

# Drug Abuse and Muslim Youth: An Examination of the Social, Emotional and Spiritual Consequences

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Abstract	Original Research Article
<p>This study examines the multifaceted consequences of drug abuse among Muslim youth, focusing on the social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Drug abuse poses a significant threat to the well-being of young Muslims, impacting their individual lives, families, spiritual and communities. The research explores the social factors that contribute to drug abuse, including peer pressure, cultural norms, and socioeconomic disparities. It also investigates the emotional toll of addiction, such as anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation. Furthermore, the study delves into the spiritual consequences, considering the conflict between drug use and Islamic teachings, the disruption of religious practices, and the erosion of moral values. The findings highlight the devastating impact of drug abuse on Muslim youth's relationships, mental health, and spiritual well-being. This study underscores the need for culturally sensitive and faith-based interventions to address the root causes of drug abuse and promote holistic recovery. By understanding these interconnected consequences, this research aims to inform effective prevention and intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of Muslim youth, promoting their holistic well-being and fostering a healthier, more resilient community.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Drug Abuse, Muslim Youth, Social Consequences, Emotional Consequences, and Spiritual Consequences.</p> <p><b>Citation:</b> Adeoye, A. W., &amp; Jimoh, O. A. (2025). Drug abuse and Muslim youth: An examination of the social, emotional and spiritual consequences. <i>GAS Journal of Religious Studies (GASJRS)</i>, 2(4). [1-6]</p>	

## INTRODUCTION

The paper aims at examining the social, emotional, and spiritual consequences of drug abuse amongst the Muslim youth. Ordinary, drug is a substance used as a medication or in the preparation of medication upon the prescription of pharmacist. Also, it is what could bring a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). While the abuse of drug and substances is the illegal application and administration of drugs without medical prescriptions by a qualified medical practitioner in order to get intoxicated or derive a limited satisfaction other than what the substances are medically meant for. However, drug abuse is a Global problem which cut across all the World religions, but this paper limits itself to its consequences on Muslim youth and Islam.

Therefore, the work is projected to explore the conceptual meanings of drugs and its abuse, youth, Muslim youth, common types of intoxicants, Qur'anic verses on the gradual prohibition of drug and substances, Prophetic traditions, its societal,

emotional, and spiritual consequences on the Muslim youth. It also serves as an antidote for the Muslim youth that instead of abusing drugs courtesy of their detested condition, it is far better to find way out in some preventive measures rather than the limited refuge.

## Statement of the Problem

Drug abuse has become a pervasive issue among Muslim youth worldwide, with far-reaching social, emotional, and spiritual consequences (Ali, 2015; Al-Kandari, 2017). The Islamic faith emphasizes the importance of physical and mental well-being, and drug abuse is considered a major threat to this well-being (Khalil, 2016). Despite this, many Muslim youth are succumbing to drug addiction, leading to the social, emotional, and spiritual problems. Drug abuse among Muslim youth presents a multifaceted issue that extends beyond the individual to affect families, communities, and religious institutions. Though much has been said by the scholars of different



background in respect of substance abuse, but the narrative still the same. Hence, the present study aims at proffering solutions to the problems identified.

## Conceptual Framework

In the view of Mohammed (2018), the word youth is a term which connotes different meanings all over the World, but it is believed to be a period between an adolescent stage and adulthood. Therefore, in the view of Nigeria National Youth Policy, it is an individual with the ages between 18-35years. In the contrary opinions, the United Nation describes anyone within the age of 15-24years as youth, while the Common Wealth of Nations recognizes those between 16-29years as youth.

Muslim youth is an individual between 18-40years and this is evidenced in Q46:15 where Allah says:

And we have enjoined man to be good to his parents. His mother carried him with travail upon travail. And his pregnancy and weaning covered thirty months until when he is matured and reaches forty years, he says, my Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor you have bestowed on me and my parents, and I do righteous deeds that you are pleased with. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you and truly I am one of those who submit to you.

However, the Arabic word used for youth in the Qur'an is *Fata* which appeared in fourteen places using four different words. The word *Fata* was used in respect of Prophet Yusuf (AS) when the women in the city of Egypt said to the wife of the Aziz:

And women in the city said, the wife of the governor is seducing her youthful slave. The love for him has arrested her. Surely, we see her in open error. Q12:30

Also, *Fatayaan* was used to mean two young men who happened to enter prison with Prophet Yusuf. Allah says:

And two men entered the prison with him. Q12:36

Allah uses *Fityatu* which means the youth who isolated themselves to the cave. This is however mentioned in Q18:10:

When the young men took refuge in the Cave and said, our Lord, bless us with mercy from your own and provide us with guidance in our affairs.

Lastly, the word youth is used as *Fityatun* and it can be found in Q18:13:

We narrate to you their story with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord and we increased them in guidance.

The quoted verses are some of the places in the Qur'an where the term youth is employed with various connotations but the same meaning [Mohammed, 2018:40].

The word can also be seen in the *Ahadith* of the Prophet as *Shabun*, singular of *Shabab* especially when he was addressing the Muslim youth on the essence of marriage for those who have the means, but if reverse is the case, they should fast in lieu in order to protect them from committing Zina (fornication). Also, the Prophet was categorical by mentioning

the youth amongst the seven people Allah will specially honor under His shade on the day where there won't be any except that of His:

On the authority of Abu Hurairah who said the messenger of Allah (S.A.W) said; Allah will specifically shade seven categories of people on the day where there won't be any shade except His; a just leader, a youth who has been brought up in the worship of Allah (worships Allah sincerely from childhood), a man whose heart is attached to the mosques (prays compulsory prayers in congregation), two persons who love each other for Allah's sake and they meet and part in Allah's cause only, a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illicit intercourse with her and says: I am conscious of Allah, a man who gives out charity secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand spent (nobody knows how much he has given in charity), and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes flooded with tears". (Sahihul Bukhari, Hadith 660).

According to Uthaymeen (2011:26-37) opined that youthful age is a time of great change and hope for the future. It could be the happiest and most productive time of a person's life, yet this stage of development can also be fraught with numerous psychological, sociological, and spiritual crises. This is because, the youth of any given society carry the future of their nation on their shoulders, so their problems and troubles should be the concern of everyone around them, and solutions to these challenges should be practical and concrete. He stressed further and grouped youth into three categories concluding that the first category is the pride of Islam, symbols, and its prosperity. So, below are the categories:

1. Righteous youth
2. Corrupt youth
3. Confused youth

The second category are regarded as calamity to themselves and catastrophe to their society. This is because, they have deviated from the dictates of Islam and behaviorally reckless. As such, they bring this *Ummah* (Islam) to the lowest of the low by obstructing its glory and honor. While the last category are the uncertain and irresolute individuals who are at a crossroad. They can however free themselves from this confusion, but must be concentrated on learning the orthodox Islamic creed and ready to uphold the Qur'an and Sunnah to the fullest (Uthaymeen, 2011).

Moreover, drugs are substances which when taken, can limit cognition, perception, mood, behavior and overhaul body function. It can also produce a change in biological function through chemical action (Balogun, 2006). However, the word 'drug' according to Oxford English Mini Dictionary, connotes a substance used in medicine or as a stimulant or narcotic. While according to Ajila (1999:117-118), opined that drugs consist a chemical, natural or synthetic that may later affect the functioning of the body. It is however confirmed by the pharmacologists that, all the chemicals that affect living things are drugs.

Also, drug is a substance used as medication or in the



preparation of medication. And it's used for reasons such as curing or alleviating pain and diagnosing ill health and is seen as a common process in many communities (Okafor, 2020). In the same vein, it is paramount to know that substance abuse is often used as drug abuse which according to Alhassan (2023) is any drugs when taken is either harmful or threatens to harm the physical or mental health, social well-being of individuals, or society at large which is however considered as illegal.

Abdullahi (2009) stated that drug abuse is the use of drugs to the level at which the health and social function of individual are being jeopardized. Also, it is an unlawful overdose in the use of drugs or arbitrary overdependence of one's particular drug without or with a prior medical prescription from qualified m pharmacist.

According to Merck (2009), as quoted by Okafor, a person who allows him/herself to be controlled by a psychoactive substance is called a "drug abuser", he however, brings forth a condition called neurological functions and his/her moods, perception, consciousness and energy level change and the drugs can take over his/her normal functioning and well-being. While the negligent use of any substance, mostly the ones that have effects on one's consciousness like alcohol, cocaine, codeine and methamphetamines results in discomfort and malfunction. Therefore, NAFDAC (2000) as quoted by Okafor enumerated some drugs being misused by the youth and they are stimulants, hallucinogens, sedatives, miscellaneous and tranquilizers.

a. **Stimulants:** These are the substances that act and stimulate central nervous system directly. This is because, the users of the substances at initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increases. So, the major source of these substances comes from caffeine.

b. **Hallucinogens:** These are the drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. They also produce distorted perception, feelings of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy. They mostly come from marijuana, LSD, etc.

c. **Sedatives:** These are among the most widely used and abused because of the belief that they relieve stress and anxiety, while some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation or help users to forget their problems. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine and chloroform.

d. **Miscellaneous:** This is a group of volatile solvents or inhalants that provides euphoria, emotional disinhibiting and everlasting distortion of thought to the user. The main sources are glues, spot removers, tube repair, perfumes, chemicals, etc.

f. **Tranquilizers:** These are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium, etc.

It is apposite at this juncture to examine the common types of drug and substances found in Africa and other continents together with their effects and they are as follow:

1. Cannabis [Marijuana]

The natural source of marijuana is the Indian hemp plant (cannabis sativa). So, the alternative names for Marijuana

include pot, weed, grass, shit, among others, which vary with social group and geographical locations. Among the major producing countries of cannabis and hashish are Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, the United States and some African countries [particularly Nigeria and Ghana]. It is often taken by smoke inhalation from cigarettes or from a pipe, its effect is more rapid with inhalation and usually lasts for a few hours. So, majority of its users typically reporting mental slowness, tiredness, anxiety and terror (Rabia et al., 2013).

2. Alcohol

Alcohol has the most frightening and dangerous withdrawal syndrome among all drugs that cause dependence. Therefore, anxiety, insomnia, weakness, and confusion are among its effects. It also has strong association with numbers of problems such as accidents, domestic violence, hopelessness, sexual assault and misbehaving (Yusuf, 2013).

3. Tobacco

Sagir (2021) as quoted by Adamu et al., observed that most tobacco smokers are young, single, less educated and isolated, more especially in rural tertiary institutions where government anti-smoke agencies are nearly absent. So, the nicotine in tobacco increases the heart rate, narrows the passage in the blood vessels, and increase the risk of heart disease, hypertension and stroke. These effects occur whether the tobacco is smoked or chewed depending on the route of the tobacco consumption, tar hides the linings of the respiratory tract or the digestive tract and it paralysis and destroys the cilia found in the lungs and is responsible for causing lung cancer and damage of memory (Adamu et al., 2021).

4. Inhalants and Syrup

These are impulsive chemical substances which include diluters, vaporizers, paint thinner, nail polish, petrol, glue, gum, correction fluid, analgesics, and other common and uncommon dangerous chemicals. In many cases, the psychoactive effects of these substances last for only a few minutes. But they are capable of claiming the life of the user and if addicted, the user may damage his urinary, respiratory and even sensory organs (Musa, 2021) as quoted by Adamu et al.

Islamic Perspective on Drug and Substances

The word "*Khamr*" is used in respect of drug and substances in the Qur'an, which is anything that intoxicates one or any substance that alters one's reasoning faculty. It's however on record that Abubakar son of Abu Musa narrated that his father said:

The messenger of Allah [peace and blessings of Allah be upon him] sent me to Yamen and I said; O messenger of Allah, there are different types of drinks over there, what should I drink, and what should I refrain from? He said what are they? I said; Al-Bit (mead) and Mizr (beer). He said what are mead and beer? I said; mead is a drink made from honey and beer is a drink made

from grains. The messenger of Allah said; Do not drink intoxicant, for I have forbidden all intoxicants [Sunan an-Nasai, 5606].

Therefore, it is deduced from the above Hadith that the ruling guiding anything that intoxicates one is prohibition which include hard drugs and substances, which must be shun by the Muslim youth in specific and every reasonable person at large. So, having known that the ruling is prohibition, then how did Islam prohibit intoxicant substances. Prior to the advent of Islam, Khamr was part and parcel of human lives to the extent that most companions then also engaged in it before the light of Islam came to them. So, the prohibition of Khamr was gradual in nature in three different occasions. The first one goes thus:

a. "They ask you [Muhammad] about intoxicant substances and gambling. Say, in both there is great sin and some benefits for people. But the sin is greater than the benefits." Q2:219

However, it's figured out from this verse that from the onset, Allah did not prohibit Khamr outrightly, but He made people known that it's sinful act and also beneficial, but the sin outnumbered the benefits. Stylishly, Allah was calling people's reasoning faculty to ponder over it and make a rightful choice.

b. "O, you who believe, do not go near Salah (prayer) while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying." Q4:43

It's also seen from this verse that having realized the low abstinence from intoxicants, Allah then attached it to Salah, that a believer should not pray while he is intoxicated. Knowing that Allah will not accept his Salah and there is no way he can take it that will not affect his Salah. So, Muslims started abstaining from it before the last prohibition came which condemned it totally.

c. 'O, you who believe, the intoxicants, gambling, altar stones and divining arrows are filthy, a work of Satan. Therefore, refrain from it, so that you may be successful.' Q5:90

In this verse, Allah made it clear that Khamr is an abomination that must be shun. This is because it affects one socially, economically, emotionally, medically and spiritually. So, these are the three verses as far as gradual prohibition of intoxicants is concerned in the Qur'an.

## Social, Emotional and Spiritual Consequences of Drug Abuse on the Muslim Youth

In light of these consequences, it is essential to explore the interplay between drug abuse and its social, emotional, and spiritual negative effects among the Muslim youth. So, a deep understanding of these dynamics could inform prevention and intervention strategies that are culturally sensitive and effective in addressing the unique challenges faced by this demographic. The danger of drug abuse among Muslim youth is further complicated by the lack of effective interventions and support services that address the unique needs of this population (Al-Kandari, 2017). Many existing interventions are based on Western models of addiction treatment and do not take into account the cultural and spiritual nuances of Muslim youth (Hodge, 2017).

Socially, drug abuse among Muslim youth could also lead to strained relationships with family and friends, decreased academic and career performance, and increased risk of criminal behavior (Hodge, 2017). Socially, drug abuse may be instrumental to the breakdown of familial structures and community bonds, undermining the collective values upheld in Islamic teachings (Rizvi, 2021). The stigma associated with drug use often results in isolation and marginalization of affected individuals, further complicating their recovery and reintegration into society (Khan et al., 2020). This social disintegration not only affects the individuals but also have impacts on their families and communities, leading to increased tensions and a diminished sense of collective identity (Ali & Ahmed, 2022).

Emotionally, drug abuse can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety, as well as decreased self-esteem and confidence (Ali, 2015). Muslim youth engaging in drug abuse frequently experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness, exacerbated by the conflict between their behaviors and religious beliefs (El-Khoury, 2022). The inner turmoil stemming from guilt and shame can hinder emotional development and lead to destructive coping mechanisms, thereby perpetuating a cycle of addiction and emotional distress (Farhan & Malik, 2023). Muslim youth who abuse drugs may experience feelings of guilt and shame due to the conflict between their faith and their behavior (Ali, 2015). Drug abuse can lead to increased anxiety and depression among Muslim youth, which can further exacerbate their emotional distress (Khalil, 2016). Drug abuse can lead to decreased self-esteem and confidence among Muslim youth, making it challenging for them to reintegrate into their communities (Hodge, 2017).

Spiritually, the engagement in drug abuse can lead to a crisis of faith, as individuals grapple with the contradiction between their actions and their religious teachings (Hassan, 2021). The loss of spiritual connection can result in feelings of emptiness and a disconnection from the community (Zafar, 2020). This disconnection not only affects the individual's relationship with God but also diminishes their participation in communal religious practices, thereby weakening the fabric of the Muslim community (Nasir, 2023). Drug abuse can lead to a sense of disconnection from one's faith and community, which can be particularly distressing for Muslim youth (Khalil, 2016). Drug abuse can lead to a decrease in spiritual practices, such as prayer and fasting, which are essential components of Muslim identity (Ali, 2015). Muslim youth who abuse drugs may experience a loss of spiritual guidance, which can make it challenging for them to navigate their faith and recovery (Hodge, 2017).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The work focused on the Muslim youth, but it cut across all the Muslims all over the World. This is because, it is observed during the course of study that it is not only the youth that indulge in the abuse of substances. Therefore, the following are some of the recommendations for the public consumption:

1. That there should be a periodic orientation for the youth on the consequences of drug abuse courtesy of the Mosques





2. That the Mosques should establish a well-equipped rehabilitation center with seasoned specialists
3. That the youth should be charged with religious activities that could serve as a barrier for the abuse of substances
4. That the youth should be reminded of the dynamism nature of World and such should not lead to oppression while in trial period
5. That the youth should be mindful of the company of whom they keep.

## CONCLUSION

The abuse drug and substances among the Muslim youth presents a complex challenge with far-reaching social, emotional, and spiritual ramifications. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that integrates culturally sensitive prevention programs, mental health support, and spiritual guidance. By fostering strong social networks, promoting emotional well-being, and reinforcing Islamic values, we can empower Muslim youth to resist the allure of drugs and build fulfilling lives grounded in faith and purpose. Further research is needed to explore the specific nuances of drug abuse within diverse Muslim communities and to develop evidence-based interventions that are both effective and culturally appropriate. Conclusion.

The findings of this study emphasize the critical need for targeted interventions and support services that address the unique challenges faced by Muslim youth struggling with drug abuse. By acknowledging the complex interplay between individual, familial, and societal factors, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies to prevent drug abuse and promote holistic recovery. Furthermore, faith-based initiatives that incorporate Islamic principles and values can play a vital role in promoting spiritual growth and resilience among Muslim youth. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the social, emotional, and spiritual consequences of drug abuse among Muslim youth, informing evidence-based solutions to support their well-being and rehabilitation.

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