Curbing Drug/Substance Abuse among Students in Universities in Nigeria: The Role of Librarians

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ABSTRACT

The rate at which youths, especially students in the tertiary institutions engage in drug/substance abuse in Nigeria is increasing on a daily basis. This has resulted in youth restiveness as well as other crimes, which has made it a serious challenge to national development and growth. What should be done, becomes the question in everyone's mind. To this end, this study was developed. The study examined the roles of librarians in curbing drug/substance abuse among students in universities in Nigerian. It adopted the descriptive survey research design using the final year students of University of Uyo, totalling 1407 students. The accidental sampling technique was adopted in selecting 70 students, which represents 5% of the population. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data generated were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviations. Findings of the study revealed that Alcohol-ethanol, tobacco, tramadol, etc. were found to be abused. Peer pressure, poverty and unemployment were among the determinants of the abuse. The behavioural patterns include dizziness, easily provoked, loss of self-control, etc. Consequences associated with drug/substance abuse and roles of librarians in curbing drug/substance abuse were found out. The study recommended intensified efforts by librarians in bringing to the knowledge of the students the dangers of drug/substance abuse and how to avoid them.

Keywords: *Roles, Librarians, Drug/Substance Abuse, Students, Nigerian Universities*

INTRODUCTION

Drugs are meant to build not to destroy, to heal not to kill and to replenish not to drain. They are substances capable of bringing about a change in the biological function of an individual through its chemical actions, while modifying perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2006; and Okoye, as cited in Fareo, 2012).According to pharmacologists, a chemical substance is used in the treatment, cure, prevention or diagnosis of disease or used to enhance physical and mental well-being (Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2016).

However, recent outrage in the country, points to the very fact that most drugs have become severally abused and misused, through wrongful and inappropriate application, thereby resulting in a national or even global menace. According to Akanbi, Godwin, Theophilus, Muritala and Ajiboye (2015), drug abuse,(now called, drug /substance use disorder), has become a threatening and disturbing global phenomenon, with multi-dimensional implications on global and Nigerian peace. It is one of the most potent motivating factors responsible for high level of anti-social, economic, health, and political problems confronting the world. It accounts for majority of the criminal activities such as killing, kidnapping, raping, cultism, banditry, suicide, armed robbery, as well as issues of self-inflicted manifestations like accidents, withdrawal syndrome, dependence, depression, aggression, poor academic performance and failures.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) (2018), drawing from the American Psychiatric Association, posited that drug abuse is the application of illegal and non-medical use of substances, possessing inherent properties of altering the mental state of an individual in numerous ways, considered by social norms and values as inappropriate, undesirable, harmful, threatening, worrisome and culture-alien. It is a departure from an appropriate, legal or lawful use of drugs. It constitutes everything that represents non-medical use of substances by

human beings with the conscious or unconscious intention of modifying one or more of its original functions and as such, impairing the individual's ability to function effectively and normally within the acceptable social, physical, emotional or psychological expectations. Moreover, literature point out that some drugs/substances commonly abused by students include tobacco, alcohol, stimulants like caffeine, nicotine, cannabis, Indian hemp, amphetamine, tramadol, codeine, volatile solvents like glue, chloroform, correction fluid, psychotropic medicines such as sedatives, anxiolytics, hypnotics, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), mescaline, vasodilator, anesthetic, gases manpower, paraga, sepe, opaeyin, etc, (Adeyeye, 2018; Imam, 2004; Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2016; and UNODC, 2018). Indeed, drug/substance abuse has a ravaging effect on the lives of many Nigerian youths and students, ruins families and leads to the devastation of communities.

This scenario calls for all hands to be on deck in order to tame the danger of drug/substance abuse. It demands combined efforts and collective responsibilities from all educational stakeholders especially; librarians and information professionals, who are the purveyors of information and knowledge resources. Qualified librarians and information professionals are trained personnel with higher educational qualifications and requisite skills of generating, recording, processing, storing, preserving, retrieving, disseminating and communicating information to user son various areas of human leaning (Kolawole & Igwe, 2016). Librarians and other information professionals are involved in the tasks of advocating, educating, mentoring, counseling, liaising, lecturing and enlightening students through diverse media and for a on the surging tide of drug/substance abuse among students in the Nigerian universities. This has become absolutely necessary because students as leaders of tomorrow, the hope of the families, the light of the communities and the pillars of nation; are in great danger of increasing affinity with drug/substance abuse in all our institutions of higher learning.

In fact, the misuse and abuse of drugs/substances by students have become one of the most worrisome health, emotional and psychological related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA, as cited in Fareo, 2012). Also, NAFDAC (2018), reported that the abuse of illicit drugs is forming Nigerian student's sub-culture, thereby making several Nigerian students live in the dilemma of mental health and many other physical, emotional cum

psychological challenges such as insanity, mala-adjustment to school situations, poor academic performance, loss of focus and concentration, and high rate of school drop outs. Based on this background, therefore, this research examines the roles of librarians and information professionals in curbing drug/substance abuse among students in Nigerian universities with particular reference to the University of Uyo, AkwaIbom State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is guided by the following specific objectives, namely: to:

- Identify the various drugs/substances usually abused by students in universities in Nigeria;
- Examine the determinants of drug/substance abuse among students in universities in Nigeria;
- Determine the behavioural patterns of students in universities in Nigeria under drug/substance abuse;
- Establish the consequences of drug/substance abuse among students in universities in Nigeria;
- Find out the roles librarians can play in curbing drug/substance abuse among students in universities in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drug/substance abuse is a major factor inhibiting students' learning and moral behaviour in Nigerian universities (NDLEA, 2013). It is a common enemy and a global menace. Drug/substance abuse is a very complex challenge of modern society with significant public health concerns and implications affecting families, communities, institutions and nations in monumental dimensions (Unaogu, Onu, Iteke, Tukur, & Oka, 2017). In studies conducted by Obiamaka, (2004); Okorodudu and Okorodudu (2004); Ubom (2004) and UNODC (2018), they agreed that the evil of drug/substance abuse knows no boundaries or social class. This is because it impedes the peace and development of any society, threatening life, health, dignity and prosperity of individuals and societies. It is also noted from the work of Obot (1999), that drug/substance abuse have several overwhelming effects ranging from psychosis, paranoid schizophrenia, chronic addiction and all the implications of mental health, destruction of vital body organs like the brain, heart, liver, lung; and physical dependency.

Specifically, from various studies such as Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016), Adeyeye (2018) and UNODC(2018) have come to agree that some of the drug/substances of abuse include; alcohol-ethanol (beer, and other spirits); cannabis (marijuana, weed, pot, ganja, dope); cocaine; heroin; opioid (analgesic alkaloid morphine, tramadol, codeine); tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, shishas); barbiturates; epherdrine; stimulants like caffeine; nicotine; Indian hemp; amphetamine; volatile solvents like glue; chloroform correction fluid; psychotropic medicines such as sedatives, anxiolytics, hypnotics, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD); mescaline; vasodilator; anesthetic; gases manpower; paraga; sepe; opaeyin; etc. Consequently, Fayombo and Aremu (2000), NAFDAC (2008), Oshikoya and Alli (2006),and Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016), noted that drug/substance abuse is highly forming students sub-culture in Nigerian universities. Such habit and craving has lots of negative consequences, including maladaptive and inappropriate responses to the learning and social environment causing dwindling educational performance, academic achievement and even halt some students' entire life's prospect and progression. Psychologists also argued that heavy drinking and drugs misuse hamper students' expectations about their academic performance (Botvin, 2009).

Muoti (2014), and Washington and Lee University (2019), noted that the destructive power of drug/substance abuse manifests in diverse of ways such as impaired judgment and coordination, poor concentration, loss of focus and interest, poor academic performance, insolent behaviour, high rate of dropouts, abuse of rules and regulations, assault and rape; incarceration; hazing; falls, drowning and other injuries; contracting sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) like HIV/AIDS, as well as unwanted or unplanned sexual experiences and pregnancy, maimed, sentenced to a life of delinquency, insanity, street walking, premature death and many other signs of educational and life backwardness. According to Enakpoya (2009), Adeyeye (2018), Muanya and Onyenucheya (2019), students are exposed to drug/substance abuse for several reasons. These authors found out that drugs/ substance abuse by students are blamed on several factors and determinants such as; parents, friends/peers, and television/radio advertisements (mass media/social media), curiosity, boldness, enjoyment of social gathering, academic pressure, sound-sleep, sexual-prowess, and performance in sports. Taylor (2003) observed that some

parents and peers influence students drinking and drug consumption. Parental deprivation due to death, divorce, separation or discord has strong association with drug/substance abuse (Adeyeye, 2018). Also, social and environmental factors like living away from home, relaxed parental control, alienation from family, early exposure to drugs, peer influence, easy access to the drugs and their availability, facilitate the abuse of drugs and other substances (Fareo, 2012).

However, in all the reviewed literature, little or no contribution was attributed to librarians and information professionals either in the academic, school, special, public or national libraries. This is typically not encouraging because librarians are supposed to be advocates and facilitators of information and knowledge for such an alarming and disturbing global phenomenon like drug/substance abuse. Therefore, this observed gap motivates this study, trying to serve as a wakeup call on librarians and information professionals to live up to their expectation in this all important issue of concern.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design using the University of Uyo as a focus. The University has a student population of over 20,000 spread across its three campusesviz: Town Campus, Ikpa Road, Permanent Site, NsukaraOffot (Nwaniba Road) and School of Basic Studies, EdieneAbak (*Admission's office, University of Uyo*). However, this study was limited to final year students found in the Town Campus across all faculties, totalling 1407 students. The study further selected 70 students, which represents 5% of the population as respondents using the accidental sampling technique. Data were collected for the study with the structured questionnaire titled: ***"Questionnaire on the Roles of Librarians in Curbing Drug/Substance Abuse among Students of Nigerian Universities (QRLCDSASNU)".*** 70 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents a cross several faculties/ departments of the Town Campus, but 64 copies were successfully retrieved and used. Data generated were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviations. Furthermore, the 4-point scale approach was adopted to ascertain the degree of agreement or otherwise in each of the item statements. This implies that 2.5 mean score yardsticks indicating the level of agreement or disagreement were adopted in accepting or rejecting the variables.

PRESENTATION OF RESULT/DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table1. *Drugs/Substances usually Abused by Nigerian University's Students*

S/n	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. Dev	Decision
1	Alcohol-Ethanol (beer, and other spirits)	38	20	4	2	3.47	0.755	Agreed
2	Benylin (cough, cold and flu medications)	9	27	20	8	2.58	0.887	Agreed
3	Rohypnol (flunitrazepam)	3	27	26	8	2.39	0.769	Disagreed
4	Cannabis (marijuana, weed, pot, ganja, dope)	11	32	12	9	2.70	0.920	Agreed
5	Opioid (analgesic alkaloid morphine)	12	25	22	5	2.69	0.871	Agreed
6	Cocaine (coke)	13	23	13	15	2.53	01.069	Agreed
7	Heroine (big H, herb)	12	15	29	8	2.48	0.943	Disagreed
8	Tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, shishas)	30	32	-	2	3.41	0.660	Agreed
9	Tramadol	33	27	2	2	3.42	0.708	Agreed
10	Amphetamines (central nervous system stimulant)	5	24	26	9	2.39	0.828	Disagreed
11	Coffee/Caffeine	24	32	4	4	3.19	0.814	Agreed
12	Codeine	16	29	13	6	2.86	0.906	Agreed
13	Butazoldine	1	29	27	7	2.34	0.695	Disagreed
14	Barbiturates	6	24	32	2	2.53	0.712	Agreed
15	Indian hemp	15	30	15	4	2.88	0.845	Agreed
16	Ephedrine	18	34	-	12	2.09	0.684	Disagreed
17	Madras	14	39	-	11	2.05	0.628	Disagreed
18	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)	1	14	37	12	2.06	0.687	Disagreed
19	Mescaline	1	12	39	12	2.03	0.666	Disagreed
20	Vasodilator	2	14	40	8	2.16	0.672	Disagreed
21	Anesthetic	5	28	29	2	2.56	0.687	Agreed
22	Gases Manpower	17	29	16	2	2.95	0.805	Agreed
23	Paraga	2	8	41	13	1.98	0.678	Disagreed
	GRAND MEAN					**2.60**	**0.778**	**Agreed**

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey, 2019*

In **Table 1**, it is obvious that the following drugs/substances are usually abused by Nigerian university's students: Alcohol-ethanol, benylin, cannabis, opioid, cocaine, tobacco, tramadol, coffee, codeine, barbiturates, Indian hemp, anesthetic, and gases manpower. It can be deduced from this result, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 2.60 and 0.778, respectively, that Nigerian university's students are engaged in high drug/substance abuse. A careful analysis of these drugs/substances usually abused closely reflect the findings of Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016); UNODC (2018); among other works, which revealed several drugs/substance abused by students to include alcohol-ethanol, cocaine, heroin, cannabis, etc.

Table2. *Determinants of Drug/Substance Abuse by Nigerian University's Students*

S/n	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. Dev	Decision
1	Religious affiliation	7	16	22	19	2.17	0.985	Disagreed
2	Family background like parents who abuse drug/substances and not playing their roles properly	32	23	9	-	3.36	0.721	Agreed
3	Peer pressure (friendship/relationship)	47	16	1	-	3.72	0.487	Agreed
4	The type of school students attend	18	30	14	2	3.00	0.797	Agreed
5	The cost of drugs/substances	23	18	19	4	2.94	0.957	Agreed
6	Student's socio-economic background like availability of money to buy drugs/substances	23	25	10	6	3.02	0.951	Agreed
7	Student's age bracket or group	21	35	3	5	3.13	0.826	Agreed
8	Student's level of exposure to drugs/substances	23	35	4	2	3.23	0.707	Agreed
9	Student's emotional status	19	31	13	1	3.06	0.753	Agreed
10	Availability of drugs/substances	20	31	13	-	3.11	0.715	Agreed
11	Influence of mass media, including social media, and advertising	20	30	11	3	3.05	0.825	Agreed
12	Environmental influence like decline in the Nigerian value systems	17	35	11	2	3.03	0.755	Agreed
13	Poverty and unemployment	28	27	7	2	3.27	0.782	Agreed
14	Disobedience to the laws and moral decay	25	27	12	-	3.20	0.739	Agreed

15	Lack of control of prescription in the healthcare facilities and weakness in inspections for drug/substance sellers and traffickers	14	17	29	-	2.64	0.897	Agreed
16	Ignorance of the implications of drug/substance abuse	29	16	19	-	3.16	0.859	Agreed
17	Curiosity and experimentation of drugs/substances	16	27	16	2	2.84	0.895	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN					**3.05**	**0.803**	**Agreed**

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey, 2019*

The result in **Table 2** shows that majority of the respondents, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.05 and 0.803, respectively, confirmed that there are numerous determinants of drug/substance abuse by Nigerian university's students. The determinants as agreed by the students, include; family background, peer pressure, the type of school, cost of drug/substances, student's socio-economic background, age, level of exposure, emotional status, availability of drugs/substances, influence of mass media, environmental influence, poverty and unemployment, disobedience to the laws and moral decay, lack of control of prescription in the healthcare facilities, ignorance of the implications of drug/substance abuse, and curiosity and experimentation of drugs/substances. It is possible that these determinants contribute to the high number of Nigerian university's students, who engage in drug/substances abuse. This finding complements the studies of Adeyeye (2018) and Muanya and Onyenucheya (2019), which found that students are exposed to drug/substance abuse for several reasons such as; parents, friends/peers, and television/radio advertisements (mass media/social media), curiosity, boldness, enjoyment of social gathering, academic pressure, among other reasons.

Table3. *Behavioral Pattern of Students who engage in Drug/Substance*

S/n	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. Dev	Decision
1	Dizziness and drowsiness in class	26	27	11	-	3.23	0.729	Agreed
2	Easily provoked, angry and rude to people	25	30	9	-	3.25	0.690	Agreed
3	Loss of self control	26	27	10	1	3.22	0.766	Agreed
4	Secretiveness	18	22	21	3	2.86	0.889	Agreed
5	High level of anxiety, aggressiveness, depression	18	35	9	2	3.08	0.741	Agreed
6	Always confused	19	32	13	-	3.09	0.706	Agreed
7	Frequent vomiting, constipation, nausea and defecation	13	28	17	6	2.75	0.891	Agreed
8	Lack of coordination	13	36	13	2	2.94	0.732	Agreed
9	Weakness/fatigue/laziness	22	32	7	3	3.14	0.794	Agreed
10	Blurred vision and speech	19	32	12	1	3.08	0.741	Agreed
11	Hallucination	16	31	14	3	2.94	0.814	Agreed
12	Loss of appetite	14	22	25	3	2.73	0.859	Agreed
13	Paranoid	17	35	11	1	3.06	0.710	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN					**3.03**	**0.774**	**Agreed**

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey, 2019*

Table 3 highlights the behavioral pattern of drug/substance abuse students in Nigerian universities. It is evident that foremost among these behavioral patterns are: easily provoked, angry and rude to people, dizziness and drowsiness in class, loss of self-control, lack of coordination, among other behavioral patterns. This analysis gives an insight into the consequences of drug/substance abuse which respondents expressed in **Table 4**. It is not surprising that high level of anxiety, aggressiveness and depression is among these behavioral patterns. This is because several writers and researchers such as Oshikoya and Alli (2006); and Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016) have earlier harped on this, blaming it on drug/substance abuse. However, the totality of the responses provided in respect of behavioral patterns of drug abusers is true reflections of situations in Nigerian universities (Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2016).

Table4. *Consequences of Drug/Substance Abuse by Nigerian University's Students*

S/n	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. Dev	Decision
1	It damages vital body organs, like the brain, liver, lung, heart attack, etc.	41	22	1	-	3.63	0.519	Agreed
2	It leads to mental health/affective disorder	41	22	1	-	3.63	0.519	Agreed
3	It leads to death (or suicidal behaviour)	32	31	1	-	3.48	0.534	Agreed

4	Demotivates student's learning behavior	32	21	11	-	3.33	0,757	Agreed
5	Low/lack of concentration and interest in studying	26	30	7	1	3.27	0.718	Agreed
6	Strained relationship with other students and lecturers	24	25	13	2	3.11	0.838	Agreed
7	Declining grades and academic performance	34	23	6	1	3.41	0.729	Agreed
8	Involvement in theft and other criminal activities	39	20	3	5	3.50	0.735	Agreed
9	Involvement in truancy and loss of focus	26	31	7	-	3.30	0.659	Agreed
10	Strained relationship with management and constituted authority	26	19	19	-	3.11	0.838	Agreed
11	Reduction of physical and psychological sensitivity	27	29	4	4	3.23	0.831	Agreed
12	Unconsciousness, coma and convulsion	19	30	15	-	3.06	0.732	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN					**3.34**	**0.696**	**Agreed**

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey, 2019*

The result presented in **Table 4** shows that the majority of respondents agreed to all the consequences of drug/substance abuse by Nigerian university's students. These consequences, as agreed by majority of the respondents include; damages to vital body organs, leads to mental health disorder, death, demotivates student's learning behaviour, lack of concentration and interest in studying, strained relationship with other students and lecturers, declining grades and academic performance, involvement in theft and other criminal activities, involvement in truancy and loss of focus, strained relationship with manage-ment and constituted authority, reduction of physical and psychological sensitivity, and unconsciousness, coma and convulsion. This means that most Nigerian university's students who engage in drug/substance abuse are faced with numerous dangers and issues. This supports the works of Ubom, (2004); Muoti (2014); and UNODC (2018), which found out that drug/substance abuse impedes the peace and develop-ment of any society, threaten life, health, dignity and prosperity of individuals and societies. This is to say that there are health, financial and physical hazards associated with drug/substance abuse.

Table5. *Roles of Librarians in Curbing Drug/Substance Abuse among Nigerian University's Students*

S/n	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. Dev	Decision
1	Librarians should frequently organize seminars, workshops and conferences for studentson dangers of drug/substance abuse.	22	34	8	3	3.12	0.789	Agreed
2	Make available information materials on drug/substance abuse-related issues	31	27	9	0	3.33	0.705	Agreed
3	Organizetalk shows or group discussions for the studentson the issues of drug/substance abuse	35	18	7	7	3.21	1.008	Agreed
4	Establish guidance and counseling unit to help depressed students out of their depression	24	28	11	4	3.07	0.876	Agreed
5	Create bill boards or posters showing the harm drug abuse can cause	17	27	20	3	2.87	0.851	Agreed
6	Lead delegations to the University authority to help formulate policies against drug/substance abuse among students.	23	28	10	6	3.01	0.929	Agreed
7	Carryout radio/television campaigns on drug/substance abuse	18	30	19	0	2.99	0.749	Agreed
8	Create media blogs to address issues on drug/substance abuse	27	32	4	4	3.22	0.813	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN					**3.10**	**0.840**	**Agreed**

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey, 2019*

The result in **Table 5** shows that majority of the respondents, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.10 and 0.840, respectively, confirmed that there are numerous roles librarians can play in curbing drug/substance abuse among students in universities in Nigeria. These roles include: Frequently organizing seminars, workshops and conferences for students on dangers of drug/substance abuse, making available information materials of drug/substance abuse-related issues, organizing talk shows or group discussions for the students on the issues of drug/substance abuse, establishing guidance and counseling unit to help depressed out of their depression, creating bill boards or posters showing the harm drug/substance abuse can cause, leading delegates to the University authority to help formulate policies against drug

abuse among students, carryout radio/television programmes on drug/substance abuse, and creating media blogs to address issues of drug/substance abuse. It could also be right to say that librarians have much to do based on the roles agreed by majority of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The issue of drug/substance abuse has been a thorn in the flesh. Except care is taken to curb it, the resultant effects will be disastrous to the individuals and society at large. This study has revealed the drug/substances usually abused by the Nigerian university students. It also showed the determinants, behavioral patterns of drug/substance abusers, consequences, and the roles of the librarians in curbing drug/substance abuse among students of Nigerian universities. Based on this, the paper concludes by stating that drug/substance abuse has many ill consequences which affect the individuals in every area of life. To curb these consequences, librarians need to rise up and serve as actors and advocates in providing vital information and further assistance to the Nigerian university's students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Librarians should intensify efforts in bringing to the knowledge of the Nigerian university students the dangers of drug/substance abuse by encouraging them to abstain from such behaviors. This, they can do through organization of seminars and workshops on drug/substance abuse.
- Librarians should embrace the use of radio and television programmes to sensitize the publics on the issue of drug/substance abuse as well as the means of overcome the determinants.
- Libraries should acquire and make accessible information materials on ways of overcoming the dangers of drug/substance abuse as well as the rightful use of the drugs mostly abused by the students.
- Librarians should exhibit friendly attitudes to students found abusing drugs/substances. This will enable them to understand the state of the students and further develop strategies of helping them out of the menace.
- Above all, librarians should engage in advocacy for government and other authority bodies to understand their roles. This will go a long way in providing them with required instruments and apparatuses to carry out the

responsibilities of curbing drug/substance abuse among Nigerian university students.

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