

Public Perception of the Health and Social Crises Associated with Substance Abuse among Students of Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Chinenye M. Okonkwo¹, Ijeoma Igwe¹, Onyeyilichukwu P. Onwuama^{1*}, Chinyere E. Onalu², NnekaL.Umego¹, Joy C. Omaliko¹ and Chibuikwe N. Nwoke¹

¹Department of Sociology/Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State

²Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State

***Corresponding Author:** Onyeyilichukwu P. Onwuama, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. Email: onyeyilichukwu.onwuama@unn.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

One of the greatest calamity that has be fallen humanity in the 21st century is the mayhem of drug abuse which has adversely affected the health, economy and security of nations, yet many people still indulge in it. Daily, many youths lose their sanity to substance abuse and subsequently engage in crime and criminality, thus making more complex the nations' duty to protect her citizens. Consequently, this study has empirically examined public perception of the health and social crises associated with substance abuse among students of Federal Polytechnic, Oko in Anambra State. The cross sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The simple random sampling technique and stratified sampling techniques were used to select respondents, while structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics was employed for the data analysis. Age was found to be a factor in students' perception of substance abuse enhancing criminality ($p = .013$). The respondents' level of study was also found to influence their perception on the negative health consequences of substance abuse ($p = .000$). The study recommends among other things, that regular seminars be organized for young people on the effect of substance abuse.

Keywords: substance, abuse, perception, students

INTRODUCTION

Substances have been used by humans for both therapeutic and social purposes. Substances serve as drugs for various purposes. Fareo (2012) explained that 'the use of drugs itself does not constitute any danger because drugs correctly administered have been a blessing' (p.341). Studies (Shaheen E. L & Annette, K. 2012; Nyege & Ogoloma 2014; Miguel et al, 2014) have shown that Substances like amphetamines are used clinically to treat hyperactive children and as a short term appetite suppressant, caffeine is used medicinally as stimulant and diuretic, sedatives are administered to mentally ill people before commencing treatment. Alcohol present in palm wine was used traditionally for pleasure especially in Igbo society during social gathering, and today alcoholic beverages exist in various brands. Substance abuse connotes the overdependence and misuse of substances with or without medical prescription and as such becomes harmful to the body. Substance use as Lucy, Rini and Sayna (2017) and Gouri, Sangeeta, Trilochan and Sourajit (2014) noted

can lead to dependence syndrome- a cluster of behavioral, cognitive and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated use which includes a strong desire to take the drug and difficulties in controlling the use despite harmful consequences.

Over the years, substances which have therapeutic purposes have been misused by humans and today, substance abuse has become a major concern globally with the youths recording the greatest abuse of these substances. Ekpenyong (2012) reported that in Pakistan, the share of those who started heroin use at 15-20 years of age has doubled to almost 24 percent; a survey in Czech Republic showed that 37 percent of new drug users were teenagers between 15 and 19 years old; in Egypt, drug use in particular heroin use is becoming a serious problem and nearly 6 percent of secondary school students admit to having experimented with drugs.

In Nigeria, substance abuse has recorded a tremendous increase over the years. Onofa, Adamso, Ighoroje and Majekodunmi(2016) observed that a comparison with other third

world countries reveals that Nigeria ranks among the highest users of dangerous drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, benzodiazepines, cocaine and opioids. Oliha (2014) earlier stressed that more Nigeria youths are becoming drug dependents while Nigeria gradually transits from the status of a drug-consuming nation to that of a drug-producing one.

The abuse of substances like tobacco, alcohol, cocaine, caffeine, heroin, amphetamines, tramadol and cannabis among students is not a recent phenomenon. However, substance abuse and its threat to peaceful and coordinated human existence have escalated over the years. These substances are now at the beck and call of the youths especially undergraduates who have been taken away from the watch eyes of their parents and guardians, and being at the experimental stage of their lives, they are easily prone to experiment with alcohol and other substances.

The abuse of these substances poses a great threat not only to the students but to the institution and society as a whole. Fulnom, Lazarus, Iliasu, Adegun and Ikwoche (2017) enumerated some of these consequences to include truancy, theft of library materials, rudeness, dropouts, injuries, loss of lives, destruction of properties, indiscipline, examination malpractice, cultism and compromised academic standards amongst others. The problems placed by substance abuse among students are inexhaustible with youths exhibiting new forms of unruly behaviors each day. Muritala, Godwin, Anyio, Muhammad and Ajiboye (2015) expressed their fear that this hateful practice and its associated problems would not lead to the breeding of deranged generations of youths. Eze and Uzoeghe (2014) stressed that annually, cigarette smoking is a well-documented, common and avoidable cause of morbidities and mortalities among students and young people globally. Also, Akingbade and Emmanuel (2018) reported that alcohol makes people more susceptible to seduction. This makes them vulnerable to unplanned pregnancy which in most cases is associated with abortion and death of the victims.

In spite of these numerous hazards, substance(s) abuse among students is still on the increase. The abuse of alcohol is rampant with students boasting on the number of beer they consume each day. This study therefore focuses on the feelings and views of the public on the health and social crises associated with substance

abuse among students with respect to the students of federal polytechnic Oko, Anambra state.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

From the discussion above, three hypotheses guided the study:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between respondents' age and their perception on substance abuse enhancing criminality.
- H2: Off-campus students are more likely to have a positive perception of substance abuse than In-campus students.
- H3: There is a significant difference between respondents' level of study and their perception on the health consequences of substance abuse.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area and Population

The study was conducted in Federal Polytechnic, Oko. Oko is an agricultural town in Anambra state. Their major food crops are plantain, coco-yam, maize, cassava and banana. Oko is also rich in minerals such as Kaolin Chalk (Nzu) in Ezioko and limestone in Eziabor (Oko town, n.d). There is a higher Institution in Oko which is today known as Federal Polytechnic, Oko. It was approved by Anambra State Government in 1979 as a College of Arts and Science. In June 1980, the Institution was upgraded to a College of Arts, Science and Technology and in 1985; an Edict of the Anambra State Government formalized the status of the College and named it Anambra State Polytechnic, Oko. Finally, in 1993, the State polytechnic was taken over by the Federal Government and was renamed Federal Polytechnic, Oko (Federal Polytechnic Oko, 2021). The campus occupies a total land area of 89 hectares. The polytechnic has eight faculties: School of Business, School of Financial studies, School of Information technology, School of Environmental design and technology, School of Engineering technology, school of applied science technology, School of General studies and School of Arts, design and printing technology. The institution has attracted students from different socio-cultural background. The population of the undergraduates' students in the institution stands at 25,000 for the 2018/2019 academic session. Out of this population, 45.8% are males while 54.2% are females.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The target population for this study consists of all undergraduates of the institution. A sample size of 216 respondents was selected for the study. The multi stage sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. The researcher used the simple random sampling (SRS) technique through hand drawing (without replacement) to select six faculties out of the eight faculties in the school. From each faculty,

the simple random sampling technique through hand drawing was also employed to select one department giving a total of six departments. Each selected department was further stratified into four existing levels in the polytechnic (OND 1, OND 2, HND 1 and HND 2). At each stratum (level), a total number of five boys and four girls were randomly selected from the first three departments while five girls and four boys from the last three departments.

Table1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	108	53.2
Female	95	46.8
Total	203	100.0
Age		
15-20	52	25.6
21-26	125	61.6
27-32	21	10.3
33-38	5	2.5
Total	203	100.0
Level of study		
OND 1	40	19.8
OND 2	88	43.6
HND 1	41	19.8
HND 2	34	16.8
Total	203	100.0
Place of residence		
In campus	27	13.3
Off campus	176	86.7
Total	203	100.0

Data Collection

The instrument for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. A list of pre-set questions was administered to the students. The questionnaire provided information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the students as well as data on their perception on substance abuse.

Data Analysis

The research employed the quantitative method of data analysis. The data were coded and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency tables were used in characterizing the respondents. Correlation analyses were also done using chi-square (χ^2) to illustrate the relationship between certain socio-demographic variables and the students' perception on substance abuse.

Table 1 above represents the demographic characteristic information of the respondents who completed the questionnaire used for the study. The information from the 203 questionnaires that were retrieved showed that males made up 53.2% of the study sample while females were 46.8% of the study sample. This reveals that there were slightly more males than female respondents in the study.

On respondents' age, the highest proportion of the students (61.6%) falls within the age range of 21-26 years followed by those in the age range of 15-20 which constitutes 25.6% of the respondents. Respondents within the age range of 27-32 constitute 10.3% while very few of the respondents were within the age range of 33-38. Majority of the respondents are in OND 2 constituting 43.3% of the study sample, followed by those in HND 1 with 20.2%. Those in OND 1 constitute 19.7% of the population while those in HND 2 constitute 16.7% of the population. The reason for this variation is

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related to the fact that the questionnaires were administered during their lecture free hour. As a result, it implies that some respondents found in the classes may not belong to those classes. More than half (86.7 %) of the respondents live off-campus while only 13.3% live on campus.

At this point, the three hypotheses formulated for this study were tested at 0.05 levels of significance. This implies that if the level of significance is ≤ 0.05 , then there is a significant relationship

Table2. Age of respondents and views on whether substance abuse enhances criminality

Does substance abuse have any benefit to the individual	Place of Residence		
	In-campus	Off-campus	Total
Yes	2(7.4%)	27(15.3%)	18(10.2%)
No	23(85.2%)	131(74.4%)	154(75.9%)
Don;t know	2(7.4)	18(10.2%)	20(9.9%)
Total	27(100.0%)	176(100.0%)	203(100.0%)

$$\chi^2=16.153, df= 6, p= .013$$

Table 2 above reveals that the age of the respondents affects their perception that substance abuse enhances criminality. For instance, all the respondents aged 31-35 opined that substance abuse were of the view that substance abuse enhances criminality while 90.4%, 78.4% and 52.4% of the respondents aged 16-21, 21-25 and 26-30 years respectively were also of the opinion that substance abuse enhances criminality.

On the other hand, 5.0%, 2.3% and 28.6% respondents aged 16-21, 21-25 and 26-30 years

respectively were of the opinion that substance abuse does not enhance criminality. However, 7.7%, 8.8% and 19.0% of the respondents aged 16-21, 21-25 and 26-30 years respectively were uncertain if substance abuse enhances criminality. When the data was subjected to chi square test, the chi square value of 16.153 was significant at .013 levels. This shows that there is a statistically significance relationship between the ages of students and their views on whether substance abuse enhances criminality therefore the first hypothesis is accepted.

Table3. Place of Residence and Respondents' views on whether Substance abuse has any benefit to the Individual

Does substance abuse enhance criminality	Age of Respondents				
	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	Total
Yes	47(90.4%)	98(78.4%)	11(52.4%)	5(100.0%)	161(79.3%)
No	1(5.0%)	16(2.3%)	6(28.6%)	0(0.0%)	23(11.3%)
Dont Know	4(7.7%)	11(8.8%)	4(19.0%)	0(0.0%)	19(9.4%)
Total	52(100.0%)	125(100.0%)	21(100.0%)	5(100.0%)	203(100.0%)

$$\chi^2= 1.577, df= 2, p= .455$$

Table 3 presents a comparison of respondents' place of residence and their view on whether substance abuse has any benefit to the individual or not. From the table, it is observed that 7.4% of respondents who resides in the school indicated that substance abuse has benefit to the individual while 15.3% of respondents who resides outside the school also indicated that substance abuse has benefit to the individual. 85.2% and 74.4% of in-campus and off-campus respondents respectively asserted that substance

abuse does not have any benefit to the individual. Also, 7.4% and 10.2% of respondents who reside inside and outside the school were uncertain on whether substance abuse has any benefit to the individual.

The chi-square value indicated that the level of \leq significance was at .455. Thus, it shows that there is no significance relationship between respondents' place of residence and their perception of positive value of substance abuse.

Table4. Respondents' level of study and views on whether substance abuse has negative health consequences

Does substance abuse have negative health consequences	Respondents' Level of Study				
	OND 1	OND 2	HND 1	HND 2	Total

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Yes	30(75.0%)	80(90.9%)	41(100.0%)	31(91.2%)	182(89.7%)
No	0(0.0%)	4(4.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(20%)
Dont Know	10(25.0%)	4(4.5%)	0(0.0%)	3(8.8%)	17(8.4%)
Total	40(100.0%)	88(100.0%)	41(100.0%)	34(100.0%)	203(100.0%)

$\chi^2 = 24.884, df = 6, p = .000$

Table 4 presents a comparison of respondents' level of study and their views on whether substance abuse has negative health consequences. From the table, it is observed that all HND 1 respondents were of the view that substance abuse has negative health consequences while 75.0%, 90.9% and 91.2% of respondents in OND 1, OND 2 and HND 2 respectively were also of the view that substance abuse has negative health consequences. 4.5% of respondents in OND 2 indicated that substance abuse does not have any negative health consequences. However, 25.0%, 4.5% and 8.8% of respondents in OND 1, OND 2 and HND 2 respectively were uncertain if substance abuse has negative health consequences. When the data was subjected to chi square test, the chi square value of 24.884 was significant at .000 levels. This shows that there is a statistically significance difference between respondents' level of study and their views on the negative health consequences of substance abuse. Thus hypothesis 3 which states that there is significant difference between respondents' level of study and their perception on the health consequences of substance abuse is upheld.

DISCUSSION

The study concurs with the growing cries and concern about the increasing rate of substance abuse among young people especially those in tertiary institutions. The findings of the study showed a high rate (71%) of substance abuse among students of federal polytechnic Oko and that the mostly abused substances were alcohol (63.1%) and marijuana (28.1%). Other substances commonly abused by the students are tobacco, tramadol, inhalants, cocaine and kolanuts. Evidence from this study showed that the abuse of these substances have been normalized by the youths especially those in the tertiary institutions and one can easily have access to these drugs which are literally scattered all over the streets of their town. The high rate of alcohol abuse among the students is in line with the findings of Johnson, Akpanekpo, Okonna, Adeboye, and Udoh (2017) who reported 100% use of alcohol among undergraduates' students of university of Uyo, Nigeria and that of Adekeye, Adeusi, Chenube,

Ahmadu and Shoarin (2015) who reported that alcohol was the most consumed substance among undergraduates in Moshood Abiola state polytechnic, Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture of South West Nigeria. The findings of this study indicated that there is hardly any students' social event that does not record a significant rate of substance abuse. The students of higher institutions of learning frequently organize parties and the number of ladies present, quantity of alcohol and other substances consumed is often used as judging criteria on how awesome the event was.

The study also showed that male students (79.3%) were more involved in substance abuse than the female students. This is in line with the study by Oluoha, Duru, Okafor, Diwe, Iwu, Aguocha, Ohale and Nwaigbo (2017) who also reported that male respondents were about five times more likely to use psychoactive substances than their female counter part. This view was also collaborated by Aremo and Boman (2017) who reported that out of the 113 respondents that used drugs, 87.6% were male while 12.4% were female. Similarly, Odukoya, Odeyemi, Oyeyemi, & Upadhyay (2013) in their study on the determinants of smoking initiation and susceptibility to future smoking among school going adolescent in Lagos state Nigeria recorded that males were 3.77 times more likely to have initiated smoking. However, this does not agree with the study by Nyege and Ogoloma (2014) who noted that there was no significant difference in the pattern of drug abuse among male and female students. The greater percentage of male involvement in substance abuse could be related to the fact that some cultural norms permit the consumption of alcohol by only the male folk. The society most times frowns at the use of alcohol by females yet exult the use of alcohol by the males. This being the case, an adolescent male is more likely to see the abuse of alcohol as a basic requirement for stepping into adulthood. This study also revealed that friends (55.7%) were the major supply of these substances. Age was found to be associated with the students' perception that substance abuse enhances criminality as evidence in table 2 and their level

of study influenced their perception that substance abuse has negative health consequences. However, there was no significant relationship between respondents' place of residence and having positive perception of substance abuse.

The study also revealed that off-campus (75.4%) students were more involved in substance abuse than in-campus students. Similarly, Aremu and Boman (2017) had reported that 78.9% of the drug users resided outside the school premises. The reason for this could be related to the fact that in-campus students might find it a bit difficult to take these substances within the school premises for fear of being penalized unlike off-campus students who are very much unsupervised. The most common reason for substance abuse according to the study was peer influence (60.1%). Studies have shown a link between peer influence and students involvement in substance abuse. For instance, the study by Akingbade and Emmanuel (2018) and that of Abdu- Raheem (2013) both showed a significant relationship between peer influence and substance abuse. The implication of this is that the group a student's associates with would have a great influence in determining if he or she will be involved in substance abuse.

Although greater percentages (89.6%) of the respondents were aware of the fact that substance abuse has negative health consequences, many seem not to be aware of these health consequences. For instance, more than half (52.2%) of the respondents indicated that substance abuse cannot lead to mental illness. Also, an overwhelming number (87.7%) of the respondents were of the view that substance abuse cannot lead to cancer or suicidal tendency. However, evidence abounds that many suicide victims usually have substance abuse disorder. In the same light, medical experts have revealed that cigarette smoking is a lead cause of cancer such as mouth and lung cancer and those who abuse marijuana are at the risk of developing testicular cancer. The study also showed that majority (79.3%) of the respondents were of the view that substance abuse enhances criminality and affects students' academic performance (88.2%) but the minority cannot be ignored as they can negatively influence others. The minority which forms a part of the population will become a problem to the majority if they are not properly guided. The benefits of substance abuse as indicated by some respondents were easy comprehension, helps

one to forget his/her problem and eases stress. Some of the students believed that the abuse of substances makes one to study better likewise helps in reducing the stress during the day's activities.

CONCLUSION

Substance abuse among students remains a clog on the wheel to the achievement of physical and mental fitness of students. This in turn not only impede on the learning process but also leaves the students vulnerable to health problems like cancer, heart problems and even mental deterioration. The reason for the mayhem in many academic institutions over the years cannot escape the abuse of substances by students. The consequence of this substance abuse includes the continuous increase in substance related crime and health challenges to the drug abusers. This has continued to cripple the education institution making it unable to actualize its goals and objectives. This being the case, there is an urgent need for the government and policy makers to take the issue of substance abuse by students more seriously. Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Government agencies like National agency for food and drug administration and control (NAFDAC), Nigeria drug law enforcement agency (NDLEA) and other agencies charged with the responsibility of controlling substances should sit up in a bid to stop the illegal sales of substances.
- Government and school authorities should frequently organize seminars where students will be taught the negative consequences of substance abuse. High priority should be on the male students since they are more likely to be involved in substance abuse than their female counterpart.
- Counseling centers should be set up in every academic institution to help drug addicts who want to quit the social ill.
- Parents and guardians should ensure good bringing up of their wards and inculcation of values in them early enough in life to wage evil infiltration by peers
- Parents and guardians should pay more attention to their wards so as to detect any abnormal behavior early enough to curtail the exposure of their wards to inappropriate

behaviours, substance consumption or abuse inclusive.

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