

# Drug Abuse and Athletics: Implications in Adolescent and Youth Adjustment Problems

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## **Abstract:**

*The rapid evolution of information technology has driven libraries to explore innovative methods to leverage advanced technological breakthroughs like Blockchain. This opinion research examined the potential of blockchain technology in transforming library services, focusing on its decentralized, transparent, and safe data management capabilities. The study was necessitated by the need to address challenges related to data integrity, copyright management, and user privacy in libraries. The purpose of this research is to explore the applications, benefits, and challenges of integrating blockchain technology into library operations. The issues discussed in this research include the potential of blockchain technology to enhance data security, improve transparency, and streamline library operations. The researchers employed an analytical approach to discuss the issues raised in this research. The researchers highlighted on the benefits of blockchain technology in areas such as digital preservation, intellectual property management, and interlibrary loan systems. The findings indicated that blockchain technology has the potential to significantly enhance efficiency and security across numerous facets of library services. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that Libraries should invest in developing blockchain-based systems to enhance data security and transparency, and Librarians should receive training on blockchain technology to effectively integrate it into library operations.*

**Keywords:** *Blockchain technology, library services, data security, transparency, digital preservation*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The adjustment problems of the youth and adolescents of this generation is a very difficult task. This is because they are not only adjusting to the natural problems of physical growth and development but also to the fast rate of change of societal values and norms. The society changes because change is the most constant phenomenon. However the rate has been quickened by the current wave of pragmatism in which truth which was once seen as absolute is no longer so. Truth is now seen as relative. What is good and valued today may not be so seen or valued tomorrow. The materialistic situation in the country today has set confusion in the mind of the youth and adolescent and thus aggravated the adjustment problem (Coakley, 2021).

The youth has resorted to various means of adjusting to the changes in the society. Some of the means have been found to be positive while others are negative and can cause serious damages in the entire person involved. Examples of the above two directions are participation in athletics activities and use of drugs respectively. Participation in athletics often yields positive results while use of drugs in the long run yields negative adjustment results. Participation in athletics and use of drugs separately and jointly have psychological implications in the adjustment of the youth and adolescent to the fast changing society (Santrock, 2019).

## **2.0 Problems of the Adolescent and Youth**

The needs of human beings are fundamentally similar across all stages of life whether child, infant, adolescent, or adult. However, an adolescent or youth who successfully understands and manages these needs is more likely to develop into a well-adjusted adult and consequently live a more productive life with fewer psychological and social problems (Steinberg, 2020). The problems of adolescents and youth, therefore, are essentially the common human problems that arise from efforts to satisfy basic needs necessary for survival and well-being (Eccles & Roeser, 2021).

According to Ryan and Deci (2020), the most obvious human needs are those related to physical survival and well-being. Psychological needs, though less visible, are equally important as they relate to the mind and emotions. These include love, achievement, affection, belonging, approval, recognition, acceptance, and security. Contemporary scholars affirm that these psychological needs remain central to adolescent development and mental health outcomes.

Steinberg (2020) also identified additional needs such as independence, variety of experiences, guidance, time for reflection, and faith. These needs are numerous and interconnected. They may either be freely given or actively pursued. When they are not readily provided, adolescents may attempt to obtain them through various means, some of which may be socially unacceptable or harmful. This situation often contributes to adjustment challenges among adolescents and youth.

There is often confusion surrounding the identity of adolescents, both from the perspective of adults and the youths themselves. Some adults deny adolescents certain needs, assuming that they are capable of meeting these needs independently, while others overindulge them, thereby limiting their development of autonomy. In both cases, adolescents may adopt behaviors that conflict with socially acceptable norms in their attempts to meet these needs (Eccles & Roeser, 2021).

According to Kroger (2017), the problems of adolescence are numerous and complex. The period between the ages of 12 and 16 is often characterized by confusion and contradictions. During this stage, the adolescent, now biologically mature and emotionally intense, is faced with the critical task of self-discovery and identity formation. This aligns with modern developmental psychology, which emphasizes identity formation as a central developmental task during adolescence.

The identity crisis experienced by adolescents reflects a search for harmony and balance. Psychological adjustment depends on an individual's ability to manage self-worth through appropriate self-acceptance and a balanced evaluation of both personal and societal expectations. Adjustment problems arise when individuals either overestimate or underestimate themselves in relation to society or their own self-concept (Orth & Robins, 2019).

### **3.0 Psychological implications of Youth and Adolescent Participation in Athletics**

The physical actions of human beings are directed by their mental and emotional states and are sustained by underlying physiological processes. This suggests that the mind and body function as an integrated system; therefore, any effect on one invariably influences the other (Biddle, Mutrie and Gorely, 2019).

The recognition of the relationship between the mind and the body dates back to ancient times. For proper living, there must be nourishment for both the body and the mind. Religious teachings have also emphasized this balance. For instance, Jesus Christ highlighted that "man does not live by bread alone," implying the importance of spiritual and mental nourishment alongside physical sustenance. Similarly, Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:8, emphasized the need to balance physical and spiritual exercise. Classical philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, despite their philosophical differences, all upheld the ideal of a sound mind in a sound body as essential for human well-being. Modern psychology supports this long-held view through the concept of the mind-body relationship, often referred to as psychosomatic interaction (Taylor, 2021).

Beyond clinical conditions such as neurosis, which are often addressed in psychiatry, there are numerous everyday experiences that demonstrate the connection between mental and physical states. According to Biddle, et al., (2019) there is a relationship between headache and distress, continued work pressure and indigestion, as well as increased heart rate and fear. Contemporary research confirms that stress, anxiety, and emotional disturbances can manifest physically, leading to fatigue, headaches, and other health issues.

The influence of the mind on the body, and vice versa, occurs regardless of the intensity of either. Psychology, therefore, studies observable human behavior in order to understand underlying motivations and to predict or interpret actions (Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

Athletics involves voluntary and organized physical activities that require the use of large muscle groups. When individuals participate in athletic activities, their behaviors are often more open and expressive, making it difficult to conceal their true emotional and psychological states. Participation in sports has been widely studied within various

branches of psychology, particularly in sports psychology, which has become an essential field in modern sports organizations (Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

Engagement in athletics among youth and adolescents has been associated with several positive psychological outcomes, including improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety and depression, enhanced social interaction, and better emotional regulation. However, excessive pressure, competition, or poor coaching practices may also lead to stress and burnout among young athletes (Biddle et al., 2019). Thus, while athletics plays a crucial role in psychological adjustment, its impact largely depends on the context and manner in which it is experienced.

#### **4.0 Effects of Participation in Athletics on Youth Adjustment Problem**

Youth are generally more active than contemplative, largely because adolescence represents a period of peak physical energy and rapid growth and development. This stage is often associated with significant biological, emotional, and psychological changes, which may create adjustment challenges if not properly managed (Santrock, 2019). Many scholars have linked the early problems of adolescence to difficulties in coping with these rapid physical and developmental changes. Therefore, proper understanding and constructive use of the body can play a crucial role in reducing adjustment problems among adolescents and youth (Eccles & Roeser, 2021).

Athletics, by its very nature, involves action and physical engagement, making it particularly suitable for young people. Most healthy youths possess surplus energy, and participation in athletic activities provides a socially acceptable and productive outlet for releasing this energy (Biddle et al., 2019).

Participation in athletics also creates opportunities for meaningful interaction between youth and adults in a more relaxed and informal environment. As noted by Bucher (1972:39), youths often admire and emulate their coaches, who serve as role models. Contemporary research supports this view, indicating that coaches and mentors play significant roles in shaping adolescents' behavior, values, and emotional well-being (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity and Payne, 2021). In such settings, the fear of academic failure is minimized, and coaches are often well-positioned to understand the personal challenges faced by young athletes and provide guidance and counseling.

Athletics and sports can also provide psychological satisfaction similar to the temporary euphoria associated with drug use, but without the harmful aftereffects. Participation in sports can bring recognition, popularity, and a sense of achievement. Even in cases of defeat, young athletes learn to accept outcomes fairly and are motivated to improve, thereby fostering resilience and perseverance (Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

While athletics may serve as an end in itself for some individuals, for adolescents and youth, it often functions as a means to achieving broader developmental goals. Young people participate in sports for various reasons beyond physical fitness, including social approval, self-evaluation, self-esteem development, creative expression, personality integration, and skill acquisition. These attributes, when developed through athletics, can be transferred to other areas of life, thereby enhancing overall adjustment (Eime et al., 2021).

Competitive athletics have also been shown to satisfy fundamental psychological needs such as recognition, belonging, self-respect, and achievement, while providing a constructive outlet for physical energy and creativity. These findings align with contemporary motivational theories, which emphasize the importance of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in human development (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Furthermore, participation in sports contributes to the development of important personal qualities such as discipline, determination, persistence, initiative, self-control, and courage. These qualities are essential not only in sports but also in everyday life and are closely linked to positive psychological adjustment (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). Although it is not possible to exhaustively relate all these qualities to athletic situations, it is evident that many life skills required for success can be learned through sports and athletics. This idea is reflected in the metaphorical use of athletic imagery in broader life contexts, emphasizing perseverance, commitment, and the pursuit of goals.

#### **5.0 Use of Drugs in Athletics**

The use of external aids to enhance human performance is a long-standing aspect of human behavior. These aids may be spiritual (e.g., charms, rituals), psychological (e.g., hypnosis), or physical (e.g., substances and technological support). In many traditional African societies, including Igbo culture, wrestlers were known to rely on charms believed to enhance strength or provide protection. This reflects the broader human tendency to seek

assistance in achieving desired outcomes. Indeed, the advancement of civilization itself can be partly measured by the development of tools and aids that make tasks easier and more efficient (Coakley, 2021).

Athletics is not exempt from this tendency. Adolescents and youth, who are often driven by high ambition and the desire for quick success, are particularly susceptible to seeking shortcuts to performance enhancement. This is especially significant given that youth constitute the majority of participants in athletic activities. Historically, the use of substances to enhance performance dates back to ancient times, where stimulants were used to reduce fatigue and improve endurance (Lippi, Franchini and Guidi, 2019).

In contemporary times, the use of drugs commonly referred to as doping has become a major concern in sports globally. Doping involves the use of prohibited substances or methods to enhance athletic performance and is considered both unethical and harmful (World Anti-Doping Agency, 2023). The increasing prevalence of drug use in sports reflects broader societal pressures, including the commercialization of sports and the high value placed on winning (Coakley, 2021).

### **5.1 Why Adolescents and Youth Engage in Drug Use in Athletics**

The reasons why adolescents and youth engage in drug use in athletics are complex and multifaceted. One major factor is the intense pressure to succeed. Modern competitive sports, especially at elite levels, emphasize victory, recognition, and financial rewards, often overshadowing the original Olympic ideal of participation (Ntoumanis and Backhouse, 2018). This “win-at-all-costs” mentality can drive young athletes to seek artificial means of improving performance.

Additionally, adolescents are naturally more prone to experimentation and risk-taking behaviors due to ongoing psychological and neurological development (Steinberg, 2020). They may be influenced by coaches, peers, family members, or even commercial organizations promoting performance-enhancing substances. In some cases, authority figures such as coaches or trainers may directly or indirectly encourage the use of such substances, further increasing the likelihood of drug use (Backhouse, Whitaker and Petroczi, 2018).

Personal psychological factors also play a significant role. Issues such as low self-esteem, lack of confidence, fear of failure, and the desire for social recognition can push adolescents toward doping. Without proper guidance and support, young athletes may resort to drug use as a coping mechanism or as a means of achieving perceived success (Ntoumanis and Backhouse, 2018).

Institutional factors may also contribute to the problem. In some educational and sports settings, excessive emphasis on winning medals and achieving recognition can create environments that indirectly encourage unethical practices, including doping. This may be compounded by poor supervision and lack of adequate counseling services for young athletes (Backhouse et al., 2018).

### **5.2 Effects of Drug Use in Athletics**

Physiologically, performance-enhancing drugs may temporarily improve athletic performance by reducing fatigue, increasing endurance, relieving pain, and enhancing muscle mass and strength. However, these benefits are often short-lived and come with serious health risks, including cardiovascular problems, hormonal imbalances, addiction, and even death (World Anti-Doping Agency, 2023).

Psychologically, drug use may create a false sense of confidence, increased aggression, and a temporary feeling of well-being. Athletes may feel more capable and fearless, which can enhance performance in the short term. However, this artificial boost often leads to dependency, distorted self-perception, and long-term psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, and loss of self-worth when performance declines or drug use is discontinued (Lippi et al., 2019; Ntoumanis and Backhouse, 2018).

Thus, while drugs may appear to offer quick solutions to performance challenges, their overall impact on youth and adolescent development is largely negative. The motivation behind drug use is primarily psychological—the desire for success, recognition, and self-worth but the consequences often undermine both physical health and psychological adjustment.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Participation in athletics, though physical, offers an excellent means of adolescent and youth adjustment to psychological perform. Drug abuse by the adolescent and Youth is inimical to the use of athletics in solving the adjustment problem. That athletics has been made to attract the use of drugs is one of the greatest adolescent and youth adjustment problems in our time. One might conjecture that since drugs or ergogenic aid help the athlete to perform well it will help pace way for the youth to experience the much needed success through participation in athletics. Drug abuse in the long run is a negative approach to adolescent and adult adjustment problem. It creates more problem than it ever helps to solve especially when addiction occurs and it often does occur. Drug acts like blockade in a war. It is like flogging a child and preventing him from crying.

The mere thought of drug as an aid is itself a sign of danger. It is a sign of inability to grapple with reality and thus an individual seeks for an easy escape and drug unfortunately, affords a very temporary one. Drug abuse destroys the adolescent or youth and renders ineffective other acceptable and worthwhile means of solving adjustment problems. An already addicted youth may not be able to participate in athletics even if he so desires. This is because of the economic, social, moral physiologic and emotional side effects of drug addiction

The positive psychological effect which is gained through participation in athletics is judged on the bases of pure natural effort. Gradually the adolescent learns practically and emphatically among other things that he does not need to be the best to survive or the best all the time. He easily compares himself with others under the same situation. He learns to win without arrogance and to tolerate failure especially when he has put in his best. When an illegal or unacceptable external or artificial aid is applied, a psychological problem is created. This psychological problem results from such feelings as sense of guilt for having cheated, self-deceit as one knows he has not applied proper measure of his ability and dependence on the aid, just to mention a few.

The use of drugs does not only affect the user, but also demoralizes other competitors who are participating in their natural form. It creates bitterness against the drug performer as the athletes often know better these secretes and these who indulge in them even before the organisers suspect. It brings into focus those elements which the youth revolt against in the adult world. One of the most important attribute of athletics competition is fairness and justice. Every effort is made to make sure that all competitors are on equal footing. Criteria such as age, size weight and sometimes length of exposure are matched. This fairness and justice are some of the elements that pull the youth to sports. They want to test themselves against their fellow youth and nature. The youth revolt against the adult society is often based on corruption, injustice and double standard.

Popular professional and amateur athletes suffer serious psychological trauma when exposed or caught on dope. The news media quickly disseminated the information to the world. As a result even the honest prestige which the individual has built over the years through hardwork becomes doubtful overnight. This embarrassment does not stop with the individual it often extends to others associated with him.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

The bulk of the adolescent and youth are found in educational institutions. The heads of these institutions should encourage participation in athletics by providing enough funds to procure personnel, equipment and facilities. Excessive remuneration should be avoided especially at amateur level.

The approval of the budgets of Athletic organisers and leaders should not be tied to the number of gold medals won or the overall position of the contingent. This leads the leaders to encourage foul means of winning, including exposing the athletes to drugs. Sports organisers in institutions should avoid hiring of athletes. This enhances what the presenter refers to as amateur professionalism. These "amateur professionals" are forced to depend on drugs and other dubious means to maintain their standard and also to meet up with their many engagements. Principals and heads of Schools should avoid the use of interhouse sports competition as launching ceremonies to collect money which more often than not are never spent on sports. This creates distraction. Since the athletes do not get the attention of the spectators, most students convert this occasion to organizing parties at which these drugs are introduced. Serving and sale of alcohol and tobacco at athletic arena should be discouraged. The sponsoring of athletic meets by alcohol and tobacco producing companies is indeed an unfortunate situation. The case is even

worsened when popular athletes are used to advertise these commodities. Daily Champion of 29th April 1992, reports that sports organisers at Bayero University has rejected advertisement of alcohol by Guinness in NUGA '94. This is in spite of Guinness having sponsored NUGA for about eight (8) years. This is a bold attempt in this materialistic era. This apt should be emulated. Care should be exercised in selecting coaches and contingent leaders because these people have great influence on the young athletes.

Professional or even high amateur level coaches should be punished along with their athletes if proved beyond reasonable doubt that they were aware of the doping of their athletes. The coaches quite often expose and encourage their athletes to dope and quickly abandon them when they are caught. Good coaches psyche up their athletes through love, and proper communication, building of mutual trust and pep talks among others. There are psychologically accepted methods such as hypnosis. Much of the educational moral and psychological gains in athletics depend on the moral fibre of the coach and sponsors. Parents of talented athletes should also help to discourage use of drugs by their wards.

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