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## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF YOUTH IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ENUGU STATE

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### Abstract

Debates over the years, have favored the assumption that individuals who engage in substance abuse have high proclivity to demonstrate antisocial behaviours as direct consequence of substance abuse. But with increase in different psychotropic substances and reports of wide spread substance abuse, this study attempted to revisit youth substance abuse with the hope of ascertaining the current nature of substances they abuse, the extent to which they abuse it, how the abuse relates to their antisocial behaviours, the consequences of the above on them, the challenges associated with the mitigation/control of youth drug abuse and measures that could be adopted to address the phenomenon of youth drug abuse and antisocial behaviours. The study is anchored on containment theory and based its analysis on quantitative data obtained from randomly selected sample of five hundred and ninety-four (594) youth, and qualitative data obtained from purposively selected nine (9) interviewees. Data collected using questionnaire were coded and analyzed with SPSS Version 21 for descriptive and inferential result, while the qualitative responses were transcribed and analyzed to provide in-depth insights, using direct quotes and illustrations. The study found a significant positive correlation between the extent of substance use and degree of indulgence in antisocial behaviours. Property related antisocial behaviours like theft, armed robbery and vandalism were all found to relate with different forms of substance abuse. Measures like youth empowerment, access to counselling services, public sensitization, police border patrol, and increasing the cost of regularly abused substances could be improved to reduce youth drug abuse.

**Keywords:** Antisocial Behaviour; Methamphetamine; Substance Abuse; Substance Use; Youth Drug Abuse.

## Introduction

Behavioural Scientists – Criminologists, Psychologists, Sociologists and other social science scholars have tried to ascertain the prevalence of substance abuse among young people with anti-social behaviour for more than four decades (Moral & Pacheco, 2013). The media is awash with a barrage of news concerning youth arrested for anti-social behaviour culminating from substance abuse. Substance abuse has seriously led to the increase in health issues, crime rate and insurgency in many nations (Broning et al, 2012). One of the reasons adduced for this is that substance abuse is usually accompanied with mental disorder, anti-social behaviours etc. (Broning et al, 2012; Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). In light of the foregoing, Nigeria's anti-drug czar, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), identified substance abuse as the generic cause of banditry and insurgency in Nigeria (Atekojo, 2021).

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) which connotes actions that harm or lack considerations for the wellbeing of others is a global phenomenon (Morgado, 2017). Antisocial behaviours exist along a continuum and include violations of social rules, defiance of authority and of the rights of others, deceitfulness, theft and reckless disregard for self and others. Antisocial behaviour can be identified in children as young as three or four years of age. If left unchecked, these coercive behavioural patterns will persist and escalate in severity over time, becoming a chronic behavioural disorder (Ikediashi & Akande, 2015).

The history of substance abuse and its effects is a long and complicated one (Patterson, 2021). Substance abuse is a well acknowledged public health concern globally (Ghouchani, et al, 2021). The overarching status of substance abuse is well documented. For instance, in Sweden, drug induced fatalities is 81 deaths out of 1 million deaths, making it the highest in Europe (Dahlman et al, 2021). In Portugal, there is a sharp rise in criminal sanctions targeted at drug abusers with jail terms (Rego, Oliveira, Lameira & Cruz, 2021). In the Americas, specifically in Canada, the use of Cannabis alone has increased exponentially with the prevalence of its use highest in those aged 18 – 24 years (Fischer, Lee & Robinson, 2021). The Caribbean is most notorious for substance abuse. This is because Brazil and Argentina are the countries with the largest markets for illicit drugs in South America with over 900 and 600 thousand users, respectively (Nardi, Cunha, Bizarro & Dell'Aglia, 2012). In Asia, Iran alone has 2 million substance-dependent people; representing 2.5% of the Iranian population (Saadati, et al, 2021). Although substance abuse is widespread and affects all social categories, youth are the most affected (Azuike, Oni & Dirisu, 2012). This is often propagated by the susceptible factors which characterize youthful period such as stress associated with physiological and physical change, peer-acceptance and belongingness in school and life in general (Oketch, 2008).

The availability and acceptability of some chemical and psychoactive substances in Nigeria has been of tremendous benefit to mankind but it has been acknowledged that the misuse of the same can cause incalculable harm not only to individuals but to the society at large (Effiong, 2019). A nationwide drug use survey by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Nigeria indicated that one in seven persons (aged 15–64 years) had abused drug in the past year (UNODC, 2018). Following the same survey, one in five individuals who had abused drug in the past year is suffering from drug-related disorders (UNODC, 2018). Consequently, the UNODC noted that substance abuse has been a cause of many criminal offences such as theft, burglary, sex work, and shoplifting. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act Cap. N 30 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 provides for stringent penalties for persons trafficking in cocaine, LSD, heroin, or similar drugs to be punished by life imprisonment, while possession or use attracts

a sentence of 15 years but not exceeding 25 years (NDLEA Act, 2004). However, the burden of substance abuse in Nigeria is growing despite several drug laws, policies and strategic plans to prevent it (Jatau et al, 2021).

Many researchers are of the view that there is a direct link between substance abuse and poor attitudinal disposition such as antisocial behaviour (NACADA, 2006; Nardi, Cunha, Bizarro & Dell'Aglio, 2012). In trying to see the impact of substance abuse on antisocial behaviour of youth, many respondents shared their perceptions that substance abuse is a factor in antisocial behaviours, particularly between youth groups in a focused group discussion (FGD) carried out by the Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme (2017). See the following excerpts: “the case of a stolen phone turned into a full-blown community crisis, a boy stabbed his neighbor to death over a minor quarrel after taking a solution of 20 Naira and a stray bullet hit and killed a woman over skirmishes of drug gangs” (NSRP, 2017: 16, 17). It is important to logically access these views in order to ascertain the relationship between substance abuse and antisocial behaviour. However, correlation does not equal causation, and it is likely that street gangs, for example, would still engage in confrontation or other forms of antisocial behaviours against one another even in the absence of illicit substances (NSRP, 2017). While substance abuse at times may exacerbate or worsen antisocial behaviours by removing social inhibitions and impairing the judgment of involved parties, it would be a mistake to blame substance abuse completely for antisocial behaviours (NSRP, 2017).

In Nsukka, it is not uncommon to find many youths roaming the urban and rural streets aimlessly. The number of mentally challenged youth who parade the streets in Nsukka has also continued to increase. Drinking bars and joints for cannabis have also become highly lucrative business in these communities with its concomitant antisocial behaviours (Dibia, Nwagu, & Odo, 2020). There is hardly any gathering in Nsukka that you won't find alcohol of any sort because it has traditional or cultural importance as Nsukka people hardly consult their chief priests and gods without dry gin or palm wine (Iyiani, Iwuagwu, Ngwu, Agholor, Eyang & Okay, 2020). However, in the social acceptance of some of these substances like alcohol in Nsukka, Nsukka people express strong dissatisfaction with the abuse of substances because these substances when abused, outweigh the social gains and create dysfunctional social structure like fighting and other forms of antisocial behaviours (Iyiani, Iwuagwu, Ngwu, Agholor, Eyang & Okay, 2020). In Nsukka, some of the herbal alcoholic beverages like *Erujeje*, *knock off*, *alomo bitters*, *Odogwu bitters* etc. are also consumed by the populace in order to get 'high' and elongate their sexual encounters in the guise of curing malaria (Chukwu, Okonkwo & Mefoh, 2019). Nsukka presents a typical semi-urban area, with great prospects of a city status emanating from pop culture. It is in the authors' argument that amongst youth, patterns like dread lock, hair spray, saggy pant, leg and waist beads, incessant cult activities and other ASB which are experienced incessantly, may have potential link to substance abuse in Nsukka local government area. Although, Nsukka is still developing, many psychoactive substances are being abused and smuggled into the town (Omonobi, 2021).

The Enugu State NDLEA Command raided the Nsukka axis of the state capital and arrested a 28-year-old lady, Odo Ndidiamaka for possession of 80.23 grammes of cocaine and 3.81 grammes of methamphetamine (Omonobi, 2021). There are many reported cases of antisocial behaviours of youth in Nsukka culminating from substance abuse. For instance, the police in Nsukka, Enugu State, on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015 arrested two masquerades in Ovoko community, for robbing a trader along the Nsukka-Obollo-Afor Road. One of the arrested masquerades had Indian hemp in his pocket. Narrating his ordeal, the victim (Ezenwaji), a trader said the masquerade gave him the beating of his life, after which they searched him and collected 57000 Naira from his

pocket. However, the alleged masquerade animator while admitting that the police recovered Indian hemp from him, said “If Police will release me, I will not animate masquerade or smoke Indian hemp again. It is the left-over of the one we smoked, before coming out” (Uzodinma, 2015). There are many antisocial behaviours going on in Nsukka such as rape, theft, burglary, assault and battery but less scholarly attention has been given to the influence of substance abuse on these vices. Also, the initial concern about substance abuse expressed in several empirical literatures (see for example Chikere & Mayowa, 2011; Azuike, Oni & Dirisu, 2012; Teferra, 2018; Ikoh, Smah, Okwanya, clement & Aposhi, 2019; Jatau et al, 2021) were limited to the use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, gum, lizard dropping, pit latrine and other forms of synthetic drugs.

However, the surfacing of substance like crystal methamphetamine (Mkpuru-mmiri) in South-Eastern part of Nigeria is an indication that knowledge of substances which could be abused is yet limited. Crystal methamphetamine (Mkpuru-mmiri); which literally translates to water balls or ice block) is a substance which is now trendy with street boys because it provides highness more than marijuana (Uchendu, 2021). As Uchendu noted, the effect of Mkpuru-mmiri (methamphetamine) on its abusers are devastating, and include ability to sustain tragic pain coupled with wriggling on the ground (including in muddy places) like casted demons. The opinion that youth are innovators of illicit substances, often spreading from pop culture, with its attendant link to antisocial behaviour has attracted a lot of views on the subject matter. Yet, empirical studies on youth antisocial behaviour as caused by substance abuse with specific focus on Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State have not received much scholarly attention. This study therefore attempts to fill this research gap by focusing specifically on antisocial behaviours caused by substance abuse. This extends the discussion on substance abuse and its nexus with antisocial behaviours of youth with specific focus in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse also called drug abuse, is a term simply used to denote the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain. Over 190 million drug users can be found around the globe; this number is steadily on the increase exponentially, especially among youth (Mandal, 2021). Drug use is the application of a drug to cure an illness, prevent a disease or improve health, in line with prescription of a qualified medical doctor. However, drug use becomes an abuse when a drug or substance is taken for reasons other than medical purpose, in an amount, strength, frequency or manner, capable of causing damage to the physical or mental functioning of an individual (Sahu & Sahu, 2016). Substance abuse results to substance addiction. This usually happens when the abuser develops tolerance and dependence. Substance tolerance is a condition where the user needs more and more of the drug to experience the same effect (Sahu & Sahu, 2016). When this happens, the smaller quantities which were sufficient earlier no longer satisfy the user and they are ultimately compelled to increase the quantity of drug/substance intake. Gradually, dependence on drug/substance develops.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Antisocial behaviours are behaviours resulting from an individual's inability to respect the rights of others (Fortin, 2003). These behaviours include assault, vandalism, arson, theft, armed robbery and other delinquent acts which are antithetical to social norms (Gaik, Abdullah, Elias & Uli, 2010). In childhood and adolescence, antisocial behaviours are categorized into behavioural disorders, impulsiveness, stealing, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying,

running away from home and truancy (Farrington, 2005). Antisocial behaviours refer to a set of behaviours which are against established rules or norms (Gaik et al, 2010). It is believed that the early stage of delinquent behaviour is antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour has the potential to cause school failures, impairments in socio-emotional development, peer rejection, delinquency, and adult crimes (Hashmani 2019a). Antisocial behaviour describes all behaviours, attitudes, and personality traits that people engage in that appear to be dysfunctional, in that they often have negative interpersonal and societal outcomes (Hashmani & Jonason, 2019).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Containment theory was the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Containment theory which was credited to Walter Reckless in 1967 contends that a series of external social forces and internal qualities effectively insulate certain individuals from criminal involvement even when ecological variables induce others to engage in crime. Reckless (1967) posited that people are pushed or pulled into crime. The determinants of criminal behaviour are inner and outer containment that buffer the relationship between the pull and push. Pushes or social pressures consist of poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity, group conflicts, minority group status, lack of opportunities and inequalities (Reckless 1967:479). Pulls on the other hand, draw a person away from their original way of life and accepted form of living. They consist of bad companions, delinquency of criminal subculture, deviant groups, mass media, and propaganda (Reckless 1967:480). In relation to this study, adherents of the Containment theory tend to approach substance abuse and youth antisocial behaviour as emanating from individuals' inability to discipline self through inner containment; this results from the pushes and pull of life which tend to overwhelm such individual. In Reckless's perspective, inner containment indicates when individuals exhibit self-control and can discipline themselves and thereby not given to deviance (Reckless, 1967). However, when people fail to discipline themselves through inner containment (as is the case with substance abusers and violators of approved social behaviours), the society comes in through outer containment (that is, social control). Therefore, people can be socialized internally through the family to imbibe societal norms. But where this fails, the society, through its agencies (outer containment) regulates the individual. Put succinctly, from Reckless's perspective, deviant behaviour results from lack of self-control which is a resultant effect of improper inner containment, that is, the informal social control, which will in turn inform the formal social control mechanism (the outer containment) to intervene.

### **Methodology**

Sampling of participants was based on multi-stage sampling procedure and purposive sampling. A sample size of 594 respondents were selected from residents of Nsukka LGA through multi-stage sampling, while seven respondents which comprised two National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA] officials, one social worker and four substance abusers from the Nsukka Correctional Service, were purposively selected for an in-depth interview (IDI). The police are considered because they are the gate-keepers of the criminal justice system and determine who enters into the process (Dambazau, 2007). Two NDLEA officials were selected because of their role in apprehending drug users, confiscation of illicit substance and counseling of drug abusers. One social worker from the Nsukka Correctional Service was selected because of their role in rehabilitating people who are addicted to illicit drugs. Also, four youth substance abusers in Nsukka Correctional institution were interviewed to know how the influence of substance abuse impacted on their arrests or convictions. This gives a total of nine individuals for the in-depth

interview (IDI). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 was used for the analysis. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data placed emphasis on the interpretation and description of responses by the interviewees to complement the quantitative data. The choice of Nsukka Local Government Area as the study area was informed by the dynamic composition of the area by people of different ethnic nationalities who mingle with the indigenous Nsukka people. Nsukka is the second largest town in Enugu State. It is second only to the capital city of Enugu. Nsukka LGA is home to the prestigious University of Nigeria. Because of this, the town is a melting pot for people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, this makes pop culture possible in Nsukka LGA. Therefore, considering the diverse multi-cultural composition of the area, a study of the impact of substance abuse on antisocial behaviours of youth is considered well situated in Nsukka LGA.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This study passed through the review board of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In line with the approvals, informed consent was duly sought from the respondents being that the study did not expose participants to obvious risks. Also, participants were made to understand that they reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any point or when they feel uncomfortable, with no penalty attached to doing so.

### **Findings**

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by drug/substance intake and associated antisocial behaviours**

Drug/Substance	Property related antisocial behaviours			
	<i>Theft</i>	<i>Armed Robbery</i>	<i>Property destruction</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b><i>Alcohol</i></b>	58 (9.8%)	6 (1.0%)	40 (6.7%)	205 (34.5%)
<b><i>Cigarettes</i></b>	17 (2.9%)	Nil	43 (7.2%)	363 (61.1%)
<b><i>Hemp</i></b>	40 (6.7%)	23 (3.9%)	116 (19.5%)	220 (37%)
<b><i>Tramadol</i></b>	43 (7.2%)	89 (15%)	43 (7.2%)	200 (33.7%)
<b><i>Methamphetamine</i></b>	29 (4.9%)	3 (0.5%)	56 (9.4%)	310 (52.2%)
	Non-property related antisocial behaviours			
	<i>Killing</i>	<i>Sexual assault/ Rape</i>	<i>Gangsterism</i>	<i>Reckless driving</i>
<b><i>Alcohol</i></b>	Nil	44 (7.4%)	83 (14%)	158 (26.6%)
<b><i>Cigarettes</i></b>	Nil	8 (1.3%)	79 (13.3%)	84 (14.1%)
<b><i>Hemp</i></b>	Nil	42 (7.1%)	95 (16%)	58 (9.8%)
<b><i>Tramadol</i></b>	7 (1.2%)	86 (14.5%)	84 (14.1%)	42 (7.1%)
<b><i>Methamphetamine</i></b>	12 (2%)	55 (9.3%)	75 (2.6%)	54 (9.1%)

**Source: Authors' field survey, 2023**

In Table 1, antisocial behaviours were grouped into property related antisocial behaviours and non-property related antisocial behaviours. In the first part, alcohol usage was found to relate with theft (9.8%), armed robbery (1.0%), and property destruction (6.7%) behaviours of the respondents or that of their friends. In the second row, 7.2% of the respondents indicated that Cigarette smoking by them or their friends is applicable to their indulgence in property destruction, while 2.9% linked it to theft. In the third row, 19.5% of the respondents related consumption of Indian hems to property destruction behaviour, 6.7% indicated theft while 3.9% linked it to armed robbery. Tramadol usage was linked to theft by 7.2% of the respondents, armed robbery by 15%, and property destruction by 7.2%. It shows that under property related antisocial behaviour, tramadol usage/abuse will likely lead to armed robbery than theft and property destruction. On the contrary, methamphetamine consumption was linked more to property destruction (9.4%) and theft (4.9%), with only 0.5% of the respondents attributing it to armed robbery behaviour.

In the second part, four non-property-based antisocial behaviours were presented against different substances used by some respondents or their friends. It shows that 14% of the respondents linked their alcohol usage to gangsterism, while 7.4% indicated sexual assault/rape. However, reckless driving is the most common antisocial behaviour attributed to alcohol usage, as indicated by 26.6% of the respondents. Few respondents also indicated that when they smoke cigarette, they are likely to engage in behaviours like sexual assault (1.3%), gangsterism (13.3%) and reckless driving (14.1%). In the same way, Indian hemp was associated with sexual assault by 7.1% of the respondents, murder by 1.2% of the respondents, gangsterism by 16% and reckless driving by 9.8% of the respondents.

Tramadol was another substance that was tied to different forms of non-property based antisocial behaviours by some respondents. This is particular to rape/sexual assault as indicated by 14.5% of the respondents and property destruction by 14.1%. Other antisocial behaviours include murder (1.2%) and reckless driving (7.1%). In the last row, use or abuse of Methamphetamine was also linked to rape by 9.3% of the respondents, gangsterism by 2.6% of the respondents, murder by 2% and reckless driving by 9.1%. In both categories, alcoholic drinks and Indian hemp usage were more identified with different categories of antisocial behaviours, while tramadol and methamphetamine had the cruelest effect on antisocial behaviours like rape, armed robbery and murder.

The qualitative responses did not attribute specific categories of antisocial behaviour to substance abuse. However, all the interviewees maintained that substance abuse has direct link with antisocial behaviour. For some, the link is that of commission, that is people engage in antisocial behaviour because they took intoxicating substance, while for others, the substance abuse is to minimize the mental effect of antisocial behavioural lifestyles. What is evident from a careful classification of the responses is that most interviewees who argued that substance intake causes antisocial behaviour were all focused on non-property-based crimes, while those who argued that drug abuse is a supportive element of antisocial behaviour focused mostly on property related antisocial behaviours.

The qualitative data also revealed that drug abuse and antisocial behaviours are interwoven among young people, such that drug/substance abuse is often a prerequisite for their involvement in different forms of antisocial behaviours. According to a 23 years old inmate, some antisocial behaviours cannot be perpetrated without substance intoxication. He said:

Before I was arrested, I am a popular dealer in my area. I started trading it because I discover that most of my friend knows that I use it well and will always come to ask



me to give them. So, I started buying in large quantity to sell. There was this day I got so high on Rohypnol with four of my other friends. That day we ended up raping two girls that visited one of those my friends (**IDI: 23-year-old inmate**).

Another participant inferred on the tendency of substance abuse to induce antisocial behaviours, but maintained that the most vital link is that substance abuse helps criminals and youth with high level of antisocial behaviours to deal with the remorse from their behaviour. According to him:

I don't believe that people commit crime or do things they don't want to do because they took hemp or any intoxicating substance. Those who want to steal will steal because they want to or because it is in their blood to steal, not because they took Mkpurummiri. What they will tell me and I believe it is that taking drugs helps them to forget the bad things they are doing and kill any sense of remorse from them. Like me, I cannot say that I went to steal that motorcycle that brought me here because of drugs, because it is that same frustration that made me steal that I was also using drugs to reduce (**IDI:24 years old inmate**).

A different stand was taken by the correctional social workers who argued for differential outcomes. According to one of them:

I don't think there is a direct link to drug abuse and antisocial behaviour, yet both go "hand in hand". Mental and body system of individuals vary as well as people's personality. That is why people behave differently after taking intoxicating substances. There are some that will drink heavily and still drive normally and even more carefully. But you see another person with one bottle of beer, the person will engage himself in reckless driving. That same way, a thief will steal whether or not you gave him drugs (**IDI: Male Correctional Social Workers, Nsukka**).

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents by how often they experience symptoms arising from drug/substance use**

Symptoms	Regularity of symptoms from drug/substance use				Total
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Very Often</i>	
<b>Dry mouth</b>	297 (50%)	209 (35.2%)	35 (5.9%)	53 (8.9%)	594 (100%)
<b>Inability to defecate</b>	413 (69.5%)	143 (24.1%)	26 (4.4%)	12 (2%)	594 (100%)
<b>Frequent urination</b>	252 (42.4%)	179 (30.1%)	89 (15%)	74 (12.5%)	594 (100%)
<b>Constant headache</b>	224 (37.7%)	225 (37.9%)	55 (9.3%)	90 (15.2%)	594 (100%)
<b>Hallucination</b>	301 (50.7%)	145 (24.4%)	50 (8.4%)	90 (15.2%)	594 (100%)

**Source: Authors' field survey, 2023**

Information contained in Table 2 shows the different symptoms experienced by respondents or their friends as a result of substance/drug use. In the first row, 35.2% of the respondents indicated that they or their friends' experiences 'dry mouth' as a result of substance intake while 5.9% said they always have such symptom. Also, 8.9% indicated that very often, they or their friends experience 'dry mouth' as a result of substance use. Another symptom reported by the respondents in the second row is that of inability to defecate. It shows that 24.1% of the respondents are sometimes unable to defecate after using drugs, 4.4% said the experience is regular for them, while 2% said it happens very often.

In the third row, 30.1% of the respondents said they sometimes experience frequent urination after using intoxicating substance, 15% indicated “always”, while 12.5% indicated “very often”, which shows that they regularly experience frequent urination as a result of substance use. Following the symptom of frequent urination is that of constant headache. Surprisingly, majority of the respondents (62.3%) reported that they or their friends experience constant headache at varying degrees as a result of drug/substance use. For instance, 37.9% indicated that the headache symptom happens sometimes, 9.3% said that it happens always while 15.2% reported that the symptom happens very often. In the last row, 24.4% of the respondents reported occasional hallucination as a result of drug/substance use, 8.4% said they always experience hallucination, while 15.2% said it’s a very often experience for them. In all, the findings show that constant headache and frequent urination are the most common body effects resulting from drug/substance abuse among youth in the area.

Information obtained from the in-depth interview shows that different drug/substances have different bodily effects on the addicts. The identified symptoms include frequent urination, defecation difficulty, hallucination, dehydration and constant headache, while the intensity of the effect could vary, based on dosage and experience. One of the interviewees highlighted this by saying:

Three things you should note when you talk about how a drug affects somebody are, which drug did the person take, how many doses did he take and what experience does he have with taking that drug. The first day I took *mkpurummiri*, I did not feel anything unusual at first, but with time, I started feeling dehydrated and wanting to drink more and more water. I nearly drank from gutter that day, if not that my friend who gave me the drug that held me till we got to a place he bought water and gave to me. It was later I realized the feeling was not real, that I was just feeling a taste that is not there because even after drinking the water, I was still feeling thirsty like I was going mad (**IDI: 31-year-old inmate**).

The effect of drugs/substance abuse as presented by officers of the national drug law enforcement agencies and the Nigerian police force include mental retardation, untimely death, visual impairment, liver complications and priapism. According to a female NDLEA officer:

Drug abuse has many effects on the body. We usually warn youth especially that drugs can lead to their untimely death. It can cause defecation problem and the person will not be able to use the toilet. Some of those raw substance they consume can also damage their liver. Even when you tell people that alcohol is not good for the liver, they don’t listen. It is also known that substance like Colorado that youth are now smoking anyhow can lead to extreme hallucination and mental retardation. It can get to the point that addicts will start behaving like zombies (**IDI: Female NDLEA Officer, Nsukka Zone**).

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents on factors preventing regulation of substance/drug use**

Factors preventing regulation of drug use	Extent to which these factors prevent regulation of drug use				Total
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	
<b>Lack of community support</b>	250 (42.1%)	204 (34.3%)	52 (8.8%)	88 (14.8%)	594 (100%)
<b>Inadequate funding</b>	237 (39.9%)	158 (26.6%)	72 (12.1%)	127 (21.4%)	594 (100%)

<b>Bribery of the agency</b>	240 (40.4%)	126 (21.2%)	53 (8.9%)	175 (29.5%)	594 (100%)
<b>Lack of sensitization</b>	306 (51.5%)	146 (24.6%)	47 (7.9%)	95 (16%)	594 (100%)
<b>Inadequate punishment</b>	358 (60.3%)	141 (23.7%)	26 (4.4%)	69 (11.6%)	594 (100%)

Source: *Authors' field survey, 2023*

Information contained in Table 3 shows that 34.3% of the respondents were of the view that lack of community support to a low extent, prevents regulation of drug abuse, 8.8% said that the effect is to a moderate extent while 14.8% said that the effect is to a high extent. In the second row, 26.6% of the respondents said that inadequate funding to a low extent of preventing proper regulation of drug abuse, 12.1% said the effect is to a moderate extent while 21.4% indicated that the effect of inadequate funding in regulation of youth drug abuse is to a high extent. Another factor that was identified is bribery of the agencies in charge of preventing drug use and abuse by drug users. From the findings, 21.2% of the respondents indicated that bribery of the agency affects regulation of drug use to a low extent, 8.9% said that the effect is to a moderate extent while 29.5% said that the effect is to a high extent. Lack of sensitization was also indicated by 16% of the respondents as having a high effect on regulation of drug abuse, while 24.6% of the respondents indicated that the effect is to a low extent. In the last row, 23.7% of the respondents maintained that inadequate punishment prevents the regulation of drug abuse to a low extent, 4.4% of the respondents said the prevention is to a moderate extent, while 11.6% said that the effect is to a high extent. In all, inadequate funding was the most identified factor preventing regulation of drug abuse, followed by bribery of the agency and lack of community support.

Data obtained through in-depth interview are divided on the challenges affecting the control of drug use among youth. Whereas interviewees from the Nigerian police force and officers of NDLEA emphasized on institutional and operational capacities of the agencies, inmates and drug users identified factors relating to bribery and corruption of personnel of both agencies and that of the larger crime control institutions. Senior personnel of NDLEA said:

The major challenge as far as I know is capacity, both human and technical capacity. Every force in Nigeria is heavily understaffed and operational materials are hardly provided for. We do not have enough operational vehicles because government hardly provides fund for such and there is no community support because they easily see you as an enemy when you pick their sons and daughters who are into drug trafficking or drug abuse (**IDI: Senior NDLEA Officer, Nsukka Zone**).

On the contrary, the entire institutions involved in crime control were identified as the biggest challenge due to their corrupt tendencies and dishonesty. One of the interviewees said:

There is no challenge because from the police to the prison officers here, everyone is corrupt and only act rudely when it is a poor person that cannot settle them. You cannot see a big drug dealer here because he is always giving the police their share. Even NDLEA collect their own and pretend not to see what is happening. If not, why are people still selling tramadol even in open space like Ogige market? That shows you the law is for the poor. Big yahoo boys, eat and drink with police and they give them escort. Even here in the prison, we have two quarters. The big boys' side is well taken care of and that is where you see all these yahoo boys and rich criminals. Even here in prison, they get all the drugs they need, smoke their weeds, feel alright and even cash out from their yahoo business. But those of us who are poor stay where we are treated as animals (**IDI: 25 year-old inmate on awaiting trial**).

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents by measures that could be improved to reduce drug intake among youth**

Measures	Regularity of improvement				Total
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once</i>	<i>Twice</i>	<i>More than twice</i>	
<b>Access to counselling centres</b>	105 (17.7%)	151 (25.4%)	130 (21.9%)	208 (35%)	594(100%)
<b>Increasing cost of substance</b>	229 (38.6%)	133 (22.4%)	95 (16%)	137 (23.1%)	594 (100%)
<b>Establishment of amusement/recreational parks</b>	278 (46.8%)	175 (29.5%)	65 (10.9%)	76 (12.8%)	594 (100%)
<b>Sensitization</b>	167 (28.1%)	163 (27.4%)	109 (18.4%)	155 (26.1%)	594 (100%)
<b>Community policing</b>	198 (33.3%)	156 (26.3%)	66 (11.1%)	174 (29.3%)	594 (100%)
<b>Strengthening family, school, etc.</b>	163 (27.4%)	100 (16.8%)	92 (15.5%)	239 (40.2%)	594 (100%)
<b>Police border patrol</b>	183 (30.8%)	155 (26.1%)	62 (10.4%)	194 (32.7%)	594 (100%)
<b>Youth empowerment</b>	88 (14.8%)	129 (21.7%)	87 (14.6%)	290 (48.8%)	594 (100%)

**Source: Authors' field survey, 2023**

In Table 4, more than one-third of the respondents said that improving access to counselling centres more than twice could help reduce drug intake among youth, 25.4% said that once is okay while 21.9% said twice. Increasing cost of substances more than twice was also suggested by 23.1% of the respondents as capable of reducing drug intake among youth while 22.4% said that increasing it once will reduce youth drug intake. Again, 43.2% of the respondents suggested improving youth access to amusement/recreation parks, while majority (71.9%) supported the idea of improving sensitization networks. On the other hand, 26.3% of the respondents indicated that improving community policing once will address the youth drug intake, 11.1% suggested that the improvement should occur twice to be effective while 29.3% said that such improvement need to happen more than twice.

Again, 40.2% of the respondents said that improving on the act of strengthening family and schools should happen more than twice to be able to control substance/drug intake among youth. On the other hand, more than twice improvement on police border patrol was recommended by 32.7% of the respondents as capable of reducing drug intake among youth, while 30.8% said that a onetime improvement will still yield the desired result. In the last row, almost half of the respondents (48.8%) suggested that improving on youth empowerment in more than two occasions will help reduce youth drug intake, while 21.7% were of the view that a one-time improvement in youth empowerment will reduce youth drug intake. The implication of this finding when analyzed comparatively is that youth empowerment is the most identified mechanism for reducing youth drug intake, followed by access to counselling centres, strengthening of families/school and sensitization.

Similarly, the qualitative responses also emphasized the strengthening of learning institutions to improve their socialization capacities while government complements such with financial empowerment and employment. According to a 23-year-old inmate:

The education system needs to be changed. What they are teaching people in school is not helping them, instead it is frustrating them. I hated school because of the way the teachers were always beating us then, and won't even listen to you or try to know what your problem is. But if school can treat people with care about life, people will listen and won't get involve in things like drugs. Also, people need to be settled financially by giving them job after school or training them to learn hand work and start it for them **(IDI:23years-old inmate)**.

On the other hand, there were also suggestions to strengthen the drug regulation agencies to enable them meet up with the challenge of controlling drug circulations and abuse. A senior officer of NDLEA said:

Government, through the presidency need to strengthen NDLEA by declaring state of emergency on drug abuse. This should be backed with proper and absolute supervision of the agency and its sister's organizations like the police. In terms of logistics, there should also be adequate support from all ramifications to help curtail the activities of drug paddlers because without drug availability, there won't be drug abuse **(IDI: Senior NDLEA Officer, Nsukka Zone)**.

### Discussion of Findings

One of the major concerns of this study is to ascertain the nexus between substance abuse and antisocial behaviours. To this effect, the study found a significant positive correlation between the extent of substance use and degree of indulgence in antisocial behaviours. This is in consonance with an earlier finding by Nardi et al (2021) which contends that substance abuse has a direct link with antisocial behaviours. Also, previous deviant cases reported around Nsukka area, are often in association with substance possessions like Indian hems (Uzodinma, 2015). Even studies that explained substance abuse as having direct causal relationships with criminal behaviours like UNODC (2021); did not yield sufficient evidence by controlling for other triggers. The implication therefore is that the current study did not establish the link between substance abuse and antisocial behaviour as a causal relationship, rather as a reinforcing relationship.

Nevertheless, certain antisocial outburst like violent confrontations is known to be perpetrated under the influence of intoxicating substances (NSRP, 2017). Also, in the current study, is the distinct insight on how some form of substance abuse was necessitated by certain antisocial lifestyles. Within this finding, it holds that rather than triggering antisocial behaviour, consumption of such substance by the perpetrators is mainly to minimize the mental effect of the behaviour. Similarly, Abdu-Raheem (2013) explained that drug abuse results from attempts to suppress pains and abolish negative emotions by tapping into the tendency of the substance to increase psychomotor activities leading to euphoric feelings. Since the substances are taken in the process of carrying out the antisocial behaviour or after it, it may be argued that the substance does not cause the behaviour, but rather reinforces its perpetration. This is supported by Hashmani and Jonason's (2019) report that antisocial behaviours have multi-causal factors and that attributing its occurrence to a single factor downplays the role of others like genetics, physiology and environment in shaping behavioural outcomes.

However, for more clarity, attempt was made to itemize different forms of substance abuse and analyse each against different forms of antisocial behaviours. The concept of antisocial behaviour as used in the study is in consonance with Gaik et al (2010) and refers both to criminal and non-criminal behaviours commonly exhibited by youth, that are largely in contrast to social norms or acceptable behaviours. Employing regular classification of crimes into property and none property crimes; antisocial behaviours were equally grouped into property related antisocial behaviours and none-property related antisocial behaviours. The property-based behaviours refer to those antisocial behaviours that are targeted at material benefits, acquisition or destruction, while non-property based are antisocial behaviours that the perpetrators' gratification is not tied to material benefits nor is the behaviour demonstrated in relation to material contents.

Property related antisocial behaviours like theft, armed robbery and vandalism were all found to relate with different forms of substance abuse. Within property based antisocial behaviours, alcohol had the most reported effect on theft, exceeding what was attributed to vandalism, while smoking of hemp had more effect on vandalism, than theft. In Maherr and Kerr (2013) study, drug users were also found guilty of acquisitive crimes in connections with drug users, often in an attempt to secure money to buy more drugs. Similarly, the current study also reported that some respondents or their friends have been arrested as a result of pharmacologically induced behaviours. This was further exemplified by the finding that tramadol manifests more in armed robbery behaviour while methamphetamine abuse connects more with vandalism. Again, this was supported by McKetin et al's (2014) study which analysed how methamphetamine is associated with violent behaviour and found that participants who took the substance reported 6.2 times higher violent behaviours than those that did not take it. But, within the non-property category, alcohol abuse and hemp were linked more to cult activities or gangsterism while tramadol and methamphetamine abuse were linked more to sexual assault/ rape. This is supported by Norstrom and Rossow's (2015) study which reported significant positive association between cannabis (hemp) and violent behaviours.

Different effects of substance abuse as reported in the current study include dry mouth as affirmed by 50% of the respondents, constant headache, frequent urination, hallucination and defecation difficulties. But whereas alcohol abuse was in the current study attributed to reckless driving, a study in Lagos State by Olaniyi (2020) did not find any significant association between abuse of alcohol and involvement in road accidents. On the other hand, the current study indicated reports of mental retardation, visual impairment, liver complication and priapism resulting from substance abuse. Similar complications have been reported in previous studies (Broning et al, 2012, Ewetan & Urhie, 2014), with mental disorder as the most emphasized effect for scholars writing from psychological implications of substance abuse. Priapism although reported in previous studies did not feature in the current study. As a symptom, it results mainly from abuse of drugs believed to enhance sexual performance.

Another aspect of the consequences of substance abuse considered in the current study is its propensity towards incarceration. The study observed that among the negative effects that substance abuse has on youth is that it also exposes them to arrest. For example, nearly one-third of the respondents noted that they or their friends have been arrested before while they are trying to share or buy psychotropic drugs. On the other hand, one out of every five respondents or their friends have been arrested for being in possession of drugs while some have been arrested for psycho pharmacologically induced antisocial behaviours. Similarly, Broning et al (2012) listed part of the effects of substance abuse to include arrest and imprisonment of offenders, while

NCADD (2015) reported that substance abuse leads to crime commission and invariably incarceration of the offender.

Beside the consequences, the current study also found that existing attempts at controlling youth indulgence in substance abuse is marred by different inhibiting factors which ranged from drug availability and to actual consumption. At the level of availability, challenges such as inadequate funding of agencies involved in regulating drug circulations, and corruption of personnel of the agency in the form of bribe to allow drug traffickers and peddlers to remain in business were identified. Dibia, Nwagu and Odo (2020) in their own study noted that businesses promoting substance abuse are highly lucrative, which explains how such business owners are able to bribe regulatory agencies to avert adequate control of their operations. Differently, funding was also found to affect the operational capacities of the regulatory agencies by inhibiting the mobility, ability to investigate cases and sufficient manpower to be present at different locations simultaneously.

The institution of control was also reported to be characterised by inadequate punishment that fails to deter young people from indulging in substance abuse. There were also reports of lack of community support which makes it difficult for both the regulatory and control agencies to achieve their functions. But in all, the centrality of corruption in the form of bribery and corruption remained the most identified challenge confronting existing attempts to control youth drug abuse. Young people rather than be deterred by the agencies, perceive them as existing only for the poor as the rich appears to be above the law. Consequently, they regard increasing their financial status by all means to overcome such discrimination which further leads them to more antisocial behaviours and further exacerbate their substance use.

There were indications that measures like youth empowerment, access to counselling services, public sensitization, police border patrol, and increasing the cost of regularly abused substances could be improved to reduce youth drug abuse. Similarly, Olawole-Isaac et al (2018) reported the comprehensive sensitization and rehabilitation that targets adolescents in settings where substance abuse is prevalent. In a different study, Jatau et al (2021) recommended collaborative involvement of community, government and religious bodies in the attempt to curb the burden of substance abuse, while the youth should be targeted through sensitization.

## Conclusion

This study ascertained whether youth substance abuse is associated with antisocial behaviour in Nsukka area of Enugu state. The study found that youth substance abuse has a significant correlation with the extent of antisocial behaviours. However, considering the qualitative data, especially insights from inmates on variations of substance use intent, two pertinent observations were made. First is that the observed correlation between youth substance abuse and antisocial behaviour did not prove that substance abuse leads to antisocial behaviour. Rather, increase in both tendencies are propelled by a common denominator. This is the case with substance abuses that were reported to have occurred in an attempt to provide mental relief in the mind of an offender or to aid the offender to commit an offence with less remorse. Also, conditions within which substance abuse is perpetrated such as partying and clubbing are social lifestyles associated with certain antisocial behaviour. For example, cybercrime popularly known as *yahoo* is reported to expose actors to substance abuse, which they consume in order to stay alert during the online scamming. These same individuals are known for their luxurious spending in clubs and parties during which they consume even more substances and as such, the substance consumption

could not be said to have prompted their involvement in cybercrime, rather their involvement in cybercrime necessitated a lifestyle that is tied to substance abuse.

On the other hand, excessive consumption of alcohol and drug use among youth was found to have descriptive links with youth gangsterism, but the intent to be a member of such group preceded the action since substance abuse in itself counts as a rite of passage. The implication is that substance abuse and antisocial behaviours are both mutually reinforcing behaviours. Whereas alcohol may account for antisocial behaviours like compulsive violent behaviours, general antisocial behaviours are controlled more by criminal intent and sustained by peer pressure. Also, since consumption is tied to availability because a significant positive correlation was observed between rate of substance availability and abuse, the study concludes that antisocial behavioural threats increase the tendency to indulge in substance abuse in similar or even higher proportion than substance abuse may trigger antisocial behaviour. The conclusion is also has utility by applying the differential association assumption of Sutherland. The theory for example, traced youth substance abuse to either association with cult members in display of gangsterism (*treating fuckup*), partying with fellow yahoo friends, relating with users in the same street or ganging up with fellow users to sexually molest or abuse another person.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are considered pertinent to address the phenomenon of youth substance abuse and how it reinforces youth antisocial behaviours, following key findings in this study:

- (a) **Strengthening of socio-religious clubs in secondary schools:** Secondary schools were among the key avenues implicated in the learning of substance abuse, especially as a consequence of peer pressure or the quest to be associated with certain group membership. However, strengthening socio-religious clubs with strong moral and mentorship will alternate the social longing in the youth and minimize their desire to join other forms of club. Such clubs will also be platforms of sensitization, counselling and resolving personal issues confronting the youth to also minimize their tendency to feel isolated.
- (b) **Direct Family interventions:** The breakdown of family values constitutes a significant factor in youth learning of substance abuse, while some reportedly started by imitating their parents or an elderly person in their neighbourhood. Therefore, there is need to strengthen the family institution through direct state empowerment and workshops. This should be a behaviour targeted workshop that helps parents to improve on how they train their children as well as inform them on the best parenting approach to adopt in maintaining moral standards in the family. The training must involve guarding the children against neighbourhood interaction, especially for those living in areas with high prevalence of substance abusers.
- (c) **Overhauling of the drug control agencies and the criminal justice system:** Rather than controlling youth drug abuse, corruption perpetrated by personnel of the agencies invariably contributes to youth indulgence in the abuse. Therefore, there is need for all the agencies to be overhauled with strict sanctions against corrupt practices by culpable personnel. In doing this, the welfare of the personnel must be prioritized with relevant funding and increased human capacity building, through engaging more hands and adequate training and monitoring.
- (d) **Youth empowerment:** The axiom that “a lazy man is a devil’s workshop” is further sustained in the current study because unemployment and financial hardship were among the



factors indicated to affect youth drug abuse. Therefore, there is need for collective youth empowerment by both the government, private organizations and philanthropists to minimize the number of youths exposed to mental depression of where the next meal will come from.

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