



Perceived Pattern of Substance Use among Students in a Nigerian Tertiary Institution

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Abstract

The issue of substance use among student is a worldwide trend without a spare to Nigeria. This study investigates the Perceived pattern of substance use among the students in a Nigerian tertiary institution. The objectives set for the study are to; assess the knowledge of the students on substance use, determine the pattern of substance use among the students and identify measures to minimizing substance use among the students. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. 320 self-administered questionnaire tagged Perceived Pattern of Drug-Use (PPDU) was used for data collection and 301 were found fitted for analysis. Data analysis done using SPSS version 21 and results were presented in frequency tables/charts. It was found that majority of the respondents 57.8% were female between the ages of 21-25yrs (54.5%), (93%) had good awareness of substance use, 52.8% reported the use of substance once in a week and 42.5% use it during parties. Most of the respondents (90%) agreed that students' orientation about drugs effect will minimise the incidence and there was. This study concluded that most of the respondents had knowledge about substance use through mass media. It was therefore recommended that stated that students' orientation regarding the drug use be valued by the school administration.

Keywords: *Drugs, Substance Use, School, Students.*

Introduction

The trend of substance use among the students should be a global concern to mental health specialist group as more cases are being reported in various institutions. Substance use is a global issue and it is taking a toll on the developing countries (Basil *et al*, 2017). The incidence of substance use among the students is on the increase. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) revealed

substance use is a serious issue in an institution as about 20% of students indulged in it (Basil *et al*, 2017). Students have formed the habit of using a substance and the other which has caused a lot of havoc to the society and at the same time lead to the jeopardy of the student's academic life. Drug use keeps wrecking havoc as it impairs productive life. The mortality rate due to drug-related issues

are documented to be 40 per millions of deaths among the age of 15-65 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014)

Some of the reported issues that are associated with substance use among the students are the poor academic performance, disobedience to school authorities, expulsion from school, etc. According to Ayala (2017), there is a significant decline in academic grades due to alteration in the sense of reasoning impacted by the drug use habit. Disjointed lifestyles ranging from psychological to social are the repercussion of drug use on patients (Evans-Whipp, 2004). These ugly scenarios are documented and the ultimate concern is the future of the students who are the future leaders. The stated problem could lead to a disruption in the life cycle of the students as it could make the individual useless to the community during and after graduation from the school environment. The contribution in which the students would have made to the society will be obscured as there is breaking down of cognitive processes making the performance of executive function impaired. Young people are noted for illness associated with drug use within and outside Nigeria. (NDLEA, 2009)

The pattern of indulgence in this illicit act of drug use is studied to be of various methods and strategies among the students. The importance of studying the pattern is important to determine the ways the situation can be curbed among the students. The group of students indulging in the use of drugs are those in their active one in their youthful age but misused the energy by directing it into the social unconstructive manner. At this stage of the students' life, academic preparation is to laying the foundation for the future is the hallmark at this point in time. Instead of concentrating on the academics, the indulgence in the use of substances has preoccupied the students' mind and their academic lives are being truncated on the altar of drug use. According to Babalola et al (2015), excessive use of alcohol could take a

negative impact on the total well-being of an individual as it alters the sense reasoning and judgement.

Drugs are medical substances being prescribed in health and illness for a specific purpose which could be for diagnostic, preventive and curative in measures (Fokunang, 2012). Some of these drugs have been being prepared or exist in the form of psychoactive substances which have a greater effect of altering the mood and behaviour of the users (Sanli *et al*, 2015). Most of the heinous crimes being committed on and off campuses by students has their roots in the use of a substance which alters the students' sense of responsibility and judgement. The intake of substances informed the underlined social vices being documented among the students' populace (Popovici *et al.*,(2012), Some of the students are now seeing in hideout during the school hours, smoking or drinking. Palmer *et al.* (2013) point that over 33% students had compulsion to use drug, while 25% use drug at school hours. This pattern has been seen to be common to most students who are using drugs. The concern has been that probably there is a poor knowledge of the students regarding the causal link between substance use and physical and social issue attributed to substance. The researcher thereby set to investigate the pattern of substance use of among students in the study setting.

Objectives of Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the Perceived pattern of substance use among the students. The specific objectives for the study are;

1. To assess the awareness of the students on substance use.
2. To determine the pattern of substance use among the students.
3. To identify measures to minimizing substance use among the students.

Materials and Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the study to assess the pattern of

substance use among the undergraduate students of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Ojere, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The institution is a government owned with department and programmes cutting across five schools; Pure Applied Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Business and Management Studies, and Communication and Management Studies. Simple random sampling was used to select a school. The target population for the study was of Higher National Diploma I (HND I) students. A multi-stage sampling was used and sample of 320 was drawn from the population.

The instrument for data collection was a self-administered-questionnaire tagged Perceived pattern of Drug-Use (PPDU) Questionnaires. The questionnaire consists of four sections; Section A contained Socio-demographic data of the respondents, Section B contained Perceived Knowledge of students about Substance use, Section C contained Pattern of Substance Use, while Section D contained measures to minimizing substance use among the students. The questionnaire was assessed for face validity and content validity. The questionnaires were distributed and retrieved from the respondents. Data was analysed using SPSS version 21 and the result presented in frequency tables and charts. A letter of permission to administer the questionnaire was taken to the authority of the

institution. Student consent was sought and respondents were assured of confidentiality of the information supplied.

Results

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that majority of the students 57.8% were female, between the ages of 21-25yrs (54.5%), while 71.8% were Yoruba and 69.4% of the respondents were of Christian faith as shown in Table 1. Majority (93%) of the respondents had good awareness on substance use among students (Figure 1), 33.6% of the respondents who had awareness on substance use had it through mass media and 64.8% stated that peer group influence is responsible for the use of substance among the students (Table 2). On the pattern of substance use, 52.8% often use substance once in a week and 42.5% submitted that students use substance more during parties; and 37.2% mentioned that substance users do take the substance orally (Table 3); 43.2% of substance users do get the substance from their friends and 42.5% do get the substance from a shop. Majority (70.8%) finance the use of substances through their pocket money as shown in Table 3. Almost all the respondents (90%) agreed that there should be an orientation of the new students on the hazards/effect of drug use, majority (84.7%) of the respondents agreed that punitive measures from the school authority should be meted on a known student with substance use.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents
Demographic Data

	Category	Frequency N=301	Percentage
Age:	Less than 20 years	99	32.9%
	21-25 years	164	54.5%
	26-30 years	34	11.3%
	31-35 years	3	1.0%
	36 years and above	1	0.3%
Gender :	Male	174	57.8%
	Female	127	42.2%
Ethnicity :	Yoruba	216	71.8%
	Igbo	52	17.3%
	Hausa	29	9.6%
	Others	4	1.3%
Religion:	Christianity	209	69.4%
	Islam	91	30.2%
	Others	1	0.3%

Table 2: Awareness of Students on Substance Abuse

SN	Items	N=301(%)
1	<i>Have you heard of substance abuse?</i>	
	• Yes	280 (93%)
	• No	21 (7.0%)
2	<i>If yes, where did you acquire the knowledge?</i>	
	• Organised lecture	78 (25.9%)
	• mass media	101 (33.6%)
	• relatives	41 (13.6%)
	• friends	63 (20.9%)
	• No, I have not heard it before	18 (6%)
3	<i>What do you think is responsible for substance use among the students?</i>	
	• Stress	72 (23.9%)
	• peer influences	195 (64.8%)
	• family disruption	26 (8.6%)
	• inferiority complex	8 (2.7%)

Table 3: Perceived Pattern of Substance Abuse

	Items	N (%)
1.	How often do students use drugs?	
	• Once in a day	65 (21.6%)
	• More than once a day	32 (10.6%)
	• Once a week	159 (52.8%)
	• Several times a week	37 (12.3%)
	• I don't use it	6 (12.3%)
	• Occasionally	2 (2%)
2.	At what period do students use drugs more?	
	• Before exams	95 (31.6%)
	• Before sporting events	30 (10%)
	• At parties	128 (42.5%)
	• At home	36 (12%)
	• When sick	10 (3.3%)
	• Hide out	2 (0.7%)
3.	How do students use the drugs?	
	• Sniff	38 (12.6%)
	• Smoke	97 (32.2%)
	• Oral	112 (37.2%)
	• Injection	47 (15.6%)
	• Others	7 (2.3%)

Table 4: Measure to Minimise Substance Abuse

S/N		SA	A	D	SD
1	Rustication (expulsion) from the school	111(36.9%)	87(28.9%)	66(21.9%)	37(12.3%)
2	Punitive measures from the school authority	102(33.9%)	153(50.8%)	41(13.6%)	5(1.7%)
3	Erecting educative anti-drugs use bill boards in the school	110(36.5%)	146(48.5%)	38(12.6%)	7(2.3%)
4	Orientation of the new students on the hazards effect of drugs	127(42.2%)	144(47.8%)	21(7%)	9(3%)
5	Encourage students participation in recognized social activities on campus	104(34.6%)	149(49.5%)	39(13.0%)	9(3%)
6	Demotion of student caught indulging in the substance use	82(27.2%)	135(44.9%)	64(21.3%)	20(6.6%)

Discussion

Awareness of Students on Substance Abuse

The findings of the study revealed that majority 93% had awareness about substance abuse, out of which 33.6% had the awareness acquired this through mass media. This is in line with a study by Malik et., al (2012) on awareness of harmful effect of substance abuse among users and non users, where 75.8% respondents who were non users of the drugs had more awareness on the harmful

effect of substance use. The study is also in contrast to Bhat, Rahi & Mudasir (2015) on awareness of Drug Addiction among college students which stated that 91.23% of the respondents had no awareness on the issue related to the study. the same study further concluded that it is pertinent to increase awareness among the students in the study area. In a study by Alhyas (2015), the study

revealed that there is no adequate awareness of the participants on the use of substance. The study linked the lack of awareness of the respondents to the troubling rate of consumption of substances among the youth as the youth stated a wrong awareness associating the use of substances to relaxation method of managing stress. In a study by Parmar (2018), on knowledge and awareness regarding substance addiction among medical students, the study revealed that there is insufficient awareness about substance addiction among the students. The study also associated the poor patronage of students to the utilization of drug counselling.

The study suggested an educational programmes as a means of scaling up the level of awareness of students on substance abuse. The study is in line with the study by Awosusi and Adegboyega (2013) which concluded that there is a high level of knowledge about substance use among students in tertiary education. Where it was further stressed that the increase in the level of the knowledge among the students was linked to education on mass media regarding the use of substances, example include 'smoker are liable to die young'. The present study is also in contrast to findings from other studies such as that conducted by Nwankwo *et al* (2013) which asserted that there is poor linkage between the students' knowledge on substance use and the risk associated with use and, another study by Adebowale *et al* (2013) which stated that there was an average knowledge of substance use among students in a public school in Lagos, Nigeria.

Perceived Pattern of Substance Abuse.

On the pattern of substance use, majority of the respondents (52.8%) often use substance once in a week and 42.5% use substance more during parties.

In a study by Cho *et al.*,(2015), it was reported that there is a steady increase in the pattern of substance use as new students continue to maintain the substance use habit that they indulged in from the first semester in

their academic year. The study also stated that those who are drinking excessively have cultivated that habit prior to their admission into the school. In the same study, Alcohol was noted as the only substance that is being used among all the students in various colleges and classes. Barrettee & Tunner (2008) showed that 82% of the drunken parents have their wards indulging in such a habit, while children who keep off alcohol have 72% of their parents not drinking. He concluded by affirming the environmental role as a model in habit formation among the young people. The use of alcohol on a weekly basis could also be linked to students trying to ease off stress after the regular weekly academic programme. Some do organise various parties and friends attend to cool off with them.

Majority 70.8% finance the use of substances through their pocket money (allowance). This explains why some of the students are likely to be begging to live on campus. There is a link between financial status of a substance user and the substance has been studied. This is in consonant with a study by Park *et al* (2018) which stated that 45.5% of the substance users are always in penury incurred on them through their drug habit. Some of the issue linked to their financial state is hardship in payments of utilities and other upkeep. Majority 43.2% of substance users do get the substance from their friends and 42.5% do get the substance from a shop. Revenues are generated from the users. Over \$30,000 is taxation from substance abuser of about 35 million populations in Nigeria (Onoja, 2010). The use continues among students as alcohol is regarded as a gateway drug and permitted to be sold among the bar/shop owners.

Measures to Minimisnie Substance Abuse

Almost all the respondents 90% agreed that there should be an orientation of the new students on the effect of the hazard of drug use. Drug-related issue connotes an issue between the students and the school administration (Onoja, 2010). It is based on

this matter that the school Guidance counsellor should be part of the orientation programme so as to discuss the issue giving the stand of the school administrator on the drug-related issue. In a study by Peters *et al* (2009), there is a statistical relationship between students' orientation information and student use of drugs in school (OR = 0.93, 95% CI = 0.87-.99) the statistics take into account variables like sex distribution, age, and racial link. It shows that adequate information regarding drug use could aid in stemming down the occurrence of drug use among students in the regular academic programme. Another important factor is the students' participation in anti-drug use on campus. An example of such is Drug-Free Club of NDLEA which serves as a medium to educate members on the need to keep off drugs.

The group organise seminars on substance use and do a range of campaign against substance use. According to Evans-Whipp (2004), school orientation/policies education on drugs control social vices among students and it is an important part of school health promotion which has received little attention. Punitive measures are taken in some institution against drug use and this could be part of the drug policy of the institution. The judgement meted on the substance users on campus sometimes need to be reviewed, some respond to suspension, detention, rehabilitation while some are referred to a specialist (Evans-Whipp,2004).

Implication for Nursing

Nursing as a profession should not only be seen but heard in the battle against substance use. This should be achieved through adequate health education of the general populace, it should be done regularly in the hospitals, schools as well as where the nurses reside. The education should include the

commonly abused coffee and benzodiazepines e.g diazepam and other drugs that are not prescribed by the doctors. The school health nurses have the responsibilities of working together with the school administrators, guidance and counsellors and other relevant stakeholders in the tertiary institution in stemming down the occurrence of substance use among the students.

Conclusion

This study concluded that majority of the respondents have awareness about substance use and the source of information is majority from the mass media. It was also revealed that substances used are mainly taken orally and on weekly basis during a party with the major financing route for the substance habit being from the pocket money which could have helped the students in supporting the pursuit of their academics. The measure to curb or minimise the rate of substance use among the students may not probably be from the use of punitive measures like expulsion from school as the majority of the respondents stated that orientation of the students regarding the issue related substance use will help in minimizing or control the incidence of these habits among the students.

Recommendation

Based on the responses gotten from the undergraduate students, the researcher hereby recommends that

1. Campaign against drug use should be scaled up in all the print and electronic media.
2. School orientation for newly admitted should include drug use education
3. Inauguration of anti-drug use social club should be established in the school.
4. Billboards on anti-drug use should be mounted at strategic points in the school
5. School policy on drug users should be communicated to the students.

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