest in various ways, including, unrecognizable behavior, drug abuse can lead to changes in behavior, making the youth unrecognizable to their parents, distance in relationships. Drug abuse can create distance in relationships, making parents feel like they no longer know their child (Bjarnason et al., 2016). Drug abuse can lead to a lack of shared experiences and memories, further straining the relationship (Mambanda, 2017). Feeling like a stranger also associated with parents they may feel like a stranger in their own home, no longer familiar with their child's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors (Siegel, 2013).

The research examined the individual effects of youth drug abuse on parents, there is a need to explore the relationships effects including the impact on parent child, parent conflict, communication, changes in family dynamics and cohesion. To address this gap the researcher suggest that studies could examine the impact of youth drug abuse on parent child attachment and bonding, the effects on parental conflict resolution strategies and informing the support services to mitigate and promote health relationships.

2.5 Financial strain on parents

The financial toll on parents of youths engaged in drug abuse is considerable, particularly in terms of treatment costs. Expenses for therapy sessions, rehabilitation programs, and medical

interventions can weigh heavily on parents (McCollister et al., 2010). Additionally, legal matters related to drug abuse, such as fines, legal representation, and court fees, further exacerbate the financial strain on parents (Caulkins et al., 2012).

The effects extend to loss of income for parents who may face absenteeism from work or need to prioritize caring for their child struggling with substance abuse (Pacula et al., 2014). Property damage resulting from drug abuse, including theft or vandalism, adds to the financial burden through repair or replacement costs (French et al., 2011). Moreover, substance abuse by youth can disrupt the family budget as parents allocate more funds toward immediate needs related to addiction, leaving fewer resources for other family expenses (Zarkin et al., 2004).

The effects of youth drug abuse resonate beyond the users themselves, affecting parents and the immediate community. Witnessing alarming behavior among children or relatives under the influence of drugs can cause distress for parents and neighbors. This exposure may inadvertently normalize drug use for younger individuals, potentially perpetuating a cycle of substance abuse within families. This study underscores the importance of collective efforts in addressing the impact of youth drug abuse on parents and society as a whole.

2.5.1 Parents and Stealing

Youth steal money or valuables from parents to support their drug. Parents may experience financial insecurity and debt due to stolen funds or sold belongings (Bjarnason et al., 2016). Stealing can lead to emotional distress, feelings of betrayal, and strained relationships. Parents may feel helpless and angry due to the stealing and financial strain. Financial strain can affect parents' ability to meet their own financial needs and obligations (Siegel, 2013). Stealing can be a significant contributor to financial strain, causing parents to feel drained and insecure (Hawkins et al., 2017).

Although the literature above reviewed numerous studies regarding how youth drug abuse affects parents financial. There is limited information into the financial strain caused by youth drug abuse including its prevalence, financial burden, effects on family financial security, and effects on parental employment. Therefore survey and interviews and financial analysis could gather data, while interventions like financial counselling and support can mitigate effects. Therefore it

can inform targeted support services to promote financial stability and security for affected parents.

2.6 Chapter summary

In summary, the abuse of drugs by youth encompasses multifaceted effects on parents. Firstly, the strain on relationships is profound, as trust is eroded, communication breaks down, and emotional bonds. Secondly, the financial burden weighs heavily, with expenses related to treatment, legal issues, and lost opportunities mounting over time. Lastly, the toll on parental health is undeniable, as stress, anxiety, and worry take a toll on physical and mental well-being. Addressing these interconnected issues requires comprehensive support systems, education, and access to resources to mitigate the devastating effects of youth drug abuse on parents and families as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology of studying the effects of youth drug abuse on parents involves a structured, theoretical examination of the methods utilized in understanding this issue. It encompasses analyzing the set of methods and principles associated with understanding the effects of drug abuse among young people on their parents. This examination typically includes exploring concepts such as the paradigm of drug abuse, theoretical frameworks used in studying the issue, stages of addiction, and quantitative or qualitative techniques employed in research. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to outline the research plan for studying the effects of youth drug abuse on parents. This chapter discusses the research approach, design, target population (parents of drug-abusing youth), sample size, sampling method, research tools (such as surveys or interviews), data collection procedures, analysis techniques, validity and reliability of findings, ethical considerations, and concludes with a summary of key findings and implications for parents affected by youth drug abuse.

3.2 Research Approach

In studying the repercussions of youth drug abuse on parents, this research embraced a qualitative approach. As described by Creswell (2003), the quantitative approach is typically employed for making affirmative statements or raising awareness, such as pinpointing causes and consequences, narrowing down specific variables, and formulating hypotheses and inquiries.

It entails utilizing measurements, observations, and tests to gather numerical data, often through methods like research surveys. However, in this study, the focus shifts to exploring the effects of drug abuse by youths in Epworth on their parents. The researcher opted for this research paradigm to collect firsthand accounts from participants, aiming to formulate comprehensive conclusions and recommendations tailored to the study's context.

3.3 Research Design

In the context of studying the effects of youth drug abuse on parents, Smith (2007) defined research design as the strategic framework used to gather evidence and address research inquiries. Parahoo (1997) further elaborated that research design is the blueprint outlining how, when, and where data are to be collected and analyzed. It serves as a roadmap in both exploratory and empirical studies, enabling researchers to collect, summarize, present, and comprehend information for clarification purposes. Additionally, research design allows researchers to document, analyze, and report on existing or past situations. In this particular study, the researcher employed questionnaires and interviews to gather statistical information. This design facilitated the creation of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling the calculation of correlations among variables pertinent to the effects of youth drug abuse on parents.

3.3 Target Population

In the context of studying the effects of youth drug abuse on parents, Burns and Grove (1997) define the target population as the entire group of respondents who meet specific criteria. Similarly, Eldman (2002) describes it as all the individuals associated with a real or hypothetical group, events, or objects that a researcher aims to examine in the research study. For this particular study, the target population comprised the residents living in Epworth Ward 3 mainly parents of adolescents who misuse drugs.

3.5 Sample

A sample is a well-defined as a collection of objects or single entities known to have similar characteristics or traits that are of interest to the researcher (Cruz 2019). In research, a population must be well defined and its characteristics examined so that it can studied in a specific manner (Dean 2021). More importantly, when using qualitative research, the researcher must make sure the population is well defined as it informs the sample that is used to collect data. In this particular instance, the research population is the entirety of all people in Epworth Ward 3.

3.5.1 Sample Sizes

According to Henry (1990) Sample size referred to the number of participants or observations included in a study. A sufficient sample size was crucial to ensure reliable and generalizable results. A larger sample provided greater precision and statically power, allowing researcher to detect significant differences and relationships. However the research used a sample of 40 participants because increasing sample size also increase costs. A well planned sample size helped to ensure validity and reliability to research findings Rosenthal (1991).

3.6 Sampling techniques

As outlined by Crouch and Houseden (2001), sampling involves selecting a subset from a larger group, with the assumption that this subset can accurately represent the entire population. In this particular study, a non-probability sampling method was utilized. This method, although not fully representative as it excludes certain individuals, was chosen for its cost-effectiveness, ease, and speed in selecting units for inclusion in the sample.

Within the non-probability sampling approach, the researcher employed judgmental or purposive sampling. This method involves selecting elements believed to be representative of the population. Specifically, in selecting subjects from Epworth health workers, the researcher targeted senior management, considering them to possess the necessary knowledge to provide insightful answers regarding the effects of youth drug abuse on parents.

3.7 Research instruments

When exploring the effects of youth drug abuse on parents, it's essential to consider the tools used to gather data. Research instruments, such as questionnaires and interviews, play a crucial role in acquiring information from those directly affected by the issue (Seaman, 1991). Coolican (2004) describes research instruments as testing schemes designed to measure specific occurrences, including questionnaires, interviews, or observation guidelines. In this study, questionnaires and interviews were employed as research instruments to collect firsthand insights from parents affected by youth drug abuse.

3.7.1 Survey

The researcher employed questionnaires as a primary means of gathering information from respondents. A questionnaire is a method of data collection where individuals are presented with the same set of questions in a predetermined sequence. White (2000) defines a questionnaire as a series of questions, each offering a range of alternative answers for respondents to choose from. Specifically tailored questionnaires were designed to align with the research objectives and suit the characteristics of the respondents.

The researcher utilized self-administered questionnaires for local parents of youth who use drugs. To ensure privacy, a drop-and-pick technique was employed, where participants were informed about the collection day, and the questionnaires were retrieved two days later without revealing any personal information. For households, self-administered interview questionnaires were utilized, wherein the researcher explained the concept briefly before assisting participants in completing the questionnaires.

The questionnaires featured both open and closed-ended items. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide unrestricted responses, while closed-ended questions offered predetermined answer options. To enhance response rates, respondents were assured of confidentiality, and they were informed that the research served academic purposes.

Structured into three sections, the questionnaires covered the health, financial strain, and relationship effects of drug abuse. Closed-ended questions, which provided structured answer choices, facilitated a quicker response process, ensuring relevance to respondents' knowledge and experiences.

3.7.2 Key Informative Interviews

As described by Moser and Kalton (1990), interviews serve as deliberate conversations between the interviewer and interviewee, initiated to gather data relevant to the research. Interviewing is essential for understanding the perspectives of the interviewees and extracting meaningful insights from their expressions. In this study, the researcher utilized structured interviews to gather information from parents and healthcare professionals. Merriam (2004) asserts that structured interviews employ a broad research topic to outline a set of inquiries guiding the discussion. The researcher opted for structured interviews as they facilitate the collection of precise data regarding respondents' attitudes, emotions, and qualities. By employing a comprehensive research theme to formulate questions, the structured interviews remained relevant to the investigation at hand.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

In this study, data collection involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. Before data collection, the researcher obtained authorization from the Bindura University of Science Education. Additionally, authorization stamps were acquired from the Epworth City Council. Questionnaires were distributed to participants, allowing them a week before the designated return date. The collected data was stored in hard copies for subsequent analysis. Tables were utilized to present the findings obtained from both the questionnaires and interviews.

3.9 Validity

Validity, as Creswell (2013) outlines, involves accurately measuring the intended aspect in this case, the effects of drug abuse on parents. Pilot testing could be utilized to assess the validity of the study's methods in capturing the true effects experienced by parents. Insuring validity is crucial, as it directly impacts the accuracy of the findings Bryman (2016). To ensure validity researcher used rigorous methods including clear definitions and blinded data collection.

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability, as noted by Kumar (2012), is essential for producing consistent and stable results. This is particularly important when examining the effects of drug abuse on parents, as it ensures that the findings accurately represent the effects of a broader population of parents dealing with youth substance abuse. Flowell's (2013) emphasis on collecting and analyzing information to assess the accuracy of instruments aligns with the need to thoroughly evaluate how well the research methods capture the effects of youth drug abuse on parents. This process may involve verifying data through the evaluation of available documents or seeking input from relevant professionals, such as counselors or support groups for parents of substance-abusing youth.

3.10 Data Presentation

The participants' responses underwent content qualitative analysis, as described by Jackson (2011), which involves scrutinizing written, verbal, or visual communication to gain historical or cultural insights over time. Data presentation was crucial for communicating research findings. The research used tables, charts, graphs to visualize data. Ensuring visuals were clear, concise and easy to understand documenting data sources and methods maintained transparency and credibility, making research findings accessible and engaging for various audience Knight (2019).

3.10.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis, as defined by Veyard (1984), involves inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data to uncover valuable insights that inform conclusions and support decision-making. In the study, data were presented through tables, pie charts, and graphs, offering a clear and concise representation of the findings. Furthermore, Howell (2013) emphasizes that data analysis brings order, structure, and meaning to the collected data. In this research, thematic analysis, as defined by Mesly (2015), was employed, focusing on identifying and reporting the frequency of concepts, words, or behaviors within the data. This approach allowed for a systematic exploration of themes and patterns emerging from the participants' responses, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the study's subject matter.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The Epworth Local Board provided the researcher permission to begin carrying out the research. He informed relevant officials in the suburb including ward Councilor about the study's objectives. The researcher obtained data while adhering to ethical guidelines. Ethical considerations are paramount in research, as highlighted by Veyard (1994), who emphasizes the importance of ensuring participants' well-being and respecting their dignity. In this study, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent were prioritized. Confidentiality, as described by Lewis and Sheppard (2006), involves safeguarding personal information to maintain trust between the researcher and the participants. The researcher assured respondents of confidentiality throughout the study, recognizing its role in fostering trust and facilitating open communication.

3.11.1 Informed consent

Informed consent, as outlined by Jackson (2011), involves participants' voluntary agreement to participate in research while upholding their dignity. The study ensured that participants had the autonomy to decide whether to participate, as emphasized by Howell (2013), who highlights the importance of providing sufficient information for informed decision-making.

3.11.2 Confidentiality

Privacy, as defined by Flaherty (1989), pertains to individuals' ability to control access to their personal information. Respecting privacy boundaries is crucial, as noted by Kirsty (2012), as it allows individuals to maintain their autonomy. Confidentiality was stressed interviews and discussions, which was significant because it allowed respondents the confidence to express their ideas. The researcher upheld privacy standards to respect participants' autonomy and ensure their comfort and security throughout the research process.

3.11.3 Voluntary Participation

According to Silverman (2013), research volunteers must participate voluntarily and without compulsion. The researcher notified that the research participants had the freedom to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. This was important because it ensured that respondents participate voluntarily without being coerced by the researcher.

3.11.4 Avoidance of harm

Researchers have a legal and moral responsibility to follow ethical considerations, the most important of which is the minimization of harm. This means that if there is any possibility to distress, procedures must be in place to prevent it from occurring and if it does occur, it must be dealt with quickly and effectively Curtis (2011). According to Silverman (2013), research is required to be conducted in a way that minimize harm to social group. The research verified that the participant's interest were not harmed by their involvement by using pseudonyms.

3.12 Chapter summary

The chapter outlined various methods employed by the researcher to gather information aimed at and addressing the core objective of examining the effects of drug abuse or substance abuse by youths on parents in Zimbabwe, focusing on Epworth Ward 3 as a Case Study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the findings of the study. A thorough examination and analysis of the key conclusion will be drawn from the four interview transcripts. Numerous themes were found in the research. Consequently, these themes may be further classified into primary and secondary themes, which would present the effects of parents caring for teenagers abusing drugs.

4.2 Respondents Demographic Information

The demographic information about the research participants is provided in this section. Age, marital status, education level, and sex are the main factors considered. The demographic information provided by participants is important because it enables the researcher to see patterns within the individuals that correspond with their demographic traits.

4.2.1 Sex

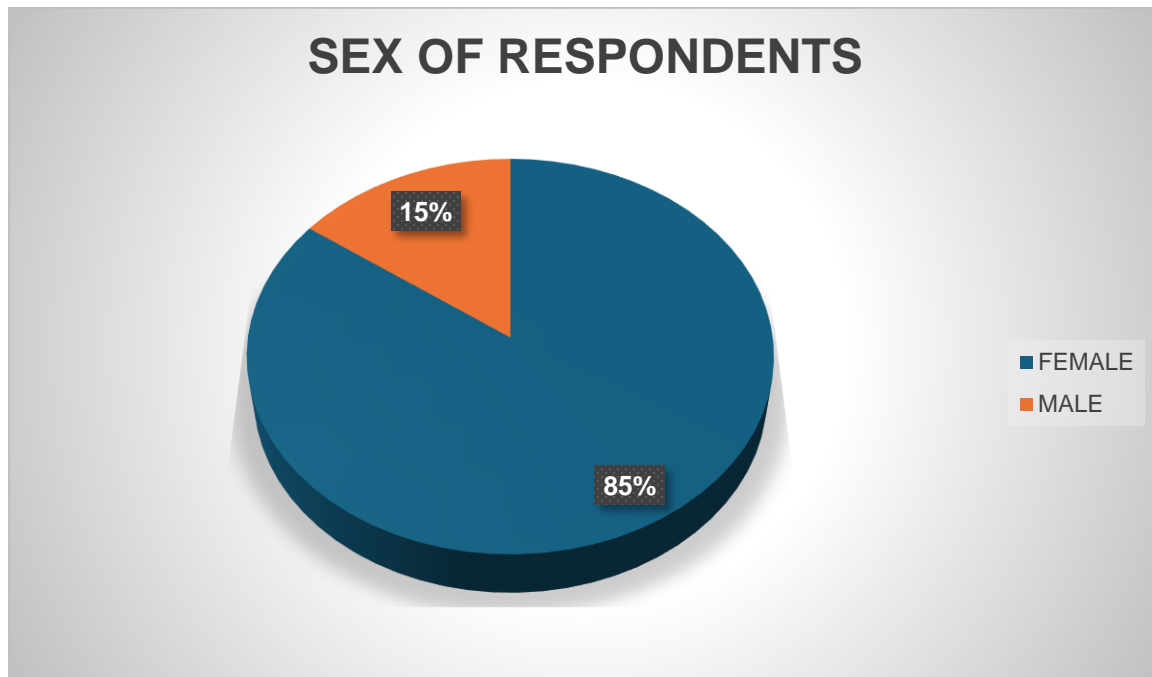


Figure 4.1 Sex (No. 40)

In Figure 4.1 the majority of the participants 34 (85%) were female, while the remaining 6 (15%) were male. This demonstrates that there were both males and women represented in the study.

4.2.2 Age

Table 4.1: Age (No 40)

Age Groups in years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-31	6	15
31-40	18	45
41-50	14	35
Above 50	2	5
Total	40	100

In Table 4.1 above shows that the majority of participants 18(45%) fell between the ages 31-40 years, and the least were 2 (5%) participants who were engaged from 50 and above age group. This suggests that they were likely to possess a better understanding of the research objectives and were inclined to provide useful responses during interviews and questionnaire submission.

4.2.3 Marital Status

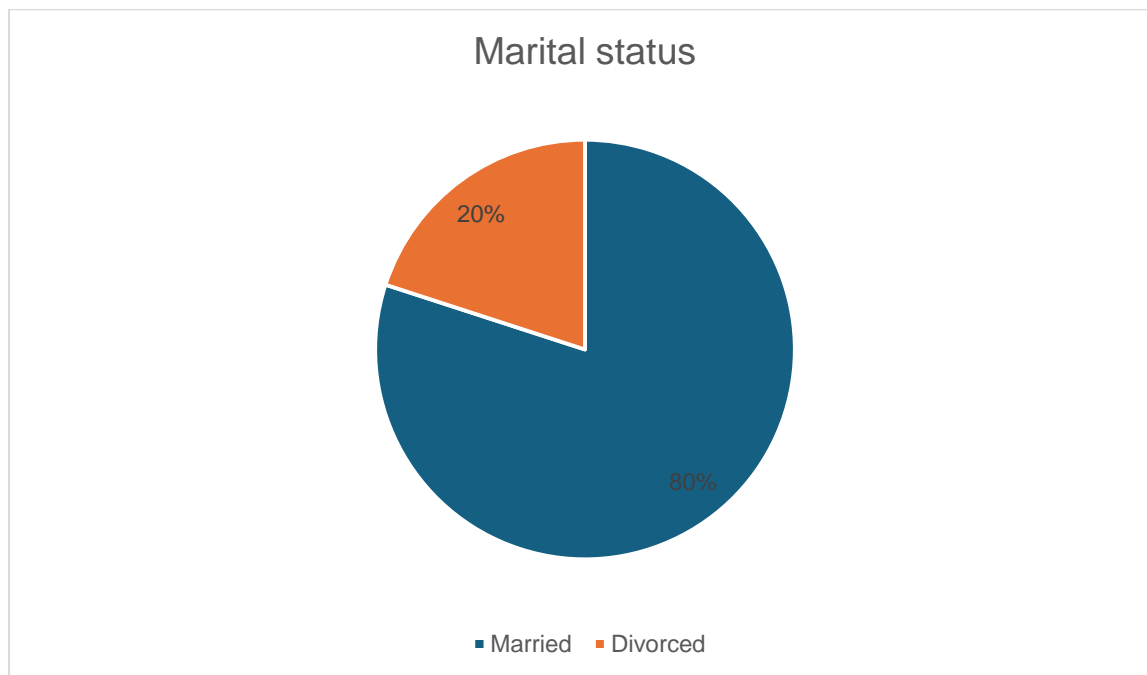


Figure 4.2 marital status (No 40)

In Figure 4.2 Marital status (40) shows that the majority of participants 32 (80%) were married, while the least participants 8 (20%) were divorced. This indicates the marital status distribution among the participants in a research study was presented.

4.2.4 Level of education

Table 4.2 Level of education (No. 40)

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	6	15

Secondary	14	35
Tertiary	20	50
Total	40	100

In Table 4.2 level of education (40), the majority of the parent's participants 20(50%) had attained tertiary education whilst the minority six (15%) participants had only completed secondary education.

4.3 Parents and Health Effects

The first objective of this study was to examine how drug abuse by youth affects the health of their parents. Health effects of parents of youth who abuse drugs were identified as the most 18(45%) health effects of parents with teens who misuse drugs. It suggests that parents perceive their health as being affected by their teenager's drug abuse. Parents were asked how the abuse of drugs by their teenagers affects their health. The following themes and subthemes emerged from the data and are presented using representative experts from parents' accounts to show analyses and interpretation.

Table 4.3: Parents and Health Effects. (No.40)

Statements	True	False
	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>
Witnessing drug abuse by youth leads to parental depression	26 65	14 35
Youth drug abuse cause their parents to feel guilty.	22 55	18 45
Anxiety is mainly associated with parents who parenting an adolescent abusing drugs.	32 80	8 20

4.3 Parent and Depression

On the Table above 4.3 indicate that most participants 26(65%) highlighted that the abuse of drugs by youth takes a major toll on the parent's own mental health. While only 14(35%) of participants denied this assertion. During an interview one of the participants averred that,

"We're in a constant state of distress and helplessness with our child's drug abuse. Despite reaching out to places like Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre and Tirivanhu's rehab, his addiction persists. It's a relentless battle that's taking a toll on us, leading to deep parental depression." (Interview).

The above responses indicate the profound health effects faced by parents grappling with their child's substance abuse. Despite earnest endeavors to seek aid from established rehabilitation centers such as Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre and Tirivanhu's rehab, the persistence of their child's drug use exacerbates feelings of depression and helplessness. This poignant struggle frequently culminates in parental depression, emphasizing the imperative for enhanced interventions and support mechanisms tailored to families navigating the complex terrain of youth substance abuse.

These findings are inconsistent with some of the existing literature (such as Reyes & Duchene, 2015), who found that parents may maintain a sense of hope (due to religious beliefs) even when having negative emotions. A study in the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment found that parents of children with drug problems were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Research in the Journal of Behavioral Health Services and research indicated that over 60% of parents dealing with a child's addiction reported high levels of stress, with many feeling helpless and hopeless.

4.3.2. Parents and guilt

Table 4.3 above shows that the majority of the participant's 22(55%) highlighted that parents feel guilt due to youth drug abuse. While only 18 (45%) disagree portraying that Parents may feel a sense of innocence due to their child's behavior. One of the participants averred that,

"In reflecting on my child's drug abuse, I grapple with feelings of guilt and shame. I constantly question where I went wrong in raising him. Seeing him expelled from school due to his drug use fills me with self-doubt and embarrassment. I can't help but feel like I've failed as a parent, He used to come by twice a week, but now, he's completely dropped out of school because of his drug problem. It's worrying because I know it spells trouble for his future. The stress of it all is just overwhelming." (Interview).

The above responses indicate that parents of children facing drug abuse are affected by emotional turmoil, marked by intense feelings of guilt, shame, and self-doubt. Witnessing their child's expulsion from school due to substance abuse worsens these negative emotions, fostering a pervasive sense of parental failure and inadequacy. Moreover, these responses underscore the profound effects of youth drug abuse on parents, manifested through emotional distress and concerns regarding their child's future. The discontinuation of school attendance due to substance misuse heightens parental anxieties, signaling a bleak outlook for the child's prospects. This heightened stress emphasizes the significant burden parents carry when dealing with their child's addiction, further underscoring the urgent requirement for effective support systems to tackle both the child's substance abuse and the emotional well-being of the parents.

These findings closely parallel those of Usher et al. (2007), who discovered that parents may struggle with feelings of guilt, blaming themselves for their adolescent children's substance use and viewing it as a failure in parenting. Their research also revealed that guilt can be magnified by forcing substance-abusing adolescents out of the home, and parents who lose their children may feel an intense sense of guilt. Research findings also corroborate the firsthand accounts provided by parents, illustrating the profound emotional toll. Studies have consistently shown that parents of adolescents struggling with substance abuse are associated with heightened levels of stress, guilt, and shame. The uncertainty surrounding their child's future, particularly regarding education and career prospects, exacerbates these negative emotions. For instance, research by Johnson et al. (2018) found that parents often report feeling overwhelmed by feelings of failure and inadequacy, questioning their parenting skills, and grappling with societal stigma associated with their child's drug use.

4.3.3 Parents and anxiety

Table 4.3 above also shows that the majority of participants 32(80) experienced anxiety due to youth drug abuse. While the least participants 8(20) denied that youth drugs cause anxiety. These extracts demonstrate this point:

"I'm terrified for his safety. Drug use puts his life at risk, and I fear he might overdose or face violence. I worry he could be kidnapped or engage in dangerous behavior like rape. It's overwhelming, and it leaves me feeling helpless." (Interview).

The above responses show the profound distress associated with parents grappling with the effects of youth drug abuse. Concerns about the safety and well-being of their child permeate their thoughts, with fears ranging from potential violence or overdose to risks of kidnapping or engagement in criminal behavior like rape. This pervasive anxiety not only destabilizes parental peace of mind but also engenders a profound sense of helplessness and fear for their safety. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support systems to address the multifaceted impact of youth drug abuse on parents' emotional and physical well-being.

These interviews align with the findings of Masombuka (2013), who similarly discovered that parents harbor concerns regarding their children's safety while they are out on the streets. Moreover, Masombuka noted that this apprehension sometimes leads to parental feelings of depression. These findings echo those of Swartbooi (2013), who also observed that parental worries about their adolescents' safety can culminate in depression. Swartbooi recounted a distressing incident wherein an adolescent was assaulted due to unpaid debts related to substance abuse. Additionally, there are instances where parents not only fret about their adolescents' safety but also feel unsafe themselves due to their children's habits, as well as concerns arising from community influences. Swartbooi's research similarly highlighted instances where parents felt unsafe due to their adolescents' social circles. Furthermore, Swartbooi emphasized that these safety concerns extend to the entire family. According to Rev's study (2005), teenage drug abuse can induce feelings of depression, stress, and anxiety among parents. Consequently, drug abuse emerges as a significant issue in Zimbabwe, necessitating substantial attention.

4.4 Parent and relationship effects

The second objective of this study was to examine how drug abuse by youth affects relationships with their parents. Parental distress from youth drug abuse is multifaceted, with three key themes

namely, absence of trust, bond deterioration, and loss of familiarity. These themes illuminate the profound effects on the family.

Table 4.4: Parents and Relationship effects (No 40)

Statements	True	False
	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>
Drug abuse by youth affects the trust between parents and their youth.	26 65	14 35
Youth drug abuse leads to deteriorations of bond between themselves and their parents.	34 85	6 15
Drug abuse among youth cause loss of Familiarity between youth on drugs and their parents	32 80	8 20

4.4.1. Parents and absence of trust

Table 4.4 above shows that the majority of the participants 26(65%) parents disrupt trust between parents and children, manifesting in fears of theft and deception while only 14(35) of participants denied this assertion. One of the participants was of the view that,

"They don't trust...him anymore because they know sometimes when you go with the place he just took the other people's stuff," while, the other one said, I can tell you now

we cannot leave our phones like this... because within ten minutes he can steal them and sell them to get money to sponsor his habit" (Interview)

The above responses show that the absence of trust was identified as the main effect of drug misuse by kids to their parents in Epworth Ward three. Participants shows that adolescents who use or abuse drugs tend to become untrustworthy, leading significantly parents to lose faith in them. The responses also suggest that one of the main effects of drug misuse by youth on parents is the erosion of trust. This is in line with Watt et al.'s study in 2014, these observations are true, as the family members lose trust, and the family unit disintegrates due to the adolescent's harmful conduct towards the other members and their parents. Additionally, per Velleman et al.'s research in 2010, parents lack confidence in their children's financial abilities because of their addictive tendencies. Adolescents who use or abuse drugs tend to become untrustworthy, leading significantly parents to lose faith in them. This behavior is mainly brought on by stealing, which results in parents and siblings needing to safeguard their belongings, including locking the home when they are not around. Consequently, when the adolescent is present, the family members become more cautious

4.4.2 Parents and deterioration of bonds

On Table 4.4 above indicate that the majority of the participants 34(85%) highlighted that youth drug abuse leads to deterioration of bonds between themselves and their parents, while 6(15%) of the participants disagreed with this assertion. Some extracts reveal this situation,

"My son's drug use is tearing our community apart. He accuses me of not caring when I set boundaries. Despite trying to talk, he mistreats others. His behavior has shifted, but I'm determined to reassure him and offer support." (Interview).

The above responses indicate that youth drug abuse strains familial and community relationships. Parents face accusations of indifference when setting boundaries, causing distress within their social networks. Despite attempts at communication, the afflicted youth mistreat others, altering their behavior. The responses also show that adolescents who use or abuse substances have troubled relationships with their parents. They have conflict-stricken relationships with their parents. Furthermore, the effects of such relationships negatively affect parental support. Parents would often find themselves mediating conflicts brought about by their child's behavior.

The effects of adolescent substance abuse on parent's relationships have been extensively studied in recent years. Swartbooi (2013) conducted research that revealed a clear correlation between adolescent substance abuse and unsatisfactory family dynamics. Parents often find themselves grappling with the disruptive behavior of their substance-abusing adolescent, necessitating significant adaptations in their lifestyle to accommodate the challenges posed.

Furthermore, this is also in line with Watt et al. (2014) findings, highlighting the profound negative consequences of substance abuse on familial and community relationships. Substance-abusing adolescents frequently engender tension within their communities, as their behavior not only affects their immediate family but also spills over into the broader social sphere. This tension can strain community cohesion and erode trust among neighbors.

4.4.3 Parents and loss of Familiarity

In Table 4.4 shows that most participants 32(80) agree that the abuse of drugs by youth cause loss of familiarity between themselves and their parents, while the minority participants 8(20%) disagree with this assertion. These extracts reveal this point:

"Last year, I discovered my child using drugs. It's been a drastic change. He's now defiant, neglects household responsibilities, and even told me, 'You're not my father anymore.' Our bond has deteriorated since he started using marijuana." (Interview).

The responses underscore the profound effects of youth drug abuse on parents'. Discovering their child's substance use triggers feelings of shock and disbelief, especially when the adolescent was previously obedient and responsible. The responses also reflect the abrupt shift in behavior, marked by defiance and disrespect, exacerbating parental distress and straining the parent-child relationship. It also shows that parents grapple with a sense of loss as they witness the transformation of their child into someone unrecognizable, leading to a breakdown in communication and connection within the family unit.

Parents are affected when their adolescent children use or abuse substances, as they witness a notable shift in their behavior. This change not only deviates from the child they once knew but also has adverse effects on the parent-child relationship. Similar to the findings by Usher et al. (2007), parents express longing for the person their child used to be before substance use, and some even endure the tragic loss of their child due to substance-related incidents. However, in

the current study, none of the parents experienced the loss of their substance-using child. Reyes (2015) supports these findings, highlighting how negative behavioral changes in adolescents affect parent-child dynamics. The effects of youth drug abuse on parents are profound and multifaceted, as evidenced by recent research. Discovering their child's substance use can be a traumatic experience for parents, particularly when the adolescent has previously exhibited obedience and responsibility (Smith et al., 2018). The sudden shift in behavior, characterized by defiance and disrespect, exacerbates parental distress and strains the parent-child relationship (Johnson & Garcia, 2019). This breakdown in communication and connection within the family unit can lead to feelings of loss and helplessness among parents, as they struggle to reconcile the image of their child with the reality of their substance abuse (Brown & Thompson, 2020).

Furthermore, the effects parents face extend beyond emotional turmoil to practical disruptions in daily life. Adolescents who abuse drugs often neglect household responsibilities and may even reject authority figures, leading to increased conflict and tension within the family (Jones & Martinez, 2017). This strains parental mental health and exacerbates feelings of inadequacy and guilt. In response to these effects, it is imperative to provide comprehensive support systems for parents navigating the complexities of youth drug abuse. Interventions should focus not only on addressing the substance use itself but also on equipping parents with coping strategies and resources to manage the emotional and practical challenges they face (Wilson & Clark, 2021). By fostering resilience and providing tailored support, we can empower parents to navigate the difficult journey of supporting their children through substance abuse recovery while also prioritizing their well-being.

4.5. Parents and Financial Strain

Youth drug abuse often leads to desperate measures, including stealing from parents. This introduction encapsulates the distressing reality that affects families as substance abuse drives adolescents to engage in criminal behavior against their parents.

Table 4.5 Parents and Financial Strain (No 40)

Statement	True	False
	<u>No</u> %	<u>No</u>

		<u>%</u>
Stealing is mostly associated by parents with child's who abuse drugs.	36 90	4 10
When children begin using drugs, they often become increasingly secretive and may resort to stealing from their parents to fund their habits	34 85	6 15

4.5.1. Stealing

Table 4.5 above shows that most participants 34 (85%) face financial difficulties through theft as a result of their adolescent children's drug use. While the minority 6 (25) of the participants denied this assertion. These extracts indicate during an interview by a male participant who said:

"I can't trust him alone at home; he plans to sell items for cigarettes and steals money for drugs. I've lost \$5,000 in bonds and smaller amounts due to his theft." (Interview).

The responses above highlight the pervasive effects of youth drug abuse on financial stability. Most parents facing theft concerns express an inability to trust their child unsupervised, fearing the potential theft of valuable household items to fund substance abuse habits. This not only erodes trust within the family unit but also leads to significant financial losses as adolescents resort to stealing money to support their addiction.

The effects of youth drug abuse on financial stability are profound and multifaceted. Research findings from various studies underscore the pervasive nature of these challenges and highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the complex interplay between substance abuse, familial trust, and financial security. Jones et al. (2019) elucidate the erosion of trust within

Families affected by youth drug abuse, as parents grapple with the inability to trust their child unsupervised due to concerns over theft. This breakdown in trust not only strains the parent-child

relationship but also contributes to heightened levels of stress and anxiety among parents (Brown et al., 2018). Furthermore, Smith and Garcia (2020) shed light on the significant financial losses incurred by parents due to adolescent theft driven by substance abuse. The theft of valuable household items and money to fund drug habits not only destabilizes family finances but also perpetuates the cycle of addiction. In response to these challenges, Wilson and Martinez (2021) propose targeted intervention strategies aimed at addressing the multifaceted impact of youth drug abuse on families. These interventions may include family therapy, financial counseling, and substance abuse treatment programs tailored to meet the unique needs of families affected by adolescent substance abuse and theft. By implementing comprehensive and holistic intervention approaches, it is possible to mitigate the detrimental effects of youth drug abuse on familial relationships and financial stability, ultimately fostering resilience and promoting positive outcomes for both adolescents and their families.

These findings also highlight the struggle and financial effects parents face due to their child's drug abuse. These studies indicate that adolescents who misuse drugs often resort to selling their belongings or stealing valuable items from family members, leading to financial strain on parents. Groenewald and Bhana's (2017) research further highlights that parents not only face economic challenges due to their children's theft but also incur expenses associated with addressing their children's substance abuse problems.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, data was gathered, presented, and analyzed using pie charts, and tables to illuminate the effects of youth drug abuse on parents. The research findings paint a stark picture of escalating drug abuse, notably affecting parents and their communities, evident in heightened health, relationships, and financial burdens to parents' lifestyle disruptions, and increased levels of violence. The subsequent chapter will synthesize these findings, draw conclusions about the profound effects parents face, and propose recommendations to address these issues. Moreover, areas for further research will be outlined to deepen understanding of the complexities surrounding parental experiences amidst youth drug abuse.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study aimed to investigate the impact of youth drug abuse on parents in Zimbabwe, focusing on Epworth Ward 3. Conclusions were derived from both primary and secondary data sources, guided by the study's objectives and field research findings. This chapter presents recommendations to address the identified challenges and suggests avenues for future research based on the study's findings.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Summary of the whole project

Chapter One served as an introduction to the research, outlining its background, significance, aims, research questions, and objectives. It also defined key terms and discussed the study's delimitations and limitations before concluding the chapter.

Chapter Two delved into the literature review, synthesizing insights from secondary data sources that have influenced the study. It examined previous research on the effects of youth drug abuse on parents, aiming to identify gaps in the existing literature and contribute valuable insights. The chapter also introduced the theoretical framework guiding the study, drawing from the Symbolic Interactionist perspective. This perspective emphasizes that knowledge is socially constructed through everyday interactions, which are then passed down through socialization processes to subsequent generations.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of the research was outlined, including details on the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and analysis methods. Ethical considerations in conducting the study were also addressed.

Chapter Four focused on presenting, analyzing, and discussing the research findings. Data was presented in textual form alongside visual aids such as tables, and pie charts to support the findings. The findings were organized into themes and subthemes aligning with the research objectives and questions.

In Chapter Five, the study concludes with a summary of its findings and the drawn conclusions. It also provides recommendations for action or programming based on the study's outcomes, as well as suggestions for future research directions.

5.2.2. Summary of research findings

The first objective of the study was to examine how youth drug abuse affects the health of parents. The research uncovered that many parents of drug users suffer from health complications such as brain damage, stress, depression, anxiety, and headaches. The high influx of drug users admitted to Epworth local clinic daily indicates a worrying trend. Residents have observed a surge in drug-induced mental health issues, as reported by the Epworth ZRP in August 2019. This situation poses a significant threat to the well-being of parents affected by their children's drug abuse.

The second objective of the study was to explore how youth drug abuse affects the relationship between parents and their children. The findings unveiled that drug addiction often drives young users to engage in illegal activities, such as theft, to sustain their addiction. This behavior disrupts their ability to fulfill responsibilities and maintain a healthy relationship with their parents. Moreover, involvement in criminal activities frequently leads to imprisonment, exacerbating family dynamics, trust erosion and potentially resulting in child-headed households. Additionally, research findings highlighted the loss of social connections, as almost half of the respondents reported losing a child they used to know or an acquaintance due to drug abuse. This

underscores the detrimental effects of youth drug abuse on parent-child relationships and social networks.

The third objective aimed to explore how youth drug abuse financially affects parents, encompassing direct costs like medical expenses for treatment and rehabilitation, as well as indirect costs such as lost wages due to addressing the consequences of drug abuse and theft. Additionally, it examines how theft, resulting from drug addiction, could further exacerbate financial burdens for parents, including potential legal fees and restitution payments.

5.3 Conclusion

The first research question was how youth drug abuse affects the health of their parents. The research concluded that a range of health consequences for parents, including heightened stress levels leading to cardiovascular issues, anxiety-related sleep disorders, and compromised immune systems. Moreover, the study highlighted the ripple effects of youth drug abuse on the broader community, with parents experiencing emotional distress and a heightened risk of depression. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3, emphasizing the importance of promoting good health and well-being for all, including parents grappling with the effects of substance abuse by youth within their families.

The second research question was how drug abuse by youth affects the relationships between parents and their children. The research concluded that Individuals ensnared by drug addiction often eschew conventional employment, turning to illicit activities to cope with the demands of their addiction. Consequently, this strains familial bonds and erodes trust between parents and their children. The research also concludes that the strained dynamics between drug-using youth and their parents exacerbate emotional distress and fracture familial cohesion. These relationship strains reverberate through communities, underscoring the urgent need to address the complex effects of youth drug abuse within family structures.

The third research question was how drug abuse by youth affects their parents financially. The research concludes that addictive substances often lead to a cycle of financial strain for parents, as individuals struggling with addiction prioritize drug acquisition over financial responsibilities. Consequently, parents bear the brunt of these financial burdens, facing increased expenses for

medical treatment, rehabilitation programs, and legal fees resulting from their children's involvement in illicit activities to sustain their addiction. This financial strain exacerbates stress and isolation among parents, compounding the challenges they face. Addressing the financial repercussions of youth drug abuse is crucial not only for the well-being of families but also for alleviating the broader societal effects and advancing progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 3's mandate of ensuring good health and well-being for all, including combating substance abuse by 2030.

5.4 Recommendations

- a. The study revealed that most parents are affected by the abuse of drugs by their teen's which results in stress, depressions and anxiety. It is recommended that the Ministry of Health and Child Care should offer treatments facilities that provide low-cost or free treatments. This accessibility guarantees that parents may easily get the treatment and resources they require to support their kids in their addiction recovery.
- b. The study revealed that the majority of parents are affected by financial strains due to youth drug addiction. It is recommended that governments must take a compassionate stance in light of the upsetting reality that parents often witness their children engaging in drug-related activities. Rather than treating parents' children as criminals, authorities should see them as human beings in need of assistance and support. This change in perspective can help reduce the financial and emotional strain that parents who are dealing with their children's drug abuse endure.
- c. The study showed that some parents are affected by youth drug abuse which affects their relationships with their children's. It is recommended that The Zimbabwe National Youth Council on Substance abuse can improve the efficacy of their outreach to parents by incorporating parents who have experienced the difficulties of juvenile drug misuse into their campaigns. This will help parents feel more connected to one another and more understanding.
- d. Future research endeavors should prioritize exploring ways to alleviate the effects of youth drug abuse on parents. By focusing on intervention and support strategies tailored specifically to parents, researchers can contribute to mitigating the relationship, financial, and psychological burdens by parents affected by youth drug abuse.

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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date: 21/04/24

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDER TAKE RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR
ORGANISATION/AREA

This serves to introduce the bearer MOSES PHIRAI, Student
Registration Number 8200695B who is a HET Peace and
Governance student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out
a research project in your area.

Your usual cooperation and assistance is therefore being sought.

Yours faithfully

D. Makwerere (Dr)
CHAIRPERSON - PEACE AND GOVERNANCE



APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

In depth interview guide

My name is Moses Phiri, a final year student at Bindura University of Science Education, studying for a Bachelor's degree in Peace and Governance. I'm currently carrying out a research project entitled, 'The effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs: Case study Epworth' Given this investigation, may I request you to be part of this study by answering these questions? This research will be confidential and it's for educational purposes only. The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs. Your view and contribution will be sincerely appreciated.

SECTION A

To analyze how youth drug abuse affects the health of their parents

- 1) Does Youth drug abuse increase stress for parents?
- 2) How does witnessing drug abuse by youth impact parental mental health?
- 3) What effect does concern for a child who abuses drugs have on parental health habits?
- 4) How does stigma contribute to parental experiences of social isolation?

SECTION B

To examine how youth drug abuse affects relationship with their parents

- 1) How does drug abuse by youth affects the trust between parents and their children?
- 2) What role does drug abuse among youth play in creating emotional distance between teenagers and their parents?
- 3) How does youth drug abuse contribute to strained communication between teenagers and their parents?
- 4) Do parents find out their child drug abuse after it has already started?

SECTION C

To examine how drug abuse by youth affects their parents financially

- 1) How often does youth drug abuse result in theft to fuel their addictions?
- 2) How aware do parents typically have regarding their child's stealing behavior stemming from drug abuse?
- 3) How does stealing to support drug abuse affect parents financially?
- 4) How much of the financial burden of youth drug abuse is attributed to costs associated with therapy?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Moses Phiri, a final year student at Bindura University of Science Education, studying for a **Bachelor's degree in Peace and Governance**. I'm currently carrying out a research project entitled, **'The effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs: Case study Epworth'** Given this investigation, may I request you to be part of this study by answering these questions? This research will be confidential and it's for educational purposes only. The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs. Your view and contribution will be sincerely appreciated.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

Female []

Male []

2. Age:

18-25	
25-35	
45-55	
Above 55	

3. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Primary level	
Secondary level	
Tertiary	
Diploma	
Degree	

4. Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Widowed	

SECTION B

1. Below are some health effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs.

Can you please indicate by ticking the most three health issues you encountered

Statements	True	False
1. Witnessing drug abuse by youth leads to parental depression.		
2. Parents of adolescents who abuse drugs may feel constant anxiety.		
3. Parents may feel a sense of helplessness towards their child's addiction, as they struggle to find ways to support and help them recover.		
4. Parents may feel ashamed and avoid socializing with peers, as their child's drug addiction can carry social stigma.		
4. The constant stress and worry can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion for parents, making it difficult for them to function normally in their daily lives.		

SECTION C

1. Provide your response in the approximate given space by ticking either True or False on the financial effects of drug abuse on parents of adolescents who abuse drugs

Statements	True	False
1. Drug addiction can be costly, putting a significant financial burden on parents who may have to pay for treatment.		
2. The financial strains that drug addiction can cause may also strain a parent-child relationship.		
3. When children begin using drugs, they often become increasingly secretive and may resort to stealing from their parents to fund their habits		
4. As drug addiction continues to escalate, children may become desperate for funds for their next fix, resorting to increasingly dishonest behavior such as stealing from their parents.		
5. Drug use can lead to financial strain on families, leaving children feeling desperate for money.		

SECTION: D

1. Provide your response in the approximately given space by ticking true or false on the relationship effects between adolescents who abuse drugs and their parents.

Statements	True	False
1. Drug abuse can strain relationships within the family, as parents may feel helpless towards their child's addiction.		
2. Dependence on drugs can lead parents to lose trust in their children.		
3. Children's drug abuse can cause parents to feel ashamed which can lead to a strain in their relationship.		
4. Parent-child relationships can become strained due to the effects of drug abuse on a child's behavior.		
5. Drug abuse by children can strain the relationship with their parents, leading to constant mistrust.		

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