



## Assessment of national drug law enforcement agency's awareness programmes on drug abuse in Anambra state

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### Abstract

The study assessed the national drug law enforcement agency awareness programmes on drug abuse in Anambra State, Nigeria. A research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised 108 NDLEA staff (Source: Drug Demand Reduction Unit, Personnel Unit, Ontisha, 2018); 2,544 civil defence corps (Source: Servicom Unit, NSCDC Zonal Office, Awka, 2019) and 356,745 youths aged 25 – 29 years in Anambra State. The sample size for this study is 108 NDLEA staff; 346 civil defence corps and 360 community youths, consisting of a total of 814 respondents. In selecting the sample size for the number of civil defence corps and community youths, Taro Yamane formula was used. A structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's Awareness Programmes Questionnaire" (ANDLEAAPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and an overall co-efficient value of 0.75 was achieved. Mean was used to answer the research question while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that the respondents agreed on the effectiveness of NDLEA on embarking on awareness programmes. The findings also revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in Anambra State. It was recommended amongst others that the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in collaboration with Anambra Ministry of Education must intensify their anti-drug campaigns and awareness programmes on illicit drugs in order to have a drug-free society with a special focus on both students and youths in the State.

**Keywords:** national drug law, awareness programmes, Anambra state

### Introduction

Since time immemorial, man is known to be using drugs and practically depending on drug usage to relieve pain, escape reality, to alter perception, provide pleasurable sensation and find the assumed meaning to life. This means that man explores several substances to satisfy his hunger and thirst for cure for his ailments. Such substance include plant extracts, fermentation products and more recently different synthetic and semi synthetic substances, hence the number of drugs in circulation.

Drugs according to Science Museum is defined as any chemical substance that when taken affects the way the body works. Chia (2016) [2] defined drugs as any natural or synthetic substances which (when taken into a living body) affects its functioning or structure, and is used in the diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of a disease or relief of discomfort. There are both legal and illegal drugs, the legal drugs are those socially and culturally accepted and used e.g. alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs and over-the counter drugs e.g. pentazocine, tramadol, codeine, cough syrups (which are now being abused). Illegal drugs are cannabis, cocaine, heroin, amphetamines among others.

Every drug has a potential of being abused by the user. That is why certain drugs have a high degree of tendency of being abused which is referred to as dependence producing or addictive drugs (Chia, 2016). Hence, drugs abuse is the recurrent use of illegal drugs with negative consequences which may include; problems at work, school, home or interpersonal relationships; problems with the law; physical

risks that come with using drugs in dangerous situations (University of Maryland Medical Centre, 2013). Chia opined that these drugs act on the brain at the neuronal and structural levels causing the alterations of arousal, awareness, impairment of sleep, memory, psychomotor performance and perception, which are symptomatic of neuropsychological toxicity. It is therefore important to note that drug abuse and trafficking illicit drugs and psychoactive substances are no doubt a thorn in the flesh of majority of the youths in Nigeria.

Nigeria as one of the developing countries in Africa has on a daily basis been besieged with news of young men and women arrested in an attempt to traffic hard drugs such as cocaine, heroin and cannabis both within and outside the shores of the country. The origin of Nigeria's drugs trafficking problem can be traced to the period just after the Second World War. Nigerian soldiers who had served in Burma, India, came back with seeds of the cannabis sativa plant. They went ahead to experiment with its cultivation and discovered that the plant does very well in some parts of Nigeria, and this led to a rise in the cultivation of the plant (Chris, 2016) [3]. This cultivation therefore has become a national phenomenon which has exposed people to what is called drug trafficking.

According to United National Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC, 2013), drug trafficking is the illicit global trade that deals with the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. The most commonly trafficked drugs are cocaine, heroin, morphine, cannabis sativa (Indian hemp) and crystal

methamphetamine. A 2012 report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), submits that Nigeria tops the list with the highest trafficking and drug use in West Africa. The report further indicates that in the last 15 years, West Africa became the new transit hub for cocaine comparing from Latin America destined for Europe with Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos, emerging as the most active centre for air trafficking of cocaine. The report indicates that close to 50% of Africa's drug couriers arrested in Europe in 2011 were citizens of Nigeria. Nigeria however, topped the list of major transit routes of heroin destined for Europe. Nigeria is reported to have featured prominently among West African states that produce and export cannabis to countries in Europe (Daily Sun, 2009).

According to the UNODC Threat Assessment of Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa Report in 2013, Nigerian trafficking syndicates based in Brazil and other places in South America remain quite active in cocaine trafficking, with these groups importing cocaine through containerized consignments and maritime shipping, air couriers and postal shipments. It is of note that methamphetamine production in West Africa is a growing concern. The main market for West African produced methamphetamine is East Asia, and to a lesser extent, South Africa. Nigerians have been over-represented in the number of West Africans arrested both in Africa and Europe for heroin smuggling (Henry, 2007) <sup>[6]</sup>.

In the past decade, there has been significant growth in the illicit trafficking of drugs, people, firearms, and natural resources. Trafficking in these and other commodities is generally characterized by high levels of organization and the presence of strong criminal groups and networks. While such activities existed in the past, both the scale and the geographic scope of the current challenge are unprecedented. In 2009, the value of illicit trade around the globe was estimated at US\$1.3 trillion and is increasing (Oshiomole, 2015) <sup>[14]</sup>. In addition to tarnishing Nigeria's image as a nation, drug trafficking also has negative impacts on its security, economy and the well-being of Nigerians. The proceeds from drug trafficking can potentially be a source of funding for non-state armed and terrorist groups. The activities of these groups result in prolonged conflicts, instability and consequently overthrow of governments.

Considering the above issues, it is important to note that the war against drug trafficking in Nigeria started in earnest with the establishment of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance in 1935. This ordinance guided the then Board of Customs and Excise and the Nigeria Police to tackle drugs trafficking locally (Nwannennaya & Abiodun, 2017) <sup>[13]</sup>. Until the advent of the NDLEA, the Board of customs and Excise (now Nigeria Customs Service) and the Nigeria police were the major drug interdiction organs of government, while the Federal Welfare Department was charged with the counseling, treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependent persons. From the activities of the Agency over the years, it is evident that government made no mistake in establishing the body that has become the reference point and the leading light in global efforts against drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse (Bartlett, 2014) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Another important period in Nigeria's war on drugs was the Decree No. 20 of 1984 which proscribed the death penalty for all those involved in drugs trafficking (Cressey, 2016). However, due to public outcry this law was adjusted to

between two years and life imprisonment, depending on the offence. The enactment of Decree 48 of 1989 saw the establishment of an independent body known as the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to tackle the menace of drugs abuse and trafficking. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is a Federal agency in Nigeria charged with eliminating the growing, processing, manufacturing, selling, exporting, and trafficking of hard drugs (This Day, 2009).

In the first instance, the NDLEA describes the South West region of Nigeria as one of the main centres of illicit drug production in the country. 196.5 acres (0.795 km<sup>2</sup>) of cannabis farmland was discovered and destroyed in the region in 2008. In particular, Edo State has the highest rate of seizure of cannabis in the country. In January 2009, the NDLEA publicly burned 5,605.45 kilograms of drugs seized from traffickers in the historic town of Badagry, Lagos State. The bonfire included 376.45 kilograms of cocaine, 71.46 kilograms of heroin and 5,157.56 tonnes of cannabis in 2015. In April 2009, the NDLEA confiscated 6.5 tonnes of marijuana from the home of a man in Ogun State who claimed to be 114 years old. In September 2009 the NDLEA reported destroying a 24 hectares Cannabis Plantation in a forest reserve in Osun State (George, 2011).

Between 2006 and June 2008 over 12,663 suspected drug dealers were arrested, with seizure of over 418.8 metric tonnes of various hard drugs. For example, in July 2009 a woman about to board a KLM flight at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport was arrested by NDLEA officers and later excreted 42 wraps of cocaine, weighing 585 grams. In September 2009, the NDLEA arrested a Guinean woman en route from Brazil to Europe with 6.350 kg of pure cocaine at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos (Nwannennaya & Abiodun, 2017) <sup>[13]</sup>.

With all these statistics and reports, the National Drug law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) remains one of the surviving national agencies that still need to put frantic efforts to making sure that the country is protected from illicit drugs and drug related crimes. The agency commenced operations in 1990; saddled with the responsibility to enforce laws against the cultivation, processing, sale, trafficking and use of hard drugs and to investigate persons suspected to have dealings in drugs and other related matter. Specifically, the functions of the agency as outlined in the NDLEA Act (2014), among others include the following: (1) the enforcement and the due administration of the provisions of this Act; (2) the coordination of all drug laws and enforcement functions conferred on any person or authority, including Ministers in the Government of the Federation, by any such law; (3) adoption of measures to identify, trace, freeze, confiscate or seize proceeds derived from drug-related offences or property whose value corresponds to such proceeds; (4) adoption of measures to eradicate illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and to eliminate illicit demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances with a view to reducing human suffering; (5) taking such measures which might require the taking of reasonable precautions to prevent the use of ordinary means of transport for illicit traffic in narcotic drugs including making special arrangements with transport owners; (6) adopting of measures which shall include coordinated preventive and repressive action; (7) adopting of measures to ease the effectiveness of eradication

efforts; (8) the facilitation of rapid exchange of scientific and technical information and the conduct of arch geared towards eradication of illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (9) ensuring the effectiveness of law enforcement to suppress illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (10) establishing, maintaining and securing communication to facilitate the rapid exchange of information concerning offices and improving international co-operation in the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drug and psychotropic substance by road, sea and air; (11) reinforcing and supplementing the measures provided in the convention of Narcotic Drugs 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention against illicit traffic of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (12) taking such measures that may ensure the elimination and prevention of the root causes of the problems of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

In rendering of its services to the masses, the NDLEA adopts measures in curtailing illicit products. Invariably, these measures more or less denote the functions of the agency as outlined in the NDLEA Act (2014). Hence, there is need to study its function on awareness of the programmes

**Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria, the national drug law enforcement agency is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that our communities are free of drug crimes. In order to carry out their roles effectively, the NDLEA are supposed to function as stipulated in the decree that established them. At present, the services of rendered by NDLEA could be given pass mark in some areas while her performance in other areas has been abysmal. For example, according to NDLEA (2013), as at middle 2013, over 3.4 million kilograms of drugs were seized and destroyed since the Agency began operations in 1990. According to the report, the Agency intercepted a total of 3,434,966.23kg of narcotics including 2, 827, 861.70kg of cannabis, 178,120.73kg of cocaine, 195, 283. 92kg of heroin and 233,699kg of psychotropic substances. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Anambra State Command renounced that on Tuesday 21st January, 2020 said that it had arrested 249 suspects, seized 426,598kg of hard drugs and secured the conviction of 37 in the state. Despite the efforts of NDLEA officers in rendering their services, there is still great concern about the dent drug trafficking has brought on the image of Nigeria and its citizens, a former Attorney General and Minister of Justice Abubakar Malami once claimed that no Nigerian will travel to America without carrying the stigma of criminality. This could mean that crimes in Nigeria are under-detected, under-reported, under-recorded and therefore under-estimated. With this, one begins to ponder on the proportion of drug traffickers that are arrested. Consequently, arrest statistics indicate just the tip of the iceberg. Available records coupled with informal preliminary investigations by the researcher revealed that some fundamental forces romance each other in ensuring the success or otherwise of this organized criminal activity.

These include; porous routes/boarders, methods of concealment, modes of transportation and deception technique. Others include drug barons, merchants, traffickers, agents, distributors, couriers and peddlers. This could imply that Nigerian borders; land, sea and air, are porous, hence drugs still find its way in and out of Nigeria. It could also imply that officers that are supposed to secure the borders seem to have been compromised in the line of duty. This poor situation still existing as regards criminality has exposed gaps in the functionality and services of NDLEA. This therefore calls for the need to assess on awareness of the programmes the services of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. How effective is National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in embarking on awareness programs?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in Anambra State.

**Method**

The adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 108 NDLEA staff; 2,544 civil defense corps and 356,745 youths aged 25 – 29 years in Anambra State. Taro Yamane formula was used to sample 108 NDLEA staff, 346 Civil Defense Corps and 360 Community Youth. A structural questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was titled ‘‘Assessment of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Awareness Programmes Questionnaire’’ (ANDLEAAPQ). The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through pilot study by administering the instrument to 20 NDLEA staff, 20 civil defence corps and 20 community members in Enugu State which was not part of the study area. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and a reliability value of 0.83 was obtained from the respondents of NDLEA staff. The second respondents (civil defense corps) yielded values 0.71. The third respondents (community youths aged 25 – 29 years) yielded values of 0.71. The overall reliability co-efficient for the respondents was 0.75. Arithmetic mean was used to analyze data related to the research questions and Inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

1. Research Question 1: How effective is National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in embarking on awareness programmes?

**Table 1:** Mean Scores of the Effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes

S/N	items on embarking on awareness Programmes	Resp.	X	Remarks
1	NDLEA radio awareness programme is very effective	NS	3.38	Agree
		CM	3.39	Agree

		CD	3.43	Agree
2	The radio programme educates people on the dangers of drug abuse	NS	3.58	Agree
		CM	3.54	Agree
		CD	3.57	Agree
3	The radio programme informs people to avoid friends who abuse drugs	NS	3.39	Agree
		CM	3.35	Agree
		CD	3.37	Agree
4	The radio programme educates people to avoid places where they can be tempted to engage in drug abuse	NS	3.44	Agree
		CM	3.41	Agree
		CD	3.42	Agree
5	The radio programme educates that abusing drugs does not help one to build self confidence	NS	3.29	Agree
		CM	3.31	Agree
		CD	3.33	Agree
6	NDLEA awareness programme encourages people to engage in healthy lifestyle	NS	3.65	Agree
		CM	3.62	Agree
		CD	3.66	Agree
7	NDLEA awareness programme teaches people on how to restrain from drug abuse	NS	3.37	Agree
		CM	3.36	Agree
		CD	3.38	Agree
8	NDLEA awareness programme teaches people how to refute mass media information that support drug abuse	NS	3.54	Agree
		CM	3.53	Agree
		CD	3.58	Agree
9	The awareness programme teaches people values that supports nonuse of drugs	NS	3.52	Agree
		CM	3.49	Agree
		CD	3.53	Agree
10	The awareness programme educates people to engage in productive life style	NS	3.49	Agree
		CM	3.53	Agree
		CD	3.52	Agree
11	The awareness programme educates people that they would be jailed if they commit drug related offences	NS	3.44	Agree
		CM	3.46	Agree
		CD	3.48	Agree
12	The awareness programme teaches people how to stay away from environments that are drug abuse friendly	NS	3.48	Agree
		CM	3.47	Agree
		CD	3.50	Agree
13	The awareness programmes makes one to understand that abusing drugs does not stop the stress of this world	NS	3.35	Agree
		CM	3.33	Agree
		CD	3.35	Agree
14	The awareness programme is not enough to stop people from committing drug related crimes	NS	3.47	Agree
		CM	3.42	Agree
		CD	3.43	Agree
Cluster Mean		NS	3.46	Agree
		CM	3.44	Agree
		CD	4.05	Agree

Data in Table 1 reveals the item by item analysis on the ratings of NDLEA staff, community member and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA on embarking on awareness programmes. The result revealed that all the items (1 – 14) were agreed upon by the respondents. This means that the three respondents agreed that NDLEA is effective in creating radio awareness programmes that; educates people on the dangers of drug abuse through radio programmes; informs people to avoid friends who use drugs; educates people to avoid places where they can be tempted to engage in drug abuse; educates that abusing drugs does not help one to build self-confidence; encourages people to engage in healthy lifestyles; teaches people on how to restrain from drug abuse; teaches people how to refute mass media information that support drug abuse; teaches people how to refute mass media information that

support drug abuse; teaches people to engage to engage in productive lifestyle; educates people that they would be jailed if they commit drug related offences; teaches people how to stay away from environments that are drug abuse friendly; makes one to understand that abusing drugs does not stop the stress of this world; and that it is not enough to stop people from committing drug related crimes. Summarily, the cluster means of 3.46, 3.44 and 4.05 respectively means that the three respondents agreed that NDLEA is effective in embarking on awareness programmes.

**Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in Anambra State

**Table 2:** ANOVA test of significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.014	2	9.007	.807	.447
Within Groups	9051.313	811	11.161		
Total	9069.327	813			

Data presented in Table 2 revealed the analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in Anambra State. The result revealed that *p*-value (0.447) is greater than the alpha level of 0.05,  $p (0.447) > 0.05$ . This means that the null hypothesis is not rejected, thus, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in Anambra State.

**Discussion of Findings**

The finding in research question one revealed that NDLEA staff, community member and civil defense agreed on the effectiveness of NDLEA on embarking on awareness programmes. Broadly speaking, the respondents jointly agreed that NDLEA is effective in creating radio awareness programmes that; educates people on the dangers of drug abuse through radio programmes; informs people to avoid friends who use drugs; educates people to avoid places where they can be tempted to engage in drug abuse; educates that abusing drugs does not help one to build self-confidence; encourages people to engage in healthy lifestyles; teaches people on how to restrain from drug abuse; teaches people how to refute mass media information that support drug abuse; teaches people how to engage to engage in productive lifestyle; educates people that they would be jailed if they commit drug related offences; teaches people how to stay away from environments that are drug abuse friendly; makes one to understand that abusing drugs does not stop the stress of this world; and that it is not enough to stop people from committing drug related crimes. This finding supported the finding of Unde-Akpeh (2017) that more than half of the respondents of the youths were aware of the radio campaign on drug abuse by NDLEA. Such programmes educate people on the dangers on drug abuse; educates people to avoid gatherings which involve drug abuse and educates people about the consequences of drug abuse when caught. The finding also agreed with the finding of Jemima, Sam and Asara (2003) that there is high awareness among the youth of types of substances used and their general effects on the individual, family and community. According to the researcher’s view, the finding illustrates that drug agencies embark on educating people to avoid friends who use illicit drugs; staying away from environment that are drug abuse friendly and also understanding that abuse of drug would keep pushing them into committing more dangerous crimes relating to drugs.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NDLEA staff, community members and civil defense on the effectiveness of NDLEA in embarking on awareness programmes in

Anambra State. This finding supported the finding of Unde-Akpeh (2017) that NDLEA staff and community youths do not differ significantly on their mean ratings on radio campaign influence on drug abuse among youths in Onitsha metropolis. This means that NDLEA staff and community members are not influenced by their mean ratings on their effectiveness in embarking awareness programmes in Anambra State.

**Recommendations**

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

1. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in collaboration with Anambra Ministry of Education must intensify their anti-drug campaigns and awareness programmes on illicit drugs in order to have a drug-free society with a special focus on both students and youths in the State.
2. The National Drug law enforcement should implore the use of social media platforms in their awareness programmes on illicit drugs
3. National Drug and Law Enforcement Agencies in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies such as the Police, NSCDC, Nigeria Immigration Service and the Nigeria Custom Service and community vigilante should help in preventing any transportation of illegal drugs and prompt report being made as and when due.
4. The National drug law enforcement agency should actively engage the youths in their awareness programmes on use of illicit drug as this will go a long way in helping the youths to stop drug abuse and crime

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