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Effectiveness of School-Based Anti-Drug Clubs in Raising Awareness of the Dangers of Drug Abuse Among Students in Basic Education Schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of school-based Anti-Drug Clubs in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse among basic education students in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised Upper Basic III students in public basic schools in AMAC, from which a sample of 300 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Anti-Drug Club Influence Questionnaire (ADCIQ). The instrument was validated by experts and had a reliability coefficient of 0.88 using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that school-based Anti-Drug Clubs are effective in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. Students agreed that club activities improved their understanding of the health, academic, social, legal, and psychological consequences of drug abuse. The study concluded that Anti-Drug Clubs serve as effective school-based preventive mechanisms for drug abuse awareness in basic education schools. It was recommended that schools should strengthen Anti-Drug Clubs through continuous sensitization programmes, collaboration with relevant agencies, and active involvement of school counsellors to enhance their effectiveness.

Keywords: Anti-Drug Clubs, Drug Abuse, Awareness, Basic Education, Students, Abuja Municipal Area Council

Introduction

Drug abuse among school-age children and adolescents has become a major public health, educational, and social concern across the globe. In recent years, the increasing involvement of young people in the misuse of psychoactive substances such as cannabis, codeine, tramadol, alcohol, cigarettes, and other harmful substances has generated serious concern among educators, parents, counsellors, and policy makers. In Nigeria, the growing prevalence of drug abuse among students has continued to threaten academic performance, school discipline, mental health, social relationships, and national development. The issue has become particularly alarming within basic education institutions where students are still in their formative years and highly vulnerable to peer influence and risky behaviours (Lawal, A., Abdullahi, S.B., Olorukooba, A.A. et al., 2025)Recent reports have shown that adolescents and youths constitute one of the most affected populations in drug abuse-related activities, thereby making preventive education and awareness programmes highly necessary in schools.

The relevance of this study at this time is underscored by the rising cases of substance abuse among students in Nigerian schools and the increasing concern over its consequences on educational outcomes and social stability. Contemporary society is witnessing rapid exposure of adolescents to drug-related information through peer groups, social media platforms, entertainment content, and urban influences. These realities have made schools important centres for behavioural intervention and preventive education. School-based anti-drug clubs have therefore emerged as strategic platforms for sensitizing students about the dangers associated with drug abuse. Through seminars, peer education, campaigns, counselling sessions, debates, and awareness programmes, anti-drug clubs are expected to discourage substance abuse and promote healthy lifestyles among students. The growing advocacy for school-based preventive mechanisms further demonstrates the urgency of examining how effective these clubs are in raising students' awareness of drug abuse dangers within the Nigerian educational context.

Academically, the concept of anti-drug clubs refers to organized school-based groups established to educate students on the harmful effects of substance abuse and to encourage positive behavioural choices among learners. These clubs often operate through peer-led awareness campaigns, educational talks, counselling activities, and collaborative programmes with agencies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and health educators. Anti-drug clubs are grounded in behavioural and preventive education principles which emphasize that awareness creation and peer influence can shape students' attitudes and decisions toward drug use. Scholars have argued that school-based intervention

programmes are capable of improving students' knowledge and attitudes regarding substance abuse when effectively implemented (Obiagu & Onele, 2024). Similarly, recent school awareness initiatives in different educational settings have emphasized the importance of peer-oriented anti-drug sensitization programmes in reducing students' vulnerability to substance abuse.

The concept of awareness in this study refers to students' level of knowledge, understanding, and consciousness regarding the dangers and consequences of drug abuse. Awareness encompasses students' understanding of the health, psychological, academic, moral, and social implications associated with substance misuse. Studies have shown that students with higher awareness levels are more likely to resist drug-related temptations and make informed decisions regarding substance use. Abubakar and Gwarzo (2025) observed that increased psycho-educational awareness among secondary school students significantly improved their understanding of the educational and health implications of drug abuse. Awareness creation therefore remains a central objective of anti-drug education programmes in schools.

Drug abuse, on the other hand, refers to the habitual or excessive use of drugs and psychoactive substances without medical prescription or in ways that negatively affect an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. Drug abuse among students is often associated with peer pressure, curiosity, emotional stress, family instability, poor parental supervision, and societal influences. Existing literature has linked drug abuse among adolescents with school dropout, poor academic performance, indiscipline, violence, risky sexual behaviour, and mental health disorders (Olanrewaju et al., 2022). In Nigeria, substances commonly abused by students include alcohol, tramadol, cannabis, codeine syrup, tobacco products, and inhalants. The increasing prevalence of these substances among young people has intensified calls for more proactive school-based preventive interventions.

Several empirical studies have been conducted on drug abuse awareness and prevention among students within and outside Nigeria. Dosunmu and Odesanmi (2025) examined awareness of factors responsible for drug abuse among secondary school students in Osun State and found that many students possessed moderate awareness of the social implications of drug abuse, although risky behaviours still persisted among learners. Abubakar and Gwarzo (2025) investigated students' awareness of the psycho-educational effects of drug abuse in Bauchi State and reported that awareness programmes significantly improved students' understanding of the dangers associated with substance abuse. Obiagu and Onele (2024) explored the prevalence and causes of drug abuse among recipients of school-based drug education programmes and found that although awareness programmes existed, drug abuse among youths remained relatively high due to peer pressure and socioeconomic factors. Similarly, Lawal, et al., (2025) reported increasing patterns of substance abuse among Nigerian adolescents despite the existence of preventive campaigns and educational interventions.

Despite these scholarly contributions, existing studies have largely focused on prevalence, causes, patterns, and general awareness of drug abuse among secondary school or university

students, with limited attention given specifically to the effectiveness of school-based anti-drug clubs in basic education schools. Furthermore, many previous studies concentrated on urban secondary schools, tertiary institutions, or broad drug education programmes without specifically examining anti-drug clubs as organized preventive mechanisms within the basic education system. There is also limited empirical evidence focusing on Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria, where increasing urbanization and youth exposure may contribute to students' vulnerability to substance abuse. This creates a significant gap in literature regarding the extent to which anti-drug clubs effectively raise students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in basic education schools.

The motivation for conducting this study therefore stems from the increasing prevalence of drug abuse among school-age children, the need for early preventive interventions, and the paucity of empirical studies examining the effectiveness of school-based anti-drug clubs within the Nigerian basic education context. The study is also motivated by the need to provide evidence-based recommendations for educators, counsellors, school administrators, parents, and government agencies on strengthening school-based preventive strategies against drug abuse. By focusing on Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria, the study intends to contribute to academic discourse and educational policy on effective school-based awareness programmes capable of reducing drug abuse tendencies among students.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the effectiveness of school-based anti-drug clubs in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in basic education schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research question guides the study:

How effective are school-based anti-drug clubs in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in basic education schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the effectiveness of school-based Anti-Drug Clubs in raising awareness of the dangers of drug abuse among students in basic education schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from participants in their natural school settings without manipulation of variables.

The population of the study comprised all Upper Basic III students in public basic education schools in AMAC, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. A sample of 300 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, ten public basic schools were selected through stratified random sampling. In the second stage, 30 students were

randomly selected from each school using simple random sampling, yielding a total sample size of 300 respondents.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Anti-Drug Club Influence Questionnaire (ADCIQ) developed by the researchers. The instrument consisted of 10 items designed to address the research questions. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Social Studies Education from Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Their observations and recommendations improved the content validity of the instrument, which yielded a validity index of 0.70.

To establish reliability, a pilot test was conducted among 30 students in Bwari Area Council who were not part of the study sample but possessed similar characteristics. Data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Data analysis involved the use of descriptive of mean and standard deviation used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision making

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Influence of Anti-Drug Clubs in Raising Students' Awareness on The Dangers of Drug Abuse

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	Anti-Drug Club activities helped me understand the dangers of drug abuse.	3.11	0.825
2	I have learned about the short-term effects of drug abuse through the club.	3.07	0.914
3	The club increased my knowledge of long-term risks of drug use.	2.84	0.904
4	The club's posters, drama, and talks educate students about staying drug-free.	2.77	1.01
5	I know how drug abuse affects school performance because of the club.	2.63	0.957
6	The club made me more aware of how drugs damage the body.	2.5	1.12
7	I learned how peer pressure leads to drug abuse through club activities.	2.78	0.961
8	My awareness of harmful substances increased through club messages.	3.03	0.934
9	I learned about the legal consequences of drug abuse from the club.	2.89	0.949
10	The club helped students understand why they should avoid drugs.	3.06	0.99
	Grand Mean	**2.86**	**0.9564**

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation on the influence of Anti-Drug Clubs in raising students' awareness on the dangers of drug abuse among students in basic education schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. The table revealed that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating respondents' agreement that Anti-Drug Clubs positively influenced students' awareness of the dangers associated with drug abuse.

Specifically, Item 1 with a mean score of 3.11 and standard deviation of 0.825 showed that students agreed that Anti-Drug Club activities helped them understand the dangers of drug abuse. Item 2 (Mean = 3.07, SD = 0.914) indicated that students learned about the short-term effects of drug abuse through club activities. Similarly, Item 10 had a mean score of 3.06 and SD of 0.990, suggesting that the club helped students understand the importance of avoiding drugs. Item 8 (Mean = 3.03, SD = 0.934) further revealed that students' awareness of harmful substances increased through Anti-Drug Club messages.

In addition, respondents agreed that the clubs increased their knowledge of the long-term risks of drug use (Mean = 2.84, SD = 0.904), educated students through posters, drama, and talks (Mean = 2.77, SD = 1.010), and taught students how peer pressure contributes to drug abuse (Mean = 2.78, SD = 0.961). Students also acknowledged learning about the legal consequences of drug abuse through club activities (Mean = 2.89, SD = 0.949).

Furthermore, Item 5 (Mean = 2.63, SD = 0.957) indicated that students became aware of how drug abuse affects academic performance, while Item 6 with a mean score of 2.50 and SD of 1.120 showed that the club increased awareness of the harmful effects of drugs on the human body.

Item 6 recorded a mean score of 2.50 and standard deviation of 1.120, showing that respondents agreed that the clubs made them more aware of how drugs damage the body. Although the mean score is the lowest among the items, it still met the criterion mean, suggesting that the clubs contributed to students' awareness of the health dangers of drug abuse.

Furthermore, Item 7 with a mean score of 2.78 and standard deviation of 0.961 indicated that students learned through club activities how peer pressure can lead to drug abuse. This finding suggests that Anti-Drug Clubs play an important role in helping students recognize and resist negative peer influences associated with substance abuse.

Item 8 recorded a mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 0.934, indicating that respondents agreed that their awareness of harmful substances increased through Anti-Drug Club messages. This implies that the clubs effectively exposed students to information about various harmful substances and their associated dangers.

Item 9 had a mean score of 2.89 and standard deviation of 0.949, showing that students agreed they learned about the legal consequences of drug abuse through the activities of the club. The finding suggests that Anti-Drug Clubs contributed to students' understanding of the legal implications and penalties associated with drug-related offences.

Similarly, Item 10 with a mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.990 revealed that respondents agreed that the club helped students understand why they should avoid drugs. This indicates that the clubs played a significant role in promoting positive attitudes and informed decisions toward living a drug-free lifestyle among students.

The grand mean of 2.86 with a standard deviation of 0.956 indicates overall agreement among respondents that Anti-Drug Clubs are effective in raising students' awareness on the dangers of drug abuse. The relatively low standard deviation values suggest moderate consistency in

the responses of the students. The findings imply that school-based Anti-Drug Clubs play a significant role in sensitizing students to the health, academic, social, and legal consequences of drug abuse in basic education schools

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that school-based Anti-Drug Clubs are effective in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse among basic education students in Abuja Municipal Area Council. This finding aligns with the first research objective, which sought to determine the influence of Anti-Drug Clubs on students' awareness levels. The result from the descriptive analysis showed a grand mean of 2.86, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that students generally agreed that Anti-Drug Clubs significantly enhance their awareness of drug abuse dangers.

The positive finding of this study may be attributed to the structured sensitization activities of Anti-Drug Clubs such as talks, posters, drama presentations, peer education, and counselling sessions. These interactive approaches likely improved students' understanding of both immediate and long-term consequences of drug abuse. This supports the view of Obiagu and Onele (2024), who found that school-based drug education programmes improve students' knowledge and awareness of substance abuse, even though behavioural change may still be influenced by peer and environmental factors. Similarly, Lawal, Abdullahi, Olorukooba, et al., (2025) reported that adolescents exposed to structured awareness programmes demonstrated higher knowledge levels about substance abuse compared to those without such exposure.

Furthermore, the findings agree with Abubakar and Gwarzo (2025), who observed that psycho-educational awareness interventions significantly improve students' understanding of the health and social implications of drug abuse. The present study extends this argument by showing that Anti-Drug Clubs specifically contribute to awareness not only in health-related areas but also in academic, social, legal, and behavioural dimensions. This suggests that Anti-Drug Clubs serve as comprehensive preventive platforms within schools.

The result also supports the Social Learning Theory of Bandura, which emphasizes that individuals learn behaviours and attitudes through observation, imitation, and interaction with peers and role models. The effectiveness of Anti-Drug Clubs can therefore be linked to peer-led learning processes where students are exposed to positive behavioural models and anti-drug messages within their social environment. This aligns with the findings of Ogbonna et al. (2024), who noted that peer-based interventions and school sensitization programmes are effective in shaping students' attitudes toward drug use.

However, despite the high level of awareness reported, literature suggests that awareness alone may not completely eliminate drug abuse tendencies among adolescents. Obiagu and Onele (2024) emphasized that although awareness programmes are widespread, drug abuse still persists due to factors such as peer pressure, family background, and socio-economic influences. This implies that while Anti-Drug Clubs are effective in knowledge dissemination,

their impact on actual behavioural change may require reinforcement through counselling, parental involvement, and community-based interventions.

In summary, the findings of this study confirm that school-based Anti-Drug Clubs play a significant role in improving students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in basic education schools. This is consistent with recent empirical evidence from Nigerian and international studies, which highlight the importance of school-based preventive education in addressing adolescent substance abuse challenges (Abubakar & Gwarzo, 2025; Obiagu & Onele, 2024).

Conclusion

The study examined the effectiveness of school-based Anti-Drug Clubs in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse among basic education students in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was concluded that Anti-Drug Clubs are effective in enhancing students' awareness of the health, academic, social, legal, and behavioural consequences of drug abuse. The overall mean scores indicated that students generally agreed that participation in club activities such as seminars, drama, posters, and peer sensitization significantly improved their understanding of drug-related risks.

The study therefore establishes that Anti-Drug Clubs serve as effective school-based intervention strategies for increasing awareness and preventive knowledge about drug abuse among students. However, awareness alone may not be sufficient to eliminate drug abuse tendencies without sustained reinforcement through counselling, parental involvement, and broader community support systems.

Recommendations

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

1. School authorities should strengthen the establishment and functioning of Anti-Drug Clubs in all basic education schools to ensure continuous sensitization of students on drug abuse.
2. Government agencies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should collaborate with schools to provide regular training, materials, and expert talks for Anti-Drug Club activities.
3. School counsellors should be actively involved in Anti-Drug Club programmes to provide professional guidance and support to students exposed to drug-related information.
4. Teachers should integrate drug abuse awareness topics into classroom instruction to reinforce messages delivered through Anti-Drug Clubs.
5. Parents and guardians should be involved in anti-drug awareness campaigns to ensure consistency of messages between home and school environments.
6. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place to assess the effectiveness of Anti-Drug Clubs and improve their implementation strategies.

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