



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

RESEARCH REPORT

**INVESTIGATING DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN
THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

POLICE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION UNIT

MARCH 2022

FOREWORD BY THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The use of drugs among young people has worsened and is a serious cause for concern to all citizens in the country. It is also saddening that the social ill has found its ways to the institutions of learning and thus affecting the future of our youths who are supposed to be the future leaders of the country.

Our children are hooked to drugs in their early age, and this has become a norm in the society. There are various kinds of drugs that have found their way to our schools, and they are commonly used by school learners in Limpopo Province.

The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 declares that all public schools should be drug free and dangerous object free zones.



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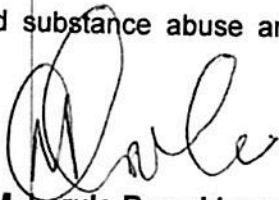
The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 declares that all public schools should be drug free and dangerous object free zones.

The National Development Plan notes that the relationship between drugs, alcohol and violence requires an in-depth study. It also suggests that specific projects should be developed by the JCPS cluster departments to address these issues in a comprehensive, coordinated, and decisive manner.

The current socioeconomic problems and social ills in the province are said to be aggravated by this substance abuse by our children at schools and in the communities.

The department is continuously conducting school safety programmes that shed more light on school safety because the reality is that, lack of knowledge about these safety programmes and the ineffective implementation thereof, depict a concerning gap in efforts to combat drug and substance abuse among learners.

In order to intensify the fight against crime and promote safety in schools, I urge all role players to join hands in increasing the capacity of Limpopo schools to enable them to develop clear policies and strategies in an effort to prevent and manage this menace of drug and substance abuse among school learners, to save our children, our future leaders.



Hon. M.M. Lerule-Ramakhanya

MEC for Transport and Community Safety

Date 04/04/2022

DECLARATION

This research report was conducted by the Research Unit within the Department of Transport and Community Safety in Limpopo province. It is therefore prohibited to duplicate or copy any part of this report without the knowledge and consent of the Department. In the event that it is discovered and proven beyond any reasonable doubt that this work is submitted for personal academic overreach (plagiarism), the department will have no choice, but to institute disciplinary action. Department of Transport and Community Safety produces research reports on annual basis which provide rationale for policy review, development and crafting of crime prevention strategies were necessary. The recommendations thereof become enforceable from the time the research report is signed by the Executive Authority (EA) of the Department through SMART action plans coordinated across leading agencies implicated in the findings. All research reports are classified accordingly to form part of institutional memory of the department and to enable proper control on access of use of government information.



Ms. L.J Mulaudzi
Acting Head of Department
Department of Transport and Community Safety

31/03/2022
Date

ACRONYMS

AGBH	:	Assault with Grievously Bodily Harm
CPF	:	Community Police Forum
DOH	:	Department of Health
DOJCD	:	Department of Justice And Constitutional Development
DSD	:	Department of Social Development
JCPS	:	Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
NICRO	:	National Institute for Crime Prevention
NIH	:	National Institute of Health
SANCA	:	South African National Council On Alcoholism And Drug Dependance
SAPS	:	South African Police Service
SGB	:	School Governing Body
SMT	:	School Management Team
YOLO	:	You Only Live Once organization

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Globally, drugs and substance abuse are an enormous social and health problem which is affecting people of all ages (South African Government, 2013). In South Africa, the Department of Education reported that 13% of grade 8 to grade 11 used drugs, while 19% participated in binge drinking. Department of Health reported that alcohol is the third leading risk for death and disability in South Africa. Department of Transport reported that 56% of transport related deaths had positive blood alcohol levels and around 70% of domestic violence has been associated with arrestees indicated that they were under the influence of alcohol (South African Government, 2013).

A drug cocktail called nyaope, whoonga or wunga is destroying the lives of many young people in South Africa (Nyanda, 2019). Parents, learners, educators, and community members fear their children who are using drugs and smoking dagga (Nyanda, 2019). These children threaten their parents, educators, learners, and community members to such extent that they are afraid to talk about these issues (Sigasa, 2015). There are many factors that may make people vulnerable, including genetics, family background, mental health issues, work stress, financial pressure, and relationship problems (Netcare, 2018).

The effects of this scourge led the government of the Republic of South Africa to appoint an inter-ministerial committee in 2010 to address alcohol and drug abuse which includes the Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Transport (South African Government, 2013). In 2011, Draft Control of Marketing of alcohol Beverages Bill was tabled before the cabinet for consideration (South African Government, 2013). National strategy for the prevention and management of alcohol and drug use amongst learners in schools was developed in 2013.

"South Africa has no regular representative surveys on substance abuse, which makes it difficult to understand the full extent of the problem. The stats are available only for people admitted for treatment. But we do know that the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU) project, which is an alcohol and other drug (AOD)

sentinel surveillance system, and is operational in nine provinces, shows that there was an increase in the number of people admitted for treatment – from 8 787 in 2016, to 10 047 in 2017, across 80 centers.” (Netcare 2018)

Alcohol, marijuana (dagga), cocaine, tik and heroin are some of the most frequently used substances in this country, according to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) (Netcare 2018).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Limpopo province is increasingly experiencing child-on-child violence associated with gang activities. The rapid emergence of gangs is believed to be linked with the use of drugs and substances. These gangs have names that seem to suggest that they are formidable and highly organized. Traditionally schools were perceived as a place where learners were safe for the whole day. However, it has turned out that they have recently become a marketplace for drugs and a place where gang members connect to identify their targets.

Due to use of drugs, learners' behavior has become unpredictable - making schools the least safe places (Department of Transport and Community Safety, 2020). Thus, the department deemed it imperative to examine the nature of the problem, its depth and extent to which it exists in the schools as a way of intensifying the fight against crime and promoting safety in schools and communities in Limpopo.

1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to highlight the prevalence of drugs and substance abuse by learners in Limpopo province to find possible solutions which ensure that the learners and educators are safe in schools.

1.4. KEY OBJECTIVES

- To identify the type of the drugs and substance abuse by learners in schools.
- To understand the link between drugs and substance abuse and criminal acts in schools.
- To evaluate school safety programs in Limpopo province.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the common types of drugs and substances used by learners in Limpopo province?
- Is there a link between drugs, substance abuse and criminal acts at schools in Limpopo province?
- What are the school safety programs used to prevent drugs, substance abuse and criminal acts in schools in Limpopo province?

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study was to contribute towards the prevention of criminal activities happening in schools linked with drugs and substance abuse and influence relevant policies by:

- Identifying the type of the drugs and substance abuse by learners in schools.
- Understanding the link between drugs and substance abuse and criminal acts in schools.
- Evaluating school safety programs in Limpopo province.

1.7. PARTNERSHIP

All work related to the research project such as development of research proposal, interviewing the participants, capturing of data, assessment of data, analysis of data and consolidation of data and development of research report was done by researchers within the Department of Transport and Community Safety (Limpopo province). Therefore, the study was not outsourced or contracted to any external service providers.

1.8. LIMITATIONS

The study was case-study-design based in Limpopo province. Therefore, the findings of the study will not be generalized in the entire country or globally. It is noteworthy that some of the SGB members were not easily accessible and that reduced the number of responses expected.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the types of substances abused, the relationship between substance abuse and criminal activities as well as the importance of school safety programme. De Vos (2005) asserts that literature review is aimed at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. In this chapter the types of substances commonly abused will be discussed as well as the link or the relationship between substance abuse and criminal activities.

2.1.1 TYPES OF SUBSTANCES

Masiko and Xinwa (2017) define substance abuse as a habitual, compulsive, excessive and harmful use of a substance, including illicit drugs, alcohol, and prescription medication, which may lead to addiction and dependence and have psychological and physiological effects.

Substance abuse is a major challenge for many young people globally. Mbandlwa and Dorasamy (2020) reported that South Africa is experiencing high levels of alcohol abuse. This is substantiated by several authors that alcohol is the most abused substance in the world. According to Monitoring the Future Survey, a continuing study of American youth, from 2020, alcohol was the most popular drug used by teens. In 2020, 33.6% of 12th graders said that they had consumed alcohol in the past month. There are different reasons why youngsters/learners use substances such as alcohol and drugs. According to Hull (2021) there are several popular drugs with teens, all with different effects and rates of use. Currently, the drugs most used by teens are:

- marijuana,
- cocaine,
- stimulants,
- painkillers and prescription drugs,
- spice and K2,
- heroine,
- crystal meth,

- hallucinogens and,
- inhalants.

Johnston, Miech, Bachman and Schulenberg (2015) in their article they identified six (6) most abused drugs by high school learners in the late 1970s and early 1980s as follows:

- Marijuana (47%)
- Amphetamines (22%)
- Sedatives (18%)
- Tranquilizers (17%)
- LSD (11%)
- Cocaine (9%).

It was further indicated that by 2016 drug use trends varied significantly. After a cocaine epidemic in the 1980s, teens tried more hallucinogens in the 1990s, particularly the LSD. However, the number of teens trying drugs in all categories is significantly down from the 1970s, the only exception is marijuana use Johnston et.al (2021).

A worrying trend of substance abuse among South African youth was exposed during Drug awareness week (Citizen: July 2018). In a statement, Life Mental Health Agency said research shows that while 15% of citizens had drug problem, 27% of adolescents used dagga, 35 % of them drank alcohol and 29% engaged in binge drinking.

The agency also noted the increasing abuse of legal medications such as ARVs, painkillers and cough syrup resulting in what is referred to as 'silent addictions. Nevertheless, Levy (2020) emphasized that commonly abused substances as identified by several authors are:

- **Alcohol**

Alcohol use is common and is the substance most often used by adolescents. By 12th grade, more than 70% of adolescents have tried alcohol, and nearly half are considered current drinkers (having consumed alcohol within the past month). Heavy alcohol use is also common, and adolescent drinkers may have significant alcohol toxicity. Nearly 90% of all alcohol consumed by adolescents occurs during a binge, putting them at risk of accidents, injuries, unwanted sexual activity, and other bad outcomes. Society and the

media portray drinking as acceptable or even fashionable. Despite these influences, parents can make a difference by conveying clear expectations to their adolescent regarding drinking, setting limits consistently, and monitoring. On the other hand, adolescents whose family members drink excessively may think this behavior is acceptable. Some adolescents who try alcohol go on to develop an alcohol use disorder. Known risk factors for developing a disorder include starting drinking at young age and genetics. Adolescents who have a family member with an alcohol use disorder should be made aware of their increased risk (Levy, 2020).

- **Nicotine in tobacco**

Rates of tobacco use among adolescents fell dramatically in the 1990s and 2000s and continue to decline. The National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) survey reported that in 2019, about 5.7% of 12th graders reported current cigarette use (smoked in the previous 30 days), down from 28.3% in 1991 and from 7.6% in 2018; only about 2% report smoking every day. However, most adults who smoke cigarettes begin smoking during adolescence. If adolescents do not try cigarettes before age 19, they are very unlikely to become smokers as adults. Children as young as age 10 may experiment with cigarettes.

The strongest risk factors for adolescent smoking are having parents who smoke (the single most predictive factor) or having peers and role models (e.g., celebrities) who smoke. Other risk factors include:

- Poor school performance
- High-risk behavior (e.g., excessive dieting, particularly among girls; physical fighting and drunk driving, particularly among boys; use of alcohol or other substances)
- Poor problem-solving abilities
- Availability of cigarettes
- Poor self-esteem

Adolescents may also use tobacco in other forms. About 3.5% of high school students use smokeless tobacco; this rate has declined over the past 10 years. Smokeless tobacco

can be chewed (chewing tobacco), placed between the lower lip and gum (dipping tobacco), or inhaled into the nose (snuff). Pipe smoking is relatively rare in the US. The percentage of people > age 12 who smoke cigars has declined.

Parents can help prevent their adolescent from smoking and using smokeless tobacco products by being positive role models (that is, by not smoking or chewing), openly discussing the hazards of tobacco, and encouraging adolescents who already smoke or chew to quit, including supporting them in seeking medical assistance if necessary (Levy,2020).

- **Electronic cigarette products (vaping products)**

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, e-cigs, vapes) use heat to volatilize a liquid containing the active ingredient, typically nicotine or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC); there is no combustion involved. Electronic cigarettes initially entered the market as nicotine cessation devices for adult smokers. They have since morphed into "vapes," which are highly attractive to and have become increasingly popular among adolescents over the past several years, especially among adolescents of middle and upper socioeconomic status. Current e-cigarette use (nicotine vaping, not counting other substances) among 12th graders increased markedly from 4.5% in 2013 to 25.5 % in 2019 according to a survey sponsored by the NIH (1). About 45.6% of 12th graders have tried e-cigarettes (nicotine and other substances).

Because there are no combustion products of tobacco, electronic cigarettes cause different adverse effects compared to adverse health consequences caused by smoking. However, other chemicals contained in vaping products can cause lung injury, which can be acute, fulminant, or chronic and, in its most severe form, lethal. In addition, these products can deliver very high concentrations of nicotine and THC. THC and nicotine are highly addictive, and toxicity is possible. E-cigarettes are increasingly the initial form of exposure for adolescents to nicotine, but their effect on the rate of adult smoking is unclear. Other potential long-term risks of e-cigarettes are also unknown (Levy,2020)

- **Marijuana**

Marijuana use in teens has declined despite laws legalizing recreational marijuana use in some states. According to statistics, less than 6% of 12th-grade students use marijuana every day. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use also shows that 0.7% of 8th-grade students and 3.4% of 10th graders use marijuana daily.

Marijuana may be relatively popular among teens because it is easy for them to obtain. Additional statistics from the National Survey on Drug Use show that 80% of 12th graders feel it would be easy for them to get marijuana, with 65% of 10th-grade students reporting the same. In recent years, the perceived risk associated with marijuana use has also decreased among teens, so they may use marijuana because they feel it is safe to do so (Hull, 2021).

- **Cocaine**

The National Institute of Drug Abuse defines cocaine as an addictive stimulant drug made from leaves of the coca plant native to South America. Mhlongo (2005) further indicated it is an extremely addictive drug and is illegal to possess or deal with. Its continuous use leads to rapid deterioration of the body, especially of the nervous system with permanent and irreversible injuries.

It was further indicated that it comes in two forms:

Powder cocaine- which is a white powder (scientists call it hydrochloride salt). Street dealers often mix cocaine with other substances like cornstarch, talcum powder or sugar. Crack-is a form of cocaine that has been processed to make a rock crystal that people smoke. Cocaine provokes marked excitation, with an increase in intellectual activity, talkativeness, euphoria and increase muscular strength. When the dose is increased, shivers, nervousness and even convulsion may occur (Ondieko and Mokuu, 2012). It can enter the body by nose through snorting, and directly into the blood stream by injecting or rubbing it into gums above the teeth.

- **Nyaope**

Nyaope is a street drug commonly used in South Africa. It is a mixture of low-grade heroine, cannabis products, antiretroviral drugs and other materials added as cutting agents. It is highly physiologically addictive substance which is smoked by users (Mthembi, Mwenesongole and Cole; 2018). Nyaope is a white powder that sometimes takes on a creamy tint. It is usually sold in small parcels at R30 a portion. Boys in Johannesburg will tell you that it all began in Pretoria, with Nigerians responsible for the supply (Letsatsi-Duba; 2013). The Citizen newspaper article (2018) also substantiated that nyaope is a popular drug in South Africa and is one of the most lethal in the world, as it is said to contain rat poison, soap powder and antiretrovirals.

2.3 THE LINK BETWEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

It is widely known that there is a relationship between the use or abuse of substances and criminal behaviour or activities. No one is surprised by the complex interconnections among drugs, alcohol, violence, and criminal behavior. Statistics repeatedly bear out the strong association between substance abuse and crime, some of which is violent in nature. Of course, drug abuse and drinking can also lead to violent behavior that is not reported and never makes it to the criminal justice system. Both alcohol and drug abuse can lead to criminal behavior and can be used as a coping mechanism by those who have a history of crime.

2.3.1 Alcohol Abuse and Crime

Since alcohol is legal and readily available, it has an especially strong connection with crime and violence. Forty percent of all crimes today are associated with alcohol use and approximately 37 percent of offenders serving in jail report drinking at the time they were arrested. In fact, alcohol was found to be associated with violent crimes (murder, rape, assault, spousal abuse, and child abuse) more than any illegal drug. In about half of all homicides and assaults, the offender, the victim, or both parties were reported to have been drinking. (<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com>). Martens and Generes (2022)

substantiated the above statement as they also indicated that Substance abuse is the largest precipitator of violence in adults and adolescents, but there are other factors that impact an individual's behavior and contribute to a person's aggressive tendencies. Risk factors tend to exist in a cluster rather than isolation. Thus, risk factors for aggressive behaviors may stem from a combination of factors such as age; gender; co-occurring mental health problems; family history, drug, or alcohol abuse; adverse childhood experiences; antisocial attitudes and beliefs; location etc.

2.3.2. Drug Abuse and Crime

The correlation between substance abuse and violent behavior has been well documented. One study found that more than 26% of respondents who reported using alcohol, cannabis, and cocaine in a 12-month period, also reported committing a violent crime within the same time frame. Some individuals use aggressive techniques to steal money to buy more drugs; others may be involved in the drug-trafficking, which often leads to violent crimes. For others, violence is a long-term side effect of the substance they abuse. Individuals addicted to methamphetamine for instance, may suffer from anxiety, confusion, insomnia, mood disorders, and aggressive or violent behavior.

In addition, the psychological risks associated with cocaine use include violent, erratic, or paranoid behavior. Similarly, hallucinogens may cause unpredictable, erratic, and violent behavior that can lead to serious injury or even death.

2.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAMME

Schools in South Africa, especially after 1994, seem to be dysfunctional and unsafe (Christie, 1998; Bester and Du Plessis, 2010). They have become unsafe because of multiple forms of violence ranging from assault, rape, carrying dangerous weapons, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, burglary, vandalism, criminal offences, theft, gang-related violence, suicides, alcohol-, drug- and medication abuse (Govender, 2006).

While noting the policies, frameworks and programmes that have been developed since 1994, there seems to be a problem with the implementation of many of these initiatives (Roper, 2002). It would seem that there is a tendency, in general, especially in developing countries, to focus on formulating and initiating policies, projects and programmes with less emphasis on implementation (Dyer, 1999).

Layane (2014) asserts that there seems to be strong evidence indicating that there was no implementation of the Safe Schools Programme (Department of Education, 2002) at the target schools. In light of the above, it becomes evident that implementation of schools safety programmes is a concern and may need to be scrutinized.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study followed qualitative research approach. Data of the study was generated using interview guide as a form of questionnaire. Both purposive and convenient samplings were used for this study. Purposive sampling was used to select the learners' displaying signs of substance use at schools. Learners, educators, and members of the school governing body who are available and concerted to participate in the study were also interviewed.

3.2 TARGET POPULATION

According to Bless and Hingson-Smith (2006:98) population refers to a set of objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics.

A total of 15 (fifteen) schools around the province were targeted. Data was collected from three (3) schools per district where three (3) school learners per school, two (2) SGB members per school and two (2) SMT members per school were interviewed, although some of the identified schools did not respond positively. In addition, interview with Social Workers and other officials from South African National Council on Alcoholism (SANCA), and officials who deal with school safety from South African Police Service (SAPS).

3.3 SAMPLING

This study will focus on both non-probability purposive and convenient samplings.

3.3.1 Non-probability purposive sampling

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2006) a non-probability purposive sampling strategy involves selecting units that are judged to be the most common in the population under investigation. This implies that people will be selected deliberately because their views and experiences will be relevant to the issue concerned. Purposive sampling will be used to select the learners in schools displaying signs of substance use in grade 11 and grade 12 from schools with history of substance use or unruly behaviour amongst learners. The schools will be identified through the help of Department of Education,

South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) as well as the South African Police Service (SAPS).

3.3.2 Non-probability convenience sampling

Mohamed Elfil and Ahmed Negida (2017) assert that this is the most convenient and widely used method of sampling. It is called convenient sampling as the researcher selects the sample elements according to their convenient accessibility. Therefore, for the purpose of this study the researcher selected both School management team (SMT) and school governing body (SGB) members who were accessible at the time of data collection. The researcher's sample was as follows:

Table 1: Participant sample for the study

Name of district	No. of schools	No. of Learners	No. of SMT	No. of SGB	SAPS Members	SANCA Officials	Total
Capricorn	3	9	6	6	3	1	25
Mopani	3	9	6	6	3	0	24
Sekhukhune	3	9	6	6	3	0	24
Vhembe	3	9	6	6	3	0	24
Waterberg	3	9	6	6	3	0	24
Total	15	45	30	30	15	1	121

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

The primary data was collected using an interview guide which served as a questionnaire. They were distributed to all identified participants as per the sampling table. Primary data was said to be more reliable for this study since they were from the original source.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data was organized and converted the data collected into text units and themes. It was also analyzed by sorting responses to open questions into broad themes.

3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical concerns are considered as an integral part of the planning and implementation of the research. Therefore, the researcher in planning research, needs to be aware of the agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research. Researchers are responsible for designing and carrying out research both knowledgeably and ethically (Milley, O" Meila and Dubois, 2001). The following ethical considerations were considered for this study.

3.6.1. Permission to conduct study

The department of Education was the key stakeholder of this research. Therefore, it was important that permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Head of Department of Education in Limpopo province. In addition, authority was sought from the Executive Council of the Department. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher also obtained the ethical clearance from the Limpopo Provincial Ethics Clearance committee (LPREC) through Office of the Premier.

3.6.2. Harm to experimental subjects

The researcher ensured that participants were not exposed to any harm as they were prepared and given information prior their participation. Motepe (2006) stresses that the researcher should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

3.6.3. Necessity for Informed Consent

Participants signed a consent form before participation in the study to ensure their willingness to participate. The researcher also put emphasis that, participation was voluntary, and participants who did not want to participate withdrew from the study.

3.6.4 Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to private information (De Vos, 2002). The study adhered to this ethical aspect by ensuring that information provided by the participants is safely stored and never shared with other people. According to Strydom (2005) anonymity means that no one, including the researcher, should be able to identify any subject afterwards. The researcher ensured that the respondents' identity would not be disclosed or accessed by other people and that their identity will be protected.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected. The chapter is divided into three categories. Firstly, the responses from the questionnaires completed by school learners; secondly, the responses from questionnaires completed by SMTs and SGBs and lastly, responses from questionnaires completed by police officers and SANCA officials. The data collected was analyzed by looking at the responses of each participant interviewed using a qualitative method which divided questions into themes.

Table 2: Summary of collected data

Category	Target	Reached
School Learners	45	42
SMTs	30	26
SGBs	30	20
Police Officers	15	13
SANCA Officials	1	3
Total	121	104

4.2. PART ONE: INSIGHT INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL LEARNERS

Theme 4.2.1: Types of substances

The most identified substances by learners in schools in their high percentage order is Marijuana, alcohol, Crystal meth, Cigarettes and Nyaope. Few learners also pointed out Kat, Glue, Cocaine, Caffein, electric cigar as well as cough mixture with soda drinks (known as purple drink or lean), one learner identified cookies with weed inside (space

cookies). It can therefore be suggested that most of the identified substances are easy to get as compared to cocaine which is mostly a drug supplied by high profile drug lords.

Theme 4.2.1.1: Contributing factors towards the abuse of substances.

Peer pressure, gangsterism, stress, loss of a loved one, lack of sporting activities, parks, play grounds, child abused by parents, being bullied, having more money, poverty, spoilt brads, parental negligence, high unemployment rate, anger, parents who also abuse substances, lack of self-motivation, depression, low self-esteem, conflict in family relationships, smoking for fun, easy access to drugs, electronic and social media influence, family history and addictions were amongst the contributory factors indicated by respondents.

According to the responses peer pressure seems to be the dominating factor towards learners abusing substances. This is also substantiated by Masiko and Xinwa (2017) in their article that peer pressure plays a great part in alcohol and substance abuse allowing young people to fit in with their peers and be socially accepted.

Respondent A *"If you are in a group of drug addicts and you want to fit in, you end up joining sessions."*

Lack of motivation, low self-esteem, parental negligence, or lack of parental support also push children towards abusing substance. Situations that cause pain such as anger, poverty, depression, being bullied, child abuse and stress were also identified as contributory factors by learners. Nevertheless, there are also situations such as smoking for fun, having lot of money as a child, being spoilt at home, family history of substance abuse/additions as well as lack of recreational facilities both at school and in the community.

Respondent B *"Lack of sport activities, parks, and playgrounds for children".*

Theme 4.2.1.2: Link between substance abuse and criminal activities.

According to the results, there is a direct link between substance abuse and criminal activities as most of the respondents indicated that substances lead to stealing to feed

the habit of which stealing is a criminal act, as well as involvement in both domestic and assault cases.

Respondent C *"When you are high in drugs, they make you not to think straight and do illegal things".*

This also substantiated by another respondent (**Respondents D**) who indicated as follows *"Criminal acts are often influenced by substance abuse because boys who smoke tend to fight each other over lousy things as they are not in their good mental state, so when fighting they use sharp weapons and someone might die, or even steal something valuable to buy substance.*

Theme 4.2.1.3: To evaluate school safety programs in Limpopo province.

From the responses most of the learners are not aware of any school safety programmes as they did not respond to the question. However, there are few of those who responded positively indicating that there are police officers who are being called to search learners looking for unwanted items in schools. Some indicated social workers who visit the schools to help those who are troubled emotionally and provide counselling and programs such as YOLO and Ke Moja Programme.

Theme 4.2.1.4: Challenges related to substance abuse faced by school learners.

The learner respondents responded affirmatively that there are challenges at school related to the abusers of substances such as bullying of other children, poor academic performance/Not doing their schoolwork/dropping out of school/staying focused in class. Other issues include anger, aggressive behaviour, misbehavior, stealing, addiction, and low self-esteem as other challenges. This means that according to the respondents' substance abuse affects the functioning and behavior of those who are using or abusing it especially the youth. It also contributes towards high rate of unemployment due to learners or youths dropping out of school.

Theme 4.2.1.5: How to stop substance abuse amongst school learners.

The respondents indicated that participation in sporting activities, drug testing amongst school learners, Interdepartmental collaborations in addressing substance abuse

problems including SAPS, DSD, Health, establishing a support program for those who are using, arrest and prosecute those who are selling substances to learners can help to stop substance abuse amongst learners.

Most learners indicated rehabilitation centers in schools to stop substance abuse which might mean that the situation is already out of control as they do not see that the promotion of preventative programs can help. One of the learners indicated that there should be action taken against police officers who are working with children in terms of selling or getting access to drugs. One of the learners suggested investigation into the children's family circumstances to determine the root cause of the problem which might be abuse, neglect, or lack of support from parents or other family members.

4.3. PART TWO: INSIGHT INFORMATION FROM SMT AND SGBS

Theme 4. 3.1: Types substances

The respondents in this category indicated that dagga, crystal meth, alcohol, and glue as well as cigarettes are the most used substances in schools. Kat, Tik and Cocaine were the least mentioned substances being used by learners according to teachers and parents as they are mostly expensive and not readily available in rural areas.

Theme 4.3.1.1: Contributing factors towards substance abuse.

The results show that child headed families and/or children without supervision, peer pressure and lack of community sporting activities are the most contributory factors towards learners using or abusing substances such as alcohol and dagga. Family background has a bearing on substance abuse. Individuals who were raised in homes that were, for instance, affected by divorce and mental illness, and those who were raised in homes where illicit drugs and alcohol were consumed, are more likely to become users in adulthood. The logical basis is that life stressors in such homes may lead individuals to alcohol and other substances as a coping mechanism or an "escape" from their realities (Masiko & Xinwa; 2017).

Theme 4.3.1.2: Link between substance abuse and criminal activities.

According to the respondents there is a relationship between substance abuse and criminal activities such as bullying other children while under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. Stealing money either at home, at school or in the community to fit the habit of being under the influence as well as being involved in gangsterism due to peer pressure. Bullying of teachers is also rife due to children who are under the influence of substances, and this leads to criminal activities due to insults and assaults.

There are fights amongst school learners leading to criminal cases such as a common assault or assault GBH. One of the respondents said "substances contribute to abnormal behavior in a negative way. They condone misbehavior and less obedience to act beyond control. Learners without money for drugs will steal."

This is what some of the respondents had to say regarding the link between drugs and substance abuse and criminal activities:

Respondent D *"Some substances or drugs turn some learners to be violent or be bully towards each other".*

Respondent E *"learners that do not afford substances resort to stealing and bullying other learners to give them their pocket money so that they can buy drugs."*

Theme 4.3.1.3: Evaluation of school safety programs in Limpopo province.

According to the respondents there are interdepartmental stakeholders such as CPF, SAPS, Social Services, School support programs with SANCA, random drug testing at schools as well as random search by SAPs, parents, and learners support programs as well as social workers that are in partnership to implement the school safety programme.

Some members displayed more understanding on school safety programs i.e., one of the SMT members indicated as follows" the school is linked to local SAPS, in the process of formation of the safety community and development of the safety plan as well as linking the school with a local clinic and the Department of Social Development."

Theme 4.3.1.4: Challenges related to substance abuse faced by school learners.

The results from this category show that due to substance abuse, learners are experiencing challenges such as high rate of dropouts, absenteeism especially between grade 10-12, high failure rate, bunking of classes, bullying, stealing, gangsterism, lack of cooperation or concentration in class, peer influence and pressure, violence, robbery, high risk behavior and criminality, vandalism and theft, ill-discipline and difficulty for teachers to manage such a child, lack of respect, addiction and suicide amongst learners.

Theme 4. 3.1.5: What can be done to stop substance abuse amongst school learners.

The results from this category came up with concurring views to help stop substance abuse amongst learners. Their views or suggestions included learners' need to stay away from taverns, pubs etc., awareness campaigns by different stakeholders i.e. NGO's, SANCA, DOH, DSD, SAPS, DOJCD, whistle blowing to the police from people selling drugs and substances to children, visible policing in schools as well as random searches to children, adoption of school safety policies as well as, learners to be given more work to keep them busy at home as well as guidance and encouraging extra-mural activities, each school to have their own social workers and psychologists to address learner's challenges including substance abuse, community awareness campaigns etc. This is how some learners responded:

Respondent F *"Expulsion is better than suspension in order for learners to comply with school safety rules".*

Respondent G *"Installation of good security system sponsored by the Department of education as many schools failed financially in this regard.*

4.4PART THREE: INSIGHT INFORMATION FROM POLICE OFFICERS AND SANCA OFFICIALS

Theme 4. 4.1: Types of substances abused

According to the respondents in this category dagga has been found to be the most abused substance mostly by school learners. It is therefore followed by Nyaope, alcohol and crystal meth. Some of the respondents mentioned cocaine, mandrax, tik, sprite, cough mixture such as alcophyllex, eye drops as well as glue. However, glue was less mentioned by these respondents although it was one of the dominating substances mentioned by SMTs and SGBs.

Theme 4. 4.1.1: Contributory factors towards the abuse of substance

The results showed that peer pressure, family background which include the history of use or abuse, addiction within the family and lack of recreational facilities to keep learners off streets. Lack of parental control, children with depression due to parents' divorce or dysfunctional families, neglected children and abused children as well as children who are bullied turn to alcohol or other drug related substances.

Theme 4. 4.2.2: Link between substance abuse and criminal acts

The results show that most learners using or abusing substances commit crime by stealing from other learners, parents or even teachers to feed their addiction. They also become violent and bully other learners or their teachers as crystal methane makes them to be aggressive and thus give them an urge to attack their fellow learners or teachers which can lead to both common assault and assault GBH. Other respondents indicated that substance abuse can lead learners joining gangs or bringing dangerous weapons to school and threaten other learners with them which is a criminal activity.

From the SANCA perspective there are already learners who have committed those crimes and currently undergoing the diversion programme and some children who are suspended at schools or undergoing disciplinary hearings due to their behaviour which is influenced by the use or abuse of substances.

Respondents I from his/her experience mentioned "*most of the assault cases occurring at school are as a result of substance abuse*".

This is substantiated by another police officer, **Respondent J** indicating that "*most criminals are substance abusers. In most cases learners accused of committing crime are either drug addicts, alcohol abusers or even both*".

Theme 4. 4.2.3: Evaluation of school safety programme

The Police responded positively that there are school safety programmes in place as through their Crime Prevention Strategy they do random searches at schools for drugs and dangerous weapons, partner with other stakeholders such as Department of Social Development, Department of Health, SANCA, NICRO, Department of Education, Department of Justice etc. Other respondents indicated that they conduct crime awareness campaigns at schools and in the communities, initiated sports-against-crime activities. They mentioned also that they have established school safety committees and have school safety meetings. Nonetheless, it can be deduced from the responses that the school safety initiatives are not yet effective as one of the respondents indicated that they must be strengthened in partnership with other stakeholders particularly community members as represented by the Community Policing Forum (CPF).

Theme 4.4.2.4: Challenges faced by school learners in relation to substance abuse

The results show that learners who are using or abusing substances turn to drop out of school or sometimes force those in schools to sell drugs like nyaope and dagga in the school yards. It was also indicated that learners become disrespectful or display uncontrollable behaviour towards their teachers and fellow learners. There also seems to be a high rate of absenteeism among learners abusing drugs and substances. One of the respondents indicated "learners fail to attend classes while busy smoking in the school toilets". The respondent further indicated that most of the learners abusing drugs and substances end up having mental illness and fail to progress to other grades as well as the risk of being exposed to criminal activities.

Rape was also identified as a challenge especially of girls who are under the influence of substances, mostly by their peers and their cases not being reported as well as teenage pregnancy.

Theme 4.4.2.5: What can be done to stop substance abuse amongst school learners.

The respondents indicated the importance of placing Social Workers in schools to address problems including drugs and substance abuse. They also suggested training on School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies to have basic information for intervention as without basic information matters turn out to be worse due to improper intervention. Police visibility and strengthening of the school safety program was also identified to stop the substance abuse challenge as well as partnership with all relevant stakeholders.

4.5. PART 4: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Dagga, Alcohol, crystal meth, tobacco and glue are mentioned to be the most consumed substances by school learners. According to Manala (2018) nyaope is a popular drug, and it is one of the most lethal in the world. However, that doesn't seem to be the case in Limpopo as per the respondents' responses as it has been mentioned less compared to dagga, crystal meth, alcohol etc.
- Lack of recreational/sports facilities, Peer pressure, Family dysfunction, Lack of parental support and stress were said to be the contributory factors to learners abusing substances.
- There is a strong relationship between drugs and substance abuse and criminal activities especially amongst school learners. Criminal activities such as bullying, common assault, assault GBH, theft etc. are mostly influenced by the abuse of substances.
- Some of the learners were not aware of any school safety programmes implemented in their schools. Whereas both the SMTs and SGBs indicated partnership with relevant stakeholders such as DOH, DSD, DOJCS, SAPS, CPF etc. School ransom searches

by SAPS, awareness campaigns, sporting activities etc. were said to be conducted at schools as part of the safety programme, however the establishment of committees as well as the plan still need to be strengthened.

- It was indicated that challenges faced by school learners in relation to substance abuse include absenteeism, dropping out of school, being bullied to sell drugs to other learners, disrespect, and uncontrollable behaviour, joining gangsterism, poor concentration in class etc.
- Respondents suggested that police visibility as well as random searches in schools might address the substance abuse challenge amongst school learners as well as the strengthening of school safety programs

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the objectives and findings of this study, this chapter will briefly discuss the conclusions as well as the recommendations thereof.

The study was aimed at to highlight the prevalence of substance abuse by school learners in the province, to find possible solutions to ensure that learners and educators are safe in schools. To address this research problem, several research questions were posed. The research objectives were also formulated which assisted in responding to the questions. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To identify the type of substances abused by learners in schools.
- To understand the link between substance abuse and criminal acts in schools.
- To evaluate school safety programs in Limpopo Province.

5.1. Conclusions

While drawing conclusions in relation to the objectives, it can therefore be concluded that dagga, alcohol, tobacco, crystal methane and glue were abused by school learners. This has been substantiated by Hull (2021) that marijuana, alcohol, and crystal meth are the most used substances by teenagers. He further indicated that cocaine, stimulants, hallucinogens, painkillers, and prescription drugs etc. are also used by teenagers although according to this study's respondents, the usage of those drugs is limited in the schools around Limpopo. Therefore, this study has met this objective of identifying the substances (alcohol and drugs) abused by learners in the province.

It can also be concluded that there is a direct link between the substance abuse and criminal activities in schools. The summary of the research indicates that there is a strong link between substance abuse and criminal activity. Whether one precedes the other or not, it is the link that is between the two, which is of importance. Curtailing one will undoubtedly reduce the other. The need to participate in criminal activities is often due to the need for drugs. Drugs in turn, reduce the rational thinking of the individual and may, more likely, lead to criminal activities. While not every crime is linked to the use of

substance abuse, much is so connected. It is for this reason that I do not think that drugs should ever be legalized (Lowenstein; 2021).

In evaluating school safety programme in Limpopo, the programs are implemented but not as effective as there were some gaps identified where some learners were not aware of any school safety programmes, interestingly, all SMTs and SGBs were aware of them and indicated that they need to be strengthened. The school safety programmes promote the protection of students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, harassment, as well as drugs and substance use. The Department of Basic Education takes school safety seriously, thus, as a priority it has put in place various policies and measures to ensure the safety of all learners.

5.2. Recommendations

- To place professionals (Social Workers, Psychologists) in schools to address challenges faced by learners as they sometimes contribute towards learners abusing substances.
- Through the JCPS Cluster, relevant departments should conduct more awareness campaigns on the dangers and impact of substance abuse towards their health, families, community, economy etc.
- To strengthen the school sporting activities since most of them were disrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to create recreational facilities in the communities that will keep the learners busy and move them away from the streets where they become exposed to dangerous things like drugs or being involved with gangs.
- Every school should have a policy on how to deal with substances (alcohol & drugs) and a standard operating procedure thereof. SANCA offers the services to schools, to help them draft those policies as well as to help them with

implementation. Drug testing is also offered at a minimal cost. Therefore, where applicable it is important that schools partner with NGOs such as SANCA, NICRO and other related stakeholders.

- To strengthen the school safety programmes, through the establishment of the school safety committees with relevant stakeholders as per the school needs as well as their areas of operation, drafting of the school safety plans and ensure the implementation of the plan. The committees should also monitor and evaluate the plans.

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APPROVAL OF RESEARCH REPORT ON INVESTIGATING DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
BY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

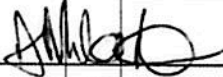


M.M. Mogashoa
Director: Police Research and Information Management

31/03/2022
Date

Comment:

The report is submitted for approval as it is the Branch
APP annual target which is achievable in the 4th quarter.

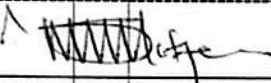


Ms. M.A. Nhlane-Mthimkulu
Chief Director: Provincial Secretariat for Police Service

31/03/2022
Date

Recommended/not recommended

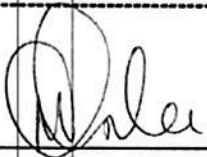
for approval



Ms. L.J. Mulaudzi
Acting Head of Department

31/03/22
Date

Approved/not approved



Hon. M.M. Lerule-Ramakhanya
MEC for Transport and Community Safety

04/03/2022
Date