

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ADOLESCENTS' DRUG USE:
IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL HEALTH PROMOTION**

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine students' perception of adolescents' drug use. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students in government secondary schools in Igboetiti L.G.A. of Enugu state. The data collected from the study were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent groups and Analysis of Variance. The result showed that the students had negative perception of adolescents' drug use. There were significant differences in the mean perception of; male and female students, junior and senior students and students of various age groups for most of the items on students' perception of drug use. The implications of the result for social health promotion were discussed and it was recommended among others that all drug education programme meant for adolescents should strive to correct the negative perception of youths that most young people abuse drugs.

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The incidence of drug use among the Nigerian youths has been shown to be on the increase (Makanjuola, Daramola, & Obembe, 2007; United Nations Office on Drug Abuse and Crime - UNDOC, 2007; Nwagu, 2009). A study conducted by Unachukwu and Nwankwo (2003) revealed that Nigerian youths are highly dependent on drugs. Adolescents are gullible and as such, they are often lured into experimentation with drugs through advertisements and by their peers. Drugs have been defined by Insel and Roth (2004) as any chemical other than food or water intended to affect the structure or function of the body. Drug in this study is however limited to drugs of abuse.

Drug abuse has been described by Edlin, Golanty, and Brown (2000) as the use of any drug to the point where health is adversely affected or the ability to function in the society is impaired. Drugs of abuse are the drugs that people usually abuse. These drugs create lots of problems particularly among the youths. Research studies have shown that the most commonly abused drugs among adolescents in many societies are alcohol, tobacco and marijuana (Lennox & Cecchini, 2008; Makanjuola, Daramola, & Obembe, 2007).

Nicotine is the addictive substance in tobacco. All forms of tobacco such as cigars,

cigarette, pipes and the smokeless forms that are chewed or sniffed as snuff are all dangerous to health (Insel & Roth, 2004). Alcohol has been described by Gabhainn and Francois (2000) as a potent mind altering drug. Its abuse negatively affects the health of individuals. Papilia, Olds and Feldman (2002) pointed out that marijuana smoke typically contains over 400 carcinogens. The use and abuse of these substances by adolescents predisposes them not only to physical health problems but also to social health problems.

Drug abuse has been shown to be associated with a lot of social vices such as rape, robbery, and sexual promiscuity (World Health Organization – WHO, 2003). Lennox and Cecchini (2006) revealed that there is a strong link between alcohol and other drug use and sociability, rebelliousness, and deviant behavior. Bamaiyi (1998) pointed out that the incessant unrest in many Nigerian campuses coupled with the unwanted confrontation between students and school authority and other atrocities such as cultism even at the secondary school level are all fallout of drug abuse. In recent time, Nigerians have experienced a lot of social violence and unrest in different parts of the country. Most of these rebellious acts emanate from the youths or the youths are being used to perpetuate these acts by others. In most cases, youths take

drugs to help them remove the natural social inhibition and as such become able to engage in nefarious acts (Karma, 2009).

Among the reasons adolescents tryout alcohol, tobacco and marijuana is because they want to do what their friends are doing (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2006). Adolescents are highly influence by their peers (Berk, 2001). Therefore an adolescent's perception of what is common or uncommon among his or her peers is most likely to influence his or her choice of behaviour. Research findings such as that of Martino, Collins, Ellickson, Schell, and McCaffrey (2006) revealed that perceived approval or use of drugs by parents, other important adults or peers increases adolescents decision to use drug. In an earlier study, Towberman and McDonald (1993) has also revealed that perceived peer attitude and perceived parental attitude correlate significantly with both drug experimentation and drug use.

Factors such as age, level of education and sex is capable of influencing adolescents' perception of drug use. Berlage and Egelman (1990) noted that societal expectations differ for males and females. Young girls are expected to be demure and passive. Such behaviours as smoking and drinking are generally not regarded as feminine

roles. Such expectations from the society are capable of influencing the perception of both sexes of drug use. Again, Ukpore (2006) was of the view that age is a factor that differentiates consumers. This reflects the varying needs of the various age groups. The perceptions of these various age groups could also vary in such manner.

Adolescents' perception of drug use in this study serves two major functions. It gives clue to the nature of alcohol and drug use among adolescents as well as serves as an indicator of adolescents' attitude to alcohol and drug use. Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg (2006) observed that two critical drug related attitudes are perception of risks and perception of social disapproval. These they agreed move in correlation with consumption. Therefore an understanding of what adolescents perceive to be the common practice with regards to alcohol and other drug use is important to enable health educators tackle negative attitudes which adolescents may hold that might predispose them to abusing drugs. Identification of factors associated with adolescents' perception about drug use will equally help health educators and other drug educators to modify their drug education plan in line with the specific need of adolescents concerned.

The purpose of this study was to

ascertain the students' perception of adolescents' drug use. One research question and three null hypotheses guided the study.

Research Question

What is the students' perception of adolescents' drug use?

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses tested at P d" .05 level of significance were used for the study.

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students of adolescents' drug use.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean perception of junior and senior secondary students of adolescents' drug use.
3. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean perception of students of different age groups of adolescents' drug use.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to describe students' perception of adolescents' drug use. The population of the study consisted of all secondary school students in government secondary schools in Igboetiti LGA of Enugu state. A sample of 400 students was randomly

selected for the study.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire designed to collect data on students' perception of adolescents' drug use. The instrument consists of two sections; section 1 was used to collect the respondents' personal data. Section 2 was used to collect data on the respondents' perception of adolescents' drug use. This section consists of 8 items with 4-point Likert scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagree and strongly disagree as response options. The instrument was validated by three experts from the departments of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha index was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. An alpha of 0.86 was gotten and this was considered high enough.

Method of data collection

The data was collected by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were undergraduate students in the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Out of the 400 questionnaire administered, only 383 questionnaires were correctly completed. Only these were used for data analysis.

Method of data analysis.

The students' responses to the items were weighted. A weight of 4, 3, 2, and 1 were assigned to strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The mean weights of the respondents on all the items were worked. In order to answer the research question, the true limits of the numbers were used for decision making. Hence a mean weight of 0.5 to 1.49 was considered as 1, weight of 1.5 to 2.49 was considered as 2, mean weights of 2.5 to 3.49 was considered as 3 while mean weights of 3.5 to 4 were considered as 4. The T-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses.

Results

Table 1

Summary of T-Test analysis of the differences in the mean perception of male and female respondents of drug use among adolescents. (n = 383; df = 381)

Item No	Item Statement	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}_g	SD1	SD2	t-test	Sig.	Remark	
									\bar{x}_g	t-test
1	Most secondary school students drink beer.	3.65	3.01	3.31	.64	.78	8.670	.000	A	S
2	Use of alcoholic drinks (palm wine etc) is common among secondary school students	3.09	2.60	2.83	.94	.69	5.759	.000	A	S
3	Most secondary school students have access to alcohol only during social functions	2.81	2.54	2.66	.89	.64	3.466	.001	A	S
4	Most secondary school students are not addicted to alcohol.	2.60	2.93	2.78	.98	.94	-3.357	.001	A	S
5	Most secondary school students take drugs (Indian hemp, glue, etc)	3.14	3.27	3.21	.81	.71	-1.724	.086	A	NS
6	Most secondary school students are addicted to drug intake.	2.76	2.74	2.75	1.10	.86	.174	.862	A	NS
7	People learn to use drug in school	2.40	2.05	2.21	.90	.89	3.807	.000	DA	S
8	Drugs such as Indian hemp are readily available to students	2.60	2.41	2.50	1.18	1.09	1.651	.100	A	NS

Key \bar{x}_1 = Mean for males; \bar{x}_2 = Mean for females; \bar{x}_g = Grand mean; SD1 = Standard deviation for male; SD2 = Standard deviation for females. Number of males = 176; females = 207.

The above table reveals that the students agreed to all the items in the table except for item 7. There were significant differences in the mean perception of male and female student in 5 out of the 8 items on students' perception of drug use

Table 2

Summary of T-Test analysis of the differences in the mean perception of junior and senior secondary students of drug use among adolescents. (n = 383; df = 381)

Item No	Item Statement	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}_g	SD1	SD2	t-test	Sig.	Remark	
									\bar{x}_g	t-test
1.	Most secondary school students drink beer.	3.17	3.55	3.31	.82	.66	21.987	.000	A	S
2.	Use of alcoholic drinks (palm wine etc) is common among secondary school students	2.67	3.09	2.83	.70	.99	23.711	.000	A	S
3.	Most secondary school students have access to alcohol only during social functions	2.57	2.82	2.66	.72	.84	9.720	.002	A	S
4.	Most secondary school students are not addicted to alcohol.	2.97	2.45	2.78	.91	.99	26.398	.000	A	S
5.	Most secondary school students take drugs (Indian hemp, glue, etc).	3.33	3.00	3.21	.75	.74	17.950	.000	A	S
6.	Most secondary school students are addicted to drug intake.	2.77	2.73	2.75	.92	1.06	.147	.702	A	NS
7.	People learn to use drug in school	2.23	2.18	2.21	.96	.84	.285	.594	DA	NS
8.	Drugs such as Indian hemp are readily available to students	2.63	2.27	2.50	1.11	1.14	9.247	.003	A	S

Key: \bar{x}_1 = Mean for junior secondary students; \bar{x}_2 = Mean for senior secondary students. Number of junior secondary students = 240; senior secondary students = 143.

Table 2 shows that there were significant differences in the junior and senior students' perception of adolescents' drug use in 6 out of the 8 items

Table 3

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Mean Perception of the Respondents of the pattern of drug use among adolescents by age. (n = 383; df between = 2, df within = 380)

Item No	Item Statement	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}_3	\bar{x}_g	F-cal	Sig.	Remark	
								\bar{x}_g	F-cal
1.	Most secondary school students drink beer.	3.31	3.00	4.00	3.31	56.681	.000	A	S
2.	Use of alcoholic drinks (palm wine etc) is common among secondary school students	2.56	2.79	3.33	2.83	22.529	.000	A	S
3.	Most secondary school students have access to alcohol only during social functions	2.44	2.89	2.50	2.66	16.211	.000	A	S
4.	Most secondary school students are not addicted to alcohol.	3.13	2.50	2.83	2.78	16.889	.000	A	S
5.	Most secondary school students take drugs (Indian hemp, glue, etc)	3.25	3.27	3.00	3.21	3.771	.024	A	S
6.	Most secondary school students are addicted to drug intake.	2.63	2.81	2.83	2.75	1.662	.191	A	NS
7.	People learn to use drug in school	2.38	2.12	2.17	2.21	3.094	.046	DA	S
8.	Drugs such as Indian hemp are readily available to students	2.88	2.60	1.83	2.50	22.823	.000	A	S

Key: \bar{x}_1 = Mean for students aged 11 - 14; \bar{x}_2 = Mean for students aged 15 - 17 years; Mean for students aged 18 years and above. Number of students aged 11 - 14 years = 128; Number of students aged 15 - 17 years = 177; Number of students aged 18 years and above = 78.

There were significant differences in the perception of students of various age group of adolescent' drug use in all but one item.

Discussion

The data in tables 1, 2, and 3 reveals that the students agreed to all the items except for item 7 which states that people learn to use drugs in school. This finding is not surprising giving the continued increase in the number of youths who abuse drug (Makanjuola, Daramola, & Obembe, 2007; United Nations Office on Drug Abuse and Crime - UNDOC, 2007; Nwagu, 2009). Table 1 show that there were significant differences in the mean perception of male and female students in 5 out of the 8 items. While the male student strongly agree that most secondary school students drink beer ($\bar{x} = 3.65$), the female students only agreed ($\bar{x} = 3.01$). A careful examination of table 1 reveals that the male students had higher mean scores on all the items except for item 4 which state that most secondary school students are not addicted to alcohol. In other words male students perceived that adolescents used drugs more than the female students. This is not quite surprising. Santrock (2001) asserted that male adolescents abuse drugs more than females. It is therefore not surprising that the male students should perceive that adolescents use drug more than the females. The finding rather reflects the societal value in Nigeria. Berlege and Egleman (1990) noted that while the society frown so much at females engaging

in such vices as drug abuse, such activities are regarded as attributes of masculinity for the males and therefore the society do not so much frown at them.

The data in table 2 shows that there are significant differences in the junior and senior students' perception of drug use in 6 out of the 8 items. The senior students had higher mean scores for item 1 (Most secondary school students drink beer), 2 (Use of alcoholic drinks is common among secondary school students) and 3 (Most secondary school students have access to alcohol only during social functions). This shows that they agree more to these items. On the other hand, while there were no significant difference in the perception of junior and senior students for items 6 and 7, the junior students had higher mean scores for items 4 (Most secondary school students are not addicted to alcohol). This is also not surprising because the junior students are most likely less experienced with drugs than the senior students. It is however surprising that the junior students had higher mean scores for items 5 (Most secondary school students take drugs) and 8 (Drugs such as Indian hemp are readily available to students). It goes to show the attitude of the junior students on these items which may not portray the actual situation especially since the senior students who have

stayed longer in the school and probably have had more experience with drug did not share the same view. Oetting and Donnermeyer (1998) pointed that norms for social behavior and perception are learned predominantly in the context of social interaction with primary socialization sources which includes not just peers but also important youths and older adults. The junior students' differential perception on these items may have been as a result of such socialization which could occur outside the school.

The result as shown in table 3 reveals that there were significant differences in the students' of various age perception of drug use on all the items except for item 6 which states that most secondary school students are addicted to drug intake. It is not also surprising that students of varying age had varied perception of drug use among adolescents. This is because age is a factor of level of experience in any human endeavor. It is therefore expected that the experiences and social circle of the younger and the older adolescent will influence their perception of drug use and hence the differences.

Implications for social health promotion

The findings of this study have some important implications for social health promotion. It is however important to note

that while the students generally disagree that people learn how to use drug in school, they agree that most secondary school students have access to alcohol only during social functions. This has serious implication for drug education as a means for social health promotion. The society, basically the home and the government have important roles to play to help prevent drug abuse among the youths. Spoth, Redmond, Trudeau, and Shin (2002) revealed that the combined effort of the school and the home in preventing drug abuse produces greater positive results than only the school based effort. In the same manner, Nwachukwu and Nwagwu (2005) stressed the highly important role the parents or the home has in character development of the child. Drug abuse is a cankerworm that is disintegrating the social health of individuals and the society. Drug education is a veritable means of social health promotion and should be used as such. We live in a dispensation where such problems as family insecurity, broken home, child abuse, unemployment, social injustice and other such vices are challenging the social wellbeing of individuals and the community. The World Health Organization (2003) noted that such problems lead to drug abuse. Drug abuse also precipitates such problems. Mobilizing all available resources within the home and the

community to fight against drug abuse is quite essential for the promotion of social health of the youth and the society at large.

The findings of this study have also shown that secondary school students perceive that most secondary school students drink beer and are addicted to drugs. These negative perceptions have implications for the decision on whether or not to use alcohol and other drugs. Martino, Collins, Ellickson, Schell, and McCaffrey (2006) revealed the youths' perception of parents' and peers' drug use increase their decision to use drug. This implies that these students who perceived that most students use drugs are more likely to use alcohol and drug than those who perceived otherwise. This has implication also for their social health promotion as drug impedes social health promotion.

Conclusion

The students in this study had negative perception of adolescents' drug use. They perceived that most students use alcohol and drug. They are therefore more likely to use drug since they believe it is the norm among their peers. This poses a potential danger to the social health promotion of youth because drug use has been shown to influence the social health of individual negatively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Parents should make out time to discuss with their adolescent children the issue of drug use and abuse. They should make it clear to their children that they disapprove of drug use.
2. All drug education programme meant for the youth should strive to correct the negative perception of youth that most young people use and abuse drug.
3. The school and the home should strive to provide conducive socio-emotional environment that will help the adolescents to develop socially acceptable behaviours that will promote their social wellbeing and that of the society as a whole. Adults should also serve as role models especially parents to help their adolescent children develop positive attitude to drug use.

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**Occupational Health Problems of Industrial Workers in Nsukka
L.G.A. of Enugu State**

**A paper presented at the 8th National Health Promotion Research Association of
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Abstract

This study was embarked on to find out the occupational health problems of industrial workers in Nsukka L.G.A. The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted and four research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population consisted of 1040 people working in the industries. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select a sample of one hundred and seventy two senior and junior industrial workers that were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire which was validated by three experts in research work and the reliability was also determined. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and the hypothesis was verified using chi-square (X^2) statistic. The following major findings emerged: Industrial workers in Nsukka experienced a lot of health problems. These health problems cut across the three dimensions of health which are physical, social and emotional. The study showed that the commonest health problems were injuries, poor wages and lack of incentives and self-destruction behaviours such as drinking, smoking, among others.

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