



## **Drug Addiction in the Academic Performance of High School Students in a Rural Educational Unit**



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### **Abstract**

The impact of drug addiction on the academic performance of high school students from the Braulio Hidalgo Llor Educational Unit, Rio Venda-Chone site, is presented, a situation that occurs due to poor performance in the subjects, showing little interest because of their studies, and consequently low grades, which has generated learning problems, in this sense it is an investigation contextualized with reality, and that is added to what is happening in Ecuador. A quantitative study was carried out, and the use of scientific research methods such as inductive-deductive, analytical, and synthetic, for which interviews and surveys of parents, teachers and students were used, the sample being generalized. The result was that poor academic performance is because many young people consume narcotic substances, neglecting their studies and showing little interest in schoolwork, which has led to the concern of parents and teachers.

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## 1 Introduction

Drug addiction in the academic performance of high school students in a rural educational unit. Addiction to drugs is a phenomenon that has been expanding in all sectors of the community, a problem that has had and has an impact on education, mainly on young people in high school, and that neither teachers nor parents They don't know how to treat it. According to the Fourth National Survey on drug use in students aged 12 to 17 carried out by the National Council for the Control of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances, (CONSEP, 2012), it provided very worrying data, at the national level, first, the sample was taken made up of students from 12 to 17 years old, from urban and rural areas.

Of the students surveyed, one in five students says that a family member uses drugs. This relative could well be the father, the mother, the brother, an uncle or any other. This would account for the proximity of the drug, on the one hand, and a certain legitimacy of the use, on the other, as is often the case with the issue of alcohol use. Regarding the information that young people have about drugs, 45.0% assured that the information reaches them through television. 43.5% indicate that knowledge reaches them through the mediation of friends. For its part, the internet ranks third with 42.5%. Finally, the path to knowledge is made up of the same relatives who represent 41.5%. In Ecuador and the rest of the world, drug abuse can only provide a "temporary escape" from the world. The risks are great and the results can be fatal such as suicide, drug overdose, mental disorder. (CONSEP, 2012; [de Drogas, 2015](#)).

In order to have a broader research sample, the Psychotherapist Marco Albán from the city of Ambato was interviewed, who indicated that during 2013 he attended 64 adolescents and young people between the ages of 13 and 26 in his private practice. The psychotherapist indicates that adolescents and young people have referred in his consultation that they consume marijuana, base, cocaine, heroin and LSD, he also mentions that the drug they consume from greatest to least scale is marijuana, base and cocaine (Youth Foundation for the Future , 2014).The Youth for the Future Foundation is attended by adolescents and young people who have difficulties due to drug use, which can be glimpsed in the classroom, since they are generally inattentive, distracted, with notable traits of anxiety, in some cases fearful, in others threatening, and with little collaborative spirit ([Le Moal & Koob, 2007](#); [Estevez et al., 2019](#); [Imorou, 2020](#)).

But the problem in the Rio Venta site goes back to the fact that, in the sector, some 20 years ago, there were conflicts between families, mountainous areas and, above all, they were influenced by actors outside the community, in which for these reasons, children, young people and adolescents in these sectors were attended in the best way in the educational area, so the impact of these problems in the future was unknown, bearing in mind causes such as parental control over children. children, the importance of education in their training, care with quality educational services, among others, which has led to insubjection, not following behavioral norms, in addition to showing very little interest in studies, Here drug use and its impact on the academic performance of high school students of the "Braulio Hidalgo Loor" educational unit are analyzed, the objective of the research is to support the behavior of adolescents. entities addicted to drugs ([Freire, 2016](#); [Çırakoğlu & Işın, 2005](#); [Sani, 2010](#)).

Establish solution alternatives that allow mitigating the problem investigated, according to the objectives and in application of data collection instruments such as interviews and surveys of parents, teachers and students, it was determined: that the low academic performance is due to the fact that many young people consume narcotic substances, neglecting their studies and showing little interest in schoolwork, which has led to the concern of parents and teachers, and to mediate with a plan that makes it possible to deal with the issue with everyone the actors of the educational community and the sector. It is feasible to educate the behavior of a child at an early age, on the contrary, an adolescent or young person already has their criteria formed and consequently it becomes somewhat complicated to want to correct behaviors or attitudes, the difficulty is proportional to the chronological age of the person ([Ferrajoli , 2016](#)).

[Topkaya et al. \(2021\)](#), in a study with adolescents, collects: "The level of information acquired by students through the media about the consumption of psychotropic substances is high, 67% of students know that they are dangerous and they ignore the consequences and effects produced by the consumption of these substances on their body". The use of narcotics influences the learning process in a negative way ([Mora, 2017](#)). Adolescents for their age are eager to experience new sensations and among their curiosities they get involved with friends who tell them about alcohol as a means of distraction from their environment, which in certain cases can become a social problem, it is for this reason the importance of family guidance at all times, since the information they get outside the home is usually not adequate and for this reason parents must fulfill their responsibilities and obligations to guide and instruct their children.

The World Health Organization ([WHO, 2004](#)), defines drugs as: "All those substances that have direct action on the Central Nervous System; Therefore, they are capable of substantially modifying the mental, moral and physical attitudes of the people who consume them, as well as generating irreversible damage to individual, public and social

health.” There is a World definition on the definition of Illicit Drugs, specifying that they are substances capable of altering a person's behavior, leading to a loss of values and degenerating their mental functions. It affects health, causing irreparable damage. For the Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (MINJUS & UNODC, 2013), cited in "Drugs and addictions" This is the name given to the substance that causes an alteration of the physical and psychosocial state and can cause addiction (p. 11).

In recent years the term illicit drugs has been related to the word addiction, this is due to the great hallucinogenic content with which the drug is prepared and therefore produces addiction in people who consume it. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016). A drug is a plant, mineral, or animal substance that has a stimulating, hallucinogenic, narcotic, or depressant effect. A soft drug is known as one that has a low addictive degree, such as cannabis, while a hard drug is highly addictive (such as cocaine and heroin). (Page 5). For the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2015), Uses: These are the sociocultural acts and motivations that a subject establishes with a drug at a given time. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the following uses of drugs:

- 1) Experimental use. - Refers to the first times a person consumes a drug; It is usually alcohol or tobacco. Sometimes the term can refer to extremely infrequent or inconsistent use.
- 2) Social use. - This term is generally used in relation to alcohol or tobacco, and refers to the social custom of consuming alcoholic beverages or smoking tobacco in the company of other people only for socially acceptable reasons and ways. Social use cannot necessarily be moderate, since many times this use can lead to intoxications.
- 3) Recreational use. - Consumption of a drug, normally illegal, in social or relaxing situations, which implies that there is no dependency or other problems related to or derived from the pattern of consumption.
- 4) Moderate use. - It is a consumption of moderate amounts of a substance, without this generating any type of individual, health or social problems.

Problematic consumption: “It is a state of psychophysiological need that is expressed in the compulsive consumption of drugs, which produces a deterioration of the control of use and alteration of cognition. Socio-cultural aspects are subordinated to problematic consumption. This concept contains the WHO terms such as: Harmful consumption, Dependence, Addiction.” (p. 16); but the discursive practices of psychotherapists who deal with some difficulties with young people who deliberate on the dignity of boys and girls as part of the concepts of dignity must be taken into account (Diaz, 2017).

The Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013), defined as an uncontrollable desire, mental or physical, to consume drugs. When the desire is physical, the drug becomes part of the body's metabolism. In dependence, the use of a psychoactive substance is prioritized over other activities that were previously considered more important. The Ministry of Justice describes the way in which dependency acts on the person, modifying their desires to the point of atrophying the person's metabolism, causing a disorder in their mental and physical health. (2016), drug use frequently affects people in their most productive years. When young people fall into the cycle of consumption, and even trafficking, instead of taking advantage of opportunities for legal employment and education, they actually create obvious obstacles to the development of individuals and communities.

The use of drugs apart from generating problems in the health and in the mental part of the person, also entails other types of inconveniences in a social way, since the consumer completely loses his common life, leaves his studies, becomes irresponsible in his work, his goals and obligations gradually decline, his personal development deteriorates to the point of becoming a burden to society. Learning is a complex process that confers identity as individuals, involving a transformation of the conception of reality, which translates into behavior and our decision-making, whose purpose is to adapt in the best way to our environment, but not all The learnings fulfill this objective and can even be detrimental to the rest of the normal development of an individual. In this sense, drug use can be considered as both an addiction and learning (Castro, 2014).

The National Council for the Control of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances, the Ecuadorian Drug Observatory, the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The answer that the drug "makes you calm when you feel tense" points to two essential terms of the function that it fulfills. The first refers to the feeling of tranquility achieved with the product (psychotropic affect), and the second to the feeling of tension (dystocic affect) (p. 22).

The use of drugs in many cases is done for reasons of tension, satisfaction of pleasures, search for personal relaxation, all these arguments are justified by lack of personal affection, that is, this behavior is related to other problems of a personal nature, they seek to fill emotional spaces that have become vulnerable, it is for this reason the

importance of personal self-esteem, a feeling of co-responsibility with the family, feeling integrated either in their educational, work, family environment, the main factor is in their emotional stability.

## 2 Materials and Methods

Research level was exploratory, since a diagnosis was made to find out if a curricular update can be implemented among adolescents that allows these students with illicit drug use problems to meet the objectives of each school year, and thus prevent this type of student population from deserting their academic life, the descriptive level, by associating the independent variable with the dependent variable, determines how illicit drugs are related to student learning. Bibliographic or documentary research was used to analyze, compare and evaluate the problem, books, theses, articles, magazines and texts that have been related to the research topic were consulted on the internet; in addition, the field investigation where the events take place, that is, in the EU Braulio Llor, site Sold-Chone. Interviews were applied to teachers and surveys to parents and students. With a sample of 80 participants among Teachers (10); parents (30); students (40).

## 3 Results and Discussions

According to the publication made by the National Council for the Control of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances, the Ecuadorian Drug Observatory, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2017), the hole where an electrical signal jumps from one neuron to another is called the synaptic cleft. This happens in nerve cell transmission when cocaine enters the brain's reward circuitry. Cocaine binds to uptake pumps that act to remove dopamine from the synapse. More dopamine accumulates in the synapse, producing feelings of intense pleasure. Unfortunately, prolonged use of cocaine causes the brain to adapt, and become dependent on the presence of cocaine to function normally, because the amount of natural dopamine present is "regularly low" than the user is accustomed to. So, if the person stops using cocaine, since there is not enough dopamine in the synapse, the person experiences the opposite of pleasure: depression, fatigue, low mood.

Cocaine has very harmful effects than marijuana, due to its highly stimulating components, it triggers an aggressive addiction to the substance. This substance is easily absorbed, so it adheres more quickly to the neurons of the brain, producing feelings of immense satisfaction about the substance. person who consumes it. Being a drug that produces high levels of pleasure, delight, enjoyment, the brain gets used to it, so when the person stops consuming, the opposite is caused, that is, they experience feelings of anger, anger, frustration, depression. Failing to recognize or understand that drug dependence is a health problem reinforces the cycle of marginalization that often affects people with drug use disorders, making it difficult for them to recover and socially integrate; In addition, the stigmatizing attitude towards drug users, which could be incurred even by health care service personnel, can hinder the delivery of effective treatment to those who need it most [Alban \(2016\)](#).

Society regulates many behaviors, including drug use. In some cases, it does so through legal provisions that establish the illegality of some substances and the prohibition of their consumption. Individuals who are tempted to transgress the norms that regulate social behavior may be driven to use drugs to express their behavior's opposition to established rules. There are close links between poverty and drug use, the most affected by the problem of drug use are poor people in relation to the societies in which they live. The behaviors that an individual presents with his environment regulate the society that is built around him, in recent times the consumption of drugs has affected the society in which we are living, since, when there are aggressive behaviors with episodes of violence, It creates an intolerance that harms the well-being and tranquility with which people develop. Figure 1 shows the risk factors for drug use.



Figure 1. Risk factors for drug use

As observed among the risk factors is the commitment of the student and the low performance observed in students who use these drugs. There are other factors related to the social influence of using drugs, the lack of personal goals and a life project, the perception of drug use as something harmless, ignorance of the effects and consequences of drug use is not taken into account. Young people who have used drugs are poorly aligned with school and become rebellious, not assuming their role in academic learning, due to their early initiation into drug use.

Prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration have practical consequences if they are confronted in a comprehensive manner, because although a survey makes one aspect of the problem visible, the approaches to overcoming it must start from the understanding that abstinence, in a person affected by drug use, is not the goal but just a starting point to travel down a tortuous path in which she not only faces her addiction but also the cultural paradigm that leads to rejection and misunderstanding of the family and social environment aggravated by a ideological distortion that has stigmatized any understanding that is outside of repression (Espinoza-Freire & Campoverde-Macías, 2017). The abstinence that people with illicit drug use may present does not represent a recovery from the problem, if the intervention is not comprehensive, the well-being would only be momentary, the addiction must be treated in all its aspects so that we can speak of a total recovery.

#### *Academic performance*

According to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2011), the meaning of the expression "educational quality" is controversial because it will always have a historical connotation since it can evolve over time and will represent a certain ideal or aspiration of society. or groups and by himself. The diversity of existing positions will always condition what each person or group of people considers to be the main goal or purpose of education as a human activity. Therefore, it is not a neutral concept, but has a strong social, economic, cultural, and political burden (P. 4).

The quality of education ensures that all young people acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary to equate them for adult life. It also points out that the quality of an educational system is characterized by the fact that: It is accessible to all citizens, it facilitates personal, organizational and material resources adjusted to the needs of each student, promotes change and innovation in the school institution and in the classrooms through reflection, stimulates and facilitates the well-being and development of teachers and other professionals of the institution educational (Graells, 2002).

The school climate refers to the perception that students have of the different environments in which they develop their usual activities and that favor or not their learning and their permanence in school, it has to do with the level of collective well-being of a group, this is also perceived by teachers and managers and other actors of the school or center or educational, even by your visitors. Among the main purposes of education is to manage a good school climate, since this allows for proper school performance, teacher management in this aspect is necessary since the strengthening of learning and student enjoyment depends on this factor. to remain within the institution.

Teachers who are sensitive or empathic with the needs and emotions of their students favor the formation of students who are emotionally healthy, safe and capable of developing their own potentialities in equal relationships

with their environment (Espinoza-Freire & Campoverde-Macías, 2017). The lack of response and carelessness on the part of teachers who do not provide conditions for emotional development in students, leave them exposed to risks, with difficulties in developing defense mechanisms, these students can later become adults with low self-esteem, unconcerned with themselves. themselves.

When there is an adequate school climate, students can grow and develop within a system that guarantees their emotional well-being, for which the task of teachers is fundamental, tolerance, empathy, and respect allow the student to exploit his full capacity. correctly, a sensitive and friendly teacher allows to overcome the barriers that may be blocking meaningful learning; a teacher lacking these qualities generates people with low self-esteem, insecurity, difficult organization to solve problems, personal carelessness, intellectual and social disability, so if we have a negative environment with students who use drugs, it is very complex for them to have a high performance in class.

Drug addiction and its influence on the academic performance of high school students of the rural educational unit, shows little interest in studies, and lack of support from parents in their academic training process, lack of support of the authorities, as well as the lack of educational strategies of the teachers in the manner and form of dealing with this issue, very delicate and that compromises the education of adolescents and young people in this rural sector of the Chone canton, a difficulty that deserves to be treated with great delicacy and objectivity (McCabe et al., 2007; Jones & Bonci, 2005; Di Chiara, 1999).

In consultation with the parents, representatives and guardians of the students, it can be said that they mention the lack of attention of the authorities to this drug problem, since for their part they have not had the orientation, nor the treatment that is could give it on time, they also indicate that they have not received a quality education either, since it was an area that had conflicts at the time, the teachers did not want to impart their knowledge in the community, and those who came had to work in a multifunctional way, that is to say with several grades, for which the education was deficient.

In studies carried out, parents mention that the boys and girls who attended school did not have a good school environment, due to the uncertainty they had between families (Graells, 2002), the school climate refers to the perception that students have of the different environments in which they carry out their usual activities and that favor or not their learning and their permanence in school, this level of well-being helps the collective of a group, the school climate is also perceived by teachers and directors and other actors of the school or educational center, even by its visitors.

The students were asked if they had received attention from the authorities or any social group in relation to drugs. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1  
They have been trained in relation to the use of drugs

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A lot	10	33.33
Little	5	16.77
Nothing	15	50.00

From what can be understood and according to the results, one of the factors that has influenced so that This problem does not affect the education of the students, it is that it has not been treated as a greater incidence by the authorities, considering between little or nothing almost 67.7%, this indicates that they have not given importance to this problem, which undoubtedly affects the performance of students.

Regarding the interview applied to the teachers, it was possible to determine that there are several elements that are not being well treated by them, such as the support of the families to the educational processes, which in reference to what was asked, state that the parents of family do not give the importance of their children's studies, that when they are called they do not go to school, they do not attend meetings, they do not help their children at home, in addition that communication is not very fluid, they also indicate that the parents assign them agricultural tasks and many times they do not send them to the study center, and some when they do send them, they do not enter the classroom. But what is critical that the Teachers mention is that they are not told about the consequences that drug use produces, and what this affects the emotional, psychic development and relationships with others, in addition the Teachers express that for what it is the problem, they diagnose in an exploratory way those who use drugs, to implement certain intervention strategies in the curriculum and be able to help them, but it is very complex.

Communication with parents in the treatment of issues related to their son or daughter was inquired about, showing the results in table 2.

Table 2  
Communication with parents

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A lot	4	40.00
Little	2	20.00
Nothing	4	40.00

According to the criteria expressed by the teachers, there is a 60% that communicates little or nothing with the parents of the students, this implies that the channels of communication between these actors are failing, and perhaps this causes low interest in studies, and perhaps due to lack of good communication, the problem of drug use increases and no solution paths are foreseen and with this improve the performance of students.

As for the surveys to the students about the performance in their studies and about addictions, they said that they do not have help at home and that there is also no interest in studying, because many have studied and are here, there are no opportunities to continue studying outside. And that neither at home nor at school is there a good environment to study that guarantees adequate personal and emotional development, and that if they consume it is to feel good, because they are not understood at home, and that this motivates them and raises your self-esteem.

The causes of drug addiction are due to endogenous factors, such as the lack of adequate attention in the education of children and young people, which favors a good school environment, this situation must be addressed as a priority with the establishment of a plan that allows adequate treatment to be given to young drug addicts, in addition to establishing channels of communication between the family and the school, and involving parents in the educational process of their children (Koob, 2013; Baler & Volkow, 2006; Eisinger et al., 2018).

## 4 Conclusion

The result was that the low academic performance is since many young people consume narcotic substances, neglecting their studies and showing little interest in school tasks, which has led to the concern of parents and teachers, and to mediate with a plan that makes it possible to deal with the issue with all the actors of the educational community and the sector. The behavior of drug addicted adolescents is because parents do not pay attention and they have not given importance to this problem by the authorities, which undoubtedly affects the performance of the students.

### *Conflict of interest statement*

The authors declared that's they have no competing interests.

### *Statement of authorship*

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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