

Peer Influence as the Predictor of Cigarette Smoking among Students of Borno State University, Maiduguri

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Abstract

Global tobacco use in Africa and Nigeria is more than a health problem. It can now be defined as a development problem. Tobacco has exposed people to sickness and diseases and breeds them to poverty, especially the productive population in their formative years. This study is about peer influence as the predictor of cigarette smoking among students of Borno State University, Maiduguri. The descriptive cross-sectional research design was used because it covered students from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Since, there is no available data on the population of smokers on campus, a supposed representative sample of ninety-five smokers. This study made use of purposive and accidental sampling techniques. The researcher to collect data for the study visited the university the research instrument (questionnaire) was self-administered to smokers after approval had been gotten from them. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using tables, simple percentages, independent samples test and bivariate regression. The study found that peer groups significantly influence cigarette smoking habits in the area. The study recommends among others that As a short time measure, Government revoke import licenses on tobacco and related products and regulate other supply chains.

Keywords: *Cigarette smoking, Peer group, predictor, Borno State University students*

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I. Introduction

Smoking is the act of inhaling and exhaling the fumes of burning plant material. A variety of plant materials are smoked, including marijuana and hashish, but the act is most commonly associated with tobacco as smoked in a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. Tobacco contains nicotine, an alkaloid that is addictive and can have both stimulating and tranquillizing psychoactive effects (Grougiou et al., 2015). The smoking of tobacco, long practised by American Indians, was introduced to Europe by Christopher Columbus and other explorers (Amorpha et al., 2017). Smoking must be defined as a chemical toxicosis which can cause detrimental effects either of acute or chronic type on different structures of the body including which these cardiovascular system, respiratory system and epithelial glands target organs (Court & Gladys, 2020).

Scholars have established that there is a significant influence of peer groups on smoking habits. For instance, Urberg, Değirmencioğlu, & Pilgrim (2015) in their study found the relative influence of adolescents' closest friends and their friendship group on their cigarette smoking and alcohol use was investigated in a short-term, longitudinal study of 1,028 students in the 6th, 8th and 10th grades in 2 school systems. The amount of influence over the school year was modest in magnitude and came from the closest friend for initiation of cigarette and alcohol use. Only the friendship group used predicted transition into current cigarette use, whereas only the close friend used predicted transition into current alcohol use. Both groups and close friends independently contributed to the prediction of adolescents' drinking to intoxication. No difference in the amount of influence was found between stable and unstable close friendships or friendship groups; neither the grade nor gender of the adolescents related to the amount of influence.

Andi, Mapeaty & Muhammad (2017) in their study averred that peers' influence on smoking behaviour is more evident as participants reveal that most of the time they are accompanied by their friends when smoking a cigarette. Friends in this context are their school friends, playmates, and both. Those participants, who still smoking, are mostly motivated by peer pressure. Some imitate friends smoking behaviour, some others are forced, and some others are motivated by the physiological comfort effect provided by smoking.

Smoking behaviour is a function of a person and their environment. Besides caused by internal factors, smoking behaviour is also caused by external factors, which as the environment. Referring to the concept of behaviour transmission, behaviour can be transmitted vertically and horizontally. Vertical transmission is performed by parents while horizontal transmission can be performed by peers (Komasari, & Helmi, 2013). The role of peers in child smoking behaviour can be reviewed from five factors of behaviour determinants: child smoking intentions; affordability; social support; personal autonomy; and supportive situations (Notoatmodjo, 2013).

The role of peers in children smoking behaviour occurs through the mechanism of peer socialization. A child with a smoking friend is more likely to be influenced to smoke. There is also a tendency that smoking children will also choose a smoking friend (Astuti, Merokok, & Kabupaten, 2013). In addition, making friends with smoking friends will elevate the risk of increasing smoking intensity. Smoking among friends can be a contributing factor as well as a behavioural amplifier factor. The need for acceptance often leads children to do whatever it takes to be accepted by the group and free from labels such as 'coward' or 'sissy'. Children may experience internal pressure to smoke if others around them smoke (Eriksen, Mackay, Schluger, et al, 2015).

Peers also act as intermediary agents of smoking socialization (Rachmat, Thaha, & Syafa, 2016). Smoking peers allow individual smoking behaviour because it creates facilitating conditions to smoke. Peers invited children to smoke, providing them with cigarettes or money to buy cigarettes and also having friends with whom they share the same behaviour (i.e. smoking cigarettes). If a child smoke, it is likely that his peers are also a smoker. Vice versa, if their peers smoke, it is likely that the children are also a smoker (Eriksen, Mackay, Schluger, et a, 2015).

For years, peer influence has reigned as the most important contributor to adolescent smoking initiation, in the views of researchers, the general public, and tobacco companies. As summarized in the 1994 Surgeon General's report on youth smoking, "The influence of peers has been posited as the single most important factor in determining when and how cigarettes are first tried"(U.S.DepartmentofHealthandHumanServices,1994,p.131). In the general public, polls have found that a majority of Americans agree that peer pressure is the most important influence in leading adolescents to smoke (Thomas & Larsen, 1993). The tobacco companies, too, wholeheartedly endorse peer influence as the primary reason that adolescents begin smoking (Hassan, 2016).

Akers and Sellers (2004) in their study in the United States concluded that peer factors seem to be a stronger predictor of adolescent substance use than parental influence. They argued that peer influence has strong direct effects on adolescent substance use, superior to the parental attachment". In New Zealand, Fergusson, Swain-Campbell and Horwood (2002) found a significant influence of deviant peers on both psychosocial and criminal outcomes, such as violent crime, property crime, and alcohol and other drug abuse". In a study conducted with an Austrian youth sample, Rumpold, Klingseis, Dornauer, Kopp, Doering and Hofer (2006) contended that peer group influence was particularly associated with adolescent substance and drug use, as compared to variables reflecting negative family atmosphere, school difficulties, and other individual factors". Kwamanga, Odhiambo and Amukoye (2003) examined the prevalence and risk factors of smoking among secondary school students in Nairobi. The study found that peer pressure, advertising, type of school and age-pressured smoking among the students. Considering the above elsewhere, does the peer group influence the smoking habit among Borno state, university students? This is unknown; hence this necessitates the study of this kind for documentation.

Conceptual framework



Theoretical framework

This study adopts the social learning theory. The theory looks at family and peer relationships to exert a significant influence on adolescents. The theory posits that “an individual learns to take cigarettes or drugs in small and informal groups” (Bahr, Marcos and Maughan, 2005; Akers & Sellers, 2004). Indeed, it is in these formal groups that adolescents are taught favourable or unfavourable behaviour of cigarette use (Akers and Jensen, 2005). The main tenet remains that the learning process may conform to societal ethics or show deviant behaviour. The theory, therefore, explains how good and bad behaviours are learned and the major players influencing any of the behaviours. Akers (1998) opined that the social learning theory “is not mainly a “positivistic” theory of the causes of crime, addressing only “why they do it” and incapable of explaining “why they do not”. Akers and Sellers (2004) in buttressing the relevance of this theory argued that “the concepts, propositions, and variables in social learning theory have been presented in published form in great detail over the past forty years, is well known in the classroom and widely cited in the literature”. The main thrust of many social learning theorists is on peers as a result of the importance children or adolescents place on their friends as they grow into adulthoods and gradually gain freedom from their parents. This theory of course constitutes a powerful stream for research on peers as a source of influence and support for smoking behaviour. For example, Mosbach and Leventhal (1988) revealed that “cigarette smoking was the best discriminator of social group affiliations”. Adebisi et al. (2010) in their study showed that “peer influence is an important source of introduction to tobacco use”, while Kim et al. (2010) noted that “both peer and parental influence are significant in predicting the risks of adolescent substance use”. The implication of this theory to the present study is that peer influence increases during adolescence and has vital effects on attitudes and behaviours mostly on the current incidence of tobacco use among undergraduate students in tertiary institutions. It is not uncommon to find most students displaying deviant behaviours different from what is learnt at home immediately after they begin to gain freedom. This theory is relevant in that it explains the variable under investigation.

Method

The descriptive cross-sectional research design was used because it covered students from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Since there is no available data on the population of smokers on campus, a supposed representative sample of ninety-five smokers (both males and females) was purposively determined. This study made use of purposive and accidental sampling techniques. The researcher to collect data for the study visited the university the research instrument (questionnaire) was self-administered to smokers after approval had been gotten from them. In line with the instructions on the instrument, the 95 questionnaires were answered and returned. Respondents were asked to instantly fill the instrument. The questionnaire contained questions concerning the study objectives. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using tables, simple percentages, independent samples test and bivariate regression.

II. Result

Table 1: Introduction to Tobacco Use and Initiation by students

Determinant of tobacco use	Frequency N=95	Percentage %=100
Friends	61	64.2
Brothers/sisters	20	21.1
Parents	4	4.2
Relatives	10	10.5

Sources: field, 2022

The data indicates that the majority of the respondents 64.2% (61) were introduced to tobacco smoking by their peers, 21.1% (20) learned the habit from their brothers/sister, 4.4% (4) were initiated by their parent and 10.5% (10) were initiated by their relative.

Table 2: frequency distribution of tobacco Use among the students

Frequency of tobacco use	Frequency=95	Percentage=%
Daily/everyday	52	54.7
Once a week	15	15.8
Once a month	18	18.9
3-4 times a week	7	7.4
Occasionally	3	3.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table shows the frequency of cigarette smoking by the students. The data shows that the majority of the respondents 54.7% (52) smoke daily or every day, 15.8% (15) smoke once a week, 18.9% (18) smoke once a month, 7.7% (7) smoke 3-4 times a week and 3.2% (3) smoke occasionally.

Table 3: Respondents' pattern of tobacco use

The pattern of tobacco use	Frequency=95	Percentage=%
Smoking+ chewing	25	26.3
Smoking alone	34	35.8
Smoking+ drinking	24	25.3
Smoking+ chewing+ drinking	12	12.6

Source: fieldwork, 2022

The table presented here about the pattern of cigarette smoking among the students in the area indicates that the majority of the respondents 35.8% (34) smoke only, 26.3% (25) smoke and chew, 25.3% (24) smoke and drink and 12.6% (12) smoke, chew and drink.

Table 4: Linear regression result of peer influence on cigarette smoking

Variable	Coefficients B	B	t-value
Peer influence	0.61	0.29	2.027
Test result			
f-value	4.027		
R	0.52		
R2	0.34		
CONSTANT	2384		4.622
Df	23		
Table f-value	375		

Significant at a 5% significance level

The hypothesis that peer influence has a significant influence on undergraduate students' tobacco use was tested using linear regression. Result obtained is shown in Table 7. The result in table 6 shows there was a high correlation (0.61) between peer pressure and tobacco use. The coefficient of determination (R²) indicates that 52 per cent of tobacco use among undergraduate students was accounted for by peer pressure. The ANOVA result indicates that cigarette smoking was significantly influenced by peer pressure. This implies that cigarette smoking is significantly influenced by peer pressure. This shows the high association between peer influence and cigarette smoking, indicating that peer influence exerted a significant influence on smokers directly or indirectly.

III. Discussion of findings

The study found that peer groups significantly influence cigarette smoking habits in the area. In other words, it has shown how peer group influence plays an important role in the smoking habit of smokers. This finding corresponds with Urberg, Değirmencioglu, & Pilgrim (2015) in their study found the relative influence of adolescents' closest friends and their friendship group on their cigarette smoking and alcohol use was investigated in a short-term, longitudinal study of 1,028 students in the 6th, 8th and 10th grades in 2 school systems. The amount of influence over the school year was modest in magnitude and came from the closest friend for initiation of cigarette and alcohol use. Only the friendship group used predicted transition into current cigarette use, whereas only the close friend used predicted transition into current alcohol use. Both groups and close friends independently contributed to the prediction of adolescents' drinking to intoxication. No difference in the amount of influence was found between stable and unstable close friendships or friendship groups; neither the grade nor gender of the adolescents related to the amount of influence.

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IV. Conclusion

Global tobacco use in Africa and Nigeria is more than a health problem. It can now be defined as a development problem. Tobacco has exposed people to sickness and diseases and breeds them to poverty, especially the productive population in their formative years. Chapter one is anchored on the background of the study, and the statement of the research problem. The objectives of the study are to determine the likelihood of advertising strategies as a factor for cigarette smoking amongst the population, to assess the peer group influence on the likelihood of smoking amongst the population, to determine how the enacted laws on cigarette smoking helped reduce Smoking, to determine the predisposing and enabling factor for smoking, to determine the reinforcing factor for cigarette smoking and to determine the cigarette vendors' role increases cigarette smoking in Maiduguri town of Borno State, Nigeria. These were followed by the corresponding research questions.

Recommendations

- i. As a short time measure, Government to revoke import licenses on tobacco and related products and regulate other supply chains.
- ii. Government should at all levels ban Advertising in whatever form as regards Cigarette advertising. This can be done by institutionalising a supervisory body or commission that will work closely with the advertising practitioners council of Nigeria,
- iii. The Government, through the youth and social development ministry and other collaborating agencies, to develop a framework that will work closely with Social and community/ cultural associations to come up with a culturally appropriate peer review mechanism that could bring fair peer group play and recreation that will bring teen closer to their cluster families and communities.

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