Title page

Essay

HLSC122 Semester 1, 2019

Assessment 3: Critical appraisal of evidence

Word count:

Article: Day, N., Criss, J., Griffiths, B., Gujral, S. K., John-Leader, F., Johnston, J., et al. (2018). Music festival attendees’ illicit drug use, knowledge and practices regarding drug content and purity: a cross-sectional survey. *Harm Reduction Journal, 15* (1), 1-8. Doi: 10.1186/s12954-017-0205-7.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to critically evaluate the article and analyzing the facts by considering literary evidence. It involves an assessment of the findings and its reliability. The critical evaluation involves an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the article. It allows understanding if the author has managed to justify his claims or not. It is critical to determine if the findings are unbiased and presented in a systematic way. The credibility of the author is considered because it impacts the reliability and neutrality of the study. The evaluation is also conducted for finding what objectives and evidence can be obtained from the author's efforts. The evaluation at the end offers benchmarks for future studies by identifying the research gap.

Part A: Critical appraisal

## Authorship

The credentials of the authors are not provided in the article but after searching them on Google Scholar it is revealed that all are well-qualified and holds significant experience of research. Niamh Day is a Senior Lecturer at the University of St. Andrews and has a background in research and study. Limited information is available about education. The author has produced research on the impact of drugs on youth. Joshua Criss, Benjamin Griffith and Shireen Kaur Gujral are affiliated with Western Sydney University and conducted research on illicit drug use. The affiliation of the authors reflects their credibility of conducting research. This gives the idea that authors are highly qualified and have experience in research. They are affiliated with well-reputed institutes that are involved in conducting accurate research (Tarkang, Kweku, & Zotor, 2017).

The study was conducted for the research purpose. The authors had no personal interest and were neither working for any specific organization. They had only affiliations with the educational institutes. The research is thus credible because it lacks personal interest.

## Research questions

The authors in the study didn’t identify the research questions separately. This can be seen as a weakness of the article because it was possible to formulate research questions such as; Can drug checking to be adopted as a harm reduction strategy among young people? Does the drug check impact the behaviour of drug use? Research questions are a catalyst for conducting research and presenting the idea to the readers. However, the authors have not included the research questions that make it difficult for the readers to identify the purpose of research.

## Research design

The study includes a separate section for methods that aims at providing a blueprint for the research. The study relied on a quantitative methodology as the respondents are surveyed through interviews. The closed-ended questionnaire is used for inquiring the participants of the study. The questionnaire comprised of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The research design clearly explains the process used for the collection of data such as the survey conduction technique. The contents of the questionnaire are also explained such as sample size included a group of 10 and 12 young adults. The target audience is also identified as the study mentions that a major Australian popular music festival where the young audience is approached. The survey was conducted for two days at the music festival. The participants selected for the survey had ages of 18-30 years because the study was focused on assessing the behaviour and perceptions of the youth. The study also explains the time at which the survey was conducted. The participants were approached at the daytime for minimizing the likelihood of intoxication impacts on them.

## Research methods

Before collection data, the participants were informed about the purpose of research and their informed consent was also acquired. This reflects that the authors met the ethical standards of research. The participants were also told that the data would be kept confidential and not leaked to anyone. The collected questionnaires were them put in the closed box for ensuring confidentiality. Participants were given adequate information about drug checking and how it can be provided (Greenhalgh, et al., 2018).

A pilot study is conducted before the final data is collected from the participants. This indicates the reliability of the research instrument designed for determining the responses of the participants. The pilot testing was used to assure that the designed survey tool (questionnaire) was written in language that participants were able to understand (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018).

## Results and limitations

The data were analyzed by using SPSS version 22 Software. After obtaining the data the open-ended question was coded thematically for determining the reasoning behind drug content and purity. A proper coding scheme was developed for computing results in the software output. Chi-square tests were computed in SPSS and a p-value of <0.05 was considered as statistically significant (Long, 2014).

The authors managed to provide results in an organized manner. Separate sections are designed for sharing the findings of the survey. The first section of results provides information about the socio-demographic variables and the characteristics of drug use. The findings are presented in a well-organized format such as the authors used percentage for the convenience of the readers. The authors have followed a proper method for presenting results section because they have classified the participants according to their age, gender, sexual orientation, employment and study status. This provides adequate information about the participants. Another strength of the study is the use of tables for providing a better view of the data.

The study has identified the limitations that prove the validity of the research. claiming limitations is a subjective process that adds credibility to the study. By acknowledging the limitations the authors have proved that they possess good knowledge of literature and also propose conduction of future research.

Part B

Application of evidence to practice

Evidence-based practice emphasizes on building a relationship between evidence and results of the survey. It stresses on retrieving relevant literature that could provide evidentiary support to the study. The study created a separate section of discussions for comparing findings of the survey with evidence from the literature. This has allowed the authors to provide adequate support to the findings of the survey. The findings reveal that they are supported by significant evidence that makes the study more reliable. The findings of the survey are linked to the literature such as it mentions that “after testing revealed an unexpected substance, two-thirds of people would not take their drug and would go on to warn their friends" (Kriener & Schmid, 2017).

The findings claim that regular drug users deny taking a pill when they are unaware of the substance. This is supported by the findings of (Johnston et al., 2006). The authors have used the study of Kriener and Schmid (2017) for providing evidentiary support by mentioning that engagement in programs is an effective harm reduction strategy. The overall analysis of the results indicates that the authors have justified their results on the basis of previous studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the article is a credible source that can be used by future researchers to understand the behaviours of youth towards illicit drug use and harm checking strategy. The credentials of the authors reveal that they are affiliated with well-reputed universities that improved the credibility of the source. Their experiences in research and backgrounds in drug studies make them credible for conducting reasonable research. The authors have complied with the ethical standards by taking informed consent of participants. The methods are also clearly outlined with the discussion of survey and questionnaire. The inclusion of limitations is a subjective process that adds credibility to the study. The critical evaluation depicts that the survey results are supported by empirical evidence.

Reference

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