

## You are Not Cool, Teasing Those Who Don'T Use Substances. A Case of Rundu Education Circuit Learners, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Faustinus Shikukutu\*

Department of Behavioral Science, the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, EmekYezreel, Israel

### Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

Anecdotal evidence suggests that schools in Kavango East Region are experiencing an increase in substance abuse despite all the measures in place and it is believed to be one of the drivers of indiscipline in schools. The use of substances amongst the youth is of particular concern in Namibia as it relates to many social problems such as crime and violence in society, affecting the academic performance of learners, involvement in motor vehicle accidents and leads to school dropout [1,2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined substance abuse as "the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and drugs" [3]. Substance use is a complex problem at the intersection of public health, safety and social issues globally and learners who use substances display behaviors that adversely impacts the quality of learning and teaching. The phenomenon exhibits a great deal of worry in some parents, teachers and other stakeholders, who are somehow not able to succeed in their attempt to control the increasing number of learners who are joining the queue.

#### 1. Findings from a study carried out in Rundu Education Circuit reveal that;

a) Majority (70%) of combined and secondary schools in the circuit are believed to be affected by substance use by learners

b) Alcohol is the most abused substance in Rundu Education Circuit, with about 56.4% of the 16-20 year-olds abusing the substance. This is followed by cannabis ((marijuana/dagga) at 41% and Angolan whisky/Kizomba at 25.6%.

c) 2.6% of those between 16-20-year-olds use cocaine, benzene, glue sniffing and hubbly bubbly occasionally as well.

Substance use among pupils is getting out of hand in Namibia and children as young as 11 years are smoking dagga and selling drugs [4]. Learners are enticed to join the substance use train by their peers and those who refuse are seen as not being cool or smart. The use of substances leads to poor academic performance, fighting, use of abusive language, change in attitudes and increased aggression.

Reasons for substance use by learners

To it into friends /peer pressure

- Just for fun
- To feel cool
- To feel grown up
- Enhance confidence
- Social problems
- To feel powerful
- Easy access to illegal substances and availability
- Experimentation

- For status

Type of substances majority of learners are involved in

- Alcohol
- Weed/dagga/marijuana/cannabis
- Other type of alcohol (Angolan whisky/Kizomba)

### Conflict of interest

The authors do not have any conflict of interest.

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### References

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\*Corresponding author: Faustinus Shikukutu, Department of Philosophy, School of Education, Rundu, Namibia, E-mail: fshikukutu40@gmail.com

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