

# Drug and Substance use among Tertiary students – The case of Copper-belt University

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## Abstract

The study investigated students' knowledge of substance abuse, the ability to prevent, sustain a drug free University Campus, and treatment of addiction. Substance dependence can lead to lifelong conditions that negatively influence learning and daily functioning. The study employed case study research which is qualitative method. Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT) or Activity Theory (AT) framework was employed in this study as a lens to explain the findings. Focus-group interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from students. The students were selected from first-year to post-graduate. Twenty-seven students participated in research of which six were female. The sample size was small because the institution was on recess. Data was analysed thematically. The findings revealed that both female and male students are involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that there are more male than female students that are involved. Marijuana, condign (cough syrup and sprite) and alcohol are most consumed substances. Academic stress, poor performance, limited recreation facilities, prescribed medications by health personnel when taken for a long time, peer-pressure and ignorance of availability of counselling centre are drivers of substance abuse. Students depict anti-social, violent behavior, vulgar language, academic failures and cognitive deficits compared with their peers. Hence, students proposed that collective efforts to ameliorate campus substance abuse should be heightened. Collective efforts such as student driven sensitization which is peer education, enact experts in mental well-being and drug enforcement chairs. Finally, central administration should reinforce the rule concerning drugs and alcohol consumption by students inside and outside the campus. They should spearhead seminars on management of academic failure and stress. Also, administrators should control alcohol and drug entry points.

**Keywords:** Substance abuse, Disorders, Addiction, Prevention, Drivers

## 1. Introduction

The study investigated the use, effect and prospect interventions of substance abuse among university students. Substance includes all kinds of alcohol, drugs and prescribed medication. Substance abuse may be defined in terms of heavy use of substance over time. It also involves prevention and treatment (LeNoue & Riggs, 2016). According to Zou, Wang, Uquillas, Wang, et al., (2017, p. 24), substance abuse is “as a

state of psychic or physical dependence, or both on a drug, arising in a person following the administration of that drug on a periodic or continuous basis” (citing Eddy et al., 1966). Tulu and Keskis (2015, p. 48) define alcohol as a “colorless volatile flammable liquid which is the intoxicating constituent of wine, beer, spirits, and other chemicals.” While a drug on the other hand has been defined as “a medicine or other substances which has a marked psychological effect when taken into the body” (Tulu & Keskis, 2015, p. 48). Furthermore, drug abuse is defined as “the use of drugs or alcohol in a way that has social and interpersonal consequences for the person using it” (Tulu & Keskis, 2015, p. 48). According to Ministry of Health (MoH, 2021) in Mwanza and Mwale (2023, p. 1) psychoactive substances can be defined as “both legal and illegal substances that when consumed can affect the way individuals’ taste, smell, feel, behave, and see things”. Psychoactive substances have further been described by Ishaq, et al. (2023) as substances that influence brain functioning, leading to a change in mood and behavior and loss of consciousness and thinking. Substance abuse may lead to substance dependence which promote lack of cognitive control over the use of drugs or alcohol. The problem of substance abuse affects social, physical and mental health of the abuser (Matheson., Laurie & Laurens, 2023). The effect impacts the family and the community as a whole.

It has been observed that students in higher institutions of learning abuse alcohol, drugs and psychoactive substances (Mwango & Mwale, 2023 citing Bullock, 2004). At Copper-belt University, student counsellors have observed that students engage in substance abuse. The activity is hidden among the abusers and the abused. Usually, the victims are brought into the counselling centre when they require expert intervention. The issue is a global challenge for instance, in the European Union, it is recorded that more than one fourth of the population of the age range of fifteen to sixty (15-64) years had tried illegal drugs at least once in their lifetime (Adam, 2018). Besides, numerous studies have revealed considerable changes in risk-taking behaviours in the first year of university (Fromme et al., 2008; Fielder, et al., 2013). The number of male students who abuse substances tend to more than their female counterpart. It was found that students engage in substance abuse for various reasons. The students who come into the universities are best of the top students and intelligent. These students are the future major drivers of the nation’s socio-economic status and achieving sustainable development by 2030. Nevertheless, the country seems to be experiencing brain drainages through substance abuse. Students tend to dropout and fail. Alcohol, cigarettes and prescribed medications being the most abused substances. The study investigated the causes of substances, how it can be prevented and what could be done to reduce brain drainage by substance abuse.

## **1.1 Problem statement**

Students display diverse physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional, and social challenges caused by substance abuse. A lot of students have shown various learning and emotional challenges with varying degrees. Hence, unexpected and persistent learning challenges that is experienced by students has resulted in withdrawal from studies, prolonged period of study and increased drop-out rates. Although, this predicament is a global issue has caused intelligent and promising students in my country to leave the university without graduating. Furthermore, these students may perpetuate alcohol and smoking in the society they live. Global drug abuse affected a staggering 275 million people worldwide in 2021 (Canton, 2021). Hence, United Nations (Canton, 2021) sustainable goals cannot be achieved in a drugged and unaware society. One of the goals of The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Canton, 2021) is

to educate about drug use disorders, available treatments and the importance of early intervention and support. The problem prompted me to investigate and find ways of contextual prevention.

### 1.1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

**Research question 1:** Which drugs and substance are commonly consumed by students and what drives students to abuse them?

**Research question 2:** What are the effects of substance abuse on students' academic performance, mental health and social behaviour?

**Research question 3:** How can abuse of substance by students be prevented?

### 1.1.2. Research Objectives

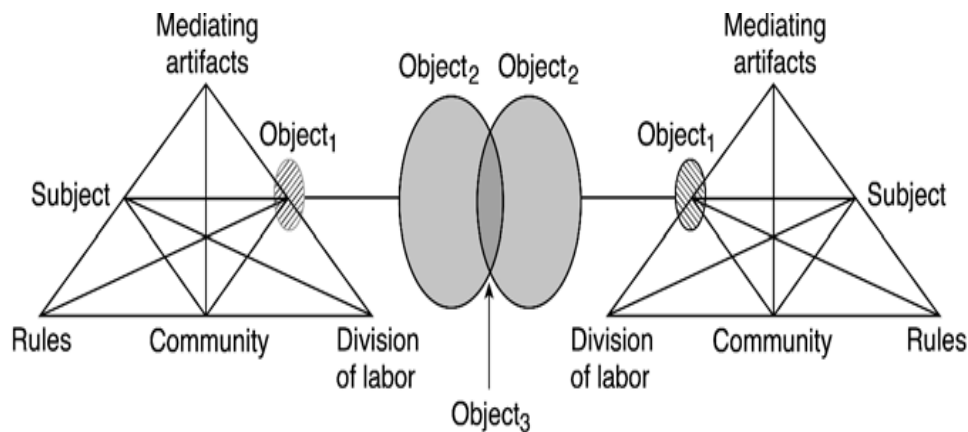
This study aims to explore the causes of substance abuse among copper-belt university student, common used substances, prevent drug abuse and apply early intervention. One of the major influence of drug use is being present in a substance-using environment. Hence, to prevent students from developing substance abuse habits is to observe the results of those taking the drugs. This may assist students to deal with potential future difficulties successfully without resorting to taking substances.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT) or Activity Theory (AT) is “a comprehensive model of the interrelated elements of an activity system. It provides philosophical frameworks that can facilitate the investigation, illumination, and description of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) where people work together with shared histories of activity and discourses to achieve common goals” (Barnard, 2010, p. 26). AT has its roots in the work of Soviet Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Leont’ev and Luria (Barnard, 2010) and in Marxist theories. According to Marx, work constitutes the context for the development of human psychology. While the goal of an activity is always conscious, according to AT, the plans, motives, and methods of performance and goal-directed behaviours can be formulated consciously or unconsciously (Barnard, 2010). The first generation’s conception started with Vygotsky and is characterised by the “mediated act” (Vygotsky, 1978). Activity Theory was first formulated in the 1930s by Vygotsky (1978), which was subsequently developed into a second-generation activity theory by Leont’ev (1978). Second generation theory represent individual and collective (group) actions embedded in a collective activity system. The object indicates that object-oriented actions are either explicit or implicit and are characterised by “ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense-making, and potential for change” (Engeström, 2001, p. 134). Third-generation activity theory” longed “to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 135). The systems which are merged into a single community of practice, form a new transformed activity system that conjoins aspects of both. The dynamic nature of interactions between individuals and institutions is a cross-cultural contact zone that Homi Bhabha (1994) termed “third space” consisting of “hybrid” between two cultures.

The CHAT is depicted by triangular, dialectically related series of interactions (Engeström, 1987). A triangle containing “six elements: subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labour (roles) as” structure of activity theory. The community consisted of culturally diversified students.

**Figure 1 shows:** *Two interacting activity systems as a minimal model for the third generation of activity theory*



Source: Engeström (2001)

Furthermore, the third-generation activity system encompasses relations between multiple activity systems (Sannino, 2011).

### 1.3 Rationale for Using CHAT Theory

Students who enter the university cross boundaries every day from home to the university and from the university back home. They bring home culture into the university and take university culture back home. The student community form various activity systems for instance, first-year students have their own activity system. Similarly, second-years, third-years, fourth-years, fifth-years and post-graduate-students’ activity systems. The university community is also an activity system. In addition, students who are addicted to alcohol and those who are not form two separate activity systems. Each activity system has roles, resources, rules and goals. All student activity systems are nested in the university activity system. The university and the students’ homes are nested in the society. Activity systems overlap and students are members of different activity systems. The point at which the activity systems intersect is called the “third space” and is “hybrid” (Homi Bhabha 1994). Third space consists of diverse students. Hence, the interaction nature between the individual and the learning institution is dynamic and hybrid. It is in these intersection points that the members can influence each other for abstinence from or consumption of drugs and alcohol.

The study was done within the campus and comprised of all activity systems (first-years to graduate students). The first-years were included because they are newcomers and other systems are familiar with university culture. Information was collected from participants own lived experiences. Besides, the recommendation for mitigations came from the students themselves.

## 2. Methodology

A qualitative method was engaged in this study. Qualitative method is used to answer questions about experiences, meaning-makings and perspectives from the standpoint of the participants (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016). So, case study research method was employed in this study. I engaged purposeful sampling techniques (Maxwell, 1996 cited in Taherdoost, 2016,) to identify the research context and participants. All students who lived within or outside the campus were considered as participants. However only 27 responded. There were six (6) female and twenty-one (21) male students. The institution was on recess for 2 weeks and hence low student participation in the study. The average age of students was twenty-two (22). Ethical clearance was obtained from The Copper-belt University Research Ethics Committee.

### 2.1 Research Design

Participants were purposely sampled research so as to illuminate the phenomena being studied. These were full-time students from year-one to year-five and postgraduate. Data were collected from students' focus-group interviews and on-line survey questionnaire. The researcher conducted the focus-group interviews. Questionnaire questions were open ended to enable participants to express themselves. Whereas, focus-group questions were semi-structured but at times were asked based on the respondents' claims. The students discussed the high levels of substance abuse across year levels and gender. Participants discussed the causes of abusing substances and proposed ways of alleviation. Students further discussed ways in which they individually and collectively responded to alcohol, drug and prescribed medication abuse. The conversations were audio recorded.

### 2.2 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Tanaka, Parkinson, Settler, & Tahiroglu, 2012) was guided by the research questions, drugs and substance which are commonly consumed by students, causes of substance abuse, effects of substance abuse on students' academic performance, mental health and social behaviour, and prevention of substance abuse. The conversations were audio recorded. Discussions lasted between 35 minutes and 50 minutes depending on the number of volunteered participants and the contributions from members. Open and selective coding was used to analyse key ideas of categories (Tanaka, Parkinson, Settler, & Tahiroglu, 2012). The researcher read and reread through the transcribed data, notes and data from questionnaires to compare and contrast for relations. I looked for patterns in the transcribed data to answer research questions. I identified codes and patterns from interview scripts concerning research questions and repetition of the response generated themes. The list of codes from the focus group interviews were: lack of guidance, awareness, no recreation facilities, peer pressure, helps to study, to keep cool, student diversity, academic pressure, easily available, marijuana, alcohol, condign (cough syrup), academic failure, mental problems, shy, sad, provide awareness and recreation activities, and test for drugs. These categories were informed by the research questions. The themes that emerged were compared again with further key ideas. This resulted in subcategories. I looked for keywords and ideas used by all the respondents to note related ideas. The recurrence of certain keywords in the answers led to the emergence of a pattern that could be categorised into the following themes: marijuana, alcohol, condign (cough syrup), academic pressure, peer-pressure, helps to study and student social cultural background. I linked these ideas to the effects of substance abuse and arranged them in groups. Putting

them in groups allowed me to put them in subthemes. The last segment of the hierarchy of the themes in which respondents expressed how substance abuse by students could be prevented were: provide awareness, recreation activities, and test for drugs. These responses were categorised into six areas: marijuana, alcohol, condign, academic pressure, peer-pressure and awareness.

Codes that emerged from student questionnaires were: marijuana, alcohol, academic pressures, to keep cool, no recreation, peer-pressure, helps to study, accessible, sad, shy, academic failure, antisocial, others are louder, create sensitisation and provide extracurricular activities. Interview responses were verified by comparing them with questionnaire responses. Subthemes emerged from this process which were: lack of sensitisation, few recreation facilities, academic and peer pressure, academic failure, altered behaviour and most consumed substances. Quotes for the themes were taken as evidence from the transcriptions and students' discussions.

## 2.2 Ethical Consideration

Participants were informed that interviews were going to be audio-recorded. Their words would be used in reporting the findings and that they were free to take part in the study or not. Signing consent forms meant that they agreed to take part. Confidentiality was upheld as pseudonyms were used to protect their identity. It was made apparent to the participants that data collected was for study. No harm or embarrassment of the participants was observed during the interviews. Before commencing data collection, a clearance letter was issued by the institution to conduct research.

## 3. Presentation of Results

In this section, I report on the research findings from students' focus-group interviews and questionnaire. University environment is heterogeneous (undergraduates, post-graduates and social-cultural) to which students must adapt. I engaged culturally historical activity theory (CHAT) being a lens in explaining the dynamics of their abuse of drugs and substances and interrogated how these were impacted by the three generations of activity theories (first, second and third) in constructing meaning of what happened, why it happened and how to ameliorate it. The themes were grouped into six categories, which are lack of sensitisation, few recreation facilities, most consumed substances, academic and peer pressure, academic failure and altered behaviour. Furthermore, the researcher employed narrative approach in presenting the findings.

## 4. Discussion of Findings

### 4.1 Lack of drug and substance sensitisation as observed by Students

Students collectively lamented that there are no workshops or induction for students to inform and equip them on managing stress, alcohol consumption and smoking, as they stated "lack of proper guidance and counselling. Some students do not know that the department of student's guidance exist in the university." Core ideas of CHAT are that humans act individually and collectively and learn by being instructed and communicating through activities. "Humans" also "make, employ, and adapt tools of all kinds to learn and communicate" because "community is central to the process of making and interpreting meaning" (Vygotsky, 1978 p. 330). Students require guidance, modelling and assistance through collaboration with

university administration, security, counsellors and peers. The role of university consists of setting the rules and roles of the students. There is no teaching and counselling without students' community and community of practice (CoP). CoP members share and construct experiences, attitudes, knowledge and research (Barnard, 2010). Besides, some students have never heard of the university counselling centre. They had experienced depression and sexual harassments from educators and fellow students but do not know who to turn to. According to Diniwe, a master's degree student claimed that "I left Copper-belt University (CBU) without even knowing, I did not even know there are counsellors on campus, I did not know. I only knew recently that there are even counsellors on campus that you can talk with." According to first and third generation of activity theory humans learn by interacting with more knowledgeable people according to the rules and use of the resources available. Student counselling centre, university security and counsellors are the resources and more knowledgeable. Individuals therefore act according to the instructions afforded them. Students claimed that there is little guidance concerning drugs and substance abuse among students inside and outside the university campus by the counsellors.

## 4.2 Few Recreation Facilities

There are few recreation facilities in the university where students can relax when they are not studying and when they are bored. There is only one student centre. Alcohol and cigarettes are sold at there. In addition, there is one volleyball and football pitch. Few recreation facilities create constraints to some students. It generated an agency to individually interaction with few facilities. Students inside and outside the campus negotiated the rules, roles and resources of the activity system, they engaged in individually and collectively. Some students improvised football and volleyball pitches by playing games in open spaces. Others, chanted and took walks. They mediated their own personal academic pressure. Nevertheless, many frequented the student centre to socialise. Zulu lamented that "... if I go there and relax. I will drink also. Eventually, I will take one glass, from one glass to two until I become addicted." Besides, the university have got no safe places [head of department or educator] where they can go and talk about their challenges.

## 4.3 Most Consumed Drugs and Alcohols

The level of consumption of drugs and alcohol on the campus is high. Both female and male students are involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Muwowo and Mwaanga claimed that it was shameful for a lady to do drugs when they joined the university. Female students used to hide when smoking or drinking but they do it openly within the campus and at student centre. Nonetheless, there are fewer female than male students. Marijuana, condign and alcohol are most consumed substances as stated by the students.

"Cough syrup is obtained from the pharmacies" as a prescribed drug for a cough said Mwaanga. Mwaanga added that "it makes students to study." Zulu explained further that condign "...is a mixture of sprite and cough syrup", "it makes you drowsy and passive. It makes you cool. Students make it. It is lethal, it is prescribed" Whereas, "Bollz, Johnny's whisky and Musontunya are the most consumed beers in campus because they are accessible and cheap."

Muntinta and Muwowo interjected that condign "improves concentration." However, students sell beer in their residential rooms. They also carry beer in water bottles and drink while the lesson is going on. Similarly, those who smoke cannabis or marijuana put their cigarettes in their shoes or put them in water bottles and drink in class. People think that he or she is drinking water. The university and security

personnel have not taken any step to arrest the situation. According to students' perception, the security personnel are afraid of students and benefit from students abuse by getting money.

In this case, students were presented with cultural, social and symbolic capitals and resources to construct their own meaning (Bourdieu, 1998). University police and student counselling centre expect all students to be responsible adults. Hence, students had to reconceptualise previous ideas, culture of no intoxication, and confront new self-regulatory intoxicating ideas and culture to construct a new hybridised identity. Students are expected to have the ability to restrain themselves from addiction to substances and drugs and contribute to their own success by creating affordances and constraints. Students realised that they are in the university not to be constrained by the security and counsellors but co-participants in preventing substance abuse to achieve the common goal which is sustainable development by 2030. Some students have been transformed into learners who approach drug and alcohol abuse with understanding the consequence and constructed acceptable behaviour with little or no help from educators, counsellors and security.

#### 4.4 Academic and Peer Pressure

By within the campus, I mean within the formalised spaces for learning and residence where students interact with each other within the allotted time. By "outside the university", I refer to the informal spaces where students were free to engage in student-to-student interactions at their own time, space and pace, though still within the context of the university's space and time. Students moved within these embodied intersecting spaces (contexts) which they shared with each other whenever they transacted activities, thereby creating and sharing dynamic micro-, mini- or macro-spaces for individualised and/or collective interactions. These third spaces provided opportunities for students to structure their interactions, explorations, socialising, sharing knowledge, learning and teaching each other to promote individual or collective successes across constraining and enabling boundaries, hence, hybridising the space and all that took place within it.

When students enter the university, they find that university has a culture which they have to adapt to. According to third-generation theory, students are 'operating within the third (3rd) space' or 'social space'. They bring previous views and established ways of doing things under scrutiny. This may "result in cultural clashes and or opportunities for transformation" (Chulach & Gagnon, 2015, p. 54). The home culture is different and these three exist in conflict that generates "new values, system of meanings, philosophies, attitudes, practices and structure" (Chulach & Gagnon, 2015 citing English, 2004a). Participants stated that people engage in drugs and substance abuse due to peer pressure. Besides, students come from different social background where they were taking alcohol and smoking weed. As Muwowo stated, "senior students influence first-year students." Bwalya further commented that "first-year students begin to abuse drugs and alcohol to feel that they are university students. I think it is because we come from different places and there are people who come here already in that habit so when they find other people who are into those things they just make or form a ka group and then it becomes worse. I think insufficient...for parental...and also parental monitoring." Chisanga added that "new students want to fit into the university culture" which Muwowo elaborated that it is referred to as "counsel culture." Students who engage in substance abuse have specific places and times when they take intoxicating substances. Zulu claimed that "they smoke in the morning and evening in the old playground. These places on campus are referred to as laboratories."

On the other hand, pre-university teaching and learning culture is different from the university culture. Students are expected to expand the knowledge through private study and research. It means they have to construct their own meaning of knowledge which may be challenging to some students. These students experience academic pressure. Hence, students adjust their roles and rules individually and collaboratively as they interact with the advanced curriculum, which changes their study structure and culture. As Namwila lamented “mental stress, anxiety is due to academic work in crowded places.” Nevertheless, Lungowe claimed that “Others use the drugs to help them study better.” Changwe added that “students study better and failing a test causes them to drink.” Mwaanga further said “for some they say it’s a way of relieving stress, there is too much stress academic work, when they take those drugs, they feel relaxed and others it maybe personal issues.” Students enact their agency which makes them the “actors of their own history” while generating “alternate cultural identities” (Chulach & Gagnon, 2015, p. 57).

## **4.5 Consequences of drug and Alcohol Abuse**

Addiction to drugs and alcohol alters people’s thinking and behaviour. Challenged behaviour and academic failure and dropout are some of the results of drug and alcohol abuse.

### **4.5.1 Challenged Behaviour**

These addicted students sell their belongings and school resources to buy drugs, cigarettes and beer. They are loud, socialise more and others study more. Banda and Zulu claimed that “they are violent and use vulgar language.” Muwowo echoes that “they shout from block to block [students’ residences], sexually harass ladies and commit sexual assault.” Whereas, a few students develop mental disorders such as “eating too much, others stop eating or eat little, stop bathing and smell bad, urinates on the bed and poor healthy” laments Banda, Zulu and Muwowo. Zulu elaborates “uhm [giggles] start (seeing?) as if someone is on the toilet”.

### **4.5.2 Student Failure and Dropout.**

Excessive drinking and smoking makes students fail to attend lessons due to hangovers and loss of focus on studies. Missing lessons and lack of concentration results in poor performance in tests and examinations states Banda and Muwowo. Such students eventually leave the university without graduating. On the other hand, some exhibit a degree of exceptional academic performance. It is possible that these students may remain dependable on drugs and alcohol later in life which may impair their thinking and performance. This defeats 2030 agenda and sustainable development number four point four (4.4) which states “By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (United Nations, 2018, p. 28).” Economic, social and political development of a nation depends on the education of its youth. Scientific, mathematical, technological and engineering literacy are driven by the young generation. They are the future leaders of tomorrow.

## **4.6 Ameliorating Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

By the community of learning, I refer to the University Campus (all faculties, schools and units), educators and their students who shared the purposes of learning and teaching. These students came from differing dynamic intersecting activity systems in each class and beyond. Furthermore, each student has individual goals to attain. Regardless of their individual differences, students’ goals converge at class intersections

to prevent drug and alcohol dependence among students. Students are concerned with the situation of substance abuse. According to them, the office of the dean of students can organise workshops to give awareness of the presence of drugs and alcohol including handling stress to all first-years during orientation. Probably, at the beginning of the term this can also be extended to returning students. One of the students (Banda) proposed that "...if we engage people who are experts in mental well-being, to help the students how to handle stress, then they will not think of going into drugs". Student driven sensitisation empowers them of how to reach each other in formal and informal ways. This involves adjusting time and ideas which are resources and their roles as a friend or roommate to a peer educator. A constraint to some students and counsellors becomes an affordance which generates a collective action to overcome an individual's challenge. Similarly, counsellors and security modify rules, roles and resources to meet the students' need of awareness. When rules and roles are adjusted the culture of working also changes. Generally, they wait for students with mental disorders, issues with educators and substance abuse to walk into their offices. In this case, few students seek professional guidance because some do not know that counsellors exist in the university. Whereas, the security does little to control the sell and use of drugs and alcohol on campus. According to students' perception "the security, they fear students. Can a security guard talk to students about what?" Furthermore, university administration should pass a rule concerning drugs and alcohol abuse on and in campus. So, the second-generation activity theory of Leont'Ve (1978) recognises "collective mediation" in the context of the "activity system". Collective mediation enables university community and students to think together that encourages finding a solution which is the object of the collective activity system. Hence, collective mediation brings collective success.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Students cross boundaries into the university from different parts of the country and beyond. The university is an activity system which comprises of different activity systems such as faculties and programmes. Besides, faculties are nested in the university. The society where the students live is an activity system. The university is embedded in the society. Activities systems have rules, roles and resources. Hence, participants interact according to the rules. Each student belongs to different activity systems. The university community and students' activity systems intersected, and the point of intersection is referred to as the "third space" (Engeström, 2001; Bhabha, 1994). It is a shared space and a learning space. Students bring to the shared space their diverse cultural, symbolic and social capitals thereby creating a hybridized space (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 2002). This means there were students who have been taking intoxicating substances before joining the university and those who were not.

Hence, responses to research question one shows that there is evidence that substance and drug abuse is prominent in the university campus. Marijuana, candida, cigarettes and alcohol are the most common drugs because they are easily accessible. As students interact with their colleagues inside and outside the classroom, they learn the university and society culture respectively. As students stated that "peer pressure" is one of the causes of people to start smoking and drinking. In addition, university teaching and learning is more individualised that calls for self-directive learning. Students had to regulate their learning strategies as they interacted with educators and complex concepts. This regulation could be very frustrating, fearful and stressful to some students which may trigger academic pressure. Failure to control academic stress some students turn to drinking alcohol and smoking to find relief. This is stated by

Mwaanga that “for some they say it’s a way of relieving stress, there is too much stress academic work, when they take those drugs, they feel relaxed and others it maybe personal issues.”

Besides, there is little counselling by the student counselling centre to students concerning substance abuse and how to handle academic pressure. Some students have never heard that there is a student counselling centre. Furthermore, there are few recreation centres within the campus where they can relax and refresh after academic anxieties. Nevertheless, students are expected to structure their own activities individually and collectively and are responsible for their actions. This is because learning in social systems requires making decisions. The findings also revealed that substance abuse generated violent behaviour, mental disorders, drop-out and failure. In this final state students transfer substance abuse and violent culture to the society. The last research question revealed that counselling centre and administrators possess cultural capital concerning students’ adaptation in the university. Nonetheless, quality of it has been compromised. If, sustainable development goal could be achieved by the year 2030, university security, counsellors and deputy vice chancellor academics must actively be involved in preventing and reducing the substance abuse. This can be done by increasing substance abuse sensitisation and increased number of recreation centres. Also, the university security to be more vigilant. In this way, they will collapse relational powers by adjusting the culture, rules, resources and roles of the learning context to promote less drug addicted students (Engeström, 2001). It would further create an agency to rescue who seem to be struggling with stress, mental health and substance abuse. Also, to rehabilitate those who are addicted and mentally incapable.

The study recommends that the dean of students’ unit and the central administration to come on board and spearhead seminars on management of academic failure and stress. This may lead to substance abuse reduction. Also, administrators should inquire how drugs are acquired into the campus so that they control entry points. Furthermore, the drug enforcement chair should be created in the institution.

## 6. Declarations

**Conceptualisation (R.C.K & P.K.M.);** Literature review (R.C.K.); Methodology (R.C.K.); software (N/A.); validation (R.C.K. & P.K.M.); formal analysis (R.C.K.); investigation (R.C.K. & P.K.M.); data curation (R.C.K & P.K.M); drafting and preparation (R.C.K.); review and editing (R.C.K); supervision (R.C.K); project administration (R.C.K & P.K.M.); funding acquisition (N/A.). All authors have read and approved the published version of the article.

**Funding:** This research did not receive any external funding.

**Acknowledgements (Optional):**

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability Statement:**

**Restricted Data Due to Confidentiality or Ethical Constraints:**

- *The data are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants and ethical restrictions imposed by the Institutional Review Board. However, de-identified data can be made*

*available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to approval by the ethics committee.*

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