

Gender Differences in Cigarette Smoking Habits of Secondary School Students in Yenagoa Local Government Area, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study employed the descriptive survey in investigating Gender Differences in cigarette smoking habits of 105 randomly selected senior secondary school students (S.S.S. 3) from six schools in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State of Nigeria. Four research questions were formulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics. A researcher-made instrument titled 'Cigarette Smoking Habit Questionnaire' (CSHQ), with a reliability value of 0.69 was used in generating data for the study. Results of the study indicated that the prevalence level of cigarette smoking among the respondents was low (1-4 sticks) per day, with male respondents indulging in the habit more than the females. It further showed that majority of the respondents, 79(75.4%) were influenced by their peers; and 54(51.4%) were influenced by their parents and guardians. Finally, majority of the respondents, 90(83.7%) did not agree that their cigarette smoking habits had a traditional undertone. The recommendations made were that counsellors should organize seminars for parents and students on the dangers inherent in smoking cigarettes. Parents should also be encouraged through group counselling technique to be good role models. Others include introducing a 'non-smokers' club to campaign against cigarette smoking, as well as teaching the students cessation techniques.

Keywords: cigarette smoking, counselling, senior students, modeling, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Adolescents generally entertain fun habits of which cigarette smoking is one of them. It is not well understood why they engage in experimentation with tobacco, although youths are seen as ever changing and wanting to live up to the expectation of their peers. Unfortunately, most of the tobacco were used in their natural state. The prevalence of smoking among Nigerian youths in particular has led the Federal Government of Nigeria to adopt some preventive measures such as pricing policies, advertising control and regulating access to cigarettes. Other measures include anti-tobacco mass media campaigns, among others (Zeka, Gore & Kriebel, 2003). Cigarette smoking cuts across all social classes, including the rich, poor, old, young boys and girls. Several reasons have been suggested why cigarette smoking is prevalent among the youths such as making them tipsy, to enable them engage in other activities such as dancing, partying, overcoming shyness, depression, boosting their ego among others (Warner, Offord, Warner, Lennon, Conover & Jansson-Schumacher, 1989; Oyewo & Oyediran, 2006).

Furthermore, the health consequences which were reported by previous researchers points to the fact that adolescents graduate from cigarette smoking to smoking marijuana, cocaine, heroin, drinking alcohol, etc (Lafinhan & Arowolo, 2002; Oyewo & Oyediran, 2006). Therefore, the present study aims at investigating specifically, the roles of the peer group, and family members in the habit cultivated by adolescents in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This is with a view to enabling counsellors in identifying programmes and planning sensitization talks on cigarette smoking in the area.

1.1. Conceptual Clarifications

Cigarette smoking refers to the active smoking of one or more manufactured or hand-rolled tobacco cigarettes per day either purchased or home grown; and smoking is the active smoking behaviour, that is, intentional inhalation of tobacco smoke (Trading Economics, 2010).

Prevalence refers to the level or degree of active participation in a behaviour. For example, smoking cigarettes is a habit that pervades society. Literature also defines prevalence of smoking as the number/percentage of men aged 15 and above who smoke any form of tobacco, including cigarettes, cigar pipes, and excluding smokeless tobacco (Trading Economics, 2012). However, to ascertain the level of its occurrence, it is necessary to find out the magnitude, whether low, moderate or high. For instance, it is reported that 4.5 million Nigerians are tobacco addicts (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is modeled after the Social Cognitive Theory as expressed by McAlister, Perry and Parcel (2008), who theorized that individuals are influenced in several ways by certain interacting variables such as cognition, environment and behaviour. The theory explains how an individual can initiate and maintain a given behaviour. For instance, in terms of quitting smoking, there is a specific role played by the interactional effects of cognitive, environmental and behavioural factors (McAlister et al., 2008).

First, the cognition is connected with various mental processes that occur within the individual such as behavioural capability, outcome expectancies and feelings of self efficacy (McAlister et al., 2008). Second, the environment comprises any factor, physically external to the individual that can have an impact on his/her behaviour. Thus, the environment includes social factors such as the family, friends, i.e. observational learning; and the physical such as the weather, availability of tobacco products, etc (McAlister et al., 2008).

Third, behaviour is the outcome of any kind of influence. In other words, it refers to the way in which the individual reacts to various inputs from the social or physical environment (i.e. self regulation). In view of the present study, the researchers are specifically connecting with this theory from the perspective of environmental influences on behavioural disposition of an individual. This is to say that certain environmental forces may have a link with the cigarette smoking habits cultivated by a person. For example, the researchers view two major environmental factors that influence behaviour which includes the home and the school. The home factor consists of parents, siblings, guardians and neighbours whose behaviour affects the individual either overtly or covertly. Furthermore, the school factor may include teachers, peers or other adults within the school environment. The social environment constitutes the kinds of relationships and friendships cultivated especially on campus where the students are involved with clubs, societies and all manner of social groups. Thus, the present study views the cigarette smoking habits of students as one that may be determined by environmental influences.

1.3. Literature Review

Several studies have investigated the cigarette smoking behaviour of adolescents and other adults in Nigeria (Adeyeye, 2011; Fawibe & Shittu, 2011; Babatunde, Elegbede, Ayodele, Atoyebi, Ibirongbe & Adeagbo, 2012; Odey, Okokon, Ogbeche, Jumbo & Ekanem, 2012; National Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Ogala, 2013; Ebirim, Amadi, Abanobi & Ilo, 2014; Taniowo, Taniowo & Oloyede, 2014). These studies were carried out in the South-west and South-east of Nigeria respectively. The findings were that cigarette smoking was prevalent among adolescents especially in the secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Adeyeye (2011) reports that cigarette smoking was more common among the male than female students who smoked between 3-7 sticks per day; Fawibe and Shittu (2011) posit that undergraduates in South-west universities smoked between 4.46 and 4.49 sticks of cigarettes per day, a behaviour influenced by friends, colleagues and siblings. Odey et al. (2012) in another development found that cigarette smoking among adolescents in Calabar, South-south Nigeria is 6.4 percent with more males as participants. Taniowo et al (2014) found that the prevalence of cigarette smoking of final year students in Oyo State, Nigeria was fairly high.

The National Bureau of Statistics (2013) reported that 4.5 million Nigerians were tobacco addicts; and that it is estimated that by the end of the 21st century, tobacco will become the leading cause of preventable deaths if efforts are not made to minimize it among Nigerians. Furthermore, the report noted that Northern Nigeria has higher cases of tobacco smokers than the Eastern parts of Nigeria. However, the rate of smoking tobacco in Nigeria was lower in comparison to other parts of the world (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Literature has also shown that in 2006, the prevalence rate of cigarette smoking was 7.8 percent. However, in 2010, it rose to 10.5 percent (Trading Economics, 2012). A survey reported that South-easterners were the highest consumers of tobacco with a rate of 9 percent of its adult population (Global Adult Tobacco Survey, 2012). Others following includes the North-central and Middle belt with at least 8.5 percent of its adult population. Another report remarks that on the average, a smoker in Nigeria spends N1,202.50 on tobacco products monthly; while on the whole, Nigerians spend N7.45 billion on tobacco monthly and N89.5 billion yearly (Ogala, 2013). Moreover, the prevalence of tobacco smoking is 10 percent of adult men and 1.1 percent of women in Nigeria.

In terms of cultural beliefs, literature submits that earlier, people have associated smoking cigarettes with hospitality, communication with gods and spirits and that cigarettes possess healing powers in that the treated tobacco leaves have some healing properties (Egbe, Petersen, Meyer-Weitz & Asante, 2014); while in Northern Nigeria, it was reported that being of the Margi, Hausa and Fulani ethnic tribes have a strong association with smoking. In the same vein, the cultural symbolism of cigarettes was emphasized in traditional marriages in some parts of Nigeria. For instance, it is an item required by youths or young men which must be brought by the groom to the family of the bride.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Youths engage in different forms of habits amongst which cigarette smoking stands out. Although cigarettes are prohibited by schools especially in the primary and post primary levels, some students still indulge in the habit. Several studies have reported the harmful health effects of cigarette smoking among the youths such as bronchitis, lung cancer, cough, etc (Oyewo & Oyediran, 2006; Lafinhan & Arowolo, 2009). Aside from these side effects, cigarette smoking is an expensive hobby for secondary school students who may spend the pocket money given to them by their parents for upkeep and transportation to purchase packets of cigarettes, especially chain smokers.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate cigarette smoking habits among secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. In particular, the study has the following objectives, to:

1. Assess the prevalence level of cigarette smoking of male and female secondary school students.
2. Determine the influence of peers in the cigarette smoking habits of male and female secondary school students.
3. Identify the influence of parents and guardians in the cigarette smoking habits of male and female secondary school students.
4. Examine whether the traditional beliefs of male and female students influences their cigarette smoking habits.

1.6. Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the prevalence level of cigarette smoking of male and female secondary school students?
2. Does the peer group influence the cigarette smoking habits of male and female secondary school students?
3. Do parents and guardians influence the cigarette smoking habits of male and female secondary school students?
4. Do male and female students' traditional beliefs influence their cigarette smoking habits?

2. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the purpose of generating information on cigarette smoking habits of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 1,897 Senior Secondary 3 (S.S.3) students in the area. The sample consisted of 120 students , with 20 students selected from each of the six secondary schools, using the stratified random sampling technique. This technique was employed due to the gender differences between the male and female variable in obtaining only those having the required characteristics for the study. However, only 105 of the respondents completed the instrument which was used for the investigation. The justification for using the senior students was based on the assumption that cigarette smoking was likely to be more predominant among them, than their junior counterparts.

The ethical consideration taken was that the researchers obtained a written permission from the school heads to carry out the research in their schools. The procedure for collecting the data was in two phases. The first involved a visit to the schools selected to acquaint the students with the purpose of the research and informing them that participation was optional. After this, those who were sure they have been smoking cigarettes were asked to write down their names, after which 20 were selected from each of the six secondary schools for the study.

The instrument for collecting data was designed by the researchers, named 'Cigarette Smoking Habit Questionnaire' (CSHQ). It contained two sections. Section A consisted of the demographic characteristics and Section B contained 20 statements on cigarette smoking habits as well as traditional beliefs about smoking cigarettes. The response format used was a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD); rated as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by two academics in research methods, after which some items that were identified to be ambiguous were reframed. A test re-test reliability of the instrument using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient yielded a value of 0.69 which was considered high enough for the study. The questionnaire forms were administered personally to the respondents by the researchers with the assistance of their class teachers. The researchers further informed the students not to write their names, in order to avoid being identified, before copies of the questionnaire were administered. This was done as an ethical measure in order to obtain their honest responses, since the topic is a sensitive issue. The data were analyzed using percentages.

2. Results

Analysis of Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of the Sample by Gender

S/N	Name of School	Male		Female	
		F	%	F	%
1.	C.S.S. Opolo	11	(73.3)	4	(26.4)
2.	St. Judes Amarata	-	-	20	(100)
3.	B.D.G.S. Ovum	11	(64.7)	6	(35.3)
4.	C.S.S Yenezue gene	12	(63.2)	7	(36.8)
5.	C.S.S. Okutukutu	15	(93.8)	1	(6.2)
6.	C.S.S. Agudama-Epie	10	(55.6)	8	(44.4)
	Total	59	(56.2)	46	(43.8)

Note: The figures in parentheses are percentage values

Table 1 shows that 11(73.3%) males and 4(26.4%) females were from Community Secondary School Opolo; 20(100%) all females were from St. Judes Girls School, Amarata; 11(64.7%) males and 6(35.3%) females were from B.D.G.S. Ovum; 12(63.2%) males and 7(36.8%) females were from Community Secondary School Yenezue-gene; 15(93.8%) males and 1(6.2%) females were from Community Secondary School Okutukutu and 10(55.6%) males and 8(44.4%) females were from Community Secondary School Agudama-Epie.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the prevalence level of cigarette smoking of male and female secondary school students?

Table 2: Percentage showing level of cigarette smoking by Male and Female Respondents

S/N	Name of School	No. of Respondents	Low Smokers (1-4 sticks)		High Smokers (5-9 sticks)	
			M	F	M	F
1.	C.S.S Opolo	15	4(3.8)	2(1.9)	7(6.7)	2(1.9)
2.	St. JudesAmarata	20	10(9.5)	3(2.8)	4(3.8)	3(2.8)
3.	B.D.G.S. Ovum	17	8(7.6)	5(4.8)	3(2.8)	1(1.0)
4.	C.S.S Yenezue-Gene	19	7(6.7)	3(2.8)	5(4.8)	4(3.8)
5.	C.S.S. Okutukutu	16	11(10.5)	1(1.0)	4(3.8)	0(0.0)
6.	C.S.S. Agudama-Epie	18	6(5.7)	7(6.7)	4(3.8)	1(1.0)
	Total	105	46(43.7)	21(20.0)	27(25.7)	11(10.5)

Table 2 shows that in summary, 46(43.7%) males and 21(20.0%) females, making a total of 67(63.7%) were low smokers, i.e. they consumed 1-4 sticks of cigarette; and 27(25.7%) males and 11(10.5%) females, making a total of 38(36.2%) were high smokers, and consumed 5-9 sticks of cigarette.

Research Question Two: Does the peer group influence the cigarette smoking habits of male and female secondary school students?

Table 3: Percentage showing response on Peer influence on cigarette smoking

S/N	Name of School	No. of Respondents	Male		Female	
			A	D	A	D
1.	C.S.S Opolo	15	9(8.6)	2(1.9)	4(3.8)	0(0.0)
2.	St. Judes Amarata	20	-	-	17(16.2)	3(2.8)
3.	B.D.G.S. Ovum	17	7(6.7)	4(3.8)	4(3.8)	2(1.9)
4.	C.S.S Yenezue-Gene	19	9(8.6)	3(2.8)	5(4.8)	2(1.9)
5.	C.S.S. Okutukutu	16	12(11.4)	3(2.8)	1(1.0)	0(0.0)
6.	C.S.S. Agudama-Epie	18	4(3.8)	6(5.7)	7(6.7)	1(1.0)
	Total =	105	41(39.1)	18(17.0)	38(36.3)	8(7.6)

Table 3 shows that in summary, 41(39.1%) males and 38(36.3%) females, making a total of 79(75.4%) agreed and 18(17.0%) males and 8(7.6%) females, making a total of 26(24.6%) disagreed that their cigarette smoking habits were influenced by their peers.

Research Question Three: Do parents and guardians influence the cigarette smoking habits of male and female students?

Table 4: Percentage showing response on Parents' and Guardians' influence on cigarette smoking

S/N	Name of School	No. of Respondents	Male		Female	
			A	D	A	D
1.	C.S.S Opolo	15	8(7.6)	3(2.8)	4(3.8)	0(0.0)
2.	St. Judes Amarata	20	-	-	11(10.5)	9(8.6)
3.	B.D.G.S. Ovum	17	5(4.8)	6(5.7)	2(1.9)	4(3.8)
4.	C.S.S Yenezue-Gene	19	7(6.7)	5(4.8)	3(2.8)	4(3.8)
5.	C.S.S. Okutukutu	16	4(3.8)	11(10.5)	1(1.0)	0(0.0)
6.	C.S.S. Agudama-Epie	18	6(5.7)	4(3.8)	3(2.8)	5(4.8)
	Total =	105	30(28.6)	29(27.6)	24(22.8)	22(21.0)

Table 4 shows those 30 (28.6%) males and 24(22.8%) females, making a total of 54(51.4%) agreed and 29(27.6%) males and 22(21.0%) females, making a total of 26(48.6%) disagreed that their cigarette smoking habits were influenced by their parents and guardians.

Research Question Four: Do male and female students' traditional beliefs influence their cigarette smoking habits?

Table 5: Percentage showing response on influence of traditional Beliefs on cigarette smoking

S/N	Name of School	No. of Respondents	Male		Female	
			A	D	A	D
1.	C.S.S Opolo	15	3(2.8)	9(8.6)	1(1.0)	2(1.9)
2.	St. Judes Amarata	20	-	-	2(1.9)	18(17.1)
3.	B.D.G.S. Ovum	17	2(1.9)	7(6.7)	4(3.8)	4(3.8)
4.	C.S.S Yenezue-Gene	19	0(0.0)	12(11.4)	2(1.9)	5(4.8)
5.	C.S.S. Okutukutu	16	1(1.0)	14(13.3)	0(0.0)	1(1.0)
6.	C.S.S. Agudama-Epie	18	0(0.0)	10(9.5)	0(0.0)	8(7.6)
	Total	105	6(5.7)	52(49.5)	9(8.6)	38(36.2)

Table 5 shows that when respondents were asked if their cigarette smoking habits had any traditional belief ties, 6(5.7%) males and 9(8.6%) females making a total of 15(14.3%) agreed as against 52(47.5%) males and 38(36.2%) females, making a total of 90(83.7%) who disagreed.

3. Discussion of Findings

The first research question sought to investigate the prevalence of cigarette smoking among male and female students in six secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The result showed that an average of 67(63.7%) who consumed 1-4 sticks of cigarettes per day were low smokers as against 38(36.2%), smoking 5-9 sticks, who were regarded as high smokers. The outcome of this result may probably be because the students were mindful of the punishment that will be meted out on them if caught smoking within the school premises. Furthermore, the advertisement on news media indicating that 'tobacco smoking is dangerous to health' might have also influenced their low consumption status. This view is also supported by Ebirim et al (2014), who found that knowledge of health problems were the main reasons for students' low smoking behaviour. The study also shows that the males were more obviously involved than the females. Although the number of female respondents were small, a previous study by Odey, Okokon, Ogbeche, Jumbo and Ekanem (2012) also supports this finding, reporting that cigarette smoking was prevalent among adolescents in Calabar, Nigeria, with the males taking the lead. Similarly, the study agrees with that of Adeyeye (2011) which submits that cigarette smoking was low among the sample used with more males than females engaging in the behaviour. Other studies with similar findings included Fawibe and Shittu (2011) as well as Babatunde et al (2012). However, the present study negates that of Taniowo, Taniowo and Oloyede (2014) who found that the prevalence of cigarette smoking was fairly high among final year students in schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

In terms of the second research question, 79(75.4%) as against 26(14.6%) agreed that their cigarette smoking habits were influenced by their peers. This result confirms those of Ebirim et al (2014); Adeyeye (2011) and Babatunde et al. (2012) that their respondents' smoking behaviour was influenced by their friends and classmates. In terms of the third research question, it found that 54(51.4%) as against 51(48.6%) indicated that their cigarette smoking habits were influenced by their parents and guardians. Although the percentage difference between the two groups was average, that is almost 50:50, yet those who agreed were slightly more than those who did not. The result could be explained in the light of children who most of the time sees their parents as their role models; and as such copy their behaviour. This finding is consistent with that of Adeyeye (2011), that parents influenced their children's cigarette smoking behaviour.

Finally, the fourth research question regarding whether the respondents' cigarette smoking habits were connected with traditional beliefs, showed that only 15(14.3%) of the respondents agreed as against majority of the respondents 90(83.7%) who disagreed. This finding simply implies that the respondents may be smoking because their peers are also doing so; probably because they desire to belong or be accepted by the group, which is characteristic of the adolescents.

4. Conclusion

Results of this study show that there is a low prevalence of cigarette smoking among secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The cigarette habits of the students were influenced by their peers, parents and guardians. Lastly, majority of the respondents did not agree that their smoking habits had a traditional connotation. The finding implies that the respondents may have indulged in smoking for the fun of it, or due to their desire for acceptance into their social group. Therefore, further studies may be required in this regard.

5. Recommendations

Since the present study has established that cigarette smoking is prevalent among both males and females in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, the study has implications for parents, students, the school authorities and counsellors. School counsellors have an important role to play in this regard, as follows:

1. A sensitization seminar should be planned by counsellors, by inviting the medical personnel to the institutions to speak to the students and their parents, particularly counselling parents and guardians to be good role models; emphasizing how their smoking habits impact negatively on their children. Furthermore, the medical personnel would be able to give an insight into the dangers of smoking cigarettes that may give rise to preventable deaths from diseases such as lung cancer, bronchitis, etc.

2. Counsellors should also assist the students to overcome their cigarette smoking habits by initiating a 'non-smokers club' in the school, so that the students' interests and energies would be diverted to more meaningful educational ventures such as debates; and awarding prizes to students who declare that they have overcome cigarette smoking. These set of students could serve as models to the other students and lead the campaign against cigarette smoking on campus, using fliers and posters.
3. Counsellors should also introduce the student smokers to cessation programmes that will encourage them to quit smoking through the use of learnt cessation skills. Also, because psychologists believe that behaviours that are learned can be unlearned, the students should be educated on how to unlearn their smoking habits through skills training, using group counselling technique and through the use of positive reinforcement such as praise, when they overcome the habit or verbal punishment such as condemnation when they keep repeating the behaviour.
4. The school authorities should place sanctions on students who violate the 'no smoking' order of the school, to serve as deterrent to others who indulge in smoking cigarettes.
5. The campaign against the dangers inherent in cigarette smoking should be intensified through the news and print media by government and they should place a total ban on cigarettes.

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