

Social pressure, anxiety and drug dependency among students at Makerere University

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## Declaration

I Katende Isaac Daniel declare that this research report is my own work and has never been submitted to any higher institution of learning

Signature: .....

Date: 10/02/2023.....

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## Approval

This is to certify that this research work was done under my supervision and it is ready for submission.

Signature.....

Dr. Nyende Paul

Supervisor

Date:.....

## **Dedication**

To my son Nicolas Daniel Katende

### **Acknowledgement**

I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow psychologists who have helped me through many ways of my journey at the university may God bless you abundantly; I wish to extend my special gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Nyende Paul for his guidance, mentorship and discussions he provided during the process of carrying out this study indeed if it was not him, I would have bailed out. Lastly I thank my parents and siblings who helped me financially during my course at Makerere University and those that helped me both directly and indirectly

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## Abstract

Drug dependence has become a large phenomenon in Uganda affecting all social segments. The use of marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, codeine, cocaine and other various drugs is a wide spread phenomenon among youths. The abuse of psychoactive drugs among youths is an issue of national importance. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between social pressure, anxiety and drug dependence among university students in Makerere University, an educational institution in Rubaga division, Kampala. The study targeted 100 students, 34 males and 66 females aged 17-30 years of age and a qualitative research design; correlational method was adopted to establish the relationship between the variables. A constructed self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the 100 respondents. Collected data was analyzed using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS Version, 23) and Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the level of significance of the hypotheses. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between social Pressure and anxiety ( $r=.330^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), as well as anxiety and drug dependence among university students ( $r=0.167^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), Results also revealed that social Pressure is significantly related to drug dependence among university students ( $r=.402^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

## Chapter One

### Background of the Study

The World Health organization (WHO) Report indicates that Uganda is ranked as one of the leading alcohol consumers in Africa with an average consumption rate of 17.54 liters per annum Namaganda (2009). Adolescents are reported to be more exposed to drug dependence due to factors like anxiety and social pressure. This poses drug dependency among university students as an increasing social problem. Namaganda (2009) reported alcohol to be the most abused substance by 80% of the adolescents aged 18-30 years, and some of these usually end up in rehabilitation centers or in slums as drug dealers.

Social pressure influences drug dependency by actively shaping drinking behavior (offering the first free drink), offering free information about several drug dependences and how to easily access those (Borsari & Carey, 2001). The desire to feel accepted and to fit in social groups is one of the strongest forces amongst university students which make them to do contrary to the social ethics, dangerous and risky. However, on the positive side of social relationship, the pressure to keep up with their social group can also inspire adolescents to achieve goals that they might never aim for on their own (Wall, Power & Berk, 2004). The Canadian Lung Association also found that 70 percent of youth (Borsari & Carey, 2001) who smoke have friends who smoke or started smoking because of social pressure.

Additionally, most victims of negative social pressure are the students of low-self-esteem with feelings of unworthiness which makes them vulnerable to drug dependence because they seek conformity, approval and acceptance to their peers. Negative social pressure may make the students to engage into drug dependency by encouraging peers to change their attitudes, values or behaviors in order to conform to groups. The desire to feel accepted and to fit in social groups is one of the strongest forces among the youth which

makes them do wrong things which are dangerous and risky. But positively social group's relationship, the pressure to keep up with their peer group can also inspire the youth to achieve goals that they might never aim for on their own (Wall, Power & Berk, 2004).

Alwin, (1994) revealed that anxiety is the result of an individual's awareness of his/her relationship with the environment being disturbed (Alwin, 1994). Many anxieties have been studied according to their impact on mental development of youth. For example, being disliked by the social group at campus may be extremely stressful for the university students (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Anxiety is the natural defense by the body against predators and danger it flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger (Timothy, 2017). It is generally adapted that experiencing high levels of anxiety such as experiencing a catastrophic experience this can range from accidents, death of a loved one, landslide victims. Stress is often seen as a trigger of many psychological disorders if immediate solutions are not sought these can range from depression ,attention deficit hyperactivity disorder(ADHD),.eating disorders like bulimia, anorexia nervosa, binge eating as well as sleeping disorders including narcolepsy (Mayo Clinic, 2013).

University students are being drawn towards drug dependence by both internal and external factors. These include social influence, external or internal locus of control and availability of substances (Rukundo, 2017). It's estimated that globally, around 164 million people had an alcohol or drug use disorder in 2016. According to the WHO (2010), 3.04% of the substance abusers were males between 15- 64years and 0.36% was females aged 15- 64 years. These actively involve themselves in substance abusive activities like drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, marijuana, and local brew among others.

Mental health problems such as depression, developmental lags, apathy, withdrawal, and other psychosocial dysfunctions frequently are linked to drug dependence among the youth. Drug dependent students are at higher risk than non-users for mental

health problems, including depression; conduct problems, personality disorders, suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide, and suicide.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many university students in Uganda are struggling with drug dependence; this is because students look at drugs as anxiety lowering medicine. Students are further pushed to drug dependence because of social pressure whereby students at universities in order to fit in with their friends are subsequently taken up to engage in drugs which later become a habit. Social pressure further leads to increased anxiety among adolescents causing them to further engage in drug dependence. But if adolescents are able to control social pressure, this shall lead to low levels of anxiety further pushing down the levels of drug dependency in university students. This will reduce on the long term mental and physical consequences to the students like displacement of information from the short term to the longer memory and destruction of the brain frontal lobes which affects mental functioning

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study sought to examine the relationship between social pressure, anxiety and drug dependency among university adults in Makerere University.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the relationship between peer pressure and stress among adolescents in Soweto zone, Katanga slum.
- To examine the relationship between stress and substance abuse among adolescents in Soweto zone, Katanga slum.
- To examine the relationship between peer pressure and substance abuse among adolescents in Soweto zone, Katanga slum.

## **Scope of the Study**

### **Geographical scope**

The study was conducted in Makerere, Rubaga division where the study targeted out of university students experiencing social pressure and anxiety. These adults stay in university vicinity that is surrounded by drug dealers and recreational centers where drugs are common. The study focused on examining the relationship between social pressure, anxiety and drug dependency among university adults.

### **Contextual Scope**

The study focused on the relationship between social pressure, anxiety and drug dependency among university adults in Makerere university, social pressure is the direct influence initiated by groups on an individual to follow their attitudes and way of life, values and behaviors to conform to those of the influencing group or individual (Karen Biermann, 2012). anxiety refers to intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations or anxiety is an uncontrollable, diffuse, unpleasant, and persistent state of negative affect, characterized by a predictable and accompanied by physiological symptoms of tension and a constant state of heightened vigilance (Barlow, 2002). Drug dependence refers to a psychic and physical state of the person characters by behavioral and other responses resulting in compulsions to take a drug, on a continuous or periodic basis in order to experience its psychic effect and at times to avoid the discomfort of its absence (Timothy J. Legg, 2018).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study may help to unleash the negative consequences associated with drug dependence on the community and its effects such as domestic violence, high crime rate this will help law enforcement personnel curb down these things.

Non-governmental organizations may use the findings of this study to sensitize university students to avoid drug dependency such as marijuana, alcohol consumption and

drug use through programs like behavior change program and youth. This program may aim ensuring that students have the capacity to resist negative social pressure and anxiety control tendencies.

Religious leaders may use the findings of the study to design programs that may help social groups to become responsible adults. Such programs could include getting involved in various religious associations and groups, and taking an active role in church activities like singing. This may have an influence on student's interactions, such that instead of spending time smoking marijuana and taking alcohol, this time may be spent promoting church programs.

The findings may help parents and guardians to fully understand how social pressure leads to anxiety, and how social pressure accompanied with anxiety cause drug dependency among university students. This is because the study shall help highlight the importance of their early involvement in the lives of their students to help reduce cases of drug dependency.

The study may benefit the students of community psychology and other disciplines as well as the university at large since a copy of the final dissertations will be put in the university library thus increasing on their stock of resources. It will also act as a reference manual for other research students, thus contributing knowledge to the academic field.



### Conceptual Framework

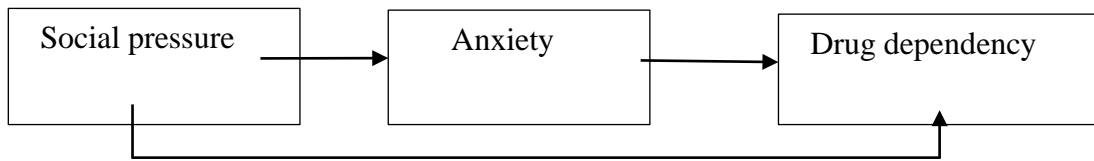


Figure 1 : A conceptual framework showing the relationship between anxiety, social pressure and drug dependency.

The conceptual framework shows that when an adult encounter negative social pressure from friends, they may feel stressed which in turn may lead to engage into drug dependency. In addition, increased negative social pressure from groups may compel university adults to engage in drug dependency.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Introduction to Literature Review**

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature involved in the study. It mainly focused on the relationship between social pressure and drug dependence, anxiety and drug dependence, and lastly social pressure and anxiety among university students.

#### **Social Pressure and Anxiety among University Students**

Social pressure is a way teenagers try to behave due to pressure coming from their peers. This kind of stress is triggered by issues like, the need for approval; desire to find a sense of belonging among others (Marshal, & Michael, 2010).

Youth are faced with both positive and negative challenges from their parents and environment. The choices that the youth make in this phase are very much dependent upon the upbringing they get and expectations from family, society, and more importantly their peers. When the youth are unable to cope with stressful situations, they end-up engaging themselves in the distressed state of mind. In this distressed situation, they indulge themselves in anti-social and delinquent activities just as their peers (Angela & Cook, 2010). Social group membership assumes more importance during youth ages than at any other time of life. A peer group can provide a refuge and a source of support for his friend in conflict with their families (Clifford, 2011).

Although differential perception of social experiences rather than immaturity may under lay the heightened vulnerability of youth to social pressure, the changes in the trajectory of brain development and resultant social deficits likely are mediated by the heightened response to repeated social stressors in youth compared to adulthood (Cook & Austin, 2012).

Apart from positive and supportive functions, relationships with friends also harbor a potential source of anxiety. One major concern of youth is being rejected by their peers, which is reported by over half of adolescents as the major stressor related to the peer context (Reich & Thomas, 2012). The function and significance of relationships with friends also change, and the social group assumes an important role in the lives of youth. Furthermore, the emergence of more intimate friendships alongside commonly shared activities sparks conflicts in exclusive, dyadic friendships (Doyle, 2009) which have been linked to issues such as similarity, intimacy, and self-disclosure (Reich & Thomas, 2012).

A study by Moknes, Moljord and Espnes (2010), showed that there was significant association between anxiety and social pressure. Social pressure is a very strong factor during youth ages since much time is spent with peers. Youth need to choose their friends wisely friends who make positive and wise decisions since social pressure becomes dangerous if they make negative decisions.

In conclusion, it has been shown that social pressure greatly influences anxiety among youth, youth who face stressful situations in their lives seek out social groups for support and likewise, the youth who are submissive to the frustration that comes with social pressure end up being anxious and this can result into drug dependence as a coping up mechanism.

### **Anxiety and Drug Dependence among University Students**

Atkinson (1994) the control theory of stress defines stress as the result of the subjective evaluation of events youth perceives a situation as anxious and uncontrollable, and that his response capabilities do not make it possible to him to meet the demands of the situation. Anxiety may affect health by producing changes in behavior and there is evidence that under high levels of anxiety, health-enhancing behavior declines and health-threatening

behavior such as consumption of nicotine, alcohol, and marijuana may increase (Milgrom, & Burrow, 2001).

NIDA (2016), argues that drugs can give a person focus to cope with several life stressors when they adhere to several coping strategies but when its persistent it arouses several negative experiences and these among many may involve drug dependence (NIDA, 2016). Among the most commonly drug dependences include marijuana, opium, miraa, nicotine and tar which contain poisonous toxins for example, marijuana contains 36 cannabinoids and the most dangerous toxin known as tetra hydrocannabinil (THC) (Russell & Mehrabian, 1975), Arevalo, et al, 2008, Milgrom, & Burrow, 2001) which brings long term mental and physical consequences to the consumers. These include displacement of information from the short term to the longer memory and destruction of the brain frontal lobes which affects mental functioning (Arevalo, et al, 2008).

Research on the mechanisms underlying drug disorders has shown that anxiety is one of the strongest predictors of drug use and coping mechanisms is an important factor in mediating the effects of stress on drug dependence (Arevalo, et al, 2008). anxiety refers to the problems or strains that people encounter throughout life, and coping refers to the behavioral or cognitive responses that people use to manage stress (Wagner, Myers & McIninch, 1999). In simple terms, anxiety also refers to the tension between the youth reaction to difficulties or challenges and his or her ability to handle and resolve the stressful situation (Russell & Mehrabian, 1975).

According to Daley, (2013), the longer anxiety goes on, the worse it becomes, and such anxieties lead to a number of problems such as tension and migraine headaches. In order to cope with such short term consequences of anxiety, youth engage in marijuana, and

opium taking, these give temporary relief from the stress thus becoming a desirable option to cope with stress among adolescents.

Conclusively, studies have shown a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence because youth are compelled to find quick ways of coping with anxiety. For example, Maladaptive coping is used by most youth who lack information on healthy ways of managing anxiety; they thus resort to quick yet short lived relief from stress by altering their moods by using drugs.

### **Social Pressure and Drug Dependence among University Students**

Social pressure is influence on your behavior from a group that you interact with socially or professionally or it's that influence that peers can have on each other (Karl & Bauman, 2002). Social pressure is highly complex as it is not always direct as it can manifest as direct or indirect pressure. For example, peer social norms can act as a form of social pressure whereby when an youth sees a group of friends spending a lot of time drinking, they feel pressure to drink even in the absence of direct pressure (Borsari & Carey, 2001).

Direct pressure comes in the form of peers urging the youth to do something, this can be through coercion, threatening them, telling them how fun something will be, or suggesting a person do something they might not otherwise do (Wood, et al, 2004). So youth who are sensitive to rejection or if the social acceptance is important to the youth. This causes many to deliberately choose to use substances to fit in and avoid rejection, or when social pressure is subtle, slowly normalizing drug dependence and makes it seem less threatening (Karl & Bauman, 2002).

Research findings on youth drug dependents highlight social influence as a prominent cause of the vice among the many other causes the proportion of their friends who are already addicts of the drugs tend to persuade the innocent comrades to partake of

them also claiming that they poses a lot of positive benefits. These may include freedom of mind from stressors, enhancing your academic performance through enabling you read books for long hours and increased energy to keep you working (Karl & Bauman, 2002).

Research disentangles social pressure into three dimensions that is active offers of alcohol, modelling of others' drinking and perceived drinking norms (Borsari & Carey 2001; Crawford & Novak, 2007). Active offers of alcohol may be the most obvious and direct form of social pressure. These offers range from a simple gesture to highly encouraging a peer to drink (Borsari & Carey, 2001). Some examples include being offered a drink, being bought a drink, or having your drink refilled without asking (Wood, et al, 2004). Explicit offers are more prominent for those students who attend parties and decide not to drink and are seen as "abnormal" that is they considered the unit group from the rest of the college community.

The second dimension is the modeling of others drinking, and is defined as a temporary imitation of peer's behaviors (Borsari & Carey, 2001). University students often imitate the level of drinking of the peer within their immediate environment that is drinking of the heaviest and is the most sociable.

Thirdly, perceived drinking norms influence a college student's level of drinking through the observation and comparison of their peers drinking levels (Borsari & Carey 2001). Peers through their own actions, may provide information about what behaviors are accepted and admired, what is considered appropriate in a given social context, and therefore what behaviors are likely to lead to social acceptance and reinforcement (Schall, et al, 2007).

Kandel, Kessler and Margulies (1978), pointed out that youth, who are friends consistently, have similar attitudes and engage in similar habits that include alcohol

consumption. Foxcroft and Lowe (1991) reported that social interaction with peers is a key determinant that results into alcohol consumption among the youth. This rhymes with what was reported in the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Journal (NIAAA, 1997), that social groups contribute a lot in shaping students' attitudes towards drinking. Similarly, a survey carried out in Uganda by the National Coalition Against alcohol and substance abuse found out that youth begin drinking alcohol when they are still young (NACODA, 2007), and this has got some far-reaching consequences like getting addicted to alcohol, and chances are that such people may consequently influence their friends to indulge in alcohol consumption while at university (Borsari & Carey 2001).

In conclusion, it should be noted that social pressure contributes to drug dependence among university students by providing an environment that influences peers into drug dependence. For example; students are offered a free drug, providing information about the variety of the drugs and also introducing them to several drugs.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are put forward.

1. There is a significant relationship between social pressure anxiety and among students at Makerere University.
2. There is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence among Makerere university students
3. There is a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among Makerere university students.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Introduction to Research Methodology**

Research methodology is something that people undertake in order to find things out in a systematic way, increasing their knowledge (Saunders, 2009). According to Kothari (2004), endeavor of any research is to uncover the concealed reality that is yet to be revealed. The chapter focuses on study design, population, sample design, instruments and measures, procedure, data management and data analysis.

#### **Study Design**

The study was quantitative in nature with a correlational research design. Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) described quantitative research as an inquiry into a social problem; explain phenomena by gathering numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods. Correlation research is concerned with establishing relationships between two or more variables in the same population or between the same variables in two populations (Leedy & Ormrod 2010).

#### **Study Population**

The population included out of school male and female adolescents aged between of 17 to 30 years was targeted for selection. This is because adolescents in this age bracket are prone to encounter substance abuse.

#### **Sample Size and Design**

The study comprised of adolescents both male and female. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Soweto zone has an approximated population size of 140 adolescents where a total of 100 university students were selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table. The sample was obtained through simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique is a technique where each individual is



chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process (Yates, 2008).

The advantages of simple random sampling include it being more representative to the target population, eliminates sampling bias and easy to use and accurate, and lastly free from classification error (Yates, 2008). However, simple random sampling makes it difficult to obtain the sample if the units are widely dispersed and it is also not applicable to population units that are heterogeneous in nature.

### **Research Instruments and Measures**

Self-administered questionnaires scored on Likert scales were used to collect data from respondents. Self-administered questionnaires were used because they are easier to answer considering the several alternatives, data was quickly coded, entered and analyzed, less skilled and no interviewer was needed because it required little skill to administer it.

In order to measure peer pressure, peer pressure inventory scale by Brown was used. It comprised of 12 items that are scored on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

To measure anxiety, perceived anxiety scale by Sheldon Cohen, Kamarck and Mermlstein 1983 which focuses on feelings and thoughts it comprised of 10 item instrument that are scored on a 5 point Likert scale with 0 for never to 5 for very often the perceived anxiety scale (SPSS -10)

To test drug dependence, the drug dependence questionnaire (Sas-National Drug Authority 2013) It has 21 items that are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 = never to 4 = always

## **Quality Control**

To ensure quality of the research, validity and reliability of the research instruments was be ensured. Validity refers to a degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions based on test scores. Messick (1989). In regard to validity, research instruments was adapted and was reviewed by two (2) subject matter experts in the school of Psychology to ensure item construction and comprehensive of the items with regard to the study constructs. Subject matter expert's recommendations were considered in the final version of the research instrument.

Reliability refers to the degree to which a test is free from measurement error, since the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). According to Cronbach (1951) for research instruments to be reliable it must have a score/value of 0.70 and above. To ensure reliability of the instruments, reliability analysis was undertaken for each scale or instrument to be used in the study. Cronbach alpha values were obtained that is 0.85 for peer pressure inventory scale, 0.75 for perceived stress scale, and 0.80 for substance abuse questionnaire.

## **Research Procedure**

The researcher presented a school identification card to the students of Makerere University to allow him carry out the research in the area. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and was given permission to go ahead with the research.

University students were randomly selected in the first year, second year, third year and fourth year. The researcher explained articulately the purpose of this study and assured the participants of confidentiality. The questionnaires were filled between twenty to thirty minutes and once they finalized, questionnaires were taken for analysis

### **Data Management**

Data was coded according to the results got from the questionnaires after the participants were done filling them. Collected data was cross checked for completeness and was entered into the SPSS computer program.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was summarized, entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23. Frequency tables were obtained and were transformed into percentages. Pearson Correlation ( $r$ ) was used to test the significance of hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are standards for proper conduct that differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Resnick, 2013). The researcher got clearance through an introducing letter from the Supervisor at the department of mental health and Community Psychology, in the School of Psychology Makerere University to introduce her to the participants and also what this research is all about to the students in the university.

The researcher promised to enforce confidentiality of information provided by each respondent. The obtained information was not used for other purposes rather only for that research.

The researcher also gave the adolescents the option of withdrawing if they did not want to participate. This was to make sure none of the adolescents felt coerced into participating. Anonymity was also ensured as no names were disclosed by the participants to establish their privacy. This was to show that the information they gave was fully for study purposes.

## Chapter Four

### Results

This chapter presents the research findings and interpretation of results. The correlation between the three variables which were to examine the relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among university students, to examine the relationship between social pressure and drug dependence of university students and to examine the relationship between anxiety and social pressure among Makerere university students.

#### Demographic Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate their sex, gender, religion, and year of study.

Frequencies were obtained and computed into percentages as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Frequencies of respondents on Demographic Characteristics**

Variables	Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	33	33
	Female	67	67
Age	18-20 Years	24	24
	18-30 Years	76	76
Year of study	Year 1	84	84
	Year 2	11	11
	Year 3	6	6
Religion	Moslems	7	7
	Catholics	40	40
	Protestants	29	29
	Others	24	24

Results in Table 1 show that majority of the respondents were females who represented 67% while males represented 33%. Also most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-30 who accounted for 76% while those who were between the ages of 16 – 20 were only 24%. A total of 84% of respondents revealed that they are first year as their year of study while those who revealed second year were only 11%. Most of the respondents

were Catholics accounting for 40% of respondents, followed by Protestants at 29%, other denominations accounted for 24% while Muslims accounted for only 7%.

### Social Pressure among University Students

To determine peer pressure among adolescents, frequencies of social pressure were obtained and computed into percentages as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Frequencies of respondent's response on peer pressure**

Items	Strongly Agree N(%)	Agree N(%)	Disagree N(%)	Strongly Disagree N(%)
My friends could push me into doing just about anything	13(13.0)	23(23.0)	14(14.0)	48(48.0)
I give into social pressure easily	10(10.0)	29(29.0)	17(17.0)	43(43.0)
When at campus, if a group of people asked me to do something it would be hard to say no.	15(15.0)	34(34.0)	20(20.0)	31(31.0)
At times I have broken rules because others have urged me to.	10(10.0)	32(32.0)	22(22.0)	35(35.0)
At times I have done dangerous or foolish things because others dared me to.	13(13.0)	27(27.0)	23(23.0)	37(37.0)
I often feel pressured to do things I wouldn't normally do.	9(9.0)	28(28.0)	28(28.0)	33(33.0)
If my friends are drinking, it would be for me to resist a drink	18(18.0)	24(24.0)	25(25.0)	31(31.0)
I have skipped lectures, when others have urged me to.	22(22.0)	32(32.0)	14(14.0)	30(30.0)
I have felt pressured to have sex because a lot of people my own age have already had sex.	15(15.0)	29(29.0)	16(16.0)	40(40.0)
I have felt pressured to get drunk at parties.	14(14.0)	23(23.0)	26(26.0)	35(35.0)
I have at times felt pressured to do drugs, because others have urged me too	12(12.0)	26(26.0)	18(18.0)	44(44.0)

Results in table 2 show that 36% of respondents felt that their friends could push them into doing just anything, while 66% of respondents disagreed. The study further reveals that 42% of respondents revealed that at times, they had broken rules because others had urged them to, while 58% of the respondents disagreed. Respondents who revealed that

they felt pressured to do things they wouldn't normally do were 37% while 63% disagreed.

Respondents who felt that at times, they felt pressured to do drugs because others had urged them to were 38% while those who disagreed were 62%.

### **Anxiety among University Students**

To determine anxiety among adolescents, frequencies of anxiety were obtained and computed into percentages as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Frequencies of respondent's response on stress**

Items	Never N(%)	Almost never N(%)	Sometimes N(%)	Fairly always N(%)	Always N(%)
I the last one month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened un expectedly?	6(6.0)	6(6.0)	40(40.0)	26(26.0 )	11(11.0 )
In the last on month how often have you felt that you are unable to control the important things in your life?	2(2.0)	23(23.0)	46(46.0)	24(24.0 )	5(5.0)
In the last one month how often have you felt nervous and" anxious"?	5(5.0)	24(24.0)	44(44.0)	18(18.0 )	8(8.0)
In the last one month how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	7(7.0)	15(15.0)	35(35.0)	24(24.0 )	18(18.0 )
In the last one month, how often have you felt things were going your way?	6(6.0)	27(27.0)	33(33.0)	17(17.0 )	17(17.0 )
In the last month, how often have you found that you cannot cope with all things that you had to do?	10(10.0)	28(28.0)	35(35.0)	16(16.0 )	8(8.0)
In the last one month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	1(1.0)	26(26.0)	40(40.0)	27(27.0 )	5(5.0)
In the last one month, how often have you felt that you are on the top of things?	5(5.0)	23(23.0)	41(41.0)	18(18.0 )	13(13.0 )
In the last one month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside your control?	4(4.0)	24(24.0)	39(39.0)	19(19.0 )	12(12.0 )
In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	7(7.0)	27(27.0)	37(37.0)	14(14.0 )	13(13.0 )

Results in Table 3 reveal that 40% of respondents in the last one month, who sometimes felt upset because of something that happened unexpectedly were 40%, those that always felt upset were 11%, those who never felt upset when something had happened unexpectedly were 6% respondents who never felt confident about their ability to handle their personal problems always were 18%, while those who sometimes never felt confident about their ability were 35%, those who always felt confident about their ability to handle personal problems were 7%. Only 1% of respondent of the respondents felt they had been able to control irritations in their lives last month, 40% sometimes felt were unable to control irritations in their lives and 5% felt they never able to control irritations in their life.

### **Drug Dependence among University Students**

To determine drug dependence among university students, frequencies of substance abuse were obtained and computed into percentages as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Frequencies of respondent's response on drug abuse**

Items	Never N(%)	Rarely N(%)	Sometimes N(%)	Frequently N(%)	Always N(%)
Taking some drinks which contained alcohol	20(20.0)	24(24.0)	15(15.0)	30(30.0)	11(11.0)
Spending a week without taking some alcohol	18(18.0)	22(22.0)	26(26.0)	24(24.0)	11(11.0)
Smoking cigarettes whenever you are bored	21(21.0)	20(20.0)	16(16.0)	33(33.0)	10(10.0)
Getting "blackouts" as a result of too much alcohol	18(18.0)	20(20.0)	17(17.0)	22(22.0)	23(23.0)
Chewing tobacco	23(23.0)	22(22.0)	16(16.0)	30(30.0)	9(9.0)
My parents complaining about my involvement with alcohol and tobacco	18(18.0)	26(26.0)	22(22.0)	24(24.0)	10(10.0)
Getting in trouble with my parents because of drinking alcohol	22(22.0)	19(19.0)	19(19.0)	26(26.0)	16(16.0)
Taking different types of alcoholic drinks in one day	21(21.0)	23(23.0)	14(14.0)	27(27.0)	15(15.0)
Losing friends because of my substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco)	17(17.0)	20(20.0)	20(20.0)	30(30.0)	13(13.0)
Taking alcohol to feel more relaxed	23(23.0)	17(17.0)	21(21.0)	23(23.0)	10(10.0)
Getting in trouble at university because of alcohol or tobacco use	20(20.0)	15(15.0)	25(25.0)	22(22.0)	18(18.0)
Avoiding social situations like parties because there is alcohol.	15(15.0)	20(20.0)	25(25.0)	22(22.0)	18(18.0)
Getting involved in a fight when under the influence of alcohol	17(17.0)	20(20.0)	20(20.0)	30(30.0)	13(13.0)
Engaging in risky activities in order to obtain alcohol / tobacco	13(13.0)	28(28.0)	21(21.0)	23(23.0)	15(15.0)
Having health problems as a result of substance abuse	18(18.0)	21(21.0)	21(21.0)	23(23.0)	17(17.0)
Drinking alcohol at social functions like Parties	25(25.0)	16(16.0)	22(22.0)	18(18.0)	18(18.0)
Using more than one substance at a time (tobacco, alcohol)	26(26.0)	22(22.0)	22(22.0)	19(19.0)	13(13.0)
Taking alcohol to feel less shy	24(24.0)	25(25.0)	20(20.0)	20(20.0)	11(11.0)

Results in Table 4 reveal that respondents who always took drinks which contained alcohol were 11% always, those that took them frequently were 30%, 15% of respondents revealed



that they took them sometimes, those that rarely took drinks containing alcohol were 24%, those who never took drinks that contained alcohol were 20%.

It was revealed that respondents who always chewed tobacco were 9%, while those who never chewed tobacco were 23%, respondents who frequently chewed tobacco were 30%; those that sometimes chewed tobacco were 16% and those who rarely were 22%.

Respondents who had gotten health problems as a result of substance abuse always were 17%, those frequently were 23%, sometimes were 21%, rarely were 21% and those who never got health problems were 18%.

Respondents who revealed that taking alcohol to feel less shy always were 11%, those that did it frequently were 20%, respondents who never took alcohol to feel less shy were 24%, while those who revealed rarely were 25%.

### **Social Pressure and anxiety among University Students**

The first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stated that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and anxiety. To test the significance of the hypothesis, Pearson Correlation ( $r$ ) was used and results are as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Pearson Correlation between social Pressure and anxiety**

		social Pressure	anxiety
social Pressure	Pearson Correlation	X	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.330**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	X
	N	100	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 5 show that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and anxiety among university students ( $r = 0.330^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is retained and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and anxiety among university students. This implies that youth in Makerere University who are exposed to increased negative social pressure, are likely to encounter high levels of anxiety.

### **Anxiety and drug dependency among University Students**

The second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) stated that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence. To test the significance of the hypothesis, Pearson Correlation ( $r$ ) was used and results are as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Pearson Correlation between anxiety and drug dependence**

		anxiety	Drug dependency
anxiety	Pearson Correlation	X	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
Drug dependence	Pearson Correlation	.167**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	X
	N	100	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 6 show that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among university students ( $r = 0.167^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is retained and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among university students. This implies that youth

in Makerere University who exhibit high anxiety levels are more likely to engage in drug dependence.

### **Social Pressure and drug dependence among University Students**

The third hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>) stated that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence. To test the significance of the hypothesis, Pearson Correlation (r) was used and results are as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Pearson Correlation between social Pressure and drug dependence**

		social Pressure	Drug dependence
social Pressure	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	X	
	N		
Drug dependency	Pearson Correlation	.402**	X
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 5 show that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence among university students ( $r = 0.402^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is retained and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence among university students. This implies that youth in Makerere University who are exposed to negative social pressure are easily pressured into engaging in substance abuse.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Introduction to discussion, conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter presents the discussion of the study findings which are in line with the purpose and objectives of the study. A conclusion and recommendations are put forward.

#### **Discussion**

##### **Social Pressure and Anxiety among University Students**

The first alternative hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and social pressure among university students. The results of the study indicated that there is significant relationship between anxiety and social pressure among university students.

Youth are a high value on their social lives, they spend the majority of their working hours among their peers, and finding and keeping their mates can include anxiety. Bullying and subtle instance of relational aggression are clear sources of anxiety on the youth. Adolescents constantly feel pressured to fit in with their peers and feel at ease. This is because everyone wants to be liked and fit in, and it is a basic human desire. Due to that, it influences peer pressure to fit in and act like your peers which causes a lot of stress to students.

Social pressure for example, through threatening, exclusion, causes youth to constantly feel worried about something or a people, this causes these adolescents to feel constantly stressed. This decreases self-confidence among adolescents which further challenges like poor academic performance, distancing from family members and friends which further causes anxiety among adolescents.

The study findings do agree with Roper (2022), who asserts that negative social pressure is detrimental to self-esteem, influence clear decision-making, and increase

anxiety among youth. Negative social pressure affects the mental health whereby it decreases self-confidence and lead to failure to achieve intended targets, furthering distancing the youth from family members and friends which further leads to increased stress tendencies (Brown, 2018).

The study findings concur with SAMHSA and Akrani (2013), who showed a significant association between increasing social pressures causes heightened levels of anxiety.

The study findings concur with Copyscape (2017) reveals that social pressure is very strong during the adolescent year; social pressure causes a youth to make unwise decisions which makes the youth to experience low self-esteem. This causes them to engage in drugs, alcohol and other unethical decisions which overtime leads to increased anxiety among youth

In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between social pressure and anxiety among university students. This is because increased social pressure leads youth to constantly feel worried about issues for example when the youth have inadequate financial support to cope up with fellow peers leading to increased anxiety among the youth.

### **Social Pressure and drug dependence among University Students**

The second alternative hypothesis of the study stated that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence. Findings in the study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between social pressure and drug dependence among university students

Adolescents will act out in risky behaviors if their friends are watching or are told by their peer to do something. So when a youth is with friends, the mere fact that someone is watching, or is told by his friend to take a drug or a drink, this forces the youth to take

the decision to undertake or abuse that drug. So the desire to fit in the group or friends, and be respected as a member of that group often makes it difficult for such youths to build the capacity to resist pressures from peers to engage in drug use and subsequently substance abuse.

The findings are in agreement with the Guxens (2009), who found that marijuana consumption by friends significantly influenced youth marijuana use the findings are significantly related. Adolescent using marijuana will report feelings a decrease in anxiety, when the effects of marijuana wear off, a rebound effect of increased anxiety occurs and when repeated turning to substances such as marijuana, and nicotine in times of stress creates an association of needing that substance to cope (Recovery Village, 2021)

The study findings are also in line with Sinha and Rijita (2002), who reported that peers who use drugs and alcohol regularly encourage others to join the gang and it's difficult to stop or reduce the practice once it has gained ground. This is because even if the drug first poses negative effects to the individual they later normalize and become addicts. Furthermore, study findings do concur with Ekren (2019), who reported that social pressure is the strategy by which any group influences its members that formerly innocent change their behaviors and conform to the influencing group. It should be noted that group not exposed to positivity but only the negative side.

In conclusion, it has been shown that the importance of social pressure is not just social, but psychological whereby social pressure leads to increased substance abuse among adolescents. This is because the power to impress the adolescent's peers overrides the fear of youth to take risks causing the youth to engage in drug dependence.

### **Anxiety and Drug Dependence among University Students**

The third alternative hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among university students. The results of the study

indicated that there is significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among the youth in Makerere University.

Adolescents are not only concerned with future goals like monetary success, and middle class status but are also concerned with immediate goals, such as doing well at campus and being popular. So social conditions may cause strain or blockage that frustrates the youth which eventually leads to harmful behaviors like drug dependence. When an adolescent feels stressed, it leads to changes in the mind and body, so some adolescents resort to maladaptive measures of managing stress like substance. So stress increases the odds that a person will use drugs.

Substance abuse is a strategy which the youth use in order to cope with stress. An increase in stress causes adolescents to find anxiety coping strategies where some youth temporary relief from stress which causes adolescents to continue to be drug dependence whenever they are stressed.

The findings concur with Hastings and Lambart (2008), who reported that anxiety can be associated with drug dependence, which is a maladaptive pattern in the use of a substance. anxiety has long been associated with the use of drugs since people who are experiencing anxiety tend to use drugs so as to reduce on the stress moods. Exposure to stress situations among adolescents may lead to a consistent and significant increase in cocaine craving, along with activation of emotional stress and a physiological stress response (Nida, 2001)

The study findings concur with Oxford Treatment Centre (2021), which revealed that when youth is stressed, most drugs act on the reward and pleasure center in the brain causing a burst of euphoria or a high as levels of dopamine and serotonin are increased. Overtime with repeated drug use, the brain each time a person is stress will rely on drugs

to keep levels of its chemical messengers balanced and thus increased and uncontrolled use of drugs causing substance abuse as the resulting principle.

In conclusion, the findings of the study were contrary to past studies which showed that there was a significant relationship between anxiety and drug dependence among adolescents. So it was brought to an end that anxiety and drug dependence are not necessarily related.

### **Conclusion**

Substance abuse among youth has been shown to be influenced by social pressure and anxiety among university students. It has been revealed that social pressure does influence drug dependence which meant that the youth when pressured by their peers are more likely to engage in drug dependence as compared to those who are not pressured by their peers. The study further revealed that also anxiety influences drug dependence among Makerere university students whereby when a student at Makerere is not stressed he/she will not engage in drug dependence, but when he/she is stressed they will engage in drug dependence.

An increase in anxiety causes the youth cope with stress using drugs or dangerous substances like opium. Lastly it has been proven that social pressure does influence anxiety among university students at Makerere University. Bullying and subtle instance of relational aggression are clear sources of anxiety on students. youth constantly feel pressured to fit in with their peers and feel at ease. This is because everyone wants to be liked and fit in, and it is a basic human desire

### **Recommendations**

The researcher made the following recommendations in line with the study findings.

The university should put in place counseling sessions for students who are affected by anxiety on every collage. Psycho education trainings should be provided to students to



equip them with diversity of skill on how to cope with stress, negativity of drug abuse and how they can live a free and healthy life.

There is need to develop strategies which tackle the challenge of social pressure among students, these strategies can be family oriented, or community oriented, as well national oriented. These strategies must ensure that the practices of social pressure are discouraged, and fought against; this will help to stamp out social pressure thereby reducing anxiety and drug dependence among students.

Guidelines on how to manage anxiety need to be provided to students in order to contain the stress levels in the area, this can be done through social support and building self-esteem of youth, this will help the youth to be able to take build their self-confidence, learn how to relieve themselves from stress tendencies and fight peer pressure.

### **Limitations**

The study was only limited to Makerere university students. Therefore, the findings would not be generalized in other areas of Uganda because different environments determine different behaviors.

The study limits itself university students, this makes the findings of the study limited in scope on a small group student at Makerere University.

### **Areas for Further Research**

The relationship between social pressure and drug dependence among university students is an area worth being searched about since my study done in one area of Makerere University. I cannot generalize it to other areas in Uganda and world over so researchers should search more on these three variables of anxiety, social pressure and drug dependence especially amongst the youth in other societies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Perceived anxiety scale by Sheldon Conen, Kamarck and Mermelstein, 1983.

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month.

In each case you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way. 0=Never 1=Almost never 2=sometimes 3=fairly often 4=very often

AGREE

DISAGREE

S/NO	Statements/ questions	Responses				
		0	1	2	3	4
1	I the last one month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened un expectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2	In the last on month how often how often have you felt that you are unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
3	In the last one month how often have you felt nervous and” stressed”?	0	1	2	3	4
4	In the last one month how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5	In the last one month, how often have you felt things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
6	In the last month, how often have you found that you cannot cope with all things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7	In the last one month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8	In the last one month, how often have you felt that you are on the top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
9	In the last one month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside your control?	0	1	2	3	4
1 0	In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	0	1	2	3	4

### Appendix B:

#### Social Pressure Inventory scale by Brown, 2002.

Please tick on the appropriate statement that best describes you.

S/No.	Statement	S A	A	D	SD
1	My friends could push me into doing just about anything				
2	I give into peer pressure easily				
3	When at school, if a group of people asked me to do something it would be hard to say no.				
4	At times I have broken rules because others have urged me to.				
5	At times I have done dangerous or foolish things because others dared me to.				
6	I often feel pressured to do things I wouldn't normally do.				
7	If my friends are drinking, it would be for me to resist a drink				
8	I have skipped classes, when others have urged me to.				
9	I have felt pressured to have sex because a lot of people my own age have already had sex.				
10	I have felt pressured to get drunk at parties.				
11	I have at times felt pressured to do drugs, because others have urged me too				

### Appendix C:

#### Drug dependence Questionnaire (SAS-National Drug Authority Uganda, 2013)

The following questions concern information about your potential involvement with substances like alcohol and tobacco.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	always

How often do you do or experience the following?	Responses				
1. Taking some drinks which contained alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
2. Spending a week without taking some alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
3. Smoking cigarettes whenever you are bored	1	2	3	4	5
4. Getting "blackouts" as a result of too much alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
5. Chewing tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
6. My parents complaining about my involvement with alcohol and tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
7. Getting in trouble with my parents because of drinking alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
8. Taking different types of alcoholic drinks in one day	1	2	3	4	5
9. Losing friends because of my substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Taking alcohol to feel more relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
11. Getting in trouble at school because of alcohol or tobacco use	1	2	3	4	5
12. Avoiding social situations like parties because there is alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Getting involved in a fight when under the influence of alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
14. Engaging in risky activities in order to obtain alcohol / tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
15. Feeling comfortable with a friend who drinks alcohol or smokes tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
16. Getting sick because of smoking too much tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
17. Having health problems as a result of substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5
18. Drinking alcohol at social functions like Parties	1	2	3	4	5
19. Getting convinced that substance use (alcohol, tobacco) is the root cause of many problems among student	1	2	3	4	5
20. Using more than one substance at a time (tobacco, alcohol)	1	2	3	4	5
21. Taking alcohol to feel less shy	1	2	3	4	5