PREVALENCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL USE ON SCHOOLING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN GENDER-SPECIFIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA EDUCATION ZONE, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the male students' brands of alcohol, the prevalence of alcohol use and consequences on schooling among adolescents in gender-specific secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Onitsha Metropolis and all the boys public secondary schools were used in the study. The population consisted 936 senior secondary class 2 (SS2) male students in the 4 boys secondary schools in Onitsha Metropolis. Through random sampling technique, 50 students were sampled from each of the 4 schools giving a total sample size of 210. A researcher-developed instrument was used for data collection titled "Alcohol Use Questionnaire (AUQ)". Validity of the instrument was determined by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of

the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha and an alpha coefficient of 0.81 was obtained which was considered high, therefore, the instrument was considered reliable for use. Results indicated that even at secondary level of education, male students have choice brands of alcoholic drinks. Though most of the students indicated that they are low to moderate drinkers, alcoholic consumption was perceived to have negative impacts on the students' attention to their studies. It was recommended that parents, counsellors and the media should be involved in the fight against alcohol use among secondary school students through productive intervention program.

Introduction

Schooling is one of the fundamental rights of the citizenry in Nigeria. The Nigeria's philosophy of education is aimed at bringing up individuals with sound moral background, and the equalization of educational opportunities for all citizens (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). This aims at getting the citizenry trained to be useful to themselves in particular and the society at large. The National Policy on Education specified that secondary education aims at preparing adolescents for useful living within the society as well as getting them prepared for higher education (FGN, 2013). Schooling involves teaching and learning which prepares one for a purposeful living which is one of the aims for establishing secondary schools. The desire of all the stakeholders especially the parents is to produce adolescents with sound education and good character during their secondary school education.

Adolescence is generally perceived as the stage in human growth and development that spans between childhood and adulthood. It is a transitional but a critical period in human growth and development. There is no consensus

among authors on the exact age range that could form this stage. This is because, the age range and duration of the adolescence varies in different societies and cultures. For instance, in Nigeria, while some assume that the age range between 10-19 years is appropriate, others suggest 10 to 24 years (Unachukwu, Ebenebe, & Nwosu, 2019). However, Unachukwu, et al (2019) have noted that these variations in age range as suggested by different authors are yet to have empirical studies to back them up in Nigeria, but it assumed that once an individual can vote and be voted for, the person has left any adolescence stage. Adolescence has also been considered as a period of storm and stress. It is observed as a period of tremendous behavioural, psychological and social changes with lots of challenges (Akanwa, 2016). Nwikpo, Okeke and Unachukwu (2016) considered the period of adolescence to be a rebellious period. During this period, adolescents tend to break away from dependence on family and begin to form affiliations and friendships with peers. They strive for peer acceptance and could take risks in order to avoid peer rejection. It has been established that adolescents yield to the influence of their peers (Moldes, Biton, Gonzaga, & Moneva, 2019). In other words, adolescents are known for trying out risky and or unhealthy behaviors; and alcohol use is one of them.

Alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug (Ajayi, Owolabi, & Olajire, 2019). Its usage is considered normal by most societies and cultures especially if not consumed excessively to the point of intoxication (Amaechi, Ekeh, & Oparaji, 2016). In Nigerian, especially in the Southeast, alcohol use seems to be part of most of the cultural festivals and celebrations. Alcoholic drinks form part of the requirements for celebrations such as traditional marriage, new yam festival, child naming ceremony among others. As leisure, some adults form the habit of visiting bars to enjoy the company of friends while gulping alcoholic drinks. This habit has resulted to alcohol use among adults without restrictions. To buttress this, Dumbili and Henderson (2017) decried that there is a high rate of alcohol use among Nigerians without any

checks on the producing industries or regulations guiding sales to neither adult nor youth consumers. As adults consume alcoholic drinks in the places of celebrations, festivals and for leisure, it will no doubt attract the attention of adolescents.

Research revealed a high significant relationship between parents' drug use and adolescent drug use (Onukwufor & Echendu, 2016). Out of curiosity to try out the escapade, adolescents could model alcohol usage from the unsuspecting adults and significant others. Apart from copying alcohol usage from significant adults, another avenue found to expose adolescents to alcohol use is the media, both mass and social media (Wakoli, 2018). In this contemporary age of technological advancement, companies reach out to their targeted audience through the media. The media through well packaged advertisements sell the message of their products to one's bedroom not just to doorstep. Most times, the media makes use of celebrities in their advertisements for alcoholic drinks to get their desired impact on the unsuspecting adolescents. Adolescents could fall prey to the antics of the media through vicarious learning and might begin to use alcohol.

Social learning theory by Albert Bandura posits that children learn by merely observing the behaviour of their social model, committing into memory actions observed, and imitating or reproducing such behaviours when similar occasions demand. Applying this theory to this study, it is assumed that adolescents could learn to consume alcohol by observing their models engage in it. This seems to be the reason behind the use of celebrities in most advertisements portraying alcoholic drinks. Similarly, peers could be models to adolescents. This is because they copy each other's style and other methods of life and play along in order to belong without been rejected by one's peers (Anierobi, Nwikpo, Okeke & Unachukwu, 2018). By implication, having friends who drink is likely to increase the tendency that young people will drink too.

Research has revealed that there are many types of alcoholic drinks consumed in traditional societies in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular. Some of the alcoholic drinks are made with ethyl such as beer, wine, toddy, whisky, brandy, rock, rum, arrack or locally prepared liquor (Amaechi, Ekeh, & Oparaji, 2016). Some of the traditionally produced alcoholic drinks consumed in Anambra State include palm wine, burukutu, ogogoro, orijin. According to Lasebikan and Ola (2016), there are indications that there has been a rapid increase in alcohol production and importation in Nigeria as well as its consumption across all age groups. This seems to account for high sales of alcoholic drinks by dealers.

Though alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug with a rapid increase in its production, it has many attendant risks when it becomes a part of life. This is to say that excessive use of alcohol has many side effects and health risks. It has been considered a health problem to addicts (Ivaniushina, Titkova, Alexandrov, 2017). Problematic alcohol use among students is strongly associated with social phobia, lifetime use of any substance, peer pressure (Mekonen, Fekadu, Chane, & Bitew, 2017). Others linked alcohol use to mental health, death, aggressiveness and self-harm (Gakidou, 2018; Peltzer, Pengpid, & Tepirou, 2016). Stress, anxiety, traumatic events and depression are also related to binge drinking (Kuntusche, Kuntusche, Thrul & Gmel, 2017). Other researchers connect alcohol consumption with poor academic performance (Enyi, Kpurkpur, Onah, Omenka, Iorkpiligh, Igori, Eru & Jato, 2017). According to Witkiewitz, Litten and Leggio (2019), the damaging effects in connection with alcohol are largely as a result of high rates of alcohol abuse among the consumers. Dworkin (2019) reported that students get addicted to alcohol given the fact they think that it makes them sexier, facilitates bonding among peers, facilitates sexual opportunities, and enhances social activities. Many studies have examined the prevalence, predictors, correlates and health risks of

alcohol consumption among students in Nigeria (Ajayi, Owolabi & Olajire, 2019; Lasebikan & Ola, 2016). However, none considered its consequences on schooling of adolescents which this study sought to determine.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school students should as a priority, actively engage in academic activities thereby forming good study habits for academic excellence to enable them prepare for university education. They should form healthy peer friendships which could influence them positively. However, most adolescents are caught in the web of alcohol use courtesy of factors ranging from peer group influence; modelling adult's drinking pattern and also through influence from social media. Alcohol use has also been revealed to have negative effects on health. This has led students being unserious with their studies resulting in poor academic performances among them. Some engage in examination malpractice, truancy, violent behaviours, display unnecessary aggression towards self, peers and teachers. Others get depressed and exhibit suicidal ideation. In spite of the fact that cases of this nature abound in secondary schools in Nigeria, literature has shown that there is dearth of research on the brand, prevalence and consequences of alcohol use on schooling among adolescents in secondary schools especially in Anambra State. This gap in literature prompted this study. The aim of the study therefore, was to determine the male students' brand of alcohol, prevalence and consequences of alcohol use on schooling among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State. This study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the brands of alcohol of male secondary school students in Onitsha Education Zone?
2. What is the prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?

3. What are the consequences of alcohol use on schooling of the male adolescents in Onitsha Education Zone?

Method

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey aims at collecting data on and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features and facts about a given population (Akinlua, 2019). This design is appropriate for this study which collected and analyzed data to explain a pertinent educational issue of concern among adolescents. The study was carried out in Onitsha and it covered all the boys' public secondary schools. The population consisted 936 senior secondary class 2 (SS2) male students in the 4 males only secondary schools in Onitsha. Through random sampling technique, 55 students were sampled from each of the 4 schools giving a total sample size of 210. The choice of gender-specific male secondary schools is predicated upon the fact that male adolescents are more likely to hang out with friends and dare risky behaviours as show off of "big boyism" than female adolescents. Three research questions guided the study. A researcher-developed instrument titled "Alcohol Use Questionnaire (AUQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument has two sections. Section A was designed to elicit information on the students' brand of alcohol and the prevalence of use. Section B contained 8 items to elicit information on the consequences of alcohol use on schooling among the participants. The instrument was a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The decision rule is that items with mean that is 2.50 and above shows agreement while those with mean that is below 2.50 shows disagreement. Three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations (Two in Educational Psychology and the other in Measurement and Evaluation) Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha with overall reliability coefficient of 0.81. Four trained

research assistants were engaged for data collection. After data collection, 10 copies of the questionnaire were not properly filled in and hence were not used for data analysis. Only 210 respondents were used for data analysis. The research questions were answered using the Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentages.

Results

Results are presented in Tables in line with research questions.

Research Question 1: What brands of alcohol are used by secondary school male students?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of male secondary school students' brands of alcohol

S/N	Brands of Alcohol used by students	F	%
1	Hero	19	9.05
2	Star	13	6.19
3	Star Radler	40	19.04
4	Smirnoff	23	10.95
5	Heineken	4	1.90
6	Life	16	7.62
7	Orijin	5	2.38
8	Palm wine	11	5.24
9	Stout	23	10.95
10	Rock	2	0.95
11	Burdweizer	20	9.52
12	Tiger	24	11.43
13	Nil	10	4.76

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of alcohol use among the male adolescent students in Onitsha Education Zone. The Table revealed that the students drink these brands of beer: 9.05% to Hero, 6.19% to Star, 19.04% to Star Radler, 10.95% to Smirnoff, 1.90% to Heineken, 7.62% to Life. 2.38% were addicted to Orijin, 5.24% to palm wine, 10.95% to Stout, and 0.95% to Rock, 9.52% to Burdweizer, 11.43% to Tiger. However, 4.76% were not addicted to any alcoholic drink.

Research Question 2: What is the prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of the prevalence of alcohol use of male secondary school students

S/N	Prevalence of alcohol use among male adolescents	f	%
1	Never	10	4.76
2	Sometimes	120	57.14
3	Often	80	38.10
	Total	210	100

Table 2 shows that out of the total participants of 210, 4.76% never use alcohol, 57.14% use alcohol sometimes and 38.10% use alcohol often.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the consequences of alcohol use on schooling among adolescents

S/N	Consequences of alcohol use on schooling among adolescents	X	SD	Remarks
1	gets me sick and consequently skip classes	3.30	1.84	Agree
2	distort my reasoning and affect my retention of studied materials	3.00	1.73	Agree
3	pushes me into aggression and violence with peers	3.10	1.76	Agree
4	makes me to develop poor study habit	3.50	1.87	Agree
5	scare serious students away from me	2.80	1.67	Agree
6	leads me into temptation to smoke	2.60	1.61	Agree
7	makes me to develop negative attitude towards school	2.60	1.61	Agree
8	negatively affects my academic performance	3.40	1.84	Agree
	Cluster Mean	3.04		

Table 3 shows that mean ratings of the male students (X=3.04) on the consequences of alcohol use on their schooling. The Table revealed that all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) were agreed on by the male students because their mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The mean of mean scores of 3.03 concludes that alcohol usage has negative consequences on schooling of male students in the area of study.

Discussion

The study was carried out to examine alcohol use among adolescents in gender-specific secondary school in Onitsha. Research question one sought to determine the brands of alcohol, the students use. Result as presented in Table 1 revealed that the students have specific brands of alcohol they use even at secondary school level. The commonest brands among the adolescents are Star Radler, Tiger, Stout, and Burdweizer. Similar studies have been conducted by Siegel, et al. (2011); Siegel, et al. (2013) and Tanski, McClure, Jernigan, and Sargent (2011). These studies showed that adolescents and youths have preferred brands. Though the studies were conducted in cultural context different from the one of the present study, there appears to be an agreement among the authors that adolescents' brands are likely to cluster around particular brands. In the studies Burdweizer appear to be a popular brand among peers. Flowing from these findings, the result could be explained using social learning theory by Bandura. Adolescents are part of the society where alcohol consumption is common and could abuse its use as a result of behavioural manifestations of significant persons such as peers, parents, teachers and other adults who are seen as models to them. By merely observing the behaviour of their social models, adolescents commit into memory actions observed, and imitating or reproducing such behaviours when similar occasions demand. This is true when it comes to alcohol use among adolescents. The has been supported by the findings of Wakoli, (2018) that media equally influence adolescents into choice of alcohol brand, and Moldes, Biton, Gonzaga & Moneva, (2019) that adolescents engage in risky behaviours as a result of peer influence. Adolescents cherish the association with peers and could do anything to avoid peer rejection.

Research question two sought to determine the prevalence of alcohol usage among the students. Table 2 showed that out of the total participants of 200, only 5% never use alcohol but 55% use alcohol sometimes and 40% use

alcohol often. In Anambra State where this study was carried out, alcohol consumption is considered normal especially if not consumed excessively to the point of intoxication (Amaechi, Eke & Oparaji, 2016). This is true because alcohol consumption seems to be part of most of the festivals and celebrations in the cultural milieu in Anambra State. As leisure, some adults form the habit of visiting pulp to enjoy the company of friends while gulping alcoholic drinks. This result is supported by the findings of Lasebikan and Ola (2016) that there has been a rapid increase in alcohol production and importation in Nigeria as well as its consumption across all age groups. This could account for high sales of alcoholic drinks by dealers. Similarly, the findings is supported by Dumbili and Henderson (2017) that there is a high rate of alcohol use among Nigerians without any checks on the producing industries or regulations guiding sales to neither adult nor youth consumers.

Research question three sought to determine the consequences of alcohol use on schooling of the male adolescents. Table 3 showed that mean ratings of the male students on the consequences of alcohol use on their schooling. The mean rating (X=3.04) could be interpreted that the alcohol use has negative consequences on male adolescents' schooling in the area of study. The students consume their brand alcohol despite the negative consequences of their behaviour on their schooling. This findings agrees with the findings of Mekonen, Fekadu, Chane, & Bitew, (2017) that problematic alcohol use among students is strongly associated with social phobia, lifetime use of any substance, peer pressure. Similarly, the findings is supported by the findings of Enyi, Kpurkpur, Onah, Omenka, Iorkpiligh, Igori, Eru & Jato (2017) that poor academic performance is associated with alcohol use.

Conclusion

The study concludes that adolescents in gender-specific secondary schools in Onitsha consume certain brands of alcohol. The study also concludes that alcohol use has negative consequences on schooling of male adolescents in gender-specific secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Stakeholders should engage in massive enlightenment campaign on the consequences alcohol intake on the mental health and academic achievement of adolescents in secondary schools.

2. Government should ban the sale of alcohol to adolescents and minors. Government should make and implement laws against alcohol use by adolescents and minors. Defaulters should be punished to serve as deterrents to others.

3. Government should also sponsor programmes such as seminars, workshops in order to reorient adolescents and encourage them to stay away from alcohol and other addictive substances. The media and celebrities should be used to enlighten the youth on dangers of alcohol use.

4. Parents should limit their alcohol consumption to serve as models for their children.

5. School authorities and guidance counsellors should use education as a tool for teaching adolescents the dangers of alcohol use in order to enhance general well-being and development.

Suggestions for Further Studies

In view of the use of a particular Education Zone in Anambra State as well as the use of close ended structured questionnaire, there is need to be cautious in generalizing the findings to the entire population of secondary school students in Nigeria. Consequently, the researchers suggest the following for further studies:

1. A replication of the study in Anambra State using mixed method which will entail the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. This will the finding more robust.

2. A similar study should be carried out using both male and female students in Anambra State. This will give a picture of the position of female adolescents in alcohol use.

3. A comparative study should be carried on alcohol use among adolescents in secondary schools in all the Education Zone in Anambra State. The findings will provide empirical evidence to stakeholders of education on where to focus more on tackling the issue of alcohol use among students.

4. There should be a study on the prevalence and consequences of alcohol use on sexual behaviour among in-school adolescents.

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