



Prevailing Effects of Narcotic Abuse Among Undergraduate Students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated prevailing effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The study objectives included prevalence of narcotic abuse, causes of narcotic abuse amongst undergraduates, effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates and ways of curtailing narcotic abuse. Three theories were examined namely psychological theory of crime, differential association theory and strain theory. Differential association theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the mixed methods research design. The target population was 24,706 regular undergraduates, aged 18 years and above studying in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study sampled 204 respondents. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. Multi-stage involves the use of purposive sampling (i.e. non-probability sampling method) and other successive types of probability sampling method in selecting the respondents. The quantitative data collected were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, frequency counts and graphic illustrations while the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic method of data analysis. Two hypotheses were tested using Chi-square (X^2) test statistics. Findings indicated that there is high prevalence of narcotic abuse among students of NAU. Majority of the respondents engage in abuse of narcotics such as marijuana, heroin, and morphine/opium. Data analyzed showed that the causes of narcotic abuse among students include peer group pressure, negative family experience, broken home, cultism, availability of narcotics in the neighbourhood and boosting self-confidence. The study confirmed that undergraduates, who engage in narcotic abuse are likely to experience poor academic performance, consent to unsafe sex due to influence of narcotic, examination malpractice bullies, etc. Based on these findings, it was recommended amongst others that awareness creation on the dangers of consuming narcotic substances should be organized. Also, undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka should sign an undertaken not to do drugs.

Keywords: academic performance, narcotics abuse, peer pressure, undergraduates, youth

Introduction

According to Achalu (2012), the term narcotic is coined by the Greek physician Galen, and it refers to agents that numb, causing loss of feeling. It originally refers to any substance that

relieves pain, dulls the senses, and induces sleep. It is a drug or substance that affects mood or behaviour and is consumed for non-medical purposes, especially one sold illegally (Achal, 2012). According to Dannie (2016), any illicit drug is a narcotic. Therefore, a narcotic is a drug such as opium, heroin, and morphine that in moderate doses dulls the senses, relieves pain and induces profound sleep but in excess doses causes stupor, coma and convulsions.

The use of illicit drug remains an important public health issue in developed countries (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2020). Almost a third of youths in Europe aged 15–25 have used illicit drugs at some point in their lives, with the experience of drug use occurring more among males than females. Cannabis is the most frequently used drug, but some also abuse cocaine, amphetamines, and other drugs. Globally, the use of illicit drugs, particularly among people who use them regularly is associated with higher risks of cardiovascular diseases, mental health problems, accidents as well as infectious diseases, particularly where the drugs are being injected. Narcotic use and abuse are the major cause of preventable mortality among youths in advanced countries such as the United States, both directly through overdose and indirectly through drug-related diseases, accidents, violence and suicide. According to Dannie (2016), as African countries witness a rapid speed of urbanization, some of its youths may be unable to adjust to their changing environment and may become victims of a disordered life and this might lead to narcotic use and abuse. Drug abusers have become a great concern to the parents, family, and society at large.

Narcotic use and abuse have reached a point where it is becoming part of the fabrics of the society, and non-drug users are being considered as obsolete (Udoko, 2015). According to Dumbili (2015), some drugs are socially accepted while others are described as illicit. In any case, there is no demarcation between socially accepted drugs and illicit ones as they all pose equal danger to the life of users and people around them. It is rather unfortunate that students in Nigerian universities appear to be the major population at risk of drug use. It is very likely that in the future, these students may turn to the abuse of hard drugs, with

all the predictable health and socioeconomic consequences (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2017).

Etukudo (2017) notes that narcotic substances are mind altering and could becloud the users thought process. These narcotic substances are used in varying degrees by people which can affect the human system either positively or negatively due to their ability to alter certain functions of the body, that is why they are called drugs. A drug is a substance used for medical purposes that change the state or function of the body (Okoye, 2016). Examples of narcotic substances that are often abused by youths (students) include: opioids, cocaine, inhalants, hallucinogens, cannabis, marijuana, methamphetamine (*Mkpuru mmiri*) etc. For Onyeizuigbo (2013), narcotic abuse is the primary reason why many youths engage in crime in the society today.

Furthermore, Wolfgang (2016) believes that some youths in Nigeria ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other such as alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes, Indian hemp, morphine, codeine, heroine, ephedrine, madras, caffeine, glue, barbiturates, and amphetamines for their various daily activities (Wolfgang, 2016). This is a clear indication that drug abuse among Nigerian youths has reached alarming rate and thus a social problem that needs collective and conscious efforts by stakeholders to curtail the menace. Mathias (2015) notes that certain pre-disposing factors such as gender, age, crime, peer pressure, poor parental upbringing, lack of supervision, broken home, family background and parental occupation contribute immensely to drug use and abuse amongst undergraduates.

In addition, Anyabolu (2013) revealed that the common reason why undergraduates abuse drugs is mostly out of curiosity and acceptance by friends. Dumbili (2016) posits that peer pressure was responsible for youths' consumption of drugs for the purpose of stimulating appetite for food. Experience shows that male undergraduates from unstable families are often associated with high risk of narcotic use and abuse. This is supported by Okorie (2015) who opined that cannabis abusers are mostly young students who have been deprived of parental supervision and warmth from infancy. Drugs among students can be abused when not taken under the prescription of a doctor. For this reason, Obafemi, (2018) notes that drug abuse is the deliberate use of narcotic substances for reasons other than

intended medical purposes and which results in physical, mental, emotional and social impairment of the user.

According to Mathias (2015), undergraduates whose parents abuse drugs are likely to do the same. Onwuka (2016) argued that high rate of drug abuse among undergraduates in Nigeria usually begins from early adolescence and continues into their higher education, when they are free from parental supervision. Onwuka (2016) stressed that drug addiction, absenteeism, truancy, lateness to school, decline in reading culture, poor academic performance among other consequences are some of the major negative effects associated with narcotic use and abuse among students. It is against the backdrop of the foregoing background that this study is set to examine prevailing effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, with a view to proffer solutions to reduce this social menace.

Statement of the Problem

According to Nnachi (2017), narcotic abuse remains a major health challenge all over the world. Drug use worldwide for all cultures is known to have serious consequences especially in places where drug abuse is highly prevalent. The prevalence of risky sexual behaviours associated with illicit drug abuse has attracted growing international recognition (Adeyemo, 2016). Narcotic abuse among undergraduate students is linked to risky sexual behaviours with significant future consequences such as the high HIV estimates in Africa (Nnachi, 2017). Unfortunately, many students are not bothered by the harmful effects of drug abuse because most times they are under the influence of these narcotic substances. These unpleasant youthful activities are widespread in most Nigerian universities.

Drug abuse is a major social problem that affects university students in all ramifications (Okorie, 2015; Wood, 2014 & Wolfgang, 2016). In Nigeria, available statistics show that many undergraduates who abuse drugs are likely to record poor academic performance, drop out of school, become thugs and get involved in campus cultism, may suffer poor health conditions, easily join criminal gangs in school, likely to bully fellow students, instigate violence within the school environment and could end up in prison. Okorie (2015)

posits that narcotic abuse have been found to play major roles in risky sexual behaviours, including promiscuity, unprotected sexual activity, and unintended pregnancy. According to Okoroji (2015) such behaviour increases the risk for unplanned pregnancy, contracting and spreading of sexually transmitted diseases, rape, poor academic results, and can cause alterations in the structure and functions of the students' brain.

Drug abuse is assuming a frightening dimension where very young students get introduced to drugs and live with it as they grow into adulthood thereby, becoming serious addicts and social miscreants (Ogwo, 2016). This concern about drug abuse and its' negative consequences in Nigeria was raised early in 2017 by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (2017), which reported that there are many negative effects associated with drug abuse among university students. These negative effects include road crashes, poor academic results, cultism, disrespectful to parents, cheating in exams, rape, mental illness, murder, aggression, armed robbery among other concerns in the society. According to Obi (2013), criminals take narcotic substances in excess that even when they receive gun shots, they may still put on a very high performance and escape with the injury without being caught. Adeyemo (2017) wrote that the negative effects of drug abuse among undergraduates have also been associated with the loss of societal values, which is evident in the indecent dressing and other negative attitudes displayed by undergraduates on campus.

According to Okoroji (2015), many students have underrated the harmful effects of drug abuse to their bodies and the general society. Drugs alter behaviour and could lead students to misbehave and live a carefree life which may endanger their lives and that of other members of the society at large. There are many causes of drug use and abuse including peer pressure and parenting style. According to Onyeizuigbo (2013), when a student starts abusing drugs the student becomes a threat to himself and the society and is predisposed to many dangers. These dangers may include criminal and deviant behaviours such as prostitution. Literature indicates that many dangers are associated with the abuse of drugs among undergraduates, some of which include non-consensual sex, rising cases of illegal abortions among teenagers, unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, syphilis etc. Onuoha (2011) submitted that care must be taken

to discourage narcotic use and abuse because of the inherent dangers in it. This is important because when an individual becomes addicted to drugs withdrawal and rehabilitation becomes a very difficult process.

By implication, there are many negative effects associated with narcotic abuse among undergraduates some of which include: use of students by politicians as thugs, fighting, gangsterism, cultism, kidnapping, murder, ritual killing, armed robbery, internet fraud and other get-rich-quick practices that are destroying the fabrics of the society (Okeke, 2015). Many studies have been conducted on the use of drugs in Nigeria but none of these studies have focused exclusively on the effects of narcotic use and abuse among undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide this study: -

1. What are the causes of narcotic abuse amongst undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State?
2. What are the effects of narcotic abuse amongst undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State?

Literature Review

Causes of Narcotic Abuse among Undergraduates

Ogwo (2016) conducted a study on the causes of narcotic abuse among university students in Obeagu, Enugu State. The study adopted an ex-post factor survey method, using a sample size of 210 youths; majority of the respondents said that narcotic abuse can be caused by peer group pressure, poor parental supervision, negative childhood experience, and wanting to belong to campus clique. Further findings revealed that other factors influencing narcotic abuse among students in Obeagu, Enugu State include but not restricted to: influence of the media, traditional norms, cultism, crimes, sexual appetite, depression, stress, family instability, negative childhood experience etc. The study submitted that the Ministry of Education must as a matter of necessity redesign its education curricula to include “narcotic education” at all levels of education in order to arrest the situation of drug abuse at various schools. This may also include organizing

lectures, rallies, seminars and film shows for the youths on the adverse effects of drug abuse in their respective schools and community.

In a related development, Okoye (2016) conducted a study in Ebonyi State University tagged “The adolescents and illicit drugs: a psychological concern”. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure to select 204 respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents identified depression, low self-esteem, and environmental influences as the major predictors of illicit drug abuse among students. In other words, the variations in social environment could occur because of the type of youth demography, cost of narcotics in a particular social environment, traditions, sporting activity and liberality in the social milieu. The qualitative findings revealed that there are some other external environmental factors that may influence substance abuse. These factors include the availability of illicit drugs in the neighbourhood, pricing, density of distribution outlets (i.e. bars and clubs within and around the social environment), the social settings where drinking takes place and prevailing norms in a particular environment. All these factors play major roles in shaping the drug habits and drinking patterns of youths in Nigerian universities. Hence, the current study will seek to find out major causes of narcotic abuse among undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

In the same vein, Ujana (2019) conducted a household survey to identify factors influencing substance abuse among out of school adolescents in Owerri, Imo State. The study employed high quality multi-institutional studies using simple random procedure and representative samples and found that availability of alcohol and hard drugs encourage substance abuse among residents. Hence, increase in alcohol beverage prices would lead to substantial reductions both in the frequency of alcohol consumption and heavy drinking among youths out of school. The study further showed that although parents and peers were both influential in defining standards of drinking and drug use, peers were more influential in terms of affecting actual drinking behaviour amongst youths who are out of school. The study concluded that peer pressure can motivate out of school youths to embark on excursion to far distance to engage in binge drinking and substance abuse. Thus, parents and guardians must leave no stone unturned towards ensuring that the

whereabouts of their children are always known to them. This will help to reduce increasing cases of substance abuse in society. The above study focused on out of school adolescents, whereas the present study will focus on university students to ascertain areas of convergence and divergence.

Effects of Narcotic Abuse among Undergraduates

A study was conducted by Onwuka (2016) to examine the socio-economic effects of narcotic abuse and addiction among youths in Yenegoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. One hundred and ten (110) persons participated in the study as respondents. The researcher made use of questionnaire as the instrument to obtain data from the respondents in a non-probabilistic (accidental) sample method at selected joints (beer parlours) within Yenagoa City. Hypothesis was postulated and tested at alpha 0.05 level of significance in order to determine whether narcotic abuse and addiction promote violent crimes in the society. The findings revealed that narcotic abuse and addiction promotes violent crimes in the society ranging from domestic violence, armed robbery to examination malpractice, truancy, poor academic performance and school dropout in the society. In a related development, the current researcher will go a step further by identify specific effects of narcotic abuse on students' academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

According to a study by Ukwaiyi (2018) to identify effects of narcotic abuse among college students, the study randomly selected 349 youths from Aba South LGA using nonprobability geographical-sampling system. Findings revealed that narcotic abuse is a significant public health problem that usually affects the intellectual and social lives of Aba youths. The study's fact sheet on youths out of school and substance abuse reveals that narcotic abuse has become a ritual that school dropouts often see as an integral part of coping with depression despite the potential incidences of addiction and social vices. The above findings were broad in scope and objective, but the present study will be narrowed down both in scope and objective to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Another longitudinal survey was carried out by Madu, Okorie and Asogwa (2017) on the prevailing effects of substance abuse among Nigerian youths. The study sampled a total of 800 respondents which comprised students and out-of-school youths. The findings

revealed that each year adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18 die from drug-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle clashes in Nigeria. Again, the survey found that each year young adults between the ages of 14 and 19 are assaulted by drug users. Other effects of substance abuse include risky sexual behaviour, teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion, premature death, loss of concentration in school activities, poor academic performance, lateness to class and truancy. The survey submitted that other negative consequences of substance abuse include health problems, vandalism, property damage and risk of arrest by the police for illegal substance abuse and endangering other lives. The above study will be replicated in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka to find out other effects of substance abuse among university students.

Similarly, Ukaje (2020) conducted a related study to ascertain ways that substance abuse affects youths in Osogbo, Osun State. The study adopted a mixed methods research design comprising 300 undergraduates. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents identified violent behaviour as the major effect of substance abuse. The study found that drug abuse is a central part of gang culture and is strongly linked to violence and aggressive behaviours. The study also found that fight between gang members usually erupts after drinking; alcohol and other narcotic drugs are often used prior to fights to build confidence; high alcohol intake usually occurs after fights as a seal of gang unity, and that alcohol and violence are linked ritualistically during gang initiation process. This present study will dig deeper to identify more problems associated with substance abuse among undergraduates.

According to a study conducted by Chingwalu (2020) to find out the relationship between narcotic abuses and increasing rate of school dropout in selected secondary schools in Enugu. With the use of 200 sample size, the study found that the relationship between narcotic abuse and school dropout is undeniable. It was found that many boys in those selected secondary schools aged 18 years and above indicated that they have engaged in various criminal acts such as cultism, murder and traffic offenses because of the influence of drugs. Many respondents who used one type of illicit drug such as marijuana revealed that the regular intake has a broad range of implications. The study further found that poor physical health could complicate drug use. Other problems associated with narcotic abuse

include poor academic performance, inability to exhibit expected roles and emotional problem. The study found that illicit drug users who have many sex partners were less likely to use protection thus, putting them at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and risk of unwanted pregnancy on the part of the females. The study also found that pregnant teenagers reported the use of at least one substance in the six months prior to pregnancy. Therefore, this study will be made to unravel the motivating and consequential variables accounting for narcotic abuse among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Theoretical Framework

To give this study a theoretical base, the researcher adopted differential association theory as its theoretical framework. Differential association theory was adopted because it describes the process of social interaction through which students learn deviant behaviour. It was adopted as the theoretical framework because it explains the intricacies of the issues associated with the effects of narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This theory sees the attitude of university students as learned through social interaction with other students having deviant dispositions. Similarly, Mathias (2015) explains that Differential Association Theory aptly suits drug related behaviours because peer pressure and the nature of one's circle of friends are very important aspects that increase one's susceptibility to narcotic abuse. This is perhaps the reason why criminologists emphasize on the need to have a good neighbourhood for growing children so that they are not exposed to the dangers of drugs and violence. This theory is very effective in explaining why social influences are important factors that mould the character of a person. It explains the dangers of bad influences particularly at an early age and how such influences could encourage narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Materials and Methods

Mixed methods research design was adopted for this study; it is a research approach whereby the researcher collects and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data within the parameters of the same study. Mixed methods approach was chosen because it is aimed at collecting information on certain variables in a study population at one point in time using two specific methods of data collection. Hence, it involves the use of two or more

methods of data collection such as the quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (e.g. interview) methods to arrive at a reliable finding(s) that can be generalized to represent the larger population. The study area was Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, located at Awka South LGA, Anambra state, Southeastern Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka was chosen for this study because of its strategic importance, convenience, location and the growing cases of narcotic use and abuse among undergraduates in the university. Experience has shown that many undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University are easily pressured and influenced by friends to engage in the use of drugs. Hence, the need for this study to identify causes of this ugly development and the way forward.

According to the Office of Director Academic Planning NAU, the population of the undergraduates as at 2021/2022 academic session is thirty-seven-thousand, one hundred and eighty-two (37,182) students. The population is made up of twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and six (24,706) for regular students and twelve thousand four hundred and seventy-six (12,476) for part time students. The target population for this study were undergraduate students aged 18 years and above studying in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reason for this choice of target population was that they are always on campus and could facilitate quick completion of this research work.

The study was limited to prevailing effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study respondents are regular undergraduates aged 18 years and above studying in Awka main campus of the university. Sample size means a proportion of a population which was studied with a view to generalize findings to the entire population. A sample size of 204 was used for the study using Taro Yamane (1967) statistical formula.

Findings/Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

<i>Socio-Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender		
Male	128	64.0
Female	72	36.0
Total	200	100.0
Age Brackets		
18 – 22	154	77.0
23 – 27	35	17.5
28 and above	11	5.5
Total	200	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	174	87.0
Married	23	11.5
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Separated	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0
Religious Affiliation		
Christianity	150	75.0
African Traditional Religion	26	13.0
Islam	10	5.0
Agnostics/Atheist	14	7.0
Total	200	100.0
Place of Residence		
School hostel	118	59.0
Off-campus	82	41.0
Total	200	100.0
Family's Socio-economic Background		
Low income family	97	48.5
Middle income family	68	34.0
High income family	35	17.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows that 64.0% of the respondents are males and 36.0% are females. This indicates that majority of the respondents are males. In terms of age, Table 1 shows that 77.0% of the respondents are young and between the ages of 18–22 while 5.5% of the

respondents are aged 28 years and above. This means that majority of the respondents are in their 20s. The marital status of the respondents reveals that 87.0% of the respondents are single while 1.5% of the respondents are separated as at the time of this study. Thus, implying that majority of the respondents are single. This result is expected because the study respondents are regular undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The column for religious affiliation shows that a significant number (75.0%) of the respondents are Christians whereas 5.0% are Moslems. The implication is that Christianity remains the dominant religion in Southeast region of Nigeria and institutions like Unizik are not exempted. With regards to place of residence, it is interesting to observe that majority, representing 59.0% of the respondents live in school hostel, followed by close to half (41.0%) of the respondents that live outside the school area, thus, implying that more number of the respondents live inside school hostels. Furthermore, family socio-economic background of the respondents was examined and result indicates that 48.5% of the respondents are products of low income families and 17.5% of the respondents came from high income families. This presupposes that majority of the respondents are products of low income family backgrounds. This lack of money and frustrations coming from the family fronts could have contributed to the intake of narcotics among some students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the causes of narcotic abuse amongst undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka? Questionnaire items 11, 12 and 13 were formulated to answer research question 1. Findings are presented in tables 5, 6, and figure 2 respectively.

Table 5: Respondents' views on awareness of the causes of narcotic abuse among students of Unizik

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	165	82.5
No	21	10.5
I don't know	14	7.0
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 shows that majority (82.5%) of the respondents are aware of the causes of narcotic abuse among students of Unizik. It is however surprising that 7.0% of the respondents don't know the causes of narcotic abuse among students. From the result, one can infer that majority of the respondents are familiar with the topic under investigation.

Table 6: Respondents' views on how often peer group pressure contributes to narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very often	121	60.5
Often	62	31.0
Not often	17	8.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2024

With regards to how often peer group pressure contributes to narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Table 6 shows that 60.5% of the respondents said very often. On the contrary, 8.5% of the respondents indicated not often. This means that peer group pressure influences narcotic abuse among students of the aforementioned university.

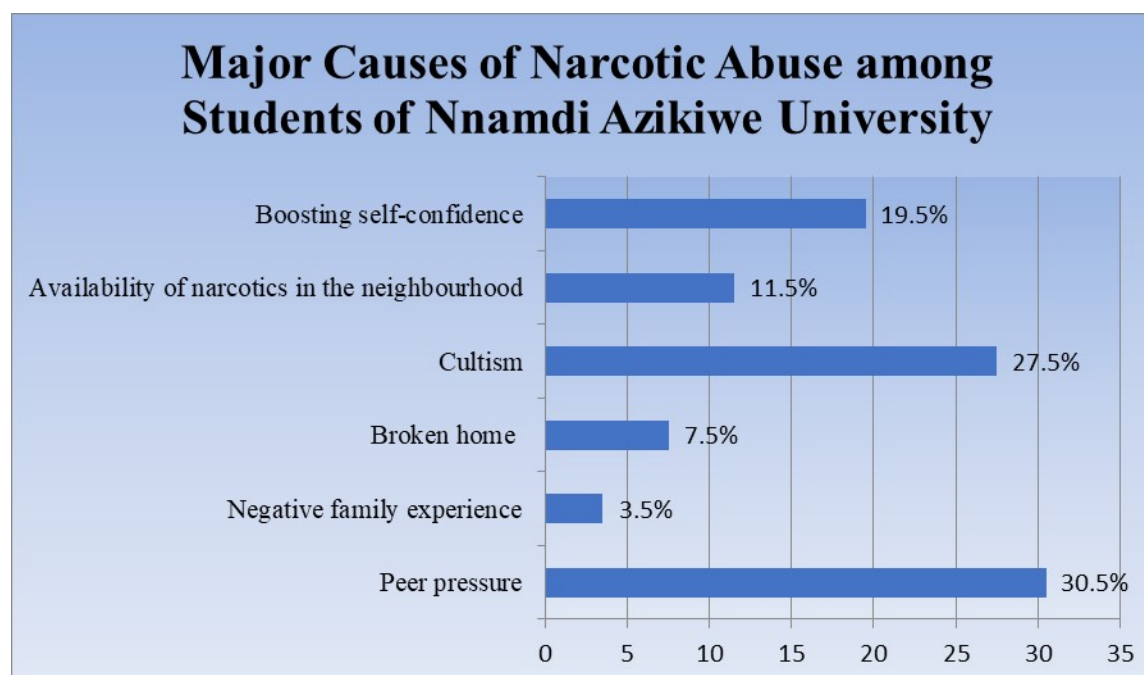


Figure 2: Respondents' views on the major cause of narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University

On the causes of narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Figure 2 reveals that 30.5% of the respondents identified peer pressure whereas 3.5% of the respondents indicated negative family experience. This implies that majority of the respondents attributed the prevalence of narcotic abuse among students to negative peer pressure in the university community. This aligns with the IDI data. An interviewee stated:

Negative peer pressure contributes to the high prevalence of narcotic use and abuse among students, when friends are taking narcotics, some students may be tempted to take to feel among, unknown to them that they are toeing a wrong path that leads to nowhere. Poor parenting is another source of concern for some of us that have been researching and presenting papers on this area of study. Parents have to do more to ensure that the society is safe and peaceful for everyone of us (Female, Married, 45 years, Lecturer, Department of Music).

In the light of the above, one of the interviewees stated that:

Over the years, scholars have found a link between negative peer influence and abuse of narcotics. This simply means that undergraduates whose friends take narcotics are likely to imbibe the same behaviour, it is only a matter of time and convenience before it happens. And sometimes the moment a particular delinquent act is learned by a young person there is no going back (Male, Married, 44 years, Lecturer, Department of English Education).

Another participant puts it this way:

Negative childhood experience such as poor parenting can promote the use of narcotics among undergraduates. If the parents are the type that are too busy with work and hardly check on their children, chances are that these children will grow up to follow wrong examples, associate with wrong people in the neighbourhood and then become worse when they enter the university (Female, Single, 29 years, NDLEA Official, Awka).

Again, another interviewee said:

Campus cultism is another factor that many people have neglected while talking about the abuse of narcotics in recent times. In case you are not aware, before embarking on any mission or reprisal attacks, cult members engage in abuse of all kinds of hard drugs including narcotics to keep their moods very high and resistant to pain too (Female, Married, 45 years, Lecturer, Department of Music).

Research Question 3

What are the effects of narcotic abuse amongst undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka? Questionnaire items 14 and 15 were formulated to answer research question 3. Findings are presented in Table 7 and Figure 3 respectively.

Table 7: Respondents' views on whether undergraduates who abuse narcotics are likely going to earn lower grades more than those who do abuse narcotics

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	112	56.0
No	88	44.0
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 shows that more than half (56.0%) of the respondents think that undergraduates who abuse narcotics are likely going to earn lower grades more than those who do abuse

narcotics. On the other hand, 44.0% of the respondents disagreed. Apparently, this implies that there is a connection between abuse of narcotics among students and poor academic performance.

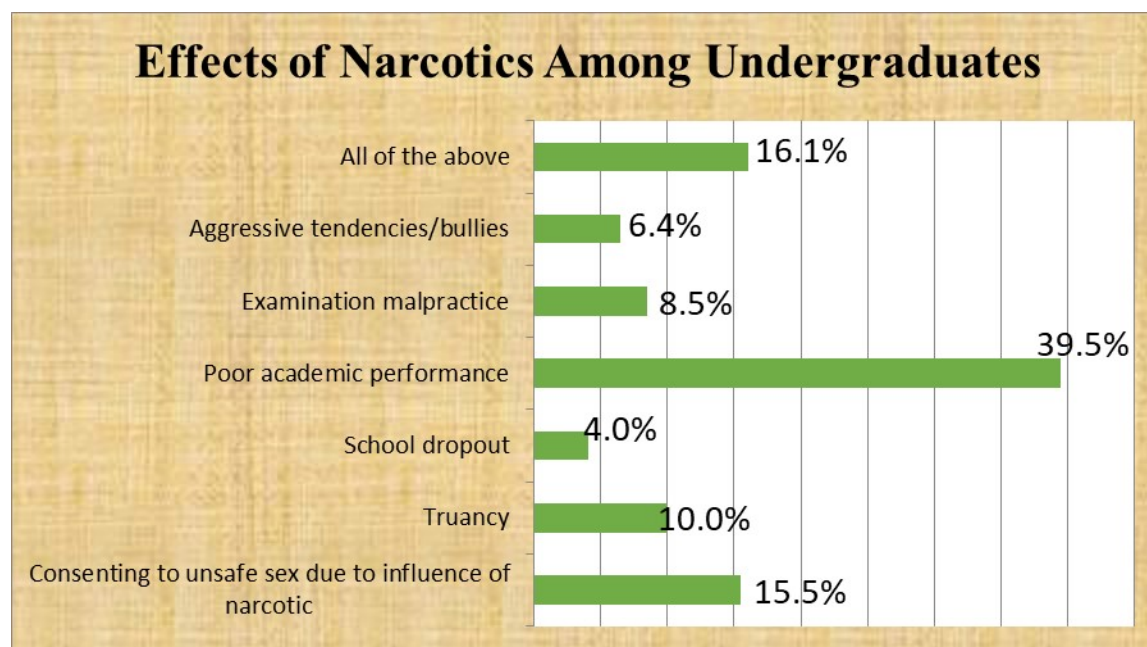


Figure 3: Respondents' views on the effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates

Figure 3 shows that 39.5% of the respondents identified poor academic performance as one of the negative effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates. Similarly, 4.0% of the respondents indicated school dropout as another consequence of school dropout among undergraduates. This implies that majority of the respondents affirmed that undergraduates who engage in narcotic abuse are likely to record poor academic performance. This aligns with the IDI data. One of the interviewees stated:

University students who engage in the use of narcotics are usually violent and disrespectful in their behaviours. Narcotic use and abuse has pushed many young people into doing things they will regret doing for the rest of their lives. Recently, I read about a boy that burnt down his parents' house after overdosing himself with marijuana. To make the matter worse, the parents managed to build that house with their pensions and gratuities many years ago (Male, Married, 37 years, NDLEA Official, Awka).

Another participant said:

Yes, that is true, narcotic abuse has forced many students to drop out of school because of poor academic performance and lack of interest in school activities. I have a student that stopped coming to classes recently,

and when I enquired, I was told that he now roams the streets of Awka because of abuse of narcotics. I personally, warned the student some months ago to stop engaging in hard drugs, little did I know that he has reached a point of no return. So what am I saying in essence, narcotic abuse can affect mental health and may lead to madness (Male, Married, 44 years, Lecturer, Department of English Education).

Again, another interviewee said:

Undergraduates who engage in narcotic abuse are twice likely to bully fellow students. Narcotic abuse has other side effects such as poor physical health condition, poor saving culture, lack of concentration in school, experience of emotional instability, unsafe sex, having many sex partners and spread of HIV/AIDs. The female students among them, end up having unwanted pregnancies, engaging in unsafe abortions and other health complications (Female, Single, 30 years, Lecturer, Department of English Education).

Another IDI participant stated that:

Narcotic abuse promotes criminal tendencies and behaviours among students. Students who abuse narcotics usually struggle to maintain such lifestyle and the only way to keep up with that lifestyle is to rob and dispossess fellow students of their phones, laptops and valuables. This is why there is usually high rate of crime in school areas. If you have one-on-one with students living around Ifite community, you will understand my point better (Female, Single, 29 years, NDLEA Official, Awka).

Test of Hypotheses

This study investigated the effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The two study hypotheses were stated, re-stated and tested using Chi-square test statistics as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Data in 9 formed the basis for testing hypothesis 1.

Table 9: Relationship between peer group pressure and narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

		<i>Have you ever abused narcotics before?</i>		Total
		Yes	No	
How often does peer group pressure contribute to narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?	Very often	63	58	121
	Often	32	30	62
	Not often	10	7	17
	Total	105	95	200

$\chi^2 = 19.335, Df=2, p = .000$

Table 9 shows that a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 19.335; Df = 2; N = 200$) exists between peer group pressure and narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka at the level of $p = .000$. As a result, the alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and narcotic abuse among students. This means that peer group pressure influences narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Hypothesis Two: Undergraduates who abuse narcotics are more likely to earn lower grades than those who do not use narcotics in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Hypothesis two was tested through the cross-tabulation of relevant study variables. Data in table 10 formed the basis for testing hypothesis 2.

Table 10: Relationship between abuse of narcotics and academic performance

		<i>Do you think that undergraduates who abuse narcotics are likely going to earn lower grades more than those who do abuse narcotics?</i>		
		Yes	No	Total
Have you ever abused narcotics before?	Yes	57	48	105
	No	55	40	95
	Total	112	88	200

$$\chi^2 = 21.335, Df = 1, p = .001$$

Table 10 shows that a statistical relationship ($\chi^2 = 21.335$; $Df = 1$, $N = 200$) was found between abuse of narcotics and academic performance at $p = .001$. As a result, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that undergraduates who abuse narcotics are more likely to earn lower grades than those who do not use narcotics in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In other words, abuse of narcotics can lead to lower grades among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Discussion of Findings

To answer the first research question, findings further indicate that majority of the respondents were aware of the causes of narcotic abuse among students. This study discovered that more often than not peer group pressure contributes to narcotic abuse among students. Peer pressure was found to be the major cause of narcotic abuse among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Other contributory factors include negative family experience, broken home, cultism, availability of narcotics in the neighbourhood and boosting self-confidence. This aligns with previous study by Ujana (2019) which found that major causes of narcotic abuse among students in Owerri, Imo State include peer pressure, broken home, cultism and confidence boosting practice.

To answer the second research question which bothers on the effects of narcotic abuse among students, findings indicate that undergraduates that engage in narcotic abuse are likely to experience poor academic performance. Other negative effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates include consenting to unsafe sex due to influence of narcotic, truancy, school dropout, examination malpractice, aggressive tendencies and the possibility of becoming a bully on campus. This agrees with the study by Ukaje (2020) which found that the effects of narcotic abuse among adolescents in Osogbo, Osun State include low CGPA, examination malpractice, risky sexual behaviour and juvenile delinquencies.

Two hypotheses were tested in this study. The first hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and narcotic abuse among students. This means that peer group pressure influences narcotic abuse among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The second hypothesis confirms that undergraduates who abuse narcotics are more likely to earn lower grades more than those who do not use narcotics in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In other words, abuse of narcotics can lead to lower grades among students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The findings in this study aligned with the postulations of Differential-Association Theory, which incidentally was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study.

Conclusion

Narcotics are substances that can relieve pain, dull the senses and induce sleep. They affect mood, behaviour and can be consumed for non-medical purposes. Narcotics like marijuana, opium, heroin, tobacco, morphine and methamphetamine are becoming common among undergraduates and this situation is disturbing to a lot of parents. While the national and regional prevalence rates are relatively moderate. Literature reveals the possibility of misuse of narcotics among university students. Media reports indicate that there is high prevalence in the use of narcotics among young people in Southeast region of Nigeria.

Thus, this study investigated effects of narcotic abuse among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Data analyzed confirmed that causes of narcotic abuse among students include peer group pressure, negative family experience, broken home, cultism, availability of narcotics in the neighbourhood and boosting self-confidence. Negative

effects of narcotic abuse include poor academic performance, consent to unsafe sex due to influence of narcotic, truancy, school dropout, engage in examination malpractice, become aggressive and bullies. To this end, there is urgent need for stakeholders to brainstorm on workable policy interventions to mitigate the impacts of narcotics on the academic performance and mental health of students. The time to act is now.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for possible implementation to address problems associated with the use of narcotics among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Nigerian students in general.

1. University management should endeavour to ban the use of narcotics among undergraduates. This will go a long way towards discouraging the use, misuse and the act of adopting narcotics as a group norm among Nigerian students.
2. Undergraduates should focus on their studies and avoid keeping bad friends. One of the goals of every student should be to succeed in school, graduate with good grades and make his/her parents proud. Therefore, undergraduates should focus on these values and refuse to be lured or distracted by pressure from friends and age mates.
3. Adequate awareness should be created on problems associated with the use of narcotics. The management of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka should organize periodic enlightenment campaigns, public lectures, school radio programmes, Seminars, Workshops and Conferences to make university students understand the consequences of narcotic abuse to their well-beings and the society in general.
4. Government agencies such as NAFDAC and NDLEA should track down narcotic distribution networks and perpetrators should be punished to serve as deterrent to others. This measure when implemented will be effective in disrupting the business and trafficking of narcotics in Nigerian universities. It will also go a long way towards discouraging potential users from taking up such bad behaviour.
5. Parents should ensure proper socialization and improved monitoring of their children while in school. Parents should learn to visit their children in school and caution them whenever they suspect that they are going astray. Furthermore, Nigeria is a religious country, as such, religious leaders should start to preach and

teach the citizens particularly the undergraduates against associating with bad friends that engage in narcotic abuse while in school.

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