



ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at promoting national development through prevention of drug abuse among southeast university undergraduates. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in conduct of the study. Two research questions and two research hypotheses guided the

PROMOTING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG SOUTHEAST UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an instrument for effecting national development. Universities are among the tertiary institutions where youths receive formal education, so the activities students in these learning institutions engage in can either make or ruin them which as well affect national development either positively or negatively. Youths are the foundation of any society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And



study. The population comprised all the 20 universities in the 5 Southeastern states of Nigeria. Through the application of stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques, a sample of 50 lecturers and 500 students were selected, giving a total of 550 respondents. A self-designed questionnaire called Drug Abuse Questionnaire (DAQ) was adopted in collection of data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by experts. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used in determining the reliability coefficients of the instrument which gave a coefficient of .81 which was considered high enough and reliable for the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean statistic while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient analysis. Findings from the study showed that there is a significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in Southeastern universities in Nigeria. Lecturers and students agreed to a very high extent that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in Southeastern Universities and national development. Finally, the researchers recommended that mass media should facilitate government's campaign against drug abuse, and avoid such thrilling advertisements and jingles like those of tobacco and alcohol (Liquor) among others.

Keywords: *Drug abuse, undergraduates, universities, development, national.*

because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured (FGN, 2001: 1). The statement above acknowledges the role of the youths in the peace and security of a nation. As the most active segment of any society, youths are the major determiners of peace and stability of a nation (Ozohu-Sulaiman, 2006). Conversely, the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined in part by youths. Peace is a sign of development. The absence of peace means that no meaningful development can take place. The National Youths Policy affirms that the



extent of the youth's responsible conduct and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country (FGN, 2001:1).

Despite the strength of the youth in national development, Nigeria is faced with many problems, one of which is the use of nonconventional substances especially by undergraduates. Most Nigerian youths depend on one form of substance or the other, for various daily activities such as social, educational or political alertness and moral. Lately, non-medical consumption of cough syrups and Indian hemp by students in Southeastern universities in Nigeria has become an issue of public concern, largely due to its potential danger to the society. Abuse of substances, licit or illicit, is so widespread in our present societal context that we might as well ask why some adolescents abstain, rather than why most do not. Nigeria is confronted with many problems, one of which is the new trend in the use of nonconventional substances. Majority of Nigerian youths ignorantly depend on one form of substance or the other, for various daily activities such as social, educational, political and moral. Lately, non-medical consumption of cough syrups in Northern Nigeria has become a subject of public concern, largely due to its potential danger to the society. Abuse of substances, licit or illicit, is so widespread in our present societal context that we might as well ask why some adolescents abstain, rather than why most do not (Baumrind and Moselle, 1985)

Statement of the problem

Use of substance among undergraduates is commonly related with a wide range of social, psychological, behavioural and health risks (Komro and Toomey, 2002), including risks of violence (Kodjo, et al, 2004) and suicide (Chatterji, et al, 2004).

The instigation of drug use usually occurs during this stage of adulthood and may lead to chronic substance abuse as well (Windle, 2003). The current trend of substance abuse among undergraduates is an issue of national concern, and it has critical effects on them such as health and behavioural problems, or even death (Yusuf, 2003). Substance abuse is a social problem that has spread and increased rapidly in our educational institutions



especially among our undergraduate students. In Nigeria, this social maladaptation is considered an issue of serious concern as it adversely affects the lives and performance of students involved as well as the harmonious functioning of the entire structure of the society (Amosun et al, 2015).

David (2003) described substance abuse as a problematic use of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit and /or prescribed drugs and it has been referred to as nation's number one health problem. While Derald (1990) refers to substance abuse as a pathological pattern or excessive use and intake of a substance even though it may cause physical damage, jeopardizing safety (such as driving a car while intoxicated) or impairing social relationships and occupational functioning. The craving for these substances may lead to a pre-occupation with its acquisition and use. The abuse of various mood-altering substances has been reported to be prevalent among Nigerian undergraduates. Studies (Lambo, 1960; Moronkola, 2003) have shown that some substances alter the mind, change the user's feeling, perception and behaviour when they are used because they exert action on the brain. Global studies on drug use and abuse revealed that early initiation of drug use is one of the best predictors of future drug abuse and dependence.

On the reasons why people abuse drugs Ethel (2015) said "People, particularly the undergraduates use drugs out of experimental curiosity". The indication here is that the young people get initiated by testing the drugs which their peers or mates use or abuse. And out of this curiosity, they fail to know the repercussion. Ethel further reasoned that "a few people use drugs as a means of displaying their masculinity or feminism or showing how they can control themselves".

Furthermore, Prim (1991) was of the opinion that the use of illicit drugs serve as a recipe for undergraduates who on daily basis cannot deal with their immediate environment which is a replete of poverty, and hopelessness. Therefore to him "those who do not have access to good mental healthcare as a result stumble upon these bad substance and start abusing it".

Davis (1984) postulated that alcohol in form of fermented or distilled liquor from varieties of plants is the most consumed drug, but it constitutes a threat to public health". A high proportion of hospital beds are occupied



annually by the mentally and physically damaged victims of alcohol dependence”.

Banging on the dangers of Drugs Abuse Adeku (1991) opined that the dangers or effects posed by narcotic drugs to our undergraduates in Nigeria and the world over in a concerted effort to create an appreciable level of awareness about the dangers of narcotic drugs, their production, demands, supply and consumption. According to him, “Jingles in the radio, television, symposiums and posters are obviously inadequate to achieve the stated goals. To achieve our goals, the controlled distribution and trafficking should attain a primary concern”.

Ajibola (1991) stated that; “More statements on the control, supply, demand or eradication and substitution of illicit production and processing of narcotic drugs substances would purely be cosmetics unless the right follow up of mechanisms were put in place to ensure control”. While demands remain high, any success in reducing production will only result in greater reward for the United Nations’ (UNs’) selected traffickers. He thus opined that we must pursue a comprehensive campaign against drug abuse in an aspect concerning traffickers not only eradicating of supply and suppression of illicit traffickers, but also on the prevention and reduction of demand”.

With the above in mind, Abacha (1994) suggested that; “We should pursue strategies that are comprehensive and multidimensional in scope and that comprises measures to eliminate illicit demand for narcotic and psychotropic substances. It was against this backdrop that the Federal Government launched the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)”. He further affirmed that; “ I have no doubt in my mind that the plan of action initiated in National Drugs control strategy will succeed, making Nigeria a drug free nation”.

The South-East zone comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The past year prevalence of any drug use in the zone is estimated at 13.8 per cent of the population or 1.5 million people aged 15-64. The past year prevalence of cannabis, heroin, cocaine use and non-medical use of cough syrups (containing codeine or dextromethorphan) in the South-East



zone is comparable with the national estimates. Overall, Imo State in the zone has a past year prevalence of any drug use exceeding the national estimates (United Nations, 2016).

A growing number of the youth programmes implemented today are being set up on the basis of sound scientific evidence. Such progress needs to be maintained.

Promising programmes whose results have been subjected to rigorous, controlled research need to be replicated with different subpopulations (diverse ethnocultural groups) in various settings around the world. Governments and other funding bodies need to give evaluation greater priority by providing technical and financial support for this purpose (Gleghorn, 1998).

Lafiagi (2001) stated “for proper reduction of drug abuse, the NDLEA built community rehabilitation centers to provide appropriate services to the addicts. This war cannot be lost, and if the war is lost, the generations of Nigerians unborn would have been condemned to eternal damnation”.

The attempt to making Nigeria a drug Free State was born when Babangida (1991) in a paper titled; for a drug Free Nigeria said “It is a problem that poses threats to the health and survival of youths and it requires attention and cooperation of all nations of the world to make it”. This makes it indispensable that the claim cannot be derived, since no arrest of the abusers and traffickers have increased over the years”. This goes far to buttress the fact that the more government makes policies to this effect, it also flaunts the policy documents.

It was against this backdrop that government policy measures are very significant as noted, due to the rate of the increase, since 1984 the military regime of Buhari decreed death sentence and imprisonment of 14 years to traffickers and abusers. Babangida in 1985 repealed the decree and establish the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency. It was also against this backdrop that Obasanjo (1990) and Gumin (1992) stated that “It was as result of the growth in drug related offences like rape, theft, and other criminal insurgencies that the need to establish institutions that will coordinate and monitor the efforts of other institution and agencies for



drug use, trafficking and related crimes necessitated the enactment of the decree which brought NDLEA as an institution under the Decree 48 of Babangida's regime".

In view of all these challenges facing Nigeria as result of drug abuse by university undergraduates in southeast Nigeria, there is need to tackle the menace of drug abuse by these students in order to strengthen and boost the economy of the nation.

Purpose of the study:

The objectives of the study were:

- 1) To identify the causes of drug abuse by undergraduates in southeast universities in Nigeria
- 2) To examine the effects of drug abuse on the students and on our Nation' economy

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria?
2. To what extent is the relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in Southeastern universities and national development?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which were tested at .05 level of significance further guided the study.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development.



Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive research design according to Akuezuilo and Agu (2003) is defined as a research in which data are collected from a sample of population with a view of finding out the relative opinion, belief, attitude and status of that population about a phenomenon. This design is appropriate for this study because the researchers collected data from the respondents and analyze them in order to ascertain to promote national development through prevention of drug abuse among southeast university undergraduates.

Southeastern Nigeria is the area of the study. It is one of the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria. It is located at the Southeastern region of Nigeria. The region is made up of five Igbo speaking states which include: Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state.

The population for this study comprised of the 20 universities in the five southeastern states of Nigeria, 5 in Anambra, 6 in Abia, 6 in Imo, and 3 in Ebonyi state.

A sample of 50 lecturers and 500 students; 10 lecturers and 100 students from one of the universities in each state of the five state in southeastern Nigeria, which totals 550 respondents was adopted for the study. In drawing the sample for the study, stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling technique was adopted to select lecturers from the universities selected.

The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a questionnaire. A self-designed questionnaire called Drug Abuse Questionnaire (DAQ) contains three sections. The first (Section A) has to do with the bio data of the respondents. The second (Section B) contains the information about the family background and family cohesion of the respondents. The third (Section C) consists of information about the peer groups of the subjects. Inventory was also used to collect information about academic performance of the students involved for three academic sessions. The responses to the questionnaire items were designed on a four-point scale of measurement as thus:



Very High Extent (VHE)	-	4
High Extent (HE)	-	3
Low Extent (LE)	-	2
Very Low Extent (VLE)	-	1

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation .After the experts’ scrutiny of the instrument, important and useful suggestions and corrections were made.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method to ascertain the internal consistency of items .In testing for reliability, copies of the questionnaire were administered on a sample of 5 lecturers and 15 students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The responses were analysed, while the reliability coefficients values of .81, .81, with an average reliability coefficients of .81 were obtained indicating that the items in the instrument were homogenous.

The researchers administered the instrument on the respondents with the aid of two briefed research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on how to approach the respondents in the various universities and were requested to strictly keep to instructions so as to ensure that the respondents were reached. The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected three days after distribution to give the respondents adequate time to complete the instrument. This exercise lasted four weeks to complete. Data collected for the study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to test the hypotheses.

1. **Research Question One:** What is the relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings of relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria

S/n	Item description	Lecturers		Students	
		\bar{X}	Decision	\bar{X}	Decision
	Being an undergraduate makes the students:				



1	Want to do whatever makes them feel among, even if it is contrary to the good upbringing the received at home.	3.39	HE	3.23	HE
2	Want to do anything extra to pass a course, even if it means taking narcotics to stimulate them to study extra	3.00	HE	3.41	HE
3	Want to drink alcohol so that they won't be seen as being old fashioned by their course mates and friends who drink it	3.70	VHE	3.75	VHE
4	Want to buy and sell drugs to make money and live big.	3.25	HE	2.81	HE
5	Want to try out some drugs out of curiosity just to know what it feels like to take those drugs	3.23	HE	3.17	HE
6	Lie to parents just to gets extra cash from them to buy stimulants and other substances	1.89	LE	1.71	LE
7	Take some substances so that they'll have the boldness to intimidate other students or talk back at lecturers who try to discipline them.	3.51	HE	2.56	HE
8	Take some illicit drugs or unprescribed drugs just to obtain a high	2.73	HE	2.88	HE
9	Take substances against their will just to please their friends.	3.04	HE	2.89	HE
10	Engage in alcohol drinking competition just for show offs and show of supremacy	3.55	VHE	3.01	HE
11	Take drugs as a way to show off supremacy.	3.78	VHE	3.99	VHE
	Total Mean Rating (\bar{X})	35.07		32.78	
	Mean of Mean Rating (\bar{X})	3.19	HE	3.03	HE

Source: Field Survey (2018).

Decision Key: VHE - Very High Extent, HE - High Extent, LE – Low Extent, VLE – Very Low Extent

Findings on table 1 above showed that both lectures and students had to a very high extent agreed to the fact that there is a relationship between



being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria in 3 and 11, while they both agreed to high extent on items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9. They also both agreed to a low extent on item 6. While they differ on item 10 as lecturers agreed to a very high extent on item 10, while students agreed to a high extent on item 10. Considering the average mean ratings of 3.19 and 3.03 for lecturers and students respectively, they both agreed to a high extent that there is a relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in Southeastern universities in Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that there is a relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in Southeastern universities in Nigeria to a high extent.

- 3. Research Question Two:** To what extent is the relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in Southeastern universities and national development?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the effect of drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development

S/n	Item description	Lecturers		Students	
		\bar{X}	Decision	\bar{X}	Decision
	Drug abuse will:				
12	Make the students violent towards other students and rude to lecturers	3.95	VHE	3.85	VHE
13	Affect the students academic performance negatively	3.76	VHE	3.57	VHE
14	Affect the mental health of the students negatively and make them act insane	3.82	VHE	3.51	VHE
15	Make the students have mood swings; irritable and grumpy and then suddenly happy and bright. Withdrawal from family members.	3.23	HE	3.21	HE
16	Make the students have a changed sleeping pattern; up at night and sleeping during the day	3.52	VHE	3.67	VHE



17	Make the students lose interest in hobbies, sports and other favorite activities	3.00	HE	3.41	HE
18	Make the students more dependent on others and always making demands.	3.72	VHE	3.68	VHE
19	Make the students careless about personal grooming.	3.65	VHE	3.81	VHE
20	Affects national development.	3.87	HE	3.45	HE
	Total Mean Rating (\bar{X})	35.52		32.16	
	Mean of Mean Rating (\bar{X})	4.07	VHE	4.02	VHE

Source: Field Survey (2018). See Appendix A

Decision Key: VHE - Very High Extent, HE - High Extent, LE – Low Extent, VLE – Very Low Extent

Findings on table 2 above showed that both lecturers and students had to a very high extent agreed to the fact that drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities affect the well being of the students and national development with the response to items 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 19, while they both agreed to high extent on items 15, 17 and 20. The average mean ratings also showed that both lecturers and students agreed to a very high extent with mean ratings of 4.07 and 4.02. This means that both lecturers and students agreed to a very high extent that drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities affect the well being of the students and national development.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{0i}: There is no significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria.



		Being undergraduate	Drug Abuse
Being undergraduate	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	550	550
Drug Abuse	Pearson Correlation (r)	.832**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	550	550

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 3 above showed the significant relationship between being and undergraduate in southeastern universities of Nigeria and drug abuse with: $r = .832$, $N = 550$ and $p\text{-value} = .000$. Since $p\text{-value} (.000)$ is less than $.05$, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development.

		Drug Abuse	Well being of society
Drug Abuse	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	550	550
National development	Pearson Correlation (r)	.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	550	550



***Significant at $p < 0.05$*

The result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 4 above showed the significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development with: $r = .821$, $N = 550$ and $p\text{-value} = .000$. Since $p\text{-value} (.000)$ is less than $.05$, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in Southeastern universities and national development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Findings of the study on relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria showed that there is a high extent of relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in Southeastern Universities in Nigeria. Despite the fact that the mean ratings of both lecturers and students fell into high extent of relationship, the statistical test results also showed that there is a statistical significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in Southeastern Universities in Nigeria. The findings is in line with the discovery of Ethel (2015), whose findings was similar by showing that there is a significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southern Kaduna.

Another finding which showed that both lecturers and students agreed to a very high extent that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in Southeastern Universities and national development. Subsequent to the findings, the test results also indicated that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development.

Davis (1984), also justify the findings by postulating that a high proportion of hospital beds are occupied annually by the mentally and physically damaged victims of alcohol dependence and other illicit drugs.



Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that both lecturers and students agreed to a high extent that all the identified actions are pointers that there is a significant relationship between being an undergraduate and drug abuse in southeastern universities in Nigeria. While it was discovered that lecturers and students agree to a very high extent that from the research questions that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse by undergraduates in southeastern universities and national development. These undergraduates are people that likely to help in moving the nation forward but through indulging in drug abuse they lose sight of their vision and their contribution to national development are as well washed away. No nation ever progresses with such trend therefore there is urgent need to discourage drug abuse among Southeast Undergraduates to realize the full potentials they are all gifted with and thereby contribute meaningfully to national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, in an attempt to proffering some meaningful solutions to curbing the menace of drug abuse, the following recommendations are presented to both government and the society at large which include

1. **Community Participation:** There should be largely involvements of communities by forming committee to fight drug abuse among its societies. This is a group of people living in an area. Community has a big role to play in prevention of drug abuse. Individuals, families, communities, and the entire society should ensure that moral values are inculcated in the youths, by joining the government fight against the menace.
2. Institutions like the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) should be empowered to squarely to deal with “Drug Barons” as well as their traffickers, peddlers, and conduits. This is because at times, their performances are undermined by the threats they get as well



as the purported connections such barons and the traffickers have with people in higher authority.

3. Themass media should facilitate government's campaign against drug abuse, and avoid such t hrilling advertisements and jingles like those of tobacco and alcohol (Liquor) etc. Meanwhile sensitization programmms should be channeled through this medium. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) should encourage the sensitization campaigns against drug abuse as well as engage in rehabilitation programmms.

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