

Focus Group Report Format

1. Summary of Project
2. Introduction with list of outcomes
3. Participation demographics
4. Summary of findings within each outcome, including representative quotes, results of yes or no questions, and quantitative data.
5. Recommendations

Summary of Project

Southern Kentucky University held a focus group during the week of January 30th through February 7th, 2017. This involved various students represented at Southern Kentucky University: those who are involved in Greek life, college athletes and those not affiliated with Greek Life. Through the focus groups, Southern Kentucky University gathered information to help administrators, faculty, staff and other students. Through this study, it was found that many knew the effects that study drugs have on them, yet they risk taking them with the promise of motivation and a good grade.

Introduction

Southern Kentucky University asked a series of questions to 6 students between the dates of January 30th and February 7th, 2017. These questions were conducted as part of the College's attempt to uncover student's use of "study drugs." Participants provided information in two ways: written responses and verbal responses.

The discussion was designed to gather information from the students in regard to the following questions:

1. What do you believe are the advantages of taking "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
2. What do you believe are the disadvantages of taking "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
3. Are there any individuals or groups who would approve of your taking "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
4. Are there any individuals or groups who would disapprove of your taking "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
5. What factors or circumstances enable you to take "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
6. What factors or circumstances make it difficult or impossible for you to take "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?
7. Are there any other issues that come to mind when you think about taking "study drugs" such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

Participation Demographics

Six participants took place in the questionnaire:

- Three women and three men
- 2 students were 19 years old; 3 students were 20 years old; 1 student was 22 years old
- All students identify themselves as caucasian
- 1 student is on their second semester in college; 4 students are on their fourth semester in college; 1 student is on their eighth semester in college

- 1 student is prescribed to Adderall; 4 students have taken Adderall while not being prescribed; 1 student has not taken Adderall

Student Perspectives

What do you believe are the advantages of taking “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- Increased focus
- provides more motivation
- more alert
- better ability to comprehend concepts
- able to block out outside distractions
- not having to sleep
- better test scores

The students all had similar responses to this question. They all had somewhere along the lines of increased focus and more motivation. One student stated “I am able to be more alert and understand concepts better for the test.”

What do you believe are the disadvantages of taking “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- No appetite
- More anxious and/or angry
- Too much pent up energy
- Difficulty sleeping
- Too much can make it difficult to sit still
- Getting addicted
- May inhibit your every day focus and you become dependent for every day life

A common answer between the recipients is a lack of appetite or addiction. If you do not have any appetite, you tend to feel more run-down because of the lack of nutrients. A lot of the times, because of this, people will look to take more of this to get their energy levels back up. This, of course, can lead to addiction. This can lead to where people are dependent on the drug for days where they aren’t necessarily studying or taking a test. One recipient even said that “it makes her sweat a lot and because of the lack of blood flow to her fingers and toes, they become numb.”

Are there any individuals or groups who would approve of your taking “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- Other college students
- Parents (if sees fit)
- Teachers (if sees fit)
- Therapists

A common trend seen in this specific question is that answers were related to if others were to see it fit that they take “study drugs.” The most common answer was other peers. One recipient even said that if they are taking “study drugs,” it will help the others if they are working in a

group to perform better. There was not a lot of variety in this specific question as most of the answers were the same.

Are there any individuals or groups who would disapprove of your taking “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- Family
- People who have had experience with drug abuse
- Pediatricians
- Close to other addictive drugs
- Coaches

This question also received very similar answers. A lot of the students that answered this question added that their parents would disapprove if they weren't prescribed one. One recipient even said “Any of the answers I said for the previous question could be applied here as well.” Another recipient said “that it just depended. Some may approve of taking the drug while others may disapprove.”

What factors or circumstances enable you to take “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- People who illegally sell them
- Prescription
- School (gives you a reason to take “study drugs”)
- Doctors who don't care about their patients
- Inability to focus or concentrate in school
- Fraternity boys
- Easily accessible
- The appeal of better grades

A lot of the common thread between these answers were obtaining the drugs illegally. Some answered the if you were genuinely prescribed to the drugs, it would enable you to take them in a way that is beneficial to you in your every day life.

What factors or circumstances make it difficult or impossible for you to take “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- Not being able to find someone to sell it to you
- Drug tests
- No prescription
- Run out of the drug
- A parent or guardian disapproves of the use of “study drugs”
- Don't have enough of an attention deficit to be prescribed
- Expensive if you don't have a prescription

This answer also dealt a lot with being prescribed to a “study drug.” It was interesting to see the answer that one may not be deemed to have enough of an attention deficit to be prescribed. While others are buying the “study drugs” from peers in order to do well on a test, others are struggling to pay attention in every day life yet cannot be prescribed.

Are there any other issues that come to mind when you think about taking “study drugs” such as Adderall to improve performance on tests?

- If one takes too much, it can have a reverse effect
- Makes you seem very unfocused
- Drug tests
- Employers might think of it as a disability
- Becoming dependent on the drug
- Some cases they are really needed, but majority of the time, they are given to people who don't necessarily need them
- The longterm effects are unknown and it can come as a setback when taking them

There was many comments from the recipients about not exactly knowing the amount to take and taking a dose higher than your body can handle. Many made the comment that this will have a negative impact on your body. One recipient said if too much is taken, it will make her head feel fuzzy and she can't focus.

Recommended Changes

It is clear from the answers to the questions that students know the effects that “study drugs” can have on them. This includes negative and positive effects. Despite the negative effects that they know will come about from taking these “study drugs,” they have made it clear that they will continue to use them as enhancers for assignments and tests. For those that sincerely need it, it has definitely made an impact on their every day life. It makes them feel very tired and they have trouble falling asleep as night. It is clear that this can create a very quick cycle that is hard to break once one starts to use these “study drugs.” Recommended changes fall into two categories; more recipients and differences between “study drugs.”

More recipients:

- It would have been to an advantage to have more recipients for this study. I think it would have been more beneficial to have more recipients who had taken “study drugs” and those who have not.
- Some recipients were in a group of friends. Their answers may have changed if they were by themselves and not in a group of people.

Difference between “study drugs”:

- Some clarification between different “study drugs.”
- Some recipients made the comment that they have had different effects when it comes to taking different types of “study drugs.” Some preferred to have another type of drug over another. It would have been beneficial to dive into the differences between numerous “study drugs.”