

Effects of Substance Use on Violent Crimes in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

OGYE Danlami Okolo, Ph.D

Department of Criminology & Security Studies, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja
E-mail: danlami.ogye@nileuniversity.edu.ng, Phone No: 07032539369

Saidu Ahmed

Nasarawa State Community and Social Development Agency, Lafia, Nigeria
Email: asaidu200@yahoo.com

Abstract

Substance use and violent crime are menace currently affecting every aspect of human society. Substance use otherwise known as drug use is becoming rampant and out of control in Nigeria. The paper examines public perception of the effects of substance use on violent crimes in Nasarawa state. The objectives include; identify the substances that are commonly used, examine the effects of alcohol abuse on incidence of violent crime and assess the effects of marijuana use on violent crimes. To further explain the relationship between substance use and violent crime, rational choice theory was adopted to explain the phenomenon. Survey design was adopted using questionnaire as the main instrument to collect the primary data for this study from the respondents. Data collected through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage tables. The findings revealed that alcohol and marijuana are the common substances available for use/abuse in Nasarawa State. The paper also revealed that the abuse of alcohol often leads to violent crimes. It was equally revealed that marijuana use is associated with violent crimes as people who use marijuana predisposed to all manners of violent behaviour like assault, rape, stealing/robbery and murder. It would be concluded that substance use has adverse effect on violent crimes in Nasarawa State. The study recommends that the government should educate public on the danger of substance use/abuse in order to discourage users from the act thereby reducing violent crimes in the State. The State government should establish a counselling unit across the State where trained criminologists would give substance users orientation and advice on how to discourage them from using substances.

Keywords: Abuse, Use, Substance, Crimes, Violent, Nasarawa State

Introduction

Humans in all generations have had a desire for altering their state of mind, often with the aid of psychoactive substances. Substances refer to chemical particles that affect the neural system and lead to alteration in mood, thoughts and behaviour (Akawu, 2019). The common substances mostly use in society include alcohol and cannabis. Abot (2017) defines substance use as a maladaptive pattern of substance abuse leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, manifested by aggressive behaviour, occurring within a 12-month period. Substance use is as old as human civilization even though the kind and intention of using substance have change over time; it is worthy to note that, no human society is immune from the use of substances. Many cultural practices supported drugs and substance use based on availability, belief and customs (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime- UNODC, 2018). Substance use is the largest precipitator of violence in adults and adolescents, although there are other factors that impact an individual's behaviour and contribute to a person's aggressive tendencies (Hegley & Linnoila, 1997). The global use of alcohol, tobacco, and other psychoactive substances is growing rapidly, and contributing significantly to the global burden of violent crimes (Akawu, 2019). Substance use presents a global challenge, with detrimental effects on the health, wealth, and security of nations (UNODC, 2018). It is associated with anti-social behaviors worldwide. In many societies,

it is considered a leading cause of violence among individuals and groups (Kosten & Singha, 2022).

Violent crimes refer to action in which an offender or perpetrator has threatened to use harmful force on the victims. Common examples include: arson, rape, burglary, and robbery, intentional homicide which captures a wide range of acts, including domestic disputes that result in killing and interpersonal violence. Whilst the term is broad, however, it does 'not capture all intentional killings, in particular, or deaths arising from armed conflicts which are usually considered separately. The difference is often described by the organization of the act. Individuals or small groups typically commit homicide, whereas killings in armed conflict are usually carried out by more cohesive groups of up to several hundred members. These killings often occur under the influence of substances. Many nations suffer from violent crimes in recent times and many people attribute this to substance use (Smah, 2017; Muhammad, 2018; Chinedu, 2019; Obot, 2023 & Adogi, 2023).

Drugs have ruinous effects on our societies, leaving a trail of misery in their wake. It drives half of all homicides and nearly 3,000 people tragically lost their lives through drug misuse as many have thrown into violence behaviour in Nigeria state and other parts of the country in recent years (Akawu, 2019). Drugs destroy lives, it shatters families and plague neighbourhoods around the state, fuelling violence and acquisitive crime. Substance abuse is a global problem, causing considerable harm worldwide. Drug use and its associated harms have been increasing, affecting neighborhoods and hindering their development.

It is a common knowledge in Nigeria that many ethnic groups have beliefs that the use of substances in warfare and act of violence against their enemies. Dangerous substances inhibit fear and anxiety to enable people fight. During warfare, these behaviours are acceptable and tolerated among ethnic groups in the state. For instance, the Eggon ethnic group in the state encouraged this through "Ombatse" meaning it's time philosophy of freedom fight for the enhancement of warfare of its members. The same applies to the Mada ethnic group of Nasarawa state through "Lokaci yayi" philosophy, meaning 'it is time (Smah, 2017; Omeiza, 2018 & Akawu, 2019). Therefore, this study explores the effects of substance use or abuse on incidence of violent crime in Nasarawa state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Violent crime is a major public issue in different parts of the world. The nature of violent acts could be physical, sexual, psychological or involving deprivation and neglect. These include physical assault, communal killings, interpersonal crises, ethnic violence sexual and domestic violence, robbery, threats, infringement of a person's rights and homicide. It accounts for a large proportion of physical injuries as well as psychological trauma and severe loss of life for the victims (Krug, 2006; Sethi, 2010; Krug, 2012 & Miller, 2016).

Many studies indicated that violent crime is associated with substance use/abuse. The use of substances like alcohol and marijuana has earned attention for the past three decades suggested to induce violent and aggressive behaviour in society. Substance use and abuse are associated with an increased risk of interpersonal violent behaviour. The relation is complex, addressing issues of proximal and distal risk factors, pharmacological effects, social context, and personal expectancy, as well as biological and psychological vulnerability (Hoaken and Stewart, 2013). Furthermore, the propensity for aggressive behaviour enhances the risk of being aggressive when under the influence of substances or illicit drugs (Taylor and Chermek, 1993). The problem of substance use is so endemic that it was estimated that there are millions of users worldwide and commonly found to be using alcohol, marijuana, stimulant and depressant (Akawu, 2019 & Adogi, 2023).

The effect of substance use on violent behaviour have been studied from the perspective of several disciplines, and in relation to a variety of violent offenses, such as assault, homicide, domestic violence, and sexual assault in Sub-Sahara Africa particularly, Nigeria (Darke, 2010). According to Smah (2017) drugs like alcohol and marijuana when taken induces the risk of been

violent in several ways including altering human behaviour and reasoning due to the acute influence of the substance. Omeiza (2010) while elucidating how substance use relates with violent crime stressed that substance use is a chemical agent that produces a change in conscious experience by altering the brain of users. It changes the normal state of consciousness and produces change in cognitive ability such as awareness, memory, emotion and mood and the alteration in consciousness that creates anger or aggression towards one another.

Nasarawa State has experienced various degrees of violent crime recently, ranging from robbery, assault, domestic violence, ethnic/communal violence, interpersonal killings among others between 2012 and 2018. The study intent to answer the question on why the public perceived alcohol or marijuana uses to influence interpersonal and communal violence in the state. The attempt in this study is to investigate public perception on the effect of alcohol abuse, marijuana use, stimulant and depressant uses on violent crimes; and how these substances induce violent crimes in the state. Many youths in Nasarawa state have embarked on the use of different substances which instigated several violent crimes across in the state. Also, the use of substance is affecting the young people in the society and leading to abnormality.

Moreover, the high level of crime rate in the State which include murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, assault, etc. are not unconnected with the increase and rise in substance use and abuse (Akawu, 2019; Kawugana & Faruna, 2018). Haladu. (2014) discovered that 65 of secondary school students use drugs. Imagine what will happen by the time they go to higher institutions of learning. Substance abuse in Nasarawa state is currently at an unacceptable proportion and should be a matter of concern to the state government, local communities, society and the international community as a whole. Mamman, Othman and Lian (2014) stated that substance or drug abuse continues to be the major risk behaviour among youth and adolescents, with physical and mental health complications.

In this study, attempt has been made to give an overview of the concept of substance use. Special focus was given to the common substance available; alcohol abuse and marijuana use and violent crimes in Nasarawa State.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- i. What are the common substances available for abuse?
- ii. What is the effect of alcohol abuse on incidence of violent crimes?
- iii. What is the effect of marijuana use on violent crimes in?

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are;

- i. To identify the substances that are commonly abused.
- ii. To examine the effect of alcohol abuse on incidence of violent crimes.
- iii. To assess the effect of marijuana use on violent crimes.

Conceptual Clarification

Substance abuse

As stated in the previous chapter, substance use is not a new phenomenon in human society. Where there have been people, there has been substance use as well. What has remained constant is the notion that substance use can either be normal or abnormal. The term “normal” refers to behaviour that is moral and inherently right by nature, while “abnormal” describes behaviour that is prohibited by societal laws and norms, and what constitutes prohibition has changed over time. In some cases, previously illegal behaviour has become decriminalized, while in other instances, what had been ordinary behaviour is now illegal (Sturgess & Fuller, 2020).

Substance use/abuse is defined differently across geographical regions localities, states and nations. Different places may apply different criteria to do so. Substance use refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (WHO,

2018). These are chemical substances that primarily affect the central nervous system, altering brain function and resulting in temporary changes in perception, moral consciousness, and behaviour. However, substance use is conceptualized in this study denotes cocaine, cannabis, marijuana, codeine syrup, culturally approved substances, alcohol which youths use during violence and how the public perceives or relates these psycho active substances to offences of violence (Wright & Jacques, 2017). Use of substances can lead to dependence syndrome – a cluster of behavioural, cognitive and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use, manifesting in a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, and/or persisting in its use despite harmful consequences (WHO, 2018).

The use of substance is denoted by the act of taking it into the body to prevent or cure a disease or disabling condition as in accepting the sick role and to exploit it (Blum, 1969). Substance abuse on the other hand is the taking of drugs to an extent that they cause social or medical harm (Dusek & Girdano, 2019). If a strong psychological drive motivates frequent and heavy use, the second state of cocaine dysphasia in which user experiences apathy, increased nervousness, insomnia and increase weight loss set in; this led to the third stage of psychosis like acute paranoid schizophrenia like disorder. Substances generally used and abused according Fortuna (2003) includes tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, stimulants (amphetamines), sedatives, opiates-heroin, volatile solvents, hallucinogens-mescaline and cocaine (World Health Organization, 1992).

Violent crime

Violent crime involves an offender threatening or using force against a victim. This could include crimes where violence is the main objective, such as murder, assault, homicide, and rape. Violence is defined as any act that uses force or threat against a victim as a means to an end (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001). In a violent crime, the victim is either harmed or threatened with violence. Examples of violent crimes include murder, assault, manslaughter, rape, sexual assault, battery, robbery, arson, and kidnapping. These are acts where intentional harm is inflicted on another individual during the commission of the crime. Moreover, violent crimes might also involve the threat of intentional harm. The harm can be inflicted using weapons, poison, bodily contact, and more. Most violent crimes are considered felony crimes, which are the most serious and carry severe punishments (Makanjua, Oyeleke & Akande, 2017).

The concept of violent crime refers to acts of violence perpetrated by individuals against other people or property with the intent to threaten, attempt, or cause physical harm. The severity of the injuries to the victim(s), the use of weapons, and the criminal history of the perpetrator can impact the seriousness of the crime. Violent crimes often involve hatred or a blatant disregard for another person's rights and worth, which can influence how the crime is perceived by a judge or jury. Common examples of violent crimes include aggravated assault, arson, assault and battery, domestic violence, hate crimes, homicide, manslaughter, mayhem, murder, terrorism, and theft/larceny (USLegal, 2024).

Public perception

The term "public perception" can be challenging to define. One way to understand it is to see it as the information gathered from a public opinion survey (Dowler, 2016). Public perception is a belief or opinion that is commonly held by many people, and it is based on their interpretation of things. This perception reflects the views of the general public. In other words, "public opinion" is simply the collective views of a group of people (usually a randomly selected sample) who are directly asked about their thoughts on specific issues or events. Their responses to structured questions can be recorded and analyzed in straightforward, quantitative terms, providing a snapshot of opinion at a specific moment in time (McCulloch & Webb, 2020 & Golbabaie, Paz & Bunker, 2022).

Empirical Review

The Available Drugs Used in Nigeria Society

According to Foster (2014), the most commonly used illegal drug among Nigerians is cannabis. Other illegal drugs used include cocaine, heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants, and inhalants and solvents such as glue. Whether you smoke marijuana, drink alcohol, or snort cocaine, there are risks involved with using drugs. These risks can range from addiction to death. Knowing the risks can help you make better decisions that positively affect your health. Understanding the effects of these drugs on your body and the serious threat of addiction they pose is the first step in protecting yourself.

- i. **Marijuana.** This mild hallucinogen, derived from the Cannabis sativa plant, is the most commonly abused illegal drug in Nigeria, according to Oni (2018). When used—usually through smoking—marijuana acts as a central nervous system stimulant. It speeds up heart rate and raises blood pressure (Stacey 2016). It can stimulate the nervous system enough that some people become paranoid while taking it. At the same time, marijuana can dull memory, making it harder to concentrate or remember things. Death from smoking too much marijuana is rare, but as with smoking cigarettes, habitual marijuana use can lead to heart disease and other cardiovascular problems. Smoking marijuana involves introducing a dirty substance into your lungs. Just like tobacco smokers, marijuana smokers are at risk for respiratory problems such as chronic cough and frequent lung infections (Scott, 2012).
- ii. **Cocaine:** Cocaine is a powerful and addictive stimulant. When ingested, it can give users a feeling of euphoria, although not everyone may find it enjoyable. The euphoric feeling only lasts for about 30 to 45 minutes (Stacey, 2016). Cocaine is commonly snorted as a powder, but it can also be turned into a rock form known as crack and smoked. Cocaine has the effect of tightening blood vessels and speeding up the heart, which are the main reasons for most cocaine-related deaths (Scott, 2012). Even small doses of cocaine can lead to sudden death, according to Smith (2014).
- iii. **Opiates:** These drugs, which include both street drugs like heroin and pharmaceutical painkillers like morphine, act on the body's central nervous system by stimulating the brain's "reward center," which controls pleasurable feelings. However, in high doses, opiates can cause some of the brain's critical functions, like breathing, to slow down or stop working. In an overdose, the brain shuts off the thermostat that drives respiration (Scott, 2012 & Oni 2008).
- iv. **Methamphetamine:** Usually, methamphetamine is a potent stimulant that can be consumed as a white powder through smoking, snorting, or injection. Similar to cocaine, methamphetamine, can accelerate the heart rate and lead to hyperthermia, which is an excessively high body temperature. Prolonged use of methamphetamine can result in anxiety, insomnia, and even induce psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations (Scott, 2012 & Oni, 2018).
- v. **Alcohol.** Moderate alcohol consumption is generally safe for most people, but excessive drinking can lead to problems. Many individuals exceed their capacity, which can lead to abnormal behaviour. Alcohol affects the brain gradually and can impair motor skills and judgment due to its depressant effects. People who struggle to cope with certain challenges may turn to heavy alcohol consumption, which can exacerbate their difficulties (Scott, 2012).

Alcohol Abuse and Violent Crimes

Alcohol and violence have long been intertwined culturally and historically. Globally, there has been a rapid increase in alcohol consumption. Data from recent decades indicate a steady rise in alcohol production and consumption, as well as in rates of alcohol-related conditions. While the consumption of alcoholic beverages has traditionally been widely accepted during major social events such as festivals, wedding ceremonies, and birthday parties in most countries, noticeable changes in drinking behavior have accompanied rapid changes in Western societies. Additionally, alcohol consumption has been a popular leisure activity among Africans; however, despite its role in providing leisure, employment, and government taxes, alcohol use has become associated with chronic health problems, crime, public disorder, and violence (Conservapedia, 2024, Palk, Davey & Freeman, 2009 & Wang, 2017).

Alcohol use contributes to a number of deleterious health and social outcomes, including traffic crashes, increased risk for disease, risky sexual behavior, homicides, suicides, crime, unintentional injury (Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2001; Dunn, Bartee, & Perko, 2003; Greenfeld, 1998; Gyimah-Brempong, 2001; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2005; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2000; Smith, Branas, & Miller, 1999; Sorenson & Berk, 2001), and is the third leading actual cause of death (i.e., nongenetic, modifiable factor contributing to death; McGinnis & Foege, 1993) in Nigeria (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004).

Recent research has shown that exposure to alcohol during adolescence can have detrimental effects on brain development, intellectual capabilities, and increases the likelihood for later addiction (Brown, Tapert, Granholm, & Delis, 2000; Monti et al., 2005). Further, a number of studies provide evidence for increased risk for these problems and earlier age at alcohol initiation (DeWit, Adlaf, Offord, & Ogborne, 2000; Ellickson, Tucker, & Klein, 2003; Guo et al., 2002; McGue, Iacono, Legrand, Malone, & Elkins, 2001; Stueve & O'Donnell, 2005; Warner & White, 2003).

Marijuana Use and Violent Crimes

Marijuana is “a greenish-gray mixture of the dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds and flowers of *cannabis sativa*, the hemp plant”. It often goes with different names in different climes. They are often referred to as “pot”, “grass”, “reefer”, “weed”, “herb”, “stone”, “ganja”, “Mary Jane – M J” (NIDA, 2018). It is usually used in the form of smoking or in food. As crude drug derived from the plant *cannabis sativa*, it is one of the most widely abused illicit drugs not only in Nigeria but throughout the world. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2018) reveals that “most users smoke marijuana in hand-rolled cigarettes called joints, among other names; some use pipes or water pipes called bongs”.

Marijuana use has also attracted considerable scholarly attention from the social science world. As revealed by Adeyemi (2018), marijuana use “is a social problem that has spread and increased rapidly in recent decades across diverse segments of countries of the world, constituting a threat to the effective functioning and survival of the society”. The use of marijuana frequently as observed by him, especially among vulnerable young people “has caused a significant burden on individuals and societies throughout the world” (Adeyemi, 2018). Ajayi and Ekundayo (2020) reported that youth who smoke marijuana are more likely to commit violent crimes such as rape, assault, and homicide than non-users of marijuana in their communities. They also found a link between marijuana use and anti-social behaviour among youth. According to the researchers, many marijuana users in communities often participate in organized crimes such as secret cults (gangs), drug trafficking, prostitution, and youth homicides, as well as other related social and criminal justice problems. Additionally, they discovered that young offenders are versatile in committing other types of antisocial behaviour, including heavy drinking, dangerous driving, and promiscuous sex.

Writing on the attitudes of youths who engage in marijuana use, Fabuyi (2020), asserted that the general survey on marijuana use situation in Nigeria carried out in 2019 through the

Rapid Situation Assessment (RSA) showed that “60 percent of youths (mainly between 10-29 years old) are found to be using marijuana, and that unruly behaviours have been found among them”. Thus, the social effects of marijuana on human behaviour are obvious. The commonly observed social effects in many of the Nigerian communities including ours are: Family break downs, violence and destruction, child abuse, sexual abuse, disrespect and break down of law and order in families and society; lost of individual dignity, respect and self worth; financial mismanagement and loss of property and destruction of family hope (NDLEA, 2021).

According to Parker (2006), “marijuana users tend to gain most income by theft, prostitution and drug peddling. He strongly declared that “there are some apparent relationships between marijuana use and criminal behaviour; a number of these are: crimes committed under the influence of drugs; crimes committed in order to get money to buy drugs and trafficking and a host of other crimes associated with drug distribution”. Bennett (2008) in examining the connection between drug use and criminal behaviour stated that “marijuana use causes crime as well as other drugs”. According to him “these crimes or offences are motivated by the need for money or goods to buy drugs. Examples of such crimes could include theft of different kinds, snatching, robbery and kidnapping”.

Similarly, Goldstein (2005) argued that “drug users such as marijuana, cocaine and alcohol are more frequently involved in crimes like assault, family quarrels, and disrespect to elderly ones, violent crimes and prostitutions. Goldstein further explained that “there is a causal relationship between marijuana use and violent behaviour”. Equally, in establishing the social effect of marijuana use on human behaviour, Sommers and Baskins (2009), interviewed 156 women from two New York City neighbours with high concentration of marijuana use. They found that “respondents were engaged in a wide range of criminal activities, and almost all of them caught admitted to being experienced drug users; 70 percents of them were regular crack users, 38 percent reported involvement in robbery, 44 percent were at times involved in prostitution, others were reported to be involved in assaults”. The researcher concludes that “marijuana use sustains violence crimes and other related criminal behaviours within a large social setting”.

Theoretical Perspective

The paper utilizes rational choice theory to analyze the link between substance use and violent crimes. Rational choice theory encompasses a set of concepts that explore how people's preferences relate to the decisions they make (Fouler, 2006). The foundational ideas of rational choice theory can be traced back to the Classical perspective, notably Cesare Beccaria's 1764 essay "Crimes and Punishments" and Jeremy Bentham's 1789 work "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" (Paternoster, 2010). Additionally, alternative interpretations of rational choice theory center on Bentham's formulation, which posits that the motives driving actions, whether criminal or not, are fundamentally rooted in individual self-interest and the pursuit of maximizing pleasure while minimizing pain. Consequently, the effectiveness of punishments relies on a degree of rationality to influence individuals' perceptions of the pleasure and pain associated with specific choices.

Rational choice perspective banks on maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. According to Cornish and Clarke (1986), rational choice perspective states that all crimes is based on a decision to commit after weighing the costs and benefits. Rational choice perspective contains a necessary two-step process. The first stage is known as the initial involvement stage, where an individual decides whether to commit the crime or not due to their needs. Whatever they choose is heavily influenced by previous learning and experience, and how others perceive them (Briann, 2022). The individual enters the second stage when they acknowledge they are ready to embark on the crime, and they must choose the offense they will be committing, which is known as the criminal event model (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). The decision to use/abuse substance is influenced by the immediate need of the individual. For example, if a drug addict is short on money, they may decide to burglarize a wealthy home. In making this decision, the

individual must consider if alcohol/marijuana use for anybody will be home, the neighbours who might see the crime take place, the level of expertise needed to pick the locks, the time needed inside the home, and the risk of apprehension. The Rational choice perspective exists to state whether the benefits outweigh the risk of the violent crime as a result of using substances.

Methodology

The paper employed the cross-sectional survey design which adopts method of questionnaire. It was considered opinion of the researcher that a study of this nature requires a cross-sectional design to examine the effect of substance use on violent crime. Specifically, the questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect data in form of public survey on the effect of substance use on violent crime.

The population of study includes all categories of persons in Nasarawa State from 18 years and above. They are persons that reside within and are indigenes of Nasarawa state, particularly areas selected for this study. They are mostly males and female as well as those with other socio-economic backgrounds, such as educational qualification, religion and income level. The target population for this study is the entire population of the general public in Nasarawa state which cut across three (3) senatorial districts of the State. Two local government areas were selected from each of the senatorial districts; with Lafia and Keana in Nasarawa South Senatorial district; Akwanga and Nasarawa-Eggon in Nasarawa North Senatorial district, as well as Keffi and Karu from Nasarawa West Senatorial district of the State. The total population of the general public in the selected local government areas is put at 1,349,797, according to (National Population Commission (2023) population projections. A sample size of 743 was determined using Watson (2002) sample size determination and it was distributed proportionately across the six selected local government areas. Multistage random was used as sampling technique. Data collected quantitatively was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage table.

Results

Table 4.1: Drugs Available in Nasarawa State (N = 743)

Drug	Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Alcohol	Local gins	494	66.5
	Burukutu	586	78.9
	Palm-wine	634	85.3
	Beer	579	77.9
	White wine	476	64.1
	Ogogoro	546	73.5
	Spirits	433	58.3
Marijuana	Cannabis	471	63.4
	Witt	382	51.4
	Wiwi	548	73.8
	Igbo'	484	65.1
	Hash	338	45.5
	Grass	367	49.4
	Skunk	279	37.6
Cocaine	Crack	387	52.1
	Coke	523	70.4
	Fish scale	336	45.2
	Blow	280	37.7
	Snow	345	46.4
	Librium	180	24.2
	Xanax	180	24.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 indicated a high percentage (66.5%) of the respondents agreed that local gin is a common substance available for abuse. This implied that local Gin is a common alcohol substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. It was also observed from the table a high percentage (78.9%) of the respondents agreed that burukutu is a common substance available for abuse. This implied that burukutu is a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. Finding in the table further indicated that significant percentage (85.3%) of the respondents agreed that palm-wine is also a common substance available for abuse. This implied that palm wine is also a common substance available for abuse in the State. Result from the table showed a high percentage (77.9 %) of the respondents agreed that beer is available for people to abuse. This meant that beer is also available in Nasarawa State for people to use and abuse.

The table further showed that a greater percentage (64.1%) of the respondents agreed that white wine is a common substance available for abuse. It implied that white wine is a common substance available for abuse in the State. In the same table, result indicated that 73.5% of the respondents agreed that Ogogoro also is a common substance available for abuse. This implied that Ogogoro is a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. The table further showed that more than half percentage (58.3%) of the respondents agreed that spirit is commonly available for abuse. This meant that spirit is also a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State.

It was observed in the table that a high percentage (63.4%) of the respondents agreed that marijuana is a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. This implied that marijuana is commonly available for abuse in the State. The table further indicated that 51.4% of the respondents agreed that Witt is a common substance available for abuse in the State. This implied that Witt is commonly available for abuse in Nasarawa State.

From the same table, majority (73.8 %) of the respondents agreed that wiwi is one of the substances commonly available for abuse in Nasarawa State. This meant that wiwi is also available for abuse in the State. The table further shows that 65.1% of the respondents agreed that Igbo is also available for abuse in the study area. This affirmed that Igbo is also available for abuse in Nasarawa State.

The table indicates that 45.5% of the respondents agreed that Hash is a common substance available for abuse in the study area. This implies that Hash is not a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. It was observed from table that 49.4% of the respondents agreed that Grass is commonly available for abuse in the study area. This meant that Grass is not a common substance available or people abuse in the State. The table indicates that 37.6% of the respondents agreed that Skunk is one of the common substances available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State.

Result from the table further showed that more than half percentage (52.1%) of the respondents agreed that Crack is also a common substance available for use/abuse. It meant that crack is commonly available for use/abuse in Nasarawa State. When asked on the availabilities of drug like Coke it was found that significant percentage (70.4%) of the respondents have agreed that Coke is a common substance available for abuse. This signified that Coke as a drug is available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State.

In the table, 45.2% of the respondents have agreed that Fish Scale is commonly available for abuse among people. This implied that Fish Scale is not among common substances available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State.

In the table, findings revealed that 37.7% of the respondents have agreed that Blow is a common substance available for abuse in the study area. It implies that Blow is not a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. It was observed from that table that 46.4% of the respondents agreed that that snow is commonly available in the study area for abuse. This implied that snow is among those substances that are not common for abuse in Nasarawa State. The table further revealed that 26.9% of the respondents agreed that Valium is a common substance available for abuse. This meant that Valium is not an available substance in Nasarawa State that is commonly abuse by people. The table showed that a percentage (24.6%) of the

respondents agreed that Serapex is commonly available for abuse among people in the State. It meant that Serapex is not a common substance available for abuse in Nasarawa State. It can be seen from the table that 29.1% of the respondents agreed that Rohypnol is a common substance available for abuse among the people of Nasarawa State. This implies that Rohypnol as substance is not also commonly available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State. In the table, a percentage (24.6%) of the respondents agreed that Ativan is among common substance available for people to abuse. It can also be said here that Ativan is not commonly available for abuse in Nasarawa State.

The table indicated that a percentage (24.6%) of them agreed that Helcion is a common substance available for abuse. This implied that Helcion is among common substances that are not available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State. In the table, finding indicates that a percentage (24.2%) of the respondents agreed that Librium is a common substance available for abuse in the study area. This meant that Librium is among common substances that are available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State. Result from the table further showed that a percentage (24.2%) of the respondents agreed that Xanax is a common substance available for abuse. This implied that Xanax is not a common substance available for people to abuse in Nasarawa State.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of violent crimes in Nasarawa State

Response	Frequency	Percent
Murder	109	14.7
Assault	177	23.8
Rape	157	21.1
Domestic Violence	173	23.3
Terrorism	53	7.1
Robbery	45	6.1
Others	29	3.9
Total	743	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 2 indicated that 68.2% of the total respondents identified assault (23.8%), domestic violence (23.3%) as well as rape (21.1%) as the common violent crimes associated with substance use in Nasarawa State. It implied that assault, domestic violence and rape are commonly associated with substance use/abuse in Nasarawa State.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of Alcohol Abuse

S/no	Category	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	People think of rape when drunk	180	338	70	63	42
2	People think of assault when drunk	147	412	102	49	33
3	People think of commit kidnapping when drunk	145	319	151	70	58
4	People think of commit burglary when drunk	142	437	85	38	41
5	People commit of stealing/robbery when drunk	119	391	148	52	33
6	People think of commit murder when drunk	127	361	115	83	57
7	People think of commit assasant when drunk	99	307	156	127	54

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 3 showed that a greater number (338) of the respondents agreed that people think of rape when drunk with alcohol in the study area. This implied that people who get drunk with alcohol often commit rape in Nasarawa State. The table further showed that significant number (412) of the respondents agreed that people who get drunk with alcohol commit assault in the study area. It meant that those who get drunk with alcohol often commit assaults in Nasarawa State.

Also, result from the table indicated that a proportional number (319) of the respondents agreed that the people think of kidnaping when drunk with alcohol. It implied that those who get drunk with alcohol commits kidnapping in Nasarawa State. The table further showed that large

number (437) of the respondents agreed that people who abused alcohol think of burglary when drunk with alcohol in the study area. This meant that those who get drunk with alcohol often think of burglary in Nasarawa State. Also, from the table more (391) of the respondents agreed that people commit stealing/robbery when drunk in the study area. This implied those who abused alcohol think of stealing or commit robbery in Nasarawa State.

The table further revealed that a significant number (361) of the respondents agreed that people think of committing murder when they are drunk with alcohol. It meant that abusers alcohol thinks of committing murder in the State. From the table, result showed that proportional number (307) of the respondents agreed that people think of commit assassination when drunk with alcohol in the study area. It implied that people who abuse alcohol think of committing assassination when drunk with alcohol in Nasarawa State.

Table 4: Respondents' rating of Marijuana Use

S/no	Category	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	When people smoke marijuana they easily commit rape	158	341	184	14	46
2	People who smoke marijuana commit armed robbery/stealing	136	452	81	50	24
3	Smoking of marijuana leads people to assault others	229	357	103	30	24
4	People who smoke marijuana commit murder	131	382	136	69	25
5	Assassins smoke marijuana before commit the crime	133	328	138	104	40

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

In table 4, a higher number (341) of the respondents agreed that when people smoke marijuana they easily commit rape in the study area. This implies that people who smoke marijuana easily rape other people in Nasarawa State. From the table, a greater number (452) of the respondents agreed that people who smoke marijuana commit armed robbery or engage in stealing in the study area. This meant that those who smoke marijuana commit armed robbery or stealing in Nasarawa State.

The table also showed that 357 of the respondents agreed that smoking of marijuana leads people to assault others in the study area. It implied that those who smoke marijuana often indulge in assaults in Nasarawa State. It is observed from the table that significant number (382) of the respondents agreed that people who smoke marijuana commit murder in the study area. It meant that people who smoke marijuana commit murder in Nasarawa State. The table indicated that a significant number (328) of the respondents agreed that assassins smoke marijuana before commit the crime in Nasarawa State. It implied that assassins smoke marijuana before commit the crime the State.

Discussion

On the public perception on substances that are commonly abused in the study area, findings revealed that a greater majority of the respondents in Nasarawa State identified alcohol and marijuana as common substances most especially, local gin, burukutu, palm-wine, ogogoro, cigar, witt, wiwi, igbo, beer, shisha, white-wine, spirit, tramadol and codeine are mostly available for abuse by people in Nasarawa State. This agrees with the findings of Katzenback & Smith (2012) Oyafunke, Falola & Salau (2014) and Oleabhie & Ighalo (2019) that alcohol and marijuana are substances which people take because less expensive and common people have access to them when needed. Olaitan and Akpan (2003) further substantiated that substances like alcohol and marijuana are locally produced and available in most shops and stores; this comes as an attempt to match the behaviour and expectations of one with the behaviour and expectations of the society.

On the public perception on the effect of alcohol abuse on incidence of violent crimes, findings showed that alcohol abuse has effect on incidence of violent crimes especially kidnapping, rape, assault, burglary, robbery, murder and assassination in the study area. This finding agreed with Greenfeld, 1998; Gyimah-Brempong, 2001; Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2001 and Dunn, Bartee, & Perko, 2003 asserted that alcohol abuse can have detrimental effects on brain development, intellectual capabilities, and increases the likelihood for violent behaviors among adolescent. It has been established that alcohol has been involved in about 40% - 70% of homicides, assaults, domestic violence and street disturbances (Cookson, 1992; Davey & French, 1995; Dingwall, 2006). Self-reports and surveys of prisoners and convicted offenders have consistently demonstrated that a substantial proportion of the young group especially males (about 40-60%) and they have consumed alcohol prior to, or at the time of committing their offence (Dingwall, 2006).

In addition, while Bartholomew (2019) found that alcohol use preceded a variety of offences, it was more commonly used prior to violent offences. Prisoner surveys undertaken in Tasmania and Western Australia also indicate that a substantial proportion of the prisoners report alcohol being associated with their offending (Indermauer, 1990; White & Boyer, 2019). Although it was found in a Western Australian prisoner sample that 52.4% of them thought alcohol was connected to their imprisonment, only 26.8% of the same sample was concerned about their alcohol use (Indermaur & Upton, 2018)

Regarding the public perception on the effect of marijuana use on violent crimes, findings revealed that marijuana use has effect on violent crimes in the study area. According to Adeyemi (2008) constant intake of marijuana substance affects people's life negatively in the area of been violent as most people who indulge in marijuana use are prone to engage to all kinds of violent behaviours such as assault, rape, murder, burglary and armed robbery. Inciardi, Horowitz & Pottieger (2013) argued that "marijuana use and violent crime relationship is interactive". Crime, they pointed out, "finances the use of substances; continuous usage of substances encourages more use of drugs and more use of drugs encourages more crimes". They stated that "it is unquestionable that a large proportion of youths who get involved with criminal justice agencies (the police, the courts and custodian institutions) are usually regular drug users like marijuana. Parker (2006) maintained that marijuana users tend to gain most income by stealing or theft, prostitution and drug peddling. He strongly declared that there are apparent relationships between marijuana use and criminal behaviour; a number of these are: crimes committed under the influence of drugs; crimes committed in order to get money to buy drugs and trafficking and a host of other crimes associated with marijuana distribution.

Conclusion

The effect of substance use on violent crime has serious multi-dimensional security threats that impact social effects on the user, the community and the society in general. Substance use undermines the security of lives and property of any society, with adverse political, social, economic and psychological implications. The abuse of alcohol and use of marijuana has adverse consequences on the individual user, security implications of the community and the society at large. Substance use has the potentials to lead into drug-related criminal behaviour which impact negatively on the overall social, economic and political fabrics of Nasarawa state in particular and Nigeria as a whole. Despite the spectre of violence which substance use entails and the implications of drug-related crimes for humanity, the rate of substance use and violent crimes keep increasing exponentially in Nasarawa state. However, despite the alarming rate of substance use and violent crime, it has been observed that there was low level of education and awareness on the danger of substance use that could to control its related effects on violent crimes in Nasarawa states. Therefore, it would be concluded that substance use has significant effect on violent crimes, especially the abuse of alcohol and use of marijuana.

Recommendations

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

- i. There is need for state government to educate the public on the danger of substance use/abuse in order to discourage users from the act thereby reducing violent crimes in the state; this can be done through NDLEA or NAFDAC where tips can be shared with the public in both rural and urban communities.
- ii. The study equally recommended that stiff penalty should be put in place as a disciplinary measure where people that are caught in the act of substance abuse should be punished in order to serve as deterrence to other individuals that might want to use or abuse substances in the state.
- iii. The government should help the communities with effective and result oriented tracking devices to identify people using and abusing substances in both urban and rural communities with the objective of curbing trafficking of these substances in Nasarawa State. Combating the menace from the distribution chain will to a large extent control the use and abuse of these substances among people especially youths in Nasarawa state to the barest minimum.
- iv. To reduce the acts of substance use/abuse and violent crimes among citizens to the barest minimum in Nasarawa State, community as well as religious leaders should be recommended for training in counselling criminology, because evidence abound that some issues that are social needs not to be social but be addressed criminologically. To do this properly, the community as well as religious leaders will do well by acquiring some professional counselling skills related to substance use/abuse.

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