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Article · January 2019
DOI: 10.12942/r.2019.01.001

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Survey of Drug Use and Crime in Nigerian Libraries: A Study of Public and Academic Libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Iboro F. A. Ottu¹, Mercy Daniel Ebong², Mercy Etukudo Ukpanah³ & Imaobong A. Etim⁴

Abstract

Drug use is a menacing problem currently affecting every aspect of Nigeria's national life. The clandestine nature of many drug use behaviours may provide suitable conditions for the development of relative ethnographies, and one of such is the library environment as a secret hideout for drug abuse. Considering the seclusive nature of every library complex, the present study investigated, through a survey, the possible existence and prevalence of drug use network in selected public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Participants were library users and patrons, including students, library workers and other public users. Results indicate that negligible (low) level of drug use was reported in the library with corresponding low level of related crime. There were also other indicators of drug use comparing respondents' reports under several demographic factors including gender, education, marital status of users, residential status of users, recent history of drug use in the library, estimated age of users, estimated financial cost of drug use as well as indices of crimes committed in the library. It was however not clear if reported crimes, which are usual day to day occurrences associated with the library, could in any way be linked to library drug use. Recommendations were made concerning the need and urgency to provide public sensitization on the dangers of drug use not only in the library but also in general, and the need to prevent its consequences through improved security measures in our academic and public facilities.

Keywords: Drug use, academic and public libraries, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, investigative survey.

Introduction

Drug use and crime are social problems which continue to impact our society. Concern about drug use and crime is however not taken as being of great importance to many. For instance, Darke, Torok, Kaye, Ross & Mcketin (2010) in their study comparing the rate of violent crimes among regular drug (methamphetamine and opiod) users reveal that drug related offences are offences in which drugs' pharmacologic effects lead to certain offences motivated by drug-users' need for money to support continued use or offences related to drug distribution itself. Common drugs of abuse include Nicotine, cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy, heroine, amphetamines, among others Lincoln (2008) decries that crimes have been ignored by most social scientists studying social behaviour. Crime is an act or omission to act which flouts the core values, rules and regulations guiding a particular establishment (Ogunyade, 2005). They are a common experience in the global environment. Issues of insecurity of life and property have greatly permeated every facet of life including, in recent times, the library. Unfortunately, with meagre budgetary allocation from government, libraries seem to have inadequate means of detecting crime rates in their environment. Accordingly, Nigerian libraries have been besieged by multiplicity of criminal activities. This is evidenced by installation of burglar-proof, detection gadgets and other security devices in both public and academic libraries.

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Library crimes involve intentional use, misuse or alteration of library materials or resources so as to deprive other users from accessing them. It can also include the violation of library policies and procedures. Contributing in this direction, Okogwu & Nnam (2013) stressed that library crime is an act of using unauthorized method(s) to gain access to library materials and properties. These may range from theft, forging of library tickets, mutilation, pilfering of library materials, fraud, arson, vandalism, aggravated assaults on staff members and drug use. In line with this, Ogbonna (2010), acknowledges that factors which are associated with several crimes include: poverty, lack of values, personality disorder, loss of contact with agents of socialization and drug abuse. Curiously, while drug use serves as a dependent variable in the study, it also remains a cause for other crimes, in other domains including the library. In recent times, there has been an uneasy calm in the public domain regarding the incidence of drugs and other crimes in libraries. This is because drug use appears strange as a form of activity that should ever be linked to the library as a place of distinction. Though drug use has not been reported by studies investigating Nigerian libraries, there are such reports by libraries outside Nigeria. Nevertheless, human behaviour is a complex chain of activities that may be difficult to explain and the use of drugs in the library may fall into this labyrinthine scheme. Why would people use drugs and involve themselves in other crimes within a reading facility? Drugs have generally been seen as a substance other than food that provides unclassified support to users when inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed or absorbed through a patch on the skin or dissolved under the tongue. This has been acknowledged to cause physiological change in the body of users. Although, drug use may alter brain chemistry which interferes with an individual's decisions, its utility in the context of the library has not yet been explained.

Libraries are indispensable institutions established to cater for educational, cultural, research and informational needs of its patrons. Valuable educational materials, both print and non-print versions are preserved for public utilization. One aspect of library services that mostly impacts the society is that of user-centered role of the library. This is amplified by Ogbonyomi (2011) who noted that libraries assume a focal point when users of diversified age groups, socio-political, economic backgrounds and cultural interests converge to utilise the resources and services of the library. Because the library is the people's central intellectual "nervous system", safety and conducive learning and studying environments are provided for patrons of diverse groups of people. However, some patrons tend to see libraries as safe haven from their otherwise hectic and lives where they can stay without disturbances, thus making libraries somewhat vulnerable to crimes and other unhealthy behaviors which may affect not only the users but other associates as well.

Global and regional trends in drug use may very often be estimated from studies that include questions on drug use and surveys that use indirect techniques to determine the number of high-risk drug users. This is comparable to the social, psychosocial, and physiological effects of drugs as well as the settings which drugs are used. Therefore some authors and bodies (Brochu, Cournoyer & Pernaen, 1999; WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS, 2007; UNODC, 2012) identify the prison as one of the high-risk settings for drug use, and not a place like the library. Other studies have associated drug use prevalence to hospitals (Obot and Olanniya, 1991; Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2009). However, a rare setting for the examination of drug use is the library, especially in Nigeria where there are barely no known studies on drug use activities.

Libraries are service institutions that exist to enable users make use of maximum information resources and services for the overall achievement of the broad goals of its parent institutions which are schools and tertiary institutions. They are established to respond to the educational, cultural, research, recreational and information needs of patrons. Libraries are classified into many categories including public, special and academic libraries. The present study is based on drug use in public and academic libraries. The academic library is a library found in any higher institution of learning like universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture and other tertiary institutions. For example, Jama'a in Ogbonyomi (2011) stated that academic libraries must assume a focal point where users of diversified age groups, socio-political, economic backgrounds and cultural interests have to converge to utilize all available resources in order to meet their individual needs for the betterment of society at large. As a result of the diverse use of library information resources, academic libraries appear to be quite vulnerable to all forms of crime and security problems from patrons. Crimes regularly committed by some users and staff of academic library which have deprived many others from fully achieving their information needs range from vandalism, mutilation, defacement, theft to arson (Ogbonyomi, 2011). Notably, Jato in Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya, (2012) observed that scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refusal to return overdue borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library, among other crimes have become a common occurrence in the library setting, especially academic libraries. However, no author has particularly linked these crimes to drug use.

Moreover, Lorenzen and Momodu in Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) and Ajejobomogun (2004) acknowledged that some individual users of academic libraries display disruptive or criminal behavior within the library surroundings and this more often cause security problems. While conducting an interview with student patrons on the causes of crime in academic libraries, Ogbonyomi, (2011) identified poverty, user population and poor security as leading and major causes of crime in academic libraries.

By its very nature, the public library strives to be welcoming to everyone, and offers services for a wide variety of people (Huska, 2008). As with any public space, problems that occur outside in the public sphere are likely to filter inside. Hence, Latuszek, (2000) opines that any gathering area can become a setting for unpredictable behaviour and violent crimes. Crime in the public library as enumerated by Huska (2008) can take several forms. First, there are crimes against the library collection such as book material theft or vandalism of the collection. Secondly, there are crimes against the physical structure of the library. These can include vandalism of building or equipment, graffiti, or arson. Most seriously, there can be crimes against the people inside the library, including threats or violence against both staff and patrons, sexual molestation or willful use of the library facility for consensual dating activities. For instance, Arndt (2002) identifies the last type of crime as things that are typically referred to as "victimless crimes", such as drug use and prostitution, which may happen on library property but occur on a more incidental basis and are not limited to occurring in a library setting. Just as library crimes have assumed varied dimensions, security measures to curb such crimes should also be multifaceted.

The use of drugs generally can have negative impact on all spheres of an individual's life, such as family friends and community, and this can also place enormous burden on the society of which the library forms a part. The statistical relationship between drug use and crime is convincing at first glance, but it is not possible to draw a conclusion regarding a definite cause-and-effect link between the two phenomena (Casavant & Collin, 2001). However, sources like NCADD (2015) and Rafaiie, Olyae & Sargolzaiee (2013) have argued that drug use share a close relationship with crime as many criminals have, at times, been under the influence of drugs while committing crimes. Violent offences therefore have also been committed under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. While most drug use could have an impact on the nervous system and may cause certain kinds of reactions and counter reactions, they have often been strongly associated with violent crimes as counter reaction to certain types of drugs. Such drugs include alcohol, (Cousineau & Schneeberger, 2000), PCP (phencyclidine), cocaine, and amphetamines (Wright & Klec, 2001) as well as barbiturates. Research has shown that Marijuana users are four times more likely to act violently or damage property (National Households survey on Drug Abuse & Foundation for a Drug - Free World, 2006-2017).

From observation, many individuals who have taken to drug use usually exhibit one of a number of characteristics that may explain why some of them commit acts of criminality. For instance, Casavant and Collin (2001) enumerated social, psychological as well as socio-economic factors that may explain both drug use and criminal activity to include poverty, lack of social values, personality disorders, association with drug users, delinquents and loss of contact with agents of socialization.

Drug use as a problem in foreign libraries remain very acute, including cases of drug injection and death. Sharing the concerns of David Seleb, Director of Oak Park Public library in Chicago: "On both a personal and a professional level, we were all very shocked and of course worried about how this could happen". It would be interesting to understand how the social dynamics of the library as an important organ of knowledge dissemination could be debased by this distraction and also how the library's "sacred" role may have been hindered by a possible attraction of nuisance behaviour such as drug use and associated crimes, even death!

Drug use, whether permissible or illegitimate is growing at an alarming rate in the society today. This has been reported to have enormous influence on the individual's behaviour. Drug use varies across social strata and life style. For instance, Holt & Treloar (2008) and Measham (2004) cited in Fischer (2015) see drug use as a source of pleasure. Fischer observed that acute use of drugs may result in intoxication and this is common with drugs like heroine, alcohol, cocaine, inhalants, marijuana, opioids (e.g. morphine and methadone). Drug users usually feel relaxed either in the clandestine or calm atmosphere. There are series of drug-related crimes in libraries in the western societies. As observed by Farrugia (2002) there are many instances of vandalism, killing, sexual assault, murder, verbal abuse among library users in the United States of America. For example, 'In Norfolk, Virginia, a 47-year-old man died of drug related causes after a patron found him in a library restroom. In Batesville, Indiana, and New Brunswick, New Jersey, police revived others in library restrooms using a popular overdose antidote'.

Also, a female library clerk in West Virginia was beaten to death by a man who had been sexually harassing several female library workers (and may be clients) over a period of time. Other sources further observed that library crimes and violence have also spread beyond American to British libraries. For instance, in 1992 a library in Leeds was attacked by two masked youths wielding iron bars, who rampaged through the library smashing windows and doors¹⁷. In addition to these, there are also drug related sites on the internet which are accessed by library users. While libraries are sacred places for reading, studying and research, its doors are open to eligible members of the society especially the public libraries. The level of these crimes recorded in libraries in western libraries raises a question to what the situation may be in Nigerian libraries. The present study was therefore an effort to investigate any evidence of drug use and crimes in Nigerian academic and public libraries as there as there barely no research evidence in Nigerian libraries.

This general purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of drug use among public academic and academic library users in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This is coming from the backdrop that certain qualities that make libraries ideal for studying and reading, which include unfettered public access, quiet corners and nooks and minimal interaction with people, have also made them attractive places for people to shoot up heroin, according to reports from librarians in countries such as United States of America. Based on the security/research information regarding drug use and crime in Nigeria the present study was conceived to investigate any evidence in Nigerian libraries.

Specifically, the study will:

1. Investigate the existence and extent of drug use in academic and public libraries in Nigeria.
2. Explore the types of crimes committed in libraries in relation to drug use.
3. Ascertain the relationship between drug use and crimes in academic and public libraries in Nigeria. These will be guided by the following research questions.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant evidence of drug use and crime in Nigerian libraries
2. There is a significant relationship between drug use and crimes in Nigerian academic and public libraries.

Method

Design

The study adopted a survey design. Surveys are commonly used as an efficient way of gathering data in researches that are exploratory in nature.

Participants

Participants were patrons (users) and staff of public and academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Nigeria is a West African Country that occupies an area of 923,768 square kilometers. As of 2015, Nigeria was the world's 20th largest economy, worth more than \$500billion and \$1trillion in terms of normal GDP and purchasing power partly respectively. Reports by the new media and the general public indicate that drug use among Nigeria's youths is worsening by the day. Some sources say considering the severity of Nigeria's drug problem, it is somewhat disturbing that drugs are so easy to get. Participants in this study were drawn from selected libraries which include University of Uyo library, Divisional Library, Uyo; Akwa Ibom State University Library, Ikot Akpadea; Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic Library, Ikot Ekpene; Federal Polytechnic Library, Ukana, Ikot Ekpene; Divisional Library, Eket; Divisional Library, Ikot Ekpene; College of Education Library, Afaha Nsit; and Divisional Library, Abak. Based on the determined population of respondents, the Yamane's (1967) sample size formula $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ was used in to calculate the sample size. In order to know the number of respondents to be sampled from each library facility (i.e. users and staff respectively) the proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to draw a determined percentage of respondents from each library facility.

Instruments

A questionnaire package was the main instrument for data collection. This was made up of Section A demographic information, Section B, Drug Use History component of the Drug Users' Questionnaire (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime) and Section C, (Lincoln and Lincoln (1987) 24-item Library Crime Index).

Procedure

The process of planning the study began with the collation of all public, private and academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The researchers looked critically at the situation (administrative health) of these facilities and brainstormed on the inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The idea to drop private libraries was based on inconsistent operational data available in these facilities. It was therefore decided that the scope of the study would be limited to public and academic libraries only. The researchers then reached out to the administrators of the libraries to collate comprehensive data on patron's yearly use, i.e. the number of registered readers in each facility. This was done to enable researchers scientifically determine the population of study. In the same way, a list of library staff (in the reader's service section) numbers were also collated since the survey involved both readers and library staff. These sub-groups formed the general population of study which was used to determine the sample size as well as the proportion from each facility.

Statistics and Data Analysis:

The logistic regression model was used in analyzing data. Logistic regression is used to describe data and to explain the relationship usually between one dependent binary (dichotomous) variable and one or more nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio independent variables. The assumptions are that the variable should be dichotomous in nature (e.g. presence vs absence), there should be no outliers in the data, no high correlations (multicollinearity) among the predictors. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggest that as long as correlation coefficients among independent variables are less than 0.90, the assumption is met.

Results

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Features of Participants

	Frequency	Valid percent
Gender: Male	117	49.8
Female	118	50.2
SES: High	25	14.3
Medium	67	38.3
Low	83	47.4
Residential Status: Live alone	109	48.4
live with parents	62	27.6
live with friends	25	11.1
Live with relative	27	12.0
Education: High school	2	0.9
Undergraduate	35	15.0
BSc	131	56.2
M.Sc	51	21.9
School attended: Boys school	16	6.9
Girls school	27	11.7
Mixed school	42	18.3
Marital Status: Married 1 (Monogamous)	161	70.0
Married more than 1	68	30.2
Divorced	6	2.7
Widowed	1	0.4
Separated	3	1.3
Never married	142	62.4
Single	4	1.8
Role in library: Staff	58	24.9
Patron	45	19.3
Student	126	54.1
Corper	4	1.7

Table 2: Logistic Regression Table showing influence of drug types on crime in the library

Variables	β	Exp (β)	df	Cox & Snell R ²	-2 Log Likelihood	Nagelkerke R ²	World	Sig
Painkillers	1.33	3.80	1	.064	311.22	.085	13.97	<.05
Alcohol	0.79	2.21	1	.085	395.65	.114	5.49	<.05

We conducted a logistic regression to investigate whether study participants will report crime committed in the library based on the 15 types of drugs which participants were assessed on. The 'Forward' logistic regression model found only painkillers and alcohol out of the 15 types of drugs to be of relevant explanatory power. The logistic equation indicated that an additional score/point on painkillers tends to multiply the odds of readers committing a crime in the library by 3.80; while an additional score point on alcohol multiplies the odds of committing a crime in the library by 2.21. In other words, the use of painkillers in the library was higher compared to use of alcohol.

From the Cox and Snell's R², it can be deduced that 6.4% probability of library readers may be committing a crime as a result of painkillers use being explained by the logistic model and 8.5% probability of library readers may be committing a crime as a result of alcohol use being explained by the logistic model. The Nagelkerke R² for painkillers is 0.064 and a similar value for alcohol is 0.114 – which indicates that the model is good and fit.

Further, logistic regression classification predicted that 113 respondents reported that crime was committed, while 123 respondents reported that crime was not committed in the library using the cut value of -500. However, the logistic model forecasted that for painkillers, out of the 113 library patrons originally believed to have committed crime, only 35 actually committed crime, while of the 123 originally predicted not to have committed crime, 13 still committed crime in the library.

Notwithstanding these statistical indices, the percentage of crime committed in the library was higher with participants who used alcohol – as it was found that among the originally predicted pool of 113 believed to have committed crime, 55 actually did, while 25 out of 123 believed not to have committed crime, were found to have committed crime.

In summary, the logistic classification result skewed toward alcohol use and the tendency of committing crime from alcohol use manifested as being higher than the trend with painkillers use; irrespective of the earlier indication that the use of painkillers was higher in the library.

Discussion

From the results, there is evidence of low drug use in the library, and resultant low level of crime. Findings from this study point to negligible and unsubstantial evidence of drug activities in the library. However, since patrons' drug behaviour may somewhat be discrete due to the contrived nature of the library as a study centre, it becomes difficult to actually quantify the volume of drug activities that may take place there. Moreover, since drug use behaviour has been defined by WHO (2012) as an index of age, the present result tends to indicate this age-related evidence. This is seen in the fact that most of the respondents aged between 15 and 55 years, who also reported to live alone, had a background of mixed schools attendance, and never married were involved in various dimensions of drug use. This trend may imply that the respondents, being undergraduates, tend to have voluntarily chosen that style of life as a way of, exercising sufficient freedom, which, to them, may include the liberty to use drugs without hindrance.

Also, the findings indicate that cough syrup, pain killers and alcohol were the top 3 drugs mostly used in the library in that order. This may also be an outcome of the ease of conveyance of these substances as alcohol was reported to be used by patrons (mostly students) in sachets while in the library. Cough syrup and pain killers may have been brought into the library due to ease of conveyance without detection. Generally it (cough syrup) has been reported as the most frequently used drug in the library (once a week) by people aged between 16 and 45 years, followed by pain killers which was reported to be used once a month. Also, alcohol was reported to be used about once in a week by people aged between 17 and 50 years while pain killers were found with people aged between 14 and 40 years. These drugs, reported to be the most frequently used, could be as a result of their status as illicit but permissible drugs that are allowed by law and may not be frowned at by the generality of the populace in terms of accessibility.

It was also observed that the amount of money reportedly spent on the top 3 drugs: cough syrup, pain killers and alcohol were proportionally in decreasing order of N4,000, N3,000 and N2,500. This may also be associated with their ease of conveyance as more people may find it convenient to bring these substances into the library more than any other substance(s) they may have considered. In relation to crime, alcohol may be the single most efficacious substance that can elicit criminal tendencies among patrons. This is because it is a common and permissible drug that people do not try to conceal away from law enforcement authorities.

However, there are other crimes that may not necessarily be committed due to drug influence.

Top among these crimes are book damage, book theft, audio-visual theft, vandalism, obscene calls, indecent exposure sexual violations and assault to patrons and staff. These may affect effective service delivery and utilization of the library.

The partial affirmation of the hypothesis of the study that there is a significant relationship between drug use and crimes in Nigerian academic and public libraries implies that there may be inadequate security network in our libraries to detect unwanted substances/items taken into the reading halls. It is therefore important for societal agencies, beginning from families to exercise some measures of control on members within their purview to help check the menace of drug peddling in our communities in general and libraries in particular.

In conclusion, we recommend that trained security personnel should be deployed in the libraries to facilitate security. Moreover, adequate provision of security devices should be made for libraries in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria in general. There is also the need for library staff to be sensitized on the emerging menace of drug use among patrons in libraries. This should be done through orientation programs to educate readers on the negative effect of drug use and the adverse effect it could have in the library. Finally, there is need to continue the global campaign against drug use in the general population to free our society from the stronghold of drugs. To do this, educational planners should work towards equipping the library with learning aids that would not only emblazon the reading atmosphere with aesthetic thoughts and ideas, but will also keep readers in constant touch with positive thoughts of generativity.

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