



**IDENTIFICATION OF COMMONLY ABUSED SUBSTANCES AMONG STUDENTS IN  
PUBLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE**

**By**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The study identified the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Methods:** A research question and a null hypothesis guided the study. The study was a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 263 principals in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. There was no sampling because the entire population was small and manageable by the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled: “Commonly Abused Substance among Students Questionnaire (CASSQ)”. The instrument was content and face validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and the average coefficient value of 0.84 was obtained which was considered reliable and suitable for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean and independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

**Result:** The study showed that marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein were the most commonly abused substance among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Recommendation:** The researcher recommended among others that a comprehensive curriculum on substance abuse should be introduced in schools to neutralize the influence of peer pressure in influencing students into substance abuse. Students should be facilitated at home and in school to develop a feeling of happiness about family life in terms of good interpersonal relationship and acceptance to parenting.

## **Background to the Study**

The abuse or harmful use of psychoactive substances like alcohol and illicit drugs among secondary school students has become a major national problem in Nigeria. The secondary school students who are expected to be leaders of tomorrow have rendered themselves useless to the societies in which they live, due to the impact of drug on them, thus, contributing to the increase in the number of psychiatric patients, street boys, school dropouts and delinquents.

This scenario is now a growing concern to parents, teachers, and the society in general over the prevalence and impact of the substance abuse in public secondary schools. This phenomenon negatively influences the participation, discipline, and performance of students and therefore poses serious challenges facing managers of public secondary schools bearing in mind the fact that success in participation, discipline and performance of students are fundamental to the success of any educational institution. Substance abuse continues to present a problem which learning institutions should address. This is so because there has been an overall increase in the abuse of substances among students in learning institutions. A study by Adeyemo, *et al.*, (2016) asserted that over 400,000 students were abusing substances out of which 160,000 were girls.

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance which is used by individuals mostly students can lead them becoming dependence syndrome (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2015). This situation could result to cognitive, behavioural or physiological situation that progresses with a continuous intake of substance use with the strong desire to continue taking it over time which might result to harmful health damage like the brain and other functional parts of the body.

According to Akachukwu (2017), substance abuse is when one uses alcohol, prescription medicine, and other legal substances too much or in the wrong way or in excessive manner that might cause abnormality in the body functioning. Substance abuse differs from addiction. Many people with substance abuse problems are able to quit or can change their unhealthy behaviour, but addiction is more of a disease and a habit. It means that one cannot stop using them even when the condition causes dangerous harm.

Substance abuse can simply be seen as a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes Chukwu, *et al.* (2017). The word “substance” can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all. “Abuse” on the other hand, can be as a result of using a substance in a way that is not intended or recommended, or using it more than prescribed. Both legal and illegal drugs have chemicals that can change how the body and mind work (Chukwu, *et al.*, 2017). They can give a pleasurable high or depressed mood, or ease stress.

The use of psychoactive substances can be said to be a universal phenomenon. Substance abuse problem encompasses medical, social, cultural and other variables and is not a merely medical or moral problem. According to Schmelleger (2013), people accept the use of some substances or drugs under certain circumstances as benign and even beneficial practice through connection to social and individual situations. The use of drugs like Benylin with codeine, Tutolin with codeine, for medical purposes like whooping cough is not a drug abuse but becomes abuse only when it is geared towards producing some desired behaviours, physical dependency, addiction and/or constitute a nuisance to the society (Amadi & Akpelu, 2018). According to Abdullahi (2015), the term substance/drugs is a abroad name that is not restricted to oral therapy

(that is, injection, capsules or tablets) but includes marijuana, alcohol as well as traditional alcoholic drinks like Ogogoro, Burukutu, Fito and Bammi.

Substance abuse is deliberate use of drugs for purposes other than its intended purpose without the supervision of a physician or a medical practitioner; while drug addiction is the continuous uncontrolled, compulsive use of a drug not only to include intoxication but also to avoid the tortures of withdrawal despite the unrelenting effort of individuals, agencies, mass media and the government at different levels against drug abuse, the prevalent practice among Post-Primary school students, tertiary institution, teenagers and even adults in the community has not decreased but rather continued to increase geometrically (Attah, *et al.*, 2016).

According to a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Report (2016), about 210 million people, or 8 per cent of the world's population age between 15 and 65 have used drugs at least once in the last 12 months. Likewise, according to the World Drug (2016), the use of illicit drugs in all Nations has increased in recent years. The report goes on to note that the increasing availability of a variety of drugs to an ever widening socio-economic spectrum of consumers is disconcerting, although the main problem at the global level continues to be opiates (notably heroine) followed by cocaine.

More than 2.6 million young people aged 10 to 24 die each year in the world (WHO, 2019). These deaths are mostly due to preventable causes such as substance abuse. In fact, not less than 14 per cent of adolescent girls and 18 per cent of boys aged 13–15 years in low- and middle-income countries are reported to have been taking alcoholic drinks (WHO, 2019). This problem is even more grim in some countries in the Western Pacific region of the WHO as more than 50% of girls aged 10-19 and more than 80% of boys aged 10-19 had ever consumed alcohol (WHO, 2019).

Nigerians make use of different substances/drugs just in the same way as this is done in many other societies. The population in Nigeria avails itself of substances when the occasion warrants them just as other population in the world do. Substances/drugs are abused in Nigeria simply because they are used without due authorization from formally qualified and registered persons who according to the laws of the land must approve their use (Chukwu *et al.*, 2017). This observation is borne out by several studies on illness behaviour among Nigerians (Amadi & Akpelu, 2018). The most common substances abused in Nigeria are marijuana, amphetamines, mandrax, proplus, barbiturates and codeine that have negative effects to the youths, immediate society and Nigeria at large.

Unfortunately, youth that constitute the manpower and future of Nigerian society are mostly the victims (Abdullahi, 2015). Federal Ministry of Youths and Sport in 2012 observed that, Nigerian youths aged 10-40 years were about 53 per cent of the country's population. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2012) observed that, over 42 per cent of Nigerian Youths abuse drugs. According to Abang (2013), in contemporary Nigeria, many categories of youths (male and female) are hooked on substance/drug abuse problem. This include an unbelievable large number of primary and secondary school pupils, undergraduate students, servicemen, cattle rearers, unemployed, nurses, pharmacists, and even medical doctors. According to Abdullahi (2015), substance abuse leads to high rate of crime, fuel conflict, political thuggery, religious intolerance, raping, domestic violence, suicide, in the society. It also affects the psychological and physical conditions of abusers.

One of the most common consequences of drug use is keeping up with academic responsibilities. According to Attah, *et al.* (2016), students experience difficulty in academics due to high intake of substances and drug use. Such difficulties include earning low grades,

doing poorly on test, missing class and falling behind in academic performance. Even students who do not use drugs may suffer academically as a result of their peers taking drugs. The so called secondary effects of drugs include taking care of friends on drugs and being victims of assault which can affect school work of students who do not use drug. These consequences can have dramatic end results. Thus, significant numbers of students who drop out of school do so because drugs interfere with their academics. Drug use undermine academic mission of schools, colleges and universities. Drug use and its effect on students performance can lead to a decline in the overall academic performance of a school as a result schools may face declining retention rates and poor reputation. Schools with reputation of 'drug use' may attract students who engage in high-risk behaviours and may discourage prospective students who are looking for an academically vigorous institution.

There are many reasons why students abuse substance which include social pressure influenced by mass media; peer group influence; lack of parental care/ supervision; just to have fun and be happy; due to the availability of the substance/ drugs; availability of money to buy drugs; family background, for example parent(s) also drinks; and frustration. Amadi and Akpelu (2018) opined that students engage in substances because of boredom, stress, depression, curiosity, weight loss, low self-esteem, enhanced experiences and peer pressure. Thus, peer group influence contributed to abuse of drugs by students and students who abused drugs recorded poor academic performance in school. Chukwu, *et al.* (2017) showed that most students' abuse substance to ease stress, break boredom, boost low self-esteem and to enhanced experiences.

As observed by Chukwu, *et al.*, drug consumption has led to unrests and widespread destruction of life and property in schools. Substance abuse leads students to have behavioural

problems such as fatigue, stress, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder as a result of these substance misuses. Students under the influence of drugs could even beat up their teachers, rape them or kill their colleagues (Agbonghale & Okaka, 2017). In Anambra State, alcohol, tramadol and cigarette smoking had formed a counter culture within the school with students' parents, teachers and students being habitual takers of these substances in the area. This hinders them from improving their academic performance (researchers' observations).

The practice of substance abuse has resulted in a number of negative effects in institutions of learning such as truancy, theft, rudeness, dropouts, injuries, loss of lives, destruction of properties, misallocation of resources, indiscipline, and compromised academic standards among others which pose serious challenges to managers of the educational institutions. Adeyemo, *et al.* (2016) outlined characteristics exhibited by those who abuse substances to include watering eyes and nose, unusually talkative hence noise making, unusual quietness, unpredictable temper, concentration lapse, and loss of interest in education. Ubangha, *et al.* (2013) further pointed out that behaviour of students who abuse substances include carelessness and neglect of personal hygiene, general irresponsibility, high irritability and hostility to close friends, wearing of dirty and tattered clothes and normally wearing one cloth for many days.

Previous studies had revealed high burden of substance abuse among secondary school students. For instance, Ogunsola and Fatusi (2019) reported that about two-thirds of in-school adolescents in Osun State Nigeria had used substances in both rural (65.7%) and urban areas (66.0%) respectively. Also, Ani (2018) revealed that 69.3% of secondary school students in Lagos, South-west Nigeria were current users of at least one of the illicit drugs. Anyanwu *et al.*

(2016) in a study among secondary school students in Ebonyi State, South East, Nigeria also revealed that 30.6% of their respondents had taken alcoholic drinks before the survey while Ifechi (2015) showed that lifetime use of any substance among students in Imo State, South East, Nigeria was 15.3%. Akachukwu (2017), in a study among secondary school students in Abia State, South East, Nigeria also reported 20.3% as the prevalence of substance abuse among the respondents.

Thus, it is important to find out the situation in Anambra State so that school authorities will seek for ways to control the menace of substance abuse among secondary school students in Anambra State. It is against this background that the researcher deemed it necessary to identify the commonly abused substance among secondary school students and control measures by school authorities in Anambra State public secondary schools.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Secondary school students are not suppose to abuse substances or misuse drugs as against doctors prescription but the real situation in Anambra State is that they abuse as a result of peer influence, availability of drug, availability of money to buy, family background such as parents who also drinks, frustration, influence of social media and stress at home and curiosity.

Despite the overwhelming intervention strategies by the government, religious organizations, non-state actors, school authorities and many other keen stakeholders to curb the problem of drugs and substance abuse especially among the secondary school students, the number of school going students being involved in drug abuse seems to be escalating day by day. A consistently high rate of riots, fires and other violent disturbances in secondary schools has caused a great deal of public concern. The most common explanation for frequent



occurrences of these problems has been associated with consumption of drugs and other substances and inappropriate applications and practices of school intervention strategies which have resulted to continue increase of substance abuse among secondary school students.

If this ugly situation is not suitably addressed, it would draw Anambra State behind other states in socio-economic development. This need motivated this study on the commonly abused substances among students and control measures by school authorities in public secondary schools in Anambra State in order to provide empirical evidence for objective remedial actions by relevant stakeholders.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to identify the commonly abused substances among students and control measures by school authorities in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **1.4 Research Objective**

Specifically, the study sought to identify the Commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Findings of the study will benefit school administrators, students, parents and guardians, teachers, schools, community health and social workers, policy makers and future researchers.

The findings of the study will help the school administrators in the development of strategies for students' behavioural management in schools that will result to possible outcome as the findings of the study will help school administrators to know the commonly abused substances among students.

The findings of the study will be useful to students in school as this finding will effectively educate them on the most commonly abused substances they engage in indirectly or indirectly. The findings of the study will also educate students on the risks involved in drug abuse.

The findings of the study will be of great benefit to parents and guardians by getting ideas on their children's intake of drugs so as to be better placed to ensure good upbringing of these children.

The findings of the study will help teachers to be enlightened on the commonly abused substances among students on how they can guide and counsel them. They will be enlightened the more on the commonly abused substances among students in schools.

Policy makers in the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders will use this information on abuse of drugs in schools so as to form appropriate policy decisions in abetting this vice that has a negative effect on academic performance.

Finally, the findings of the study will open new research gaps that may be useful for future research initiatives in this area of study by scholars. The study would be stepping stone or useful materials for startups for researchers.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study covered all public secondary schools in Anambra State. The content scope was restricted to commonly abused substances and control measures to put in place to curb abused substances among secondary school students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

The research question that guided the study is, What are the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **1.8 Hypothesis**

This null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Principals do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students.

### **Research Design**

The study was carried out using descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design according to Umeh (2017) is regarded as the structure that guides the researcher on the procedure for generating data and provides the basis upon which the generated data is analyzed. Therefore, the study made use of this design because it enabled the study to collect original data from the respondents and described the present conditions as they exist in their natural settings. This design was considered suitable for this study as only a sample of the population was surveyed to arrive at a decision on substance abuse among secondary school students in Anambra State public secondary schools. .

### **3.2 Area of the Study**

The area of the study is the Anambra State of Nigeria. Anambra State is one among the States in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. Anambra State is made up of 21 Local Government Areas, 177 communities and has 21 local government education authorities. It is an Igbo speaking state and has common boundaries with Kogi State in the North, Delta in the West, Enugu State in the East and Imo State in the South. The people of Anambra State are mainly traders, public servants, entrepreneurs and artisans. The State has six Education Zones namely, Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Onitsha, Ogidi and Otuocha with 263 public secondary schools managed by the state government (Planning, Research & Statistics Department, Anambra State Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka, 2021). Secondary school enrolment in the State is large and has remained one of the highest in South East, Nigeria.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population of this study was 263 principals which comprise 102 male and 161 female principals in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State (Planning, Research & Statistics Department, Anambra State Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka, 2021) (See Appendix B).

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample of 263 principals was used for the study which was the entire population. Thus, there was no sampling because the entire population of the study was small and manageable by the study.

### **3.5 Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled “Commonly Abused Substance among Students Questionnaire (CASSQ)”. The

questionnaire consisted of two Sections; A and B. Section “A” contain demographic variables of the respondents, while section B contains 27-item statements divided into two clusters with each cluster addressing issues of each research questions that guided the study. Cluster ‘A’ has 12-item description which described commonly abused substance among students, measurement as thus: Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### **3.6 Validation of the Instrument**

Content and face validity of the instrument was obtained through the judgment of three experts. Two in the Department of Human Kinetic & Health Education and the other one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The topic, the scope and purpose of the study, research questions, and hypotheses was presented to the experts as guide. They ascertained the clarity and relevance of the items to the research work. The experts made some helpful suggestions and recommendations that were corrected which made the instrument fit for the study.

### **3.7 Reliability of the Instrument**

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, CASSQ was administered on a sample of 20 principals of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The choice of the area was solely the researcher’s because, the area had similar features with the area of study. After the respondents had responded to the instruments, the completed copies were collected and analyzed using Cronbach alpha statistics. The result yielded 0.82 for commonly abused substance among students; and 0.91 for control measures put in place by school authorities to curb abused substances among students (See appendix D).

### **3.8 Method of Data Collection**

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and four trained research assistants. These research assistants were briefed on how to guide the respondents and follow them up to ensure high return of instrument with correct filling (ticking) to avoid double barreling. In addition to instructions written on the questionnaire, the respondents were given verbal instructions and clarifications where necessary. Copies of the questionnaire were retrieved after completion through direct means without subjecting the respondents to time constraint. Out of 263 copies administered, 251 (96%) were correctly filled and returned while 12(4%) copies were either misplaced or not correctly filled. Thus, the returned copies were adequate to draw valid conclusion for the study.

### **3.9 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software vol. 23. Thus, research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the research hypotheses were tested with independent sample t-test at .05 level of significance.

The decision rule for research questions was to agree on any item that has a mean of 2.50 and above while any item less than 2.49 was disagree upon.

#### **Decision Rule for Hypotheses**

For t-test when

$t_{cal} > t_{tab}$ : Reject  $H_0$  and Accept  $H_1$

$t_{cal} < t_{tab}$ : Accept  $H_0$  and Reject  $H_1$

For p-value when

P-value  $< .05$ : Reject  $H_0$  and Accept  $H_1$

P-value  $> .05$ : Accept  $H_0$  and Reject  $H_1$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the findings of the study. The data obtained from the field by the researcher are presented and analyzed in relation to the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

### 4.1 Results

#### Research Question

What are the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1**

Mean ratings of male and female principals on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/n	Students engage more on	Male Principals (97)			Female Principals (154)		
		( $\bar{X}$ )	SD	RMK	( $\bar{X}$ )	SD	RMK
1	Marijuana	3.75	.47	<b>Agreed</b>	3.88	.32	<b>Agreed</b>
2	Human feaces	2.01	.88	<b>Disagreed</b>	1.95	.97	<b>Disagreed</b>
3	Cigarette	3.87	.42	<b>Agreed</b>	3.93	.38	<b>Agreed</b>
4	Alcohol	3.89	.51	<b>Agreed</b>	3.96	.35	<b>Agreed</b>
5	Tramadol	3.54	.39	<b>Agreed</b>	3.79	.46	<b>Agreed</b>
6	Cocaine	2.46	.68	<b>Disagreed</b>	3.17	.74	<b>Agreed</b>
7	Petroleum, glue, solution	2.47	.64	<b>Disagreed</b>	2.55	.65	<b>Agreed</b>
8	Cough syrup	2.45	.76	<b>Disagreed</b>	2.15	.93	<b>Disagreed</b>
9	Caffeine	2.18	.83	<b>Disagreed</b>	2.27	.84	<b>Agreed</b>
10	Cannabis	2.06	.71	<b>Disagreed</b>	2.13	.77	<b>Disagreed</b>
11	Shisha	3.24	.64	<b>Agreed</b>	3.55	.43	<b>Agreed</b>
12	Codein	3.23	.57	<b>Agreed</b>	3.61	.36	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>Total Mean Rating (<math>\bar{X}</math>)</b>		<b>35.15</b>	<b>7.5</b>		<b>36.96</b>	<b>7.2</b>	
<b>Grand Mean Rating (<math>\bar{X}</math>)</b>		<b>2.93</b>	<b>.64</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>.58</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

The result in Table 1 shows the mean ratings of male and female principals on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Male and female principals believed that the most commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State include marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein with the mean ratings of 3.75, 3.87, 3.89, 3.54, 3.24 and 3.23 respectively for male principals and 3.88, 3.93, 3.96, 3.79, 3.55 and 3.61 respectively for female principals. While male principals disagreed to items 6, 7 and 9 with the mean ratings of 2.46, 2.47 and 2.18 respectively, female principals agreed to the items with the mean ratings of 3.17, 2.55 and 2.27 respectively that cocaine, glue/solution and caffeine are among the most commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. On the other items, the study showed that both male and female principals disagreed that human feaces, cough syrup and cannabis were among the most commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State with the mean ratings of 2.01, 2.45 and 2.06 respectively for male principals and 1.95, 2.15 and 2.13 respectively for female principals.

Furthermore, the average mean ratings indicated that both male and female principals agreed with the mean ratings of 2.93 and 3.08 respectively that all the identified items were the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



## 4.2 Test of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis One

Principals do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students.

**Table 3**

Summary of independent sample t-test analysis of male and female principals on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students

Principals	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value
Male	97	2.93	.64	249	1.08	.052
Female	154	3.08	.58			

*Not Significant at  $p > 0.05$*

Analysis in Table 3 shows the summary of independent sample t-test analysis of male and female principals on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students. The result showed that p-value of .052 is greater than .05 level of significance which resulted in the decision to accept the null hypothesis at  $p(.052) > .05$  that principals do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students. The result is further strengthened by the t-value where the result showed that t-calculated value of 1.08 is less than the critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 5% (.05) level of significance. Although, there is a mean difference of 0.15, but it is not significant and do not account for any difference in the mean ratings of principals. Thus, the study concluded that principals do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students.

### **4.3 Discussion of the Findings**

The study findings are discussed under the following heading below.

#### **Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Students**

Findings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State showed that the commonly abused substances among students include marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein. The study also showed that principals did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students. Although, there was a mean difference of 0.15, but it was not significant and did not account for any difference in the mean ratings of principals. The study has shown that marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein are the most commonly abused substance among students. This is because these substances abused were generally more readily and cheaply available than other substances. It is also accepted by people in many cultures some of which openly promote its use during particular important cultural and ceremonial occasions like marriage, initiation, circumcision. This makes the youth believe that marijuana, cigarette and alcohol are good and acceptable. During such occasion, some of the youth get to have a taste of the substance and with more frequent tasting of the substance, some of the students get addicted to it. These findings are in agreement with those of Njoki (2011), Anyanwu, *et al.* (2016), and Ani (2018). Njoki (2011) reported that cigarettes and marijuana are sold in almost all shops in the estates in town and all villages. It is widely portrayed by both the print and electronic media as being fashionable and trendy. Some of the personalities being used to promote the substance particularly in electronic media are very influential ones and as such, many youth end up being hooked to the substance because of trying to copy their idols.

Marijuana is generally being viewed as having certain mystical powers such as curing of certain abdominal illnesses, improving people's intelligence quotient, making people have the courage to do daring things, and making people more creative. Even though it is not acceptable in many communities and religions, those who abuse it tend to have very close relations among themselves which in itself attracts people who are feeling down cast, lonely or unhappy with the society in one way or the other. Ani (2018) findings indicated that 42 per cent of the school teachers confessed that they were aware that cigarettes and marijuana were being abused in their schools. These substances were cheap and sometimes freely available in all corners of cities. Even though it was not acceptable in many communities and religions, it is generally abused among street boys and rebellious students who are faced with lives of self-reliance. It is cheap and so abusers may take it because it intoxicates so easily at a very low cost or no cost at all. In line with Anyanwu, *et al.* (2016) findings, they indicated that 8.1% of students abused inhalants such as petroleum products, glue and solution.

From these results, it can be concluded that according to principals, marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein respectively, are the most commonly abused substances while cough syrup, glue and solution are less abused substances. This was probably because it is possible for someone to abuse cough syrup, glue and solution without being noticed. During interviews with the principals, it came out very clearly that marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol were the substances most commonly abused by public secondary school students in Anambra State. Some of the principals attested that: "the most commonly abused substances among our students definitely are marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes. In most of the cases reported to the office, the students are always involved in either of the three and in quite a number of cases; we have found students with either of three substances of abuse in dormitories or in their hand bags

when they are reporting back to school". The above statement confirms the opinion of principals that the most commonly abused substances in their schools are marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study, implications of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The study findings are summarized as follows:

1. The study showed that all the identified items were the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. The study revealed that principals do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on gender of the students.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concluded that the most commonly abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State were marijuana, cigarette, alcohol, tramadol, shisha and codein. Thus, the school authorities practices the use of professional counselors, teachings on substance abuse, training of peer educators, use of guest speakers, use of reprimands, preaching, use of posters, formation of clubs for substance abusers, use of “No Smoking Zones”, and corporal punishment in place to curb abused substances among students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

#### **5.3 Implications of the Findings**

##### **School implications**

Skilled health educators in schools would develop positive school climate and diminish incidences of bullying and harassment. They should enhance norms associated with help-seeking and decision making to be boldly displayed such as 'say no to illicit drug'. They should be given opportunities for participation with others in arts, leisure, sports, civics, environment, education or cultural activity to improve their health.

### **Peer Pressure Health Implications**

Some of the students' abuse substances as a result of peer pressure therefore, it should be appropriate to discourage favourable attitudes towards risky substance use. Students should be oriented to realize that they do not need to take drugs to have a sense of belonging among their peers. They should be persuaded to realize the detrimental effects of substances/drugs taking.

### **Family implications**

Parents' should be encouraged to communicate effectively with their children about issues related to learning, social life, health and well-being including drug-related issues. Parents should be aware of harm minimization strategies to employ in relation to their children's exposure to situations involving potential drug-related harm. Thus, rebuilding the protective nature of caring relationships in the family is important.

### **Social Marketing Implications**

Social marketing practices can be useful in behavioural modification of students. During social marketing campaigns, such as anti-smoking campaigns, drug free drama, the health educator should reinforce media messages through brief counseling against addiction. Health

educator can make a valuable contribution by providing another communication channel to reach the target audience in terms of advice and rehabilitation. Health educators are a trusted source of health information, and social marketing messages add value beyond the effects of mass communication.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the findings of this study:

##### **Recommendation for Practice**

1. Students should be facilitated at home and in school to develop a feeling of happiness about family life in terms of good interpersonal relationship and acceptance to parenting.
2. School authorities should put in place the use of professional counselors, use of posters in schools, use of 'no smoking zones' and strict supervision of students in the schools to curb the increase of substance abuse.
3. Parents and guidance should keep monitoring and know the caliber of friends of their children in order to avoid peers influence that could drag their children into drug abuse.

##### **Recommendations for Policy**

1. A comprehensive curriculum on substance abuse should be introduced in secondary schools to neutralize the influence of peer pressure in influencing students into substance abuse.
2. The government should establish special rehabilitation centers specifically for students who are substance abusers so as to help them continue with their education while undergoing rehabilitation.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

It is the suggestion of the researcher that the following studies be conducted:

1. Factors that promote substance abuse among public secondary schools students in Anambra State.
2. Since the current study only covered Anambra State, a similar study could be carried out in other states to find out whether the same results would be obtained so as to allow for generalization of results.
3. The study further suggests that further studies should be carried out on involvement of teachers and parents in curbing drug abuse and students' perception on strategies used by school principals.



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