



## Differential Association Theory: An Alternative Expansion For Youths Substance Abuse In Metropolitan Kano

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine the impacts of peer group influence in the spread of substance abuse among the youths in Kano metropolis by adopting the theoretical assumptions of Sutherland's Differential Association theory as a frame of analysis. It is obvious that the rate at which substance abuse is increasingly growing as a phenomenon in Kano- metropolis is both frightening and alarming as the menace is increasingly becoming a household problem despite its negative implication which subsequently predispose the youth into various criminal activities such as rape, assault and vandalism, traffic violation and most importantly their involvement into *Daba* and political thuggery. Using availability and snowball sampling techniques, the researcher sampled 350 respondents across various relevant stakeholders in the study area from whom data were generated and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study found that in line with Sutherland's assertion, peer group is an important factor that significantly encourages the spread of substance abuse among the youth in Kano metropolis as revelatory majority of the sampled respondents claimed to have learned substance abuse through their association with substance abusing peers. As such, the study recommends that parents, guardians and community members should monitor the movement and behavior of their children and the company they keep and as well ensure proper socialization of the youth so as to respect societal norms and live a more productive life.

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### 1.INTRODUCTION

The illegal use of drugs has been one of the oldest social problems in human society. The rate at which the menace is increasing in our society today is becoming alarming and frightening, as large proportions of youths in contemporary society are increasingly engaging in the act, which makes it to become one of the most disturbing social phenomena across the globe. Since the early time, herbs, leaves and seeds of plants have been used to heal and control diseases. The use of drugs in itself does not constitute any danger because drugs correctly

administered have been a blessing, rather the way and manner people especially youths in the study area are increasingly abusing and misusing drugs and other substances which jeopardized their potentialities, threatens their physical and mental capacities, disrupt societal moral values and make them prone to other deviant and criminal activities is what have become an issue of concern, hence the need for a systematic study. A drug may simply refer to any substance that could bring a change in the physiological function of a living organism through its chemical actions. According to Kester (1990as cited in Lawal, 2003), drug is defined as any foreign chemical which normal physiology leads to alteration of

thoughts, feeling, moods and actions. Similarly, Musa (ibid), defined drugs as any substance that causes a change in the human body. He believes that drugs can produce more than one response in living organism; these responses depend upon such factors as level of doses, age of the individual, tolerance level, past experience with the drugs, general health of the individual, interaction with other drugs and the route of administration. The Webster's new collegiate dictionary defines a drug "as any substance other than food which affects the structure or function of the body of any living organism."

According to Abdullahi (2003) the term drugs is a broad name that is not restricted to oral therapy (i.e. capsules and tablets) but includes marijuana, alcohol as well as traditional alcoholic drinks like *ogogoro*, *burukutu*, *fito*, and *pammi* (locally made alcohol in different parts of Nigeria). Nigerian youth make use of drugs just in the same way as this is done by youth in many other countries in the world. The population in Nigeria avails itself of drugs when the occasion warrants them just as the other populations in the world do.

In one of its official publications, National Agency for Food Administration and Control (NAFDAC, 2008) defined drug as any substance other than food which by its chemical nature affects the function of the living organism. From this perspective, the term drug may thus include any household product like agricultural and industrial chemicals, alcohols and spirits, tobacco, coffee, medicines of remedial value, narcotics and psychotropic substances like cocaine, valium, Librium, Marijuana or Cannabis sativa, etc (NAFDAC, 2008).

Drug abuse on the other hand can be defined in various ways, so there are as many definitions as there are people who cared to define the concept, depending upon one's sociological cultural, physiological and moral background (Lawal 2003), Lawal (2003) believed that the most commonly acceptable definition of drug abuse is the excessive and persistent self administration of a drug without recourse to the medically or culturally accepted pattern, or the use of drugs in a wrongful and harmful manner.

Drug is abused when it is used without prescription, contrary to recommended dose, or as a matter of habit rather than for cure. Kester (1990) as cited in Lawal (2003) opined that drug abuse is the use of drug when it is not medically necessary, when used against legal prohibition or when there is an excessive use of socially acceptable drugs. Garba (2005) in his own definition, defines drug abuse as the non-medical use of drugs that can alter mood and perception, produce and have the ability to make the user continue to want to use the drug in spite of health, social and physical impairments the drugs may cause to the user. The roles of the youths in societal development have been put at risk with their involvement in drug related activities which predispose them to arbitrary over dependence or misuse of drugs and other mind-altering substances, thereby jeopardizing society's future, destroying societal moral values, undermining sustainable human development and

subsequently exposing them into other criminal and deviant activities.

Although there is no single factor that can be pointed out as the sole cause of the involvement of youth into substance abuse in Kano Metropolis, yet many people are of the believe that certain factors are responsible. These include;- peer influence, curiosity and the youth's desire to experiment and test the drug, performance enhancement, personal or family problems, lack of adequate parental supervision, availability of the drug to mention but a few.

Drugs become problematic when their use results in negative drawbacks to the person who uses them or to the larger society. These drawbacks may either be physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic as a result of too much use of the substances, self prescription, using it for too long, taking it for wrong reasons or improper drug combination.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Substance abuse has been a problem facing almost all nations of the world in general, and in particular it has metamorphosed into one of the greatest and disturbing social problem that threatens the social, moral and economic structure of Kano Metropolis. The effect ranges from micro to macro levels; The person who abuses drugs and other substances posses certain abnormalities, such as; internal body disorder, change in physical appearance, drug dependence, mental disorder etc. However, in most instances these effects spread to other members of the society. For example, those that are close to drug abusers suffer a lot of consequences i.e. the deviant's immediate family members, close relatives, neighbors, school mates etc. In other words, substance abuse as a social problem does not only effect the person involved as the only victim, but rather a number of people do also fall victims, hence the societal concern.

Substances abuse is a problem that is causing serious concerns to individuals, governments and the general public all over the world, and the problem is more prevalent among youths whom in most cases are ignorant of the dangers inherent in the act. It affects the freedom, development and achievements of youths who are regarded as the world's most valuable asset, and the backbone of societal development. It is in line with the above, that Dawakin Tofa (2003:86) observed that "drug problem is a problem of the general society though victim may be individuals of groups' families, but the society at large stand to be the victim of the cumulative violence and the disaster of dependant and drug related offences."

Until recently, the problem of substance abuse was believed to be a deviant behavior that mostly affected male youths in Kano Metropolis. However, with the increasing involvement of the female youths into this life-destroying act at an alarming rate, the problem of substance abuse has today become prevalent among women in Kano Metropolis. The impact of drug abuse among the youths of Kano Metropolis in particular and Nigerian youths in general have been a hallmark of a moral bankruptcy, decadent and a bad generation; a loss of our societal values and ideals. The situation now appears to be such

that no one can claim ignorance of what is happening, thus it is not surprising when the former United Nation (UN) Secretary General Kofi Annan was once quoted as saying “drugs are tearing apart our societies, spawning crimes, spreading diseases such as aids and killing our youths and our future.”

Though, the involvement of youths in Kano Metropolis into the act of substance abuse can be regarded as the result of several reasons, some youths are believed to have started using drugs for curiosity, pleasure or social pressure, as it is evident in the way most of the youth regard some social gatherings like *Sallah* festivities, *Majalisi*, *Aikin Gayya*, football match and even wedding ceremonies as an avenue where they can freely abuse drugs and other mind altering substances. In this type of social gatherings the youths take various types of substances such as cigarettes, Indian hemp, solvent, cough syrups, etc in the name of expressing their happiness. There are also another categories of youths who got involved in substance abuse as a result of their desire to enhance their performance. This mostly consists of youth who are engaged in sports and some menial jobs like laborers, conductors, truck pushers, tailors and even some students who take drugs in order to stay awake and study over night. Other reasons include the availability of the drugs which makes it easier for the youths to get, poor parental control as well as the vulnerable personality of the youths which result from social, emotional and psychological problems.

Substance abuse in Kano metropolis constitutes a great danger and a serious social problem that is becoming a threat at both macro (societal) and micro (individual) level. At societal level, the menace is harmful as it destroys the fabrics of societal moral values, undermine the achievement of sustainable human development and generate crimes, in essence the negative consequence of drugs and substance abuse affect all sectors of society in all countries. While at the level of individual (i.e. drug abusers) the problem of drug and substances abuse can cause serious damage to their physical, psychological, social, and economic development. Their continued involvement in substance abuse may lead them into physical and psychological dependence, which will subsequently expose them to other criminal behaviors, as a number of explanations show that abuse of drugs and other dangerous substances is associated with several criminal offences in Kano metropolitan such as rape, gang warfare, assault, theft and vandalism, traffic violation, reckless driving which in many instances resulted in accidents, and most importantly their involvement into violent gang “*Daba*” and political thuggery.

In a study, Abdullahi and Haruna (1991) found out that continued use of drugs and other substances by the youths lead to addiction and mental illness. About 69% of those admitted into *Dawanau* rehabilitation center for mental illness were mentally ill because of drug abuse. Other health related effects of drug abuse particularly on abusers include health issues like; digestion problems, respiratory infections to potentially serious ones like amnesia, reasoning disorder, high blood pressure, damage

to body organs such as brain, heart, liver. Pancreases, lungs, kidney etc, and in some cases, decrease in sperm count and morbidity in males and high frequency of abnormal menstrual cycles in woman are noticed.

It is therefore on the basis of these and many other problems that are associated with the involvement of youths into substance abuse which is becoming almost a household problem in Kano metropolis that a sociological study aimed at exploring one important factors that predispose these youth into this life threatening behavior by adopting Sutherland’s theoretical postulation as a guide.

### 3. DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

The differential association theory was developed by Sutherland (1939), a University of Chicago trained sociologist who wanted to develop a general theory of crime in the 1930s. He proposed the theory as an explanation of individual criminal behavior and suggested that the theory is compatible with what he termed “differential social organization” as a cause of differences in group or societal crime rates. Thus he observed that crime and deviance (like substance abuse) occur more frequently in areas lacking social organization and effective social control. He proposed that criminal and deviant behavior like drug and substance abuse is learned through a process of association with others who define law-breaking as desirable. The two key elements in this theory are the definition of law-breaking as favorable and the association with others who adopt such definition.

Sutherland was interested in explaining how such a cross-cultural transmission of deviant values occurred. He argued that deviant behavior like drug and substance abuse is learned as a result of socialization during which criminal definition are not only transmitted culturally but are actually learned through social interaction with intimate groups. The theory is outlined in the following nine propositions:

- i. The first posits that criminal and deviant behavior is learned, just as one learns the appropriate behavior pattern is the same way he learn deviant behavior like drug and substance abuse.
- ii. The second proposition suggests that learning take place as a result of interaction. It believed that persons came into crime not through personal or private experience, but rather through contacts with others.
- iii. The third proposition posits that learning of criminal behavior like drug abuse take place when there is intimate personal interaction which occurred mostly in primary groups e.g. friends, family, neighbors, etc.
- iv. The fourth proposition expands Sutherland’s concept of learning to identify how individual not only learn the techniques and skills of committing the crime but also the motives, drives and attitudes that accompany the behavior.
- v. In the fifth proposition Sutherland elaborates upon the issue of criminal motivation as individuals are surrounded by a “cultural conflict” of competing idea, thus he learned how to define law as either favorable or unfavorable (Siegel, 2006:226).

vi. In the sixth proposition Sutherland believes that individual become deviant only when his definition favorable to violation of law exceeds his definition unfavorable to law violation. E.g. most of the youth engage in drug and substance abuse in Kano metropolis because they have favorable definition to drug abuse.

vii. In the seventh proposition he believed that the association and interaction which may result in learning of criminal behavior may vary in “frequency, duration, priority and intensity” (Siegel, 2006: 227). Thus people’s level of engagement in drug and substance abuse may vary by the frequency, intensity and duration of their interaction with others whom promote the act, and it also depended on the priority they gave to their relationship.

viii. In the eighth proposition Sutherland reiterates the logic behind the criminal learning process, as he explained that “the learning of criminal behavior is not restricted to the process of imitation” (Siegel. 2006: 227), rather it is learned in the same way that all human behavior is learned.

ix. In the final proposition Sutherland made an important claim that the motivation for criminal and law-abiding behavior cannot be the same. Therefore deviant behavior like substance abuse cannot be a result of general needs and values, such as desire for wealth or social status.

Based on the above postulation, Sutherland (1939) differential association theory is believed to have peculiar relevance and validity, as such adopted as a theoretical guide in explaining the problem of substance abuse in the study area. It is apparent that most of the substance abusing youth in Kano Metropolis have not found themselves as abusers overnight. Rather, they learned to become substance abusers as a result of association with others who are in the act. The degree, frequency, intensity and duration or the time spent during the association, the level of communication and the indolent nature of the community concerning the youth’s life are some of the favorable conditions that facilitate the cultural transmission between deviants and those who are to become deviants. The nature and composition of Kano Metropolis favors these tendencies much, as the youth constantly intermingle in different social activities and gatherings such as schools, football fields and stadiums, football viewing centers, cinemas, political gatherings, *majalisi*, night clubs, etc. and in most of these occasions substance abuse is one of the common phenomenon that is always exposed. Subsequently, most of these youth not only learn the techniques and skills of becoming substance abusers; rather they also end up acquiring even the motive, the drive and attitude of being substance abusers (as assumed by Sutherland). And this process is encouraged by the need of peer acceptance and recognition.

**4. METHODOLOGY**

The research design employed is the descriptive survey in which mix-method was utilized to generate and analyze primary data from a sample of 350 respondents across various categories of respondents from the study area; the metropolitan local governments of kano state

namely; Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Kano-Municipal, Nassarawa and Tarauni. Availability and snowball sampling method were employed in selecting respondents for quantitative data while purposive/judgmental was adopted in selecting respondents for qualitative data. Thus, two hundred and forty (240) respondents from various youth’s joints (location) across the six local governments and ninety (90) female drug abusers, making a total of three hundred and thirty (330) respondents formed the first part of the sample; ten (10) officials from the relevant institutions and ten (10) from community leaders and drug sellers formed the second part of the sample, making a total of three hundred and fifty (350) respondents which formed the sample size of the study.

Questionnaire was used to generate quantitative data from the substance abusers (both male and female) with the help of research assistants. The mode of administering the questionnaire was researcher’s-administrative approach (unless in the case of some female respondents that cannot be reached directly). The data from youths’ joints were collected at the same time for each selected joint. For the case of the second category of respondents, in-depth interview was adopted in generating qualitative data from government officials, community leaders and drug sellers. The interview with each of the respondents lasted for at least half an hour.

In terms of the presentation and analysis of the data generated for this research, the quantitative data were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the qualitative data were processed and analyzed by transcribing and interpreting the views raised by the respondents to support and compliment the quantitative data and vice versa.

**Results and discussion**

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	234	72.7
Female	88	27.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 15 years	17	5.3
15-30 years	195	60.6
31- 45 years	102	31.7
Above 45 years	8	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Non-Formal education	33	10.2
Primary education	78	24.2
Secondary education	149	46.3
Tertiary education	62	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	48	14.9
Single	242	75.2
Separated	9	2.8

Divorced	23	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: Field Work, 2017

**Peer Influence and Substance Abuse**

This section presents the data on how substance abuse is learned, how long the respondents have been abusing substances, number of respondents' peers that are abusing substance, period the respondent spend with the peers, types of substances being abused and the sources through which the respondents get the substances.

**Respondents' Experimentation with Substances**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
From peers	222	68.9
Out of frustration	72	22.4
From family members	9	2.8
Others	19	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The figures from table above shows that 68.9 percent of the respondents learned to abuse substances due to peer pressure, 22.4 percent of the respondents learned the habit out of frustration, 2.8 percent learned substance abuse from family members (who serve as role model and their behaviors can be easily imitated by the children). Lastly, 5.9 percent respondents learned substance abuse through other means. This indicates that peer influence is the major means through which the culture of substance abuse is transmitted within the youth in Kano Metropolis. This also shows how easier it is for the youth to imitate their peers and may be easily deceived into an activity that seems to appear worthwhile that may actually not be the case. This finding corresponds with what Abdullahi and Haruna (1991) in Abdullahi (2003:15) found in their study, which states that "...inmates at Dawanau Rehabilitation Centre Kano learned the habit of drug abuse from friends, workmates and other associates...." At the same time, this findings interprets the theoretical postulation of Sutherland's differential association (1939), which posits that "...people learn to become deviants the same way human capability is processed within the youthful ages. They do so due to high rate of association with youthful peers who are already in the circle. Enabling environment which favors this association matters a lot for deviance (like substance abuse) to spread...." Siegel (2005:228). On this basis therefore, it can be said that, peer influence encourage the spread of substance abuse among youth in Kano Metropolis.

**Respondents' Duration in Substance Abuse**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
BELOW 1 YEAR	26	8.1
1-4 YEARS	149	46.3
5-9 YEARS	74	22.9
10 YEARS AND ABOVE	73	22.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The table above reveals that 46.3 percent of the respondents have been in the act of substance abuse for 1-4 years, 22.9 percent respondents were involved in the business since 5-9 years, and another 22.7 percent have been with the habit for 10 years or more, while the remaining 8.1 percent respondents have learned the act of substance abuse in the last 1 year. This indicate that significant proportion of the respondents have been abusing substances for many years as only very few of them (8.1 percent) stated that they spent less than a year in the act.

**Respondents' Peers in Substance Abuse**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3	50	15.5
3-5	149	46.3
6-8	68	21.1
9 and above	55	17.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The data from table above shows that 46.3 percent respondents lived in the company of 3-5 peers that are substance abusers, 21.1 percent respondents lived within 6-8 substance abusing peers, 17.1 percent respondents are mingling in the midst of 9 or more peers that are into substance abuse. Lastly, the remaining 15.5 percent respondents have less than 3 peers that are abusing substances. This indicates that the entire sampled respondents are living within a social group with peers that are substance abusers, either in school, youth joints, working place or their neighborhood. This finding further emphasize the data from table 4.3.1 which reveals that majority of the respondents (68.9 percent) learned the habit of substance abuse from their peers. Moreover, the finding is in harmony with the theoretical postulation of Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory, which proposed that criminal behavior like drug and substance abuse is learned through a process of association with others who define law-breaking as desirable. He maintained that in the cause of this association with intimate groups a cross-cultural transmission of deviant behavior occurred.

**Duration of Interaction with Peers involved in Substance Abuse**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one year	25	7.8
2-5 years	139	43.1
6-9 years	88	27.3
10 and above years	70	21.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

From the data in the table above, it can be inferred that 43.1 percent of the respondents have spent between 2-5 years within the peer group they learned substance abuse from, 27.3 percent respondents have been living with their peers for the past 6-9 years, and 21.7 percent respondent stated that they have spent either 10 years or more in the midst of the peer group from whom they learned substance abuse. While the remaining 7.8 percent

respondents stated that the time they have spent within their peer group is less than a year. This indicates that majority of the respondents have been living with their peers for several years as only 7.8 percent of the respondents spend less than a year with their peer groups. This finding further corroborated the assumption of seventh proposition in Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory which assumed that learning deviant behavior as a result of association with deviant peers vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. It posits that, those intimate associations (with deviant peers) of long duration have greater influence in the behavior of the youth.

#### Types of Substance that is preferable to the respondents

Type of Substances	Frequency	Percentage
Indian Hemp	97	30.1
Cough Syrup	68	21.1
Gadagi	32	9.9
Rubber Solution (Solvent)	20	6.2
All of the above	77	23.9
Other Substances	28	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The data from the above table indicates that 30.1 percent of the respondents stated that Indian hemp is their preferred substance of abuse, 21.1 percent of the respondents' abuse cough syrup and 9.9 percent abuse *Gadagi* only. Respondents who prefer Rubber solution (solvent) alone were 6.2 percent while 23.9 percent of the respondents reported that all the above mentioned substances are their favorite. Lastly, the remaining 8.8 percent of the respondents abuse other substances like Roche, Tramol, *madarar Sukudaye*, *Chali*, Cocaine, and Heroin. These figures shows that Indian hemp is the most commonly abused substance by youth in Kano Metropolis and that many of the youth abused it together with cough syrups, *Gadagi* and rubber solution (solvent). The figures also reveals that apart from the substances assumed to be frequently abused in the study area by the researcher, there are many other mood altering substances currently being abused by the youth in the study area. In relation to this, an official of the NDLEA stated:-

"...For a very long time the most popular substance of Abuse among these youth is Indian hemp even though recently cough syrups like Benylin with codeine is getting increased popularity especially for female"

This finding correspond with an NDLEA report in 2011 which observed that Cannabis is the most abused drug in Nigeria and the abuse of Cannabis cut across age, sex and socio-economic status. With regards to other substances that are found to be abused by the youth, the finding is in harmony with a research conducted by NDLEA in 2012 which reveals that "...There were also reports of abuse of non-conventional substances like nail polish cleaner, gasoline, lizard excreta, *zakami*, and rubber solutions. Others are cough syrup with codeine and pit toilets..."

#### Respondents' Sources of Substances

Response	Frequency	Percentage
From a friend	62	19.3
From youth joint	204	63.4
From politicians	22	6.8
Others	34	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The findings from table above reveals that 63.4 percent of the respondents stated that they acquired the substance from the youth joints, 19.3 percent respondents are getting their substances from their friends, 6.8 percent respondents get their substances from Politicians, while the remaining 10.5 percent are getting their substances through other sources that include markets, pharmaceutical stores, medicine vendors, etc. This indicate that significant percentage of the respondents are getting these substances from various youth joints found in the study area which shows that the joints are not only serving as drug abuse joints but also were channels for the distribution and trafficking of illicit substances. The finding also reveals that there are some politicians that encourage the persistence of youth substance abuse in Kano Metropolis.

#### Substance Abusers among Respondents' Friends

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	294	91.3
No	28	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The figures from the above table indicates that 91.3 percent of the respondents have substance abusers within their friends, while only 8.7 percent of the distribution stated that there are no substance abusers among their friends. This shows that majority of the respondents are living together with close friends that are also substance abusers. This goes in line with the popular saying that "Birds of the same feathers always flock together". This finding also further emphasized the assumption of third proposition in Sutherland's (1939) theoretical postulation which assumed that learning of deviant behavior like substance abuse take place when there is intimate personal interaction which occurred mostly in primary group e.g. friends, family, neighbors, etc.

#### Encouragement from Friends into Substance Abuse

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	278	94.6
No	16	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Since, only 294 respondents stated that there are substance abusers among their friends. The data from the table above reveals that 94.6 percent of them get encouragement from their friends, while the remaining 5.4 percent of the respondents are not encouraged by their friends. This indicates that significant majority of the respondents are daily descending deeper into the act of substance abuse by their friends' encouragement and motivation. This finding also, is in harmony with Sutherland's (1939) theoretical postulation when he

elaborated upon the issue of criminal motivation, as individual interact with the deviants he is surrounded by what Sutherland called 'culture conflict' of competing ideas about what is right or wrong, moral or immoral. Thus, he will acquire not only the learning, but even the motive, drive and rationalization on how to define law as either favorable or unfavorable.

### 5. DISCUSSIONS

The research findings reveals that majority of the respondents (60.6 percent) are between the youthful age of 16-30 years. The finding corresponds with what National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA 2012:16) reported in one of its publication, when it stated that "within the last decade, the consumption of hard drugs has risen drastically in Nigeria.....adolescents and youth between the ages of 15-30 years constitute the high risk groups with females getting more involved than they used to...." In a similar vein, Usman (2003:48) identified the linkage between the period of adolescence and substance abuse, when he stated that "adolescent venture into substance abuse as a result of the psychological feeling of independence among young people, they don't want to be told what to do...."

In relation to the gender of the respondents, the finding of this study indicates that 72.2 percent of the respondents are male, while the remaining 27.3 percent are female. This finding is in harmony with what Miller (1958:11) observed when he suggested that "the idea of masculinity may make young males more likely to abuse substances. Being tough, powerful, aggressive, daring and competitive may be a way young boys attempt to express their masculinity. Acting out these ideals makes boys more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors and substance abuse."

Furthermore, with regards to the marital status of the respondents, the finding reveals that majority of the respondents are unmarried as 75.2 percent are single. On the educational status of the respondents, the findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents does not possess high educational qualification, as only 19.3 percent possessed post-secondary qualification. Considering the data obtained in relation to peer influence on youths involvement in substance abuse (and by implication the relevance of differential association theory) the study found that a significant majority of the respondents learned how to abuse substance through the influence of their peers. On the number of respondents' peers that are involved in substance abuse, the finding indicates that the entire sampled respondents are living within a social group with peers that are substance abusers, either in school, youth joints, working place or their neighborhood. This finding corresponds with what Abdullahi and Haruna (1991:31) found in their study, which states that "....inmates at Dawanau Rehabilitation Centre Kano learned the habit of drug abuse from friends, workmates and other associates...." At the same time, this findings interprets the theoretical postulation of Sutherland's differential association (1939), which posits that "....people learn to become deviants the same way human capability is processed within the youthful ages.

They do so due to high rate of association with youthful peers who are already in the circle. Enabling environment which favors this association matters a lot for deviance (like substance abuse) to spread....." Siegel, (2005:226). On this basis therefore, it can be said that, peer group influence encourage the spread of substance abuse among youth in Kano Metropolis.

### 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS-

From the foregoing discussion and analysis, it can be discerned that the problem of substance abuse particularly among the youth constitutes a menace and a threat that has devastating effects on the future of our society. This has to do with the fact that the youth are regarded the world over as the leaders of tomorrow and the backbone of any societal development and that they are the segment of society mostly affected by the menace of substance abuse especially being in their transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Thus, if the problem is not checked and curtailed the society heads to perpetual ruin. Based on the data collected and analyzed as well as the literature reviewed, the paper concludes that peer group influence is an important factor that significantly encourages the spread of substance abuse among youth in Kano Metropolis as many of the substance abusing youths are into the problem as a result of intimate interaction with others who are already into the problem. Hence, the following recommendations are found worthy of consideration:-

1. Parents/guardians and community members should monitor the movement and behavior of their children and the company they keep so as to ensure that they develop and maintain an acceptable and legitimate relationship and prevent them from falling victims of wrong association.
2. The curriculum in our schools should be strengthened and organized in such a way that topics are covered that teach children and youth on the negative effects of substance abuse, and they should be taken on an excursion to psychiatrist hospital and drug rehabilitation centers so that they understand the future that awaits one if he is involved in the act.
3. Government should provide more institution of higher learning and subsidize the education, so that more youth would have the opportunity of acquiring higher level education that will made them more enlighten and more responsible.
4. Members of the community should imbibe the habit of collaborating with law enforcement agents and develop community policing, which will help in exposing the activities of substance abusers and their suppliers as well as their hideouts.
5. Government should give emphasis on youth employment and job creation so as to make the youth engaged in conventional activities. Moreover, the program should not only give emphasis on provision of white collar jobs rather those with lower or no formal educational qualification should be involved too by providing them with skill acquisition programs and soft loans to start and own their business.

6. Since, substance abuse is against the teaching of religions, religious leaders and preachers both from Islam and Christianity should be preaching against substance abuse and alerting the youth on its negative consequences.

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