

INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY WORSHIP AND INDIVIDUAL LIFESTYLE ON DRUG USE AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyle on drug use and quality of life among undergraduates of Ekiti State University (EKSU), Nigeria. A descriptive correlational survey design was adopted to investigate the relationships among the variables without experimental manipulation. A total of 193 undergraduates were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using four validated instruments: the Celebrity Worship Scale, the Individual Lifestyle Profile Scale, the Drug Use Disorders Identification Test, and an adapted version of the Older People's Quality of Life Brief Questionnaire for youth populations. Results from regression analyses indicated that celebrity worship significantly predicted both drug use ($\beta = .52$, $t = 8.43$, $p < .05$) and quality of life ($\beta = .62$, $t = 11.03$, $p < .05$). Celebrity worship accounted for 27% of the variance in drug use ($R^2 = .27$, $F(1,191) = 71.08$, $p < .001$) and 39% of the variance in quality of life ($R^2 = .39$, $F(1,191) = 121.62$, $p < .001$). Individual lifestyle also significantly predicted drug use ($\beta = .62$, $t = 10.89$, $p < .05$) and quality of life ($\beta = .42$, $t = 6.38$, $p < .05$), explaining 38% and 18% of the variance respectively (drug use: $R^2 = .38$, $F(1,191) = 118.54$, $p < .001$; quality of life: $R^2 = .18$, $F(1,191) = 40.72$, $p < .001$). Joint regression analysis showed that celebrity worship and individual lifestyle together explained 44% of the variance in drug use and 41% in quality of life. The findings highlight the psychological and behavioral links between celebrity influence, lifestyle patterns, and student well-being. The study concludes that interventions aimed at improving undergraduate health and quality of life should incorporate both media influence awareness and lifestyle education strategies.

Keywords: Celebrity worship, Drug use, Quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

The digitization of modern society has further enhanced the impact of celebrity culture, allowing celebrities to become powerful social/psychological reference points for youth. Celebrities expose themselves to fandom via social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or X (Twitter). Such engagements create parasocial relationships, which are one-sided social interactions that lead to an increase in adoration, identity, and behavioural limitations among followers (Aruguete, McCutcheon, & McCutcheon 2024; Jia, Wang, & Liu, 2023). The ingestion-addiction model of celebrity worship describes a process that commences from entertaining worship, moving to a high level of identification with a celebrity, depending on the fan, which impacts their decision-making processes (Aruguete et al., 2024).

Lifestyle factors form another important factor in determining health status and psychosocial well-being among young adults. Lifestyle refers to behaviour, which includes regular patterns in a person's diet, exercise, stress, social interactions, and recreational activities. Lifestyle, in turn, contributes to a person's health, psychological, and social well-being in general (Farhud, 2015). Research findings indicate that unhealthy lifestyle practices correlate with high risks of substance use, mental health problems, and low levels of well-being among university students (Kushkestani, Sadeghian & Ramezani, 2020; Tarekegn, Kebede & Teshome, 2022). The extensive penetration of the media, for instance, has meant that lifestyle among students now revolves around cultural influences beyond celebrities, as portrayed in most social media platforms (Motyka, Kaczmarczyk, & Wróbel 2021).

The rising prevalence of substance use among undergraduates has become a critical public health issue within various countries across the globe, particularly within transitional development periods. Previous research indicated that exposure to certain scenarios or representations related to psychoactive substance use among celebrities has a significant potential impact on the levels of addiction, along with imitation of such behaviours (Shabahang, Fathi, & Rahimi, 2020; Motyka et al., 2021). The levels of substance use, along with other related activities such as substance use, self-injury, and negative coping mechanisms, have been empirically correlated with celebrity worship, implying the psychological effects of excessive admiration and imitation (Zsila, Urbán, McCutcheon, & Demetrovics, 2020; Sheridan, Maltby & Houran, 2007)

Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional construct reflecting individuals' perceptions of their physical health, psychological state, social relationships, and environmental conditions. Evidence consistently shows that substance use negatively affects quality of life across multiple domains, including mental health, social functioning, and life satisfaction (Bratu, Neamțu & Călina2023; Armoon, Khodadost, Nazari, Torkashvand & Sharifi 2022). A study by Aruna, Tinuola, & Olaseinde (2025) in a study affirmed that the quality of life of individuals with substance use disorders often report reduced health-related quality of life, impaired social relationships, and psychological distress. Moreover, research indicates that many correlates of poor quality of life among substance users are not addiction-specific but are related to broader psychosocial and lifestyle factors (Müller, Skurtveit & Clausen 2016), suggesting that lifestyle behaviours play a crucial mediating role.

Currently, there is growing acknowledgement of the relationship between celebrity influence and lifestyle behaviours, substances of abuse, and quality of life in public health and behavioural studies. For example, celebrity influence and addiction prevention strategies have been explored as part of public health and behavioural studies (Vafeiadis, Xiao & Qin, 2022; Brown, Basil & Bocarnea 2010). Even with the positive effects of celebrity influence on behaviour and lifestyle, it remains clear that excessive celebrity worship and imitation of behaviours can contribute to dangerous imitation behaviours due to celebrity lifestyles and substance abuse. This phenomenon of dual celebrity influence on behaviour explains the importance of researching and understanding the effects of celebrity worship on individual lifestyle behaviours and young adult health outcomes.

While research into the area internationally is rising, research into the combined effect of celebrity worship/lifestyle on the usage and quality of life of university students, especially in Africa, has been largely neglected. Most of the research done so far has been done in the Western and Asian cultures, which can hardly be generalised across the Nigerian nation. In addition, the research done previously mainly focused on celebrity worship, lifestyle, and substance use individually instead of focusing on the combined role of the three in quality of life. This has greatly limited the formulation of integral intervention approaches for the university student population in developing nations.

The rapid expansion of digital media has intensified celebrity influence among young adults, increasing parasocial engagement and lifestyle imitation. While celebrity admiration can serve motivational and informational functions, excessive celebrity worship may contribute to maladaptive behavioural patterns, including risky substance use and unhealthy lifestyle adoption. Nigerian undergraduates, who

are navigating developmental transitions, academic pressures, and evolving social identities, may be particularly susceptible to such influences. However, there is insufficient empirical evidence quantifying how celebrity worship and lifestyle behaviours interact to shape drug use and quality of life outcomes within Nigerian university settings.

At Ekiti State University (EKSU), anecdotal observations suggest increasing emulation of celebrity lifestyles among students, accompanied by rising concerns about substance use and wellbeing. Yet, systematic empirical research examining these relationships is lacking. This gap in the literature necessitates a comprehensive investigation into the predictive roles of celebrity worship and individual lifestyle behaviours on drug use and quality of life among EKSU undergraduates. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyle on drug use and quality of life among undergraduates at Ekiti State University.

Research Objectives.

- i. investigates the extent to which celebrity worship influences individuals' attitudes and behaviours toward drug use.
- ii. assess the relationship between individual lifestyle choices and the likelihood of engaging in drug use.
- iii. examine the combined effect of celebrity worship and lifestyle on drug use patterns among individuals.
- iv. determine the impact of drug use on the overall quality of life of individuals.
- v. explores whether lifestyle moderates the relationship between celebrity worship and quality of life.

Research Hypotheses

1. Celebrity worship will significantly influence drug use among EKSU undergraduates
2. Individual lifestyle will significantly influence drug use among EKSU undergraduates
3. Celebrity worship will significantly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates
4. Individual lifestyle will significantly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates
5. Celebrity worship and Individual lifestyle will jointly influence drug use among EKSU undergraduates
6. Celebrity worship and Individual lifestyle will jointly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates

METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive correlational survey design to evaluate the predictive relationships among celebrity worship, health-related lifestyles, drug use risks, and quality of life. A correlational survey framework is structurally appropriate for assessing the magnitude and direction of associations among naturally occurring behavioral and psychosocial variables without experimental manipulation or intervention. This non-experimental approach facilitates the methodical collection of standardized self-report data from a large sample within a condensed timeframe. Methodologically, the design supports multivariate statistical analyses—including multiple linear regression—to estimate shared variance (R^2), test predictive hypotheses, and permit statistical generalization to the broader undergraduate population while preserving the natural context of participants' responses.

Data were collected using four standardized self-report instruments. Celebrity worship was evaluated using the 23-item Celebrity Worship Scale (CWS) [McCutcheon et al., 2002], which measures psychological attachment across entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological domains using a 5-point Likert scale; higher summed scores indicate stronger celebrity fixation ($\alpha = .85-.95$). Participants' health-related behaviors were assessed via the 24-item Individual Lifestyle Profile (ILP) [Wagner et al., 2001], which utilizes a 4-point frequency scale to measure domains such as diet, exercise, and stress management, where higher scores reflect healthier lifestyle habits ($\alpha > .70$).

To screen for substance-related vulnerabilities, the 11-item Drug Use Disorders Identification Test (DUDIT) (Berman et al., 2003) was administered. The DUDIT utilizes weighted frequency scoring (0-44) to evaluate drug consumption and dependency symptoms, with elevated scores indicating higher clinical risk (α approx .90). Finally, global well-being was quantified using the 13-item OPQOL-Brief [Bowling & Stenner, 2011], adapted for youth populations. Responded to on a 5-point Likert scale, its summed scores represent perceived quality of life across social, environmental, and psychological domains, demonstrating strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .85-.88$).

RESULTS**Table 1: Respondents' Socio-demographics (N = 193)**

Category	Level	F(%)
Gender	Male	125(64.8)
	Female	68(35.2)
Age	17-20	81(42.0)
	21-25	112(58.0)
Religion	Christianity	155(80.3)
	Islam	37(19.2)
	Traditionalist	1(0.5)
Course of study	Accounting Education	21(10.9)
	Law	26(13.5)
	Psychology and Behavioral Studies	27(14.0)
	Political Science	62(32.1)
	Business Administration	15(7.8)
	Banking and Finance	33(17.1)
	Chemistry Education	9(4.7)

Table 1 shows that 125(64.8%) of the respondents were Male while 68(35.2%) were Female. 81(42.0%) were 17-20 years of age while 112(58.0%) were 21-25 years of age. 155(80.3%) were Christian, 37(19.2%) were Muslim while 1(0.5%) were traditionalist. Based on course of study, 21(10.9%) were in Accounting Education, 26(13.5%) were in Law, 27(14.0%) were in Psychology and Behavioral Studies, 62(32.1%) were in Political Science, 15(7.8%) were in Business Administration, 33(17.1%) were in Banking and Finance while 9(4.7%) were in Chemistry Education.

Hypothesis I: Celebrity worship will significantly influenced drug use among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 2

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression showing the Influence of Celebrity Worship on Drug Use among EKSU Undergraduates

Predictor variable	B	SE	β	t	R	R ²	F	P
(Constant)	8.422	2.118		3.977				.00
					.521	.271	71.08	
Celebrity worship	.309	.037	.521	8.431				.00

Simple linear regression result presented in Table 2 revealed that drug usage among EKSU undergraduates is strongly influenced by celebrity worship ($\beta = .52$, $t = 8.43$, $p < .05$). Celebrity worship accounted for 27% ($R^2 = .27$) of the variance in drug use among EKSU undergraduates, and the model was significant ($F(1, 191) = 71.08$, $p < .00$). As a result, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis II: Individual lifestyle will significantly influence drug use among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 3

Table 3: Simple linear regression showing the influence of individual lifestyle on drug use among EKSU undergraduates

Predictor variable	B	SE	β	t	R	R ²	F	P
(Constant)	12.319	1.304		9.447				.00
					.619	.383	118.54	
Individual lifestyle	.381	.035	.619	10.888				.00

Result in Table 3 shows that individual lifestyle significantly influenced drug use among EKSU undergraduates ($\beta = .62$, $t = 10.89$, $p < .05$). The contribution of individual lifestyle in explaining the variance in drug use among EKSU undergraduates was 38% ($R^2 = .38$), and the model was significant, $F(1, 191) = 118.54$, $p < .00$.) The stated hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis III: Celebrity worship will significantly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 4

Table 4: Simple linear regression showing the influence of celebrity worship on quality of life among EKSU undergraduates

Predictor variable	B	SE	β	t	R	R ²	F	P
(Constant)	14.462	2.574		5.618				.00
					.624	.389	121.62	
Celebrity worship	.491	.044	.624	11.028				.00

The simple linear regression in Table 4 shows that celebrity worship significantly influenced quality of life among EKSU undergraduates ($\beta = .62$, $t = 11.03$, $p < .05$). The contribution of celebrity worship in explaining the variance in quality of life among EKSU undergraduates was 39% ($R^2 = .39$), and the model was significant, $F(1, 191) = 121.62$, $p < .00$.) The stated hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis IV: Individual lifestyle will significantly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 5

Table 5: Simple linear regression showing the influence of individual lifestyle on quality of life among EKSU undergraduates

Predictor variable	B	SE	β	t	R	R ²	F	P
(Constant)	30.088	2.001		15.038				.00
					.419	.176	40.72	
Individual lifestyle	.342	.054	.419	6.381				.00

In Table 5 the regression result revealed that individual lifestyle significantly influenced quality of life among EKSU undergraduates ($\beta = .42$, $t = 6.38$, $p < .05$). The

contribution of individual lifestyle in explaining the variance in quality of life among EKSU undergraduates was 18% ($R^2 = .18$), and the model was significant, $F(1, 191) = 40.72, p < .00$.) The stated hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis V: Celebrity worship and individual lifestyles will jointly influence drug use among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Multiple Regression Table Showing Joint and Independent influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyles on drug use among EKSU undergraduates

predictors	B	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Celebrity worship	.28	4.53	<.05	0.67	0.44	75.56	<.05
Individual lifestyle	.48	7.66	<.05				

Table 6 shows that there was significant joint influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyles on drug use among EKSU undergraduates, $F(2,190) = 75.56, R^2 = 0.44; p < .05$]. The $R^2 = 0.44$ indicates that the independent variable of celebrity worship and individual lifestyles explained 44% variation in dependent variable (Drug use). Further results show that celebrity worship ($\beta = .28; t = 4.53; p < .05$), and individual lifestyle ($\beta = .48; t = 7.66; p < .05$) independently and significantly predict drug use among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis VI: Celebrity worship and individual lifestyles will jointly influence quality of life among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis and the analysis presented on Table 7

Table 7: Summary of Multiple Regression Table Showing Joint and Independent influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyles on quality of life among EKSU undergraduates

Predictors	B	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Celebrity worship	.55	8.55	<.05	0.64	0.41	64.57	<.05
Individual lifestyle	.14	2.23	<.05				

Table 7 shows that there was significant joint influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyles on quality of life among EKSU undergraduates, $F(2,190) = 64.57$, $R^2 = 0.41$; $p < .05$]. The $R^2 = 0.41$ indicates that the independent variable of celebrity worship and individual. lifestyles explained 41% variation in dependent variable (Quality of life). Further results show that celebrity worship ($\beta = .55$; $t = 8.55$; $p < .05$), and individual lifestyle ($\beta = .14$; $t = 2.23$; $p < .05$) independently and significantly predict quality of life among EKSU undergraduates. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis, which stated that celebrity worship would significantly predict drug use, was supported. The findings revealed a significant positive association between celebrity worship and drug use, indicating that students who reported higher levels of admiration and emotional attachment to celebrities were more likely to engage in substance-related behaviours. This finding is consistent with the Absorption-Addiction Model of celebrity worship, which posits that individuals progress from entertainment-based admiration to intense personal identification, with potential behavioural consequences such as imitation and maladaptive coping (Aruguete et al., 2024).

Empirical studies have similarly reported associations between celebrity worship and maladaptive behaviours, including substance use and self-harm (Zsila et al.,

2020; Sheridan et al., 2007). Furthermore, Shabahang et al. (2020) demonstrated that parasocial interaction with narcotic-addicted celebrities significantly predicts addiction potential, reinforcing the role of celebrity modelling in shaping risky behaviours. In the contemporary media environment, where celebrities often portray substance use as glamorous or normative, students with high celebrity admiration may internalise such behaviours through observational learning and perceived social endorsement.

The second hypothesis proposed that individual lifestyles would significantly predict drug use, and this hypothesis was also supported. The results indicated that unhealthy lifestyle patterns, such as poor stress management, weak health responsibility, irregular routines, and maladaptive coping strategies, were associated with higher levels of drug use. This finding aligns with health behaviour and psychosocial theories, which suggest that maladaptive lifestyle behaviours increase vulnerability to risky behaviours, including substance use. Prior research has shown that lifestyle factors such as sleep disturbances, stress, and poor daily routines significantly correlate with substance use among university students (Kushkestani et al., 2020; Tarekegn et al., 2022). Farhud (2015) also emphasised that lifestyle behaviours are central determinants of health outcomes, suggesting that interventions targeting daily behavioural patterns may reduce substance use risks. The present findings highlight that drug use among undergraduates may serve as a maladaptive coping mechanism for stress and lifestyle instability.

The third hypothesis examined the predictive role of celebrity worship on quality of life and was supported, with celebrity worship showing a significant positive relationship with quality of life. This finding suggests that moderate levels of celebrity admiration may provide emotional enjoyment, inspiration, social

connection, and psychological gratification that enhance perceived wellbeing. Previous research indicates that entertainment-social aspects of celebrity worship can be associated with positive emotional experiences and social bonding, whereas pathological levels are linked with negative psychological outcomes (Jia et al., 2023). The positive relationship observed in this study implies that most students likely engaged in normative or entertainment-orientated celebrity admiration rather than extreme or pathological worship. However, this finding also underscores the complexity of celebrity influence, which can simultaneously serve as a source of motivation and emotional support while posing risks for behavioural imitation.

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that individual lifestyle would significantly predict quality of life, was also supported. Students who reported healthier lifestyle behaviours demonstrated better quality of life across physical, psychological, and social domains. This finding is consistent with extensive literature showing that lifestyle behaviours such as physical activity, stress management, healthy social relationships, and responsible health behaviours are key determinants of wellbeing. Systematic reviews have demonstrated that individuals with substance use disorders, and unhealthy lifestyles consistently report lower quality of life across multiple domains (Bratu et al., 2023; Armoon et al., 2022). Additionally, studies have shown that psychosocial and lifestyle factors, rather than addiction-specific factors alone, significantly influence quality of life among substance users (Müller et al., 2016). These findings emphasise the importance of lifestyle interventions in improving students' wellbeing.

The fifth hypothesis investigated the joint influence of celebrity worship and individual lifestyle on drug use. The results indicated that both variables jointly

explained a substantial proportion of variance in drug use, demonstrating that substance use among undergraduates is multidetermined. This suggests that external social influences, such as celebrity modelling, interact with internal behavioural patterns to shape drug use behaviours. Students exposed to celebrity cues that normalise substance use and who also maintain unhealthy lifestyles are particularly vulnerable to engaging in drug use. This interaction supports social learning and cultivation theories, which propose that repeated media exposure and personal behavioural contexts jointly influence attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, Motyka et al. (2021) reported that media representations of psychoactive drug use significantly impact audience attitudes and behaviours, reinforcing the combined role of media influence and lifestyle context.

The sixth hypothesis examined the joint influence of celebrity worship and lifestyle on quality of life, and the findings confirmed a significantly combined predictive effect. Celebrity worship contributed more strongly to quality of life, suggesting that emotional and motivational influences from admired public figures may shape students perceived wellbeing, while lifestyle behaviours provide additional supportive effects. This finding aligns with research showing that identification with celebrities can influence attitudes, emotions, and behavioural intentions, sometimes positively when celebrities promote healthy behaviours (Vafeiadis et al., 2022; Brown et al., 2010). However, it also highlights the dual nature of celebrity influence, which can enhance emotional wellbeing while simultaneously posing risks for maladaptive behavioural imitation.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that celebrity worship and individual lifestyle behaviours are significant determinants of drug use and quality of life

among undergraduates at Ekiti State University. Stronger emotional attachment to celebrities was associated with increased engagement in drug-related behaviours, while also showing a meaningful relationship with perceived wellbeing, suggesting that celebrity influence can shape student behaviour in both adaptive and maladaptive ways. In addition, lifestyle habits emerged as a critical determinant of student health outcomes, with unhealthy behavioural patterns increasing the likelihood of substance use and reduced quality of life, whereas healthier lifestyle practices were associated with improved wellbeing. These findings have important theoretical and practical implications, as they highlight the combined role of psychosocial media influences and personal behavioural patterns in shaping student health and wellbeing.

It is based on this finding that this study recommends that it would be beneficial for the university to develop media culture literacy programmes to help students portray media and celebrity culture in a more realistic way and discourage unhealthy imitations. Health promotion programmes among university students would be beneficial in developing more healthy lifestyle habits for students through enhanced physical exercise, stress management, and nutritional well-being programmes. It is also important to use standardised tools to assess unhealthy celebrity worship and maladaptive coping strategies for students and provide early intervention programmes to alleviate vulnerability among university students. Lastly, peer-based drug awareness programmes would benefit from utilising peer influence to create more healthy lifestyle habits among university students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The empirical findings show that celebrity worship and individual lifestyle patterns jointly account for 44% of the variance in undergraduate drug use and 41% in

quality of life. Consequently, Ekiti State University (EKSU) must treat these behavioral factors as critical pillars for institutional intervention.

First, because celebrity worship predicts a substantial portion of student outcomes (27% of drug use and 39% of health-related quality of life variance), the University Guidance and Counselling Centre should implement targeted media-literacy programs. These programs should focus on critical evaluation of celebrity influence to mitigate negative social comparison and promote healthy lifestyle patterns that enhance students' physical and psychological well-being.

Second, since individual lifestyle strongly predicts drug use (38% variance) and well-being (18% variance), the EKSU Health Centre should introduce proactive, non-punitive lifestyle screenings during annual registrations.

Ultimately, the EKSU Senate must authorize an integrated psychosocial policy framework that embeds healthy-lifestyle education into the curriculum. Such as evidence-based therapies like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

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