

## **Information Seeking Pattern Associated with Substances Use by Undergraduates in Ogun State, Nigeria**

<sup>1</sup>Ikonne, Chinyere Nkechi, <sup>2</sup>Ojo, Adebowale Ifeoluwa & <sup>3</sup>Owolabi, Ruth Onajite

<sup>1&3</sup>*Department of Information Resources Management, Babcock University*

<sup>2</sup>*Center for Disease Control, Canada*

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### **Abstract**

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Information play a vital role in every decision made each day. Information exposes the sensitivity of substance use among undergraduates as such affect the health and academic performance. The global health issues of substance use among undergraduates have become a source of concern to stakeholders. Despite the efforts of the government and non-government organization to create awareness on the implication of substance use on total wellbeing use of substances among undergraduates still persists. This could be attributed to the inability to understand reasons to abstain from substances, inadequate information on measures to abstain from addict friends or other delinquent act the can alter the progress of victims. Studies have been done on substance use among undergraduate, and information seeking behaviour of students. It is apparent those information seeking patterns based on substance use among undergraduates have not been done. This study examined the information seeking pattern of undergraduates on substance use. The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised of 82,809 undergraduates in the 14 approved universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. A self-structured instrument was used to gather data and 93.9% response rate was achieved. Undergraduates in Ogun State mostly seek information on the negative effect of substance use (*Mean* = 2.81), and ways to avoid peer pressure influence on substance use (*Mean* = 2.70). On the average undergraduates had a fairly high information seeking pattern (*Mean* = 2.60 on a 4-point scale). In conclusion undergraduates displayed fairly high information seeking pattern in respect to substance use. The study recommended that intensified efforts should be made to create awareness on total eradication of substance use in all the university campus especially to freshman. Policy makers should formulate laws to ban the use and sales of substances from university campuses with adequate measures the reinstall victims.

**Keywords:** *Information, Information seeking pattern, Substance, Substance use undergraduates.*

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*Corresponding Author:*      **Ikonne, Chinyere Nkechi**

### **Background to the Study**

Information is a critical resource in any organization and it is essential for decision making. Any economy that makes use of information in its economic activities is known to be information rich economy. So also undergraduates that base his/her decision on information are poised to succeed in life. In order to locate the right information there should be a gap recognised has being empty that requires the right information to fill. The gap is filled by seeking the right source for the right information. Information seeking is the process of recognising and interpreting problem thus, drawing a search plan, to evaluate the outcome by going over the processes again if necessary. Information seeking is unavoidably an indispensable precondition to consistent and suitable performances of these behaviours (Ek & Heinstro, 2011). Young people seek information from social media, peer, internet, print and non-print, formal and informal conversation from friends among others. Information seeking is the desire to search for adequate information to fill a knowledge gap. Undergraduates that find substance use as harmful will possibly find means of abstaining from such and stay healthy. Information adequately put to use will clear all doubt and improve the performance of the individual who abstain from substance use. Information seeking pattern well developed will enable each undergraduate determine the what to do and ways of accomplishing goals. But it is quite unfortunate that despite efforts made to sensitise undergraduates of the negative consequences of substance use there still exist instances of suspension and mental disorder that result from substance use.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Information play a vital role in every decision made each day. Information exposes the sensitivity of substance use among undergraduates as such affect the health and academic performance. The global health issue of substance use among undergraduates has become a source of concern to stakeholders. Despite the efforts of the government and non-government organization to create awareness on the implication of substance use on total wellbeing use of substances among undergraduates still persists. This could be attributed to the inability to understand reasons to abstain from substances, inadequate information on measures to abstain from addict friends or other delinquent act the can alter the progress of victims. It is in view of the aforementioned that this study investigated the information seeking pattern of undergraduates based on substance use.

### **Objective of the study**

To determine the information seeking pattern of undergraduates based on substance use.

### **Research Question**

What is the information seeking pattern of undergraduates as regards substance use?

### **Literature Review**

Information seeking is the process of recognising and interpreting problem thus, drawing a search plan, to evaluate the outcome by going over the processes again if necessary. Information seeking behaviour is the recognition of one's need (or essential requirements) for information and the attendant activity of going about to search for information services and

resources to meet those needs (Opeke, 2017). Information seeking is also the act of searching for the right information to satisfy a user at the right time. Information seeking is unavoidably an indispensable precondition to consistent and suitable performances of these behaviours (Ek & Heinostro, 2011). Information seeking is the act of trying to search for suitable information to fill a gap. Information seeking can be referred to as a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or a gap in knowledge (Savolainen, 2007, p.112). Undergraduates also are involved in information seeking to fill the gap in knowledge of an individual.

Choo (2000) describes information seeking as the way and manner of seeking information in recognition of some needs (perceived by the user). Furthermore, Apata and Samuel (2010) opine that information seeking is a fundamental human process closely related to learning and problem solving. Seeking as the name implies to the act of searching or looking out for relevant information to fill a gap in knowledge. Information seeking behaviour of an individual is the way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for knowledge update and personal development (Igwe, 2012). Information is essential in every human activity and as such, one is required to have strategies to search for information that will be of benefit to oneself from a good source to fill the gap in knowledge. The searching process could involve the use of different search techniques, browsing through different sources to identify information to satisfy users' needs.

Information seeking involves the conscious and the unconscious efforts of searching through different sources to locate relevant information that exposes undergraduates to the risks of substance use. Information seeking patterns of undergraduates differ and these depend on what each considers being of priority. Ford (2015) established that information seeking strategies adopted by an individual have been grouped into browsing and monitoring. The browsing may require the use of hardcopy or online resources while the monitoring could be through selective dissemination of information where specific individual's information need is discovered and provided access by those who need it. Also, undergraduates seek information from formal and informal conversations. Information seeking is the desire of undergraduates to search for adequate information to fill a knowledge gap. Information seeking is accomplished by having the right information source to fill the gap in knowledge. Before the search attempt one is expected to have a recognised need. In the context of this study the need was focused on substance use.

Substance use by undergraduates in recent times is affecting the education sector especially when a student who is expected to graduate in a four-year programme is prolonged as a result of substance use. Substance use is referred to as the inappropriate use of drug and non-drug in a prescribed and non-prescribed form that can be injurious to undergraduate health. Substances exist in different forms like liquid, solid or in powdered form that can be chewed, sniffed, smoked, drank, and even injected into the body. There are different substance undergraduates use examples are alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, marijuana and opioid group. These substances in any quantity used can distort the total wellbeing of the users as such affect the central nervous system.

Substance use among undergraduates can be regarded as the highest cause of death because of the health implications associated with its use. Ndom, Igbokwe and Ekeruo (2013) explained that majority of students in public universities in Nigeria perceive substance abuse as a major problem and majority have witnessed violence resulting from substance use. Alcohol and marijuana were the top two (2) on the list of substances abused by male and female students. It was reported that violent behaviour like sexual assault, physical assault, are common among students after they have abused the substances. Young people between the ages of 11 and 20 sampled from the Eastern part of Nigeria reported to have started drinking at early age (Chikere & Mayowa, 2011).

The substances used in excess become abused thus, complicating the health of the individuals involved. Young people in Southern Nigeria are initiated to substance use at a tender age. Reports from Southern Nigeria show that young people at age 14 and below displayed their initiation into drug use (Fatoye & Morakinyo, 2002, p.299). Sample respondents from Northern part of Nigeria discovered that participants aged 10 to 14 in secondary school in Zaria were already smoking cannabis (Shehu & Idris, 2008). Report from a study find out those young adults between 18 and 25 years of age were the population with the highest vulnerability to substance abuse while adolescents between the ages of 11 to 17 were reported as the second highest population vulnerable to substance abuse (Jordan, 2018).

Imaledo, Peter-Kio, and Asuquo (2012) have reported that the use of alcohol and cigarette predisposes undergraduate students to sexual risk behaviour. Sexual risk behaviours have been indicated as a major predisposing factor to HIV/AIDS and responsible for increasing number of accidents in Nigeria (Fawole, Ogunkan & Adegoke, 2011; Odu & Akande, 2008). Sexual assault of all kind can result from substance use. Undergraduates in Ogun State who engage in substance use might likely have their academics and mental health at stake. Substance use have been found to affect academic performance and mental health (Akindutire & Adegboyega, 2012). Its use also, causes physiological and psychiatric disturbances (Mba, 2008). Substance use has been perceived by students to result in poor physical health, poor finance, emotional problems, memory impairment, risk factor for most chronic diseases, problem with family relationships and so forth (Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010). All this information based on substance use health implication will help determine ways to identify information that could reduce the menace of substance use by undergraduates.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Survey research design was adopted. The design enabled the research determine the information seeking pattern based on substance use.

### **Population**

The population comprised of 82,809 undergraduates in all the universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of 1513 was derived from the krejcie and Morgan table of 1970. A two stage random sampling technique was used to arrive at 1.83% of undergraduates in all the federal, state and private university.

### Instrumentation

A self-structured questionnaire was developed titled information seeking pattern of substance use by undergraduates in Ogun State.

### Data Presentation

**Table 4:** Information Seeking Pattern Among Undergraduates

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(sd)
Why some substances should be legally prohibited	479 (33.7)	403 (28.4)	115 (8.1)	423 (29.8)	2.66 (1.22)
Why some substances of high demand were banned	442 (31.1)	457 (32.2)	156 (11.0)	365 (25.7)	2.69 (1.16)
How to use the different substances safely without any complications on health	409 (28.8)	429 (30.2)	159 (11.2)	423 (29.8)	2.58 (1.19)
Benefits of substances on human health	426 (30.0)	432 (30.4)	152 (10.7)	410 (28.9)	2.62 (1.19)
How to buy the substances	300 (21.1)	344 (24.2)	220 (15.5)	556 (39.2)	2.27 (1.19)
How to stay safe without being addicted	354 (24.9)	445 (31.3)	148 (10.4)	473 (33.3)	2.48 (1.19)
Ways to avoid peer pressure influence on using substance	464 (32.7)	436 (30.7)	143 (10.1)	377 (26.5)	2.70 (1.18)
How to quit substance	445 (31.3)	382 (26.9)	190 (13.4)	403 (28.4)	2.61 (1.20)
The negative effect of substance uses on undergraduates well being	540 (38.0)	418 (29.4)	114 (8.0)	348 (24.5)	2.81 (1.19)
<b>Average Mean</b>					<b>2.60(1.19)</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018

**Interpretation Keys** -Strongly disagree: 1-1.49; Disagree: 1.50–2.49; Agree: 2.50–3.49; strongly agree: 3.50–4.00. Table 4.3.4 reveals the information seeking pattern among undergraduates. On the average the respondents had a fairly high information behaviour (Mean = 2.60, SD = 1.19). The findings also showed that the respondents agree to seek information on why some substances should be legally prohibited (mean = 2.66, SD = 1.22). The respondents agree to seek information on how to use the different substances safely without any complication on the health (Mean = 2.58, SD = 1.19). The findings also show that the respondents agree to seek information on the benefits of substances on human health (Mean = 2.62, SD = 1.19), however, the findings reveal that respondents disagree to seek information on how to buy the substances (Mean = 2.27, SD = 1.19). The findings reveal that respondents disagree to seek information on how to stay safe without being addicted (Mean = 2.48, SD = 1.19). The respondents on the average agree seek information on the ways to avoid peer pressure influence on using substances (mean = 2.70, SD = 1.18). Furthermore, the findings result show that the respondents agree to seek information on how to quit substance (Mean = 2.61, SD = 1.20) while the respondents on the average agree to seek information on the negative effect of substance use on undergraduate wellbeing (Mean = 2.81, SD = 1.19). On the overall the respondent majorly seek information on the negative effect of substances on undergraduate wellbeing (Mean = 2.81, SD = 1.19), and ways to avoid peer pressure influence on substance use (Mean = 2.70, SD = 1.18). Table 1 reveals that the mean score is above 2.50 which is also an indicator that the respondents agree with the statements on information seeking pattern of substance use. This implies that since they have fairly high information seeking pattern they abstain from substance use because they seek information on the negative consequences of substance use on their wellbeing and ways to avoid peer pressure influence on substance use.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The research question one was based on the information seeking patterns of substance use by undergraduates in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings showed that undergraduate information seeking pattern was above average. This implied that undergraduates in Ogun State, Nigeria have a fairly high information seeking pattern. The findings show that undergraduates seek for information on why some substances should be legally prohibited, why some substances are on high demand, how to safely use the different substances without complication on the health, how to stay safe without being addicted, ways to avoid peer influence on substance use, how to quit and the negative effect on undergraduate well-being. Undergraduates search and browse for information in order to meet their immediate needs basically to know the negative effect of substance use on the wellbeing and ways to avoid peer influence on substance use. Opeke (2017) emphasized that information seeking is the recognition of one's need (or essential requirements) for information and the attendant activity of going about to search for information services and resources to meet those needs. The conscious attempt of looking for the right information to satisfy the recognised need is known as information seeking. This is affirmed by the statement that information seeking is the act of searching for the right information to satisfy a user at the right time (Ek & Heinostro, 2011). Information seeking pattern of each individual differs as such this study established the information seeking pattern of undergraduates in regards to substance use was fairly high.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that undergraduates' information seeking pattern was fairly high. The undergraduates mostly sought information on the negative effect of substance use on their wellbeing and ways to avoid peer influence on substance use. since the information seeking pattern of the undergraduates is fairly high. Therefore, university campus should be free from different substances that can cut short undergraduate life and regular outreach programme within the school to control the global health issue associated with substance use.

## **Recommendation**

The study recommended that the universities administration intensify their efforts to create awareness on total eradication of substance use in all the university campus especially to fresher's because of the change in environment. Policy makers should formulate laws to ban the use and sales of substances from university campuses with adequate measures the reinstall victims.

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