

Influence of Cigarette Warning Label on Smoking Behaviour among Education Students of Osun State University (UNIOSUN), Osogbo, Nigeria

Onongha, G.I.

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education

College of Education, Ipetu-Ijesa Campus, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

Abstract

In Nigeria, the government has used different measures to fight tobacco use and abuse among her youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow. One of such measures is the use of anti-smoking warning messages such as “smokers’ are liable to die young”. The study examined the influence of warning labels on education student smoking behaviour in the College of Education, UNIOSUN, Osogbo, Nigeria. Data was obtained through the administration of one hundred and twenty copies of structured questionnaire to education students across three highly patronized bars and restaurants in the area. The results revealed that multimedia was the most accessible cigarette warning label. It identified electronic media houses such as TV and radio and cigarette packs as the main sources of cigarette warning labels awareness Pearson’s correlation result indicated a positive and significant association between students’ smoking behaviour and their attitude toward cigarette warning labels ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$). The study suggests that cigarette warning labels should be incorporated into academic curricula to create more awareness of the health consequences of tobacco use

Keywords: Warning label, Cigarette smoking, Education students, Student’s Attitude

Introduction

Globally, tobacco is the second cause of mortality as it accounts for approximately 5 million deaths per year World Health Organization, (WHO, 2005). This figure is expected to rise to 10 million deaths by 2030, with 70% of these deaths occurring in low-income countries which Nigeria is inclusive. The incidence of cigarette smoking in Nigerian campuses has been in the increase in recent time. Adolescents are now seen smoking cigarette even in open places, not considering the health consequences of their behaviour. Tobacco poses a major challenge not only to health, but also to social and economic development and to environmental sustainability. Tobacco use is a major drain on national financial resources (WHO, 2005). In order to battle against this dangerous habit, a variety of interventions against smoking and cigarette warning labels have been applied in different settings (e.g., schools, medical centres, religion settings) (Kosmidou et al., 2008). These interventions target mostly adolescents in an attempt to either modify the unhealthy behaviour, or reinforce healthy ones, through effective messages. In Nigeria and other African countries, the government has used different measures to fight tobacco use and abuse among her youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow mostly at their teens. One of such measures is the use of anti-smoking warning messages such as “smokers’ are liable to die young”.

This message among others is passed on to the youth using electronic and print media sources to create awareness on the health consequences of smoking. These health warning messages on tobacco products help to convey vital information about the health risks of smoking. The use of health warning messages has been proven to increase motivations to quit smoking and quit attempts. The inscribing of warning labels on cigarette packs can contribute to tobacco control efforts through the provision of information about health effects and tobacco ingredients. Hammond et al., (2006) opined that ‘strong, informative warnings increase consumer education on the negative effects of smoking and may motivate smokers to quit’. Despite the concentration of anti-smoking messages through primary and secondary schools and via the mass media, many young people continue to smoke. This indeed creates health concern considering the ages engaged in smoking in our tertiary institutions. Warning labels or anti-smoking messages have over three decades become a popular method by which governments attempt to inform their citizens of the health consequences of smoking (World Health Report, 1999). Nevertheless, the use of anti-smoking campaigns to fight tobacco use and abuse among youths can be successful only when students are ready to change their attitudes towards smoking in line with cigarette warning label. Despite, the use of cigarette warning label crusade to fight tobacco use and abuse and the need for the youth to quit smoking, not many studies have been carried out among tertiary institutions in Nigeria where smoking is being on the increase. Osun State College of Education, an emerging centre of academic excellence is not spared of this risky behaviour among its student. The aim of the study is to examine the influence of cigarette

warning label on smoking behaviour among education students of Osun State College of Education, UNIOSUN, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of cigarette warning label on smoking behaviour among Education students, UNIOSUN, Osogbo, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the most accessible cigarette warning label?
2. What are the sources through which students' awareness of cigarette warning label is enhanced?
3. What are the accessible means of cigarette warning label?
4. What is the frequency and number of cigarette smoked by the students?
5. What are the reasons for cigarette smoking among the students?
6. What are the attitudes of students to cigarette warning labels?
7. Would there be a significant relationship between students smoking behaviour and cigarette warning label?
8. Would there be a significant relationship between students smoking behaviours and their attitude to cigarette warning label?

Method

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey research design to study undergraduate student from different tribes and socioeconomic background.

Participants

The population of the study comprised all education students in the College of Education, Osun State University, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty participants from three popular and highly patronized bars and restaurants in the town (Ipetu-Ijesa) as the institution separates non-residential system. The participants were made up of 109 male and 11 female smokers. Their ages ranged from 15 to 29 years

Instrument

The study employed a self constructed questionnaire titled cigarette smoking warning label questionnaire (CSWLQ) The questionnaire contained questions in relation to the study objectives. It was divided into three sections: A, B and C. Section A measured socio-economic characteristics of students; Section B contained items that measured students' reasons for smoking, frequency and number of cigarette smoked and awareness of cigarette warning labels, while Section C consisted of items designed to measure the attitude of students toward cigarette warning labels using a 4 point scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree= SA (4); Agree = A (3); Disagree = D (2); and Strongly Disagree = SD (1).

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher sought and obtained the consent of the participants. The questionnaire was administered on one hundred and twenty (120) participants purposively selected at the selected bars and restaurants. Two research assistants were employed to facilitate the administration exercise. A hundred per cent response was achieved. The exercise lasted for a period of two weeks.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the administered questionnaire were analyzed using tables, simple percentages, cross tabulations, charts and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

The socioeconomic characteristics of respondents' showed that 91% of the respondents were males, while 0.9% was females. This implies that cigarette smoking is more of men's affair. This is so because smoking in this part of the world is mostly carried out by the males. The ages of respondents show that 60.2% were within the ages of 16 – 20 years; 30.9% of the respondents fell within the ages of 21 – 25 years, while 8.9% were respondents above 26 years old. This indicated that majority (91.1%) of the respondents are youths. The ethnic group of respondents implied that majority of them (73.7%) were Yorubas; this dominance may be as a result of the location of the study; 14.7% were Ibos, while 11.6% were from other tribes.

Accessible means of cigarette warning labels

Table 1 gives information on the accessibility of cigarette warning labels to undergraduate studied. It showed that multimedia aids like video/television was the most accessible cigarette warning label followed by textual cigarette label usually inscribed at the side of cigarette packs such as “tobacco smokers are liable to die young among others”. Whereas, graphics found in newspapers, billboards and tracks was the least accessible cigarette label. Graphics labels are uncommon in this part of the world; it is commonly used in the developed economies. Most of the smokers alleged that they rarely read the message provided on the cigarette packs; all they need is the stick to satisfy their urge for smoking. This result is consistent with the findings of PHC, (2010) that a vital means of conveying information about the health risks of smoking is through health warning messages on tobacco products.

Table 1: Means of accessing cigarette warning labels

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Graphics	10	8.3
Textual	32	26.7
Multi-media aids like video/television	78	65
Total	120	100.0

Awareness of cigarette warning label

Fig 1 gives information on the various sources through which awareness of cigarette warning label is enhanced. All the respondents were of the opinion that they are aware of cigarette warning labels. The information showed that electronic devices or media houses such as TV and radio were the main sources of cigarette warning labels awareness available to smokers. Another potent source of awareness creation is through cigarette packs, though some of the smokers alleged that they seldom had time reading through the inscribed messages. They further asserted that the messages provided by the electronic media are enough to influence their decision to quit smoking. Other sources of awareness creation included through advice from friends/relatives/co-smokers and billboards. The truth is that cigarette warning labels are hardly posted on billboards; as such it is less used. These media carry varying messages on the health implications of cigarette smoking. According to Kin (2009) over eight in ten female youths in most countries were aware of smoking-related diseases such as lung cancer in both smokers and (through secondhand smoke) non-smokers, stroke and stained teeth in smokers, premature ageing and pregnancy-related complications in women smokers. The major sources of such messages varied between the countries. In his study, all Malaysian females were exposed to the national anti-smoking campaign that utilized all major media channels such as television, billboards, newspapers and radio, result obtained showed that television emerged as one of the major sources of anti-smoking messages in Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam, but health warnings on cigarette packs is the other important channel.

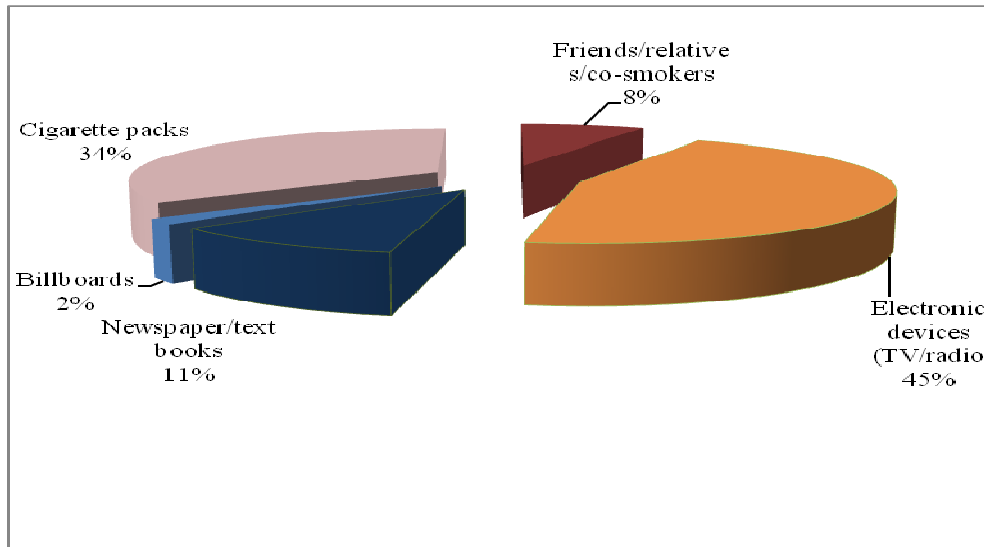


Fig 1: Sources of cigarette warning label awareness

Frequency and number of cigarette smoked

Information on the frequency and number of cigarette smoked by students is depicted in Table 2. Out of the total respondents that smoked cigarette daily, 52 (43.3%) smoked 1 – 2 sticks of cigarettes and 67 (55.8%) smoked 3 – 5 sticks, while only a negligible percentage, 1 (0.8%) smoked more than 6 – 10 sticks of cigarette daily. This implied that 3 – 5 sticks of cigarettes are usually smoked by education students daily. In addition, among respondents that smoked irregularly (i.e. occasionally), 77 (64.2%) smoked 1 – 2 sticks, while 44 (36.7%) smoked 3 - 5 sticks and nobody smoked above 5 sticks of cigarette. For those who smoked weekly, 80 (66.7%) smoked 1 – 2 sticks, while 39 (32.5%) smoked 3 - 5 sticks. The assessment revealed that 1 – 2 sticks of cigarette are usually smoked by education students. This finding is consistent with those of Siddiqui et al., (2001) when they reported an average of 2 sticks of cigarette consumption among smokers.

Table 2: The rate and number of cigarette smoked

Smoking frequency	Number of cigarette smoked			Total
	1 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 10	
Daily	52	67	1	120
Irregular	77	43	0	120
2 – 5 times a week	61	57	2	120
Weekly	80	39	1	120
Total	270	206	4	480

Potential reasons for tobacco use

Fig 2 showed the potential reasons for cigarette smoking among undergraduate students. It revealed that relief from stress, for fun and for socialization were the main reasons for cigarette use. Some of the smokers affirmed that sometimes they smoke to feel among, as they may not have the zeal to smoke but are influenced by friends. Earlier studies by Oshodi, Aina, and Oajole, (2010) affirmed this when they alleged that people smoke cigarettes to relieve stress, to stay awake or because they are influenced by their peers.

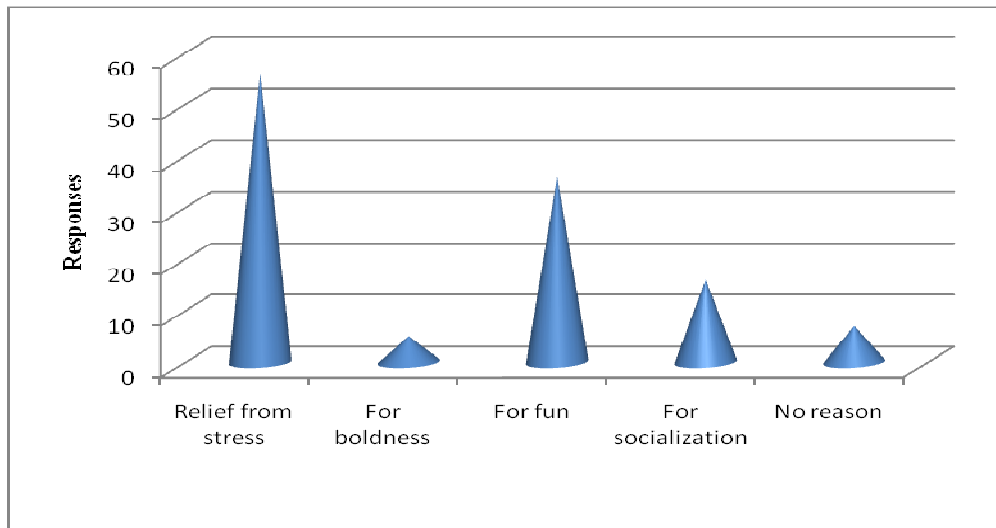


Fig 2: Likely reasons for smoking

Attitude of undergraduate students towards cigarette warning labels

The attitude of education students towards cigarette warning labels is presented in Table 3. The Table showed that 95.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that cigarette warning label is not poorly advertised. This implies that anti-smoking messages are properly disseminated and smokers are aware of the health consequences. It also indicated that 83.3% of the respondents had the opinion that cigarette warning labels convey vital information about the health risks of smoking. The frequent supply of anti-smoking messages positively influences smokers' decisions to quit or reduce the frequency of cigarette consumption. This agrees with Margaret, (2010) that in Canada, cigarette labels have been required to display a message from the United States Surgeon General warning of the punitive effects of cigarettes on health and mortality. It also agrees with the findings of PHC, (2010) that health warning messages on tobacco products (packs) are a vital means of conveying information about the health risks of smoking. Furthermore, 83.3% of the respondents refuted the assertion that cigarette warning labels do not influence smoking behaviour. This showed that the intention of students to reduce their smoking frequency as well as the number of sticks smoked daily may be based on the health information they received from reading anti-smoking messages. This is consistent with the assertion of Hammond et al., (2004) that strong and informative warnings increase consumer education on the negative effects of smoking and may motivate smokers to quit.

Table 3: Attitude of commercial drivers towards cigarette warning labels

Variables	SA	A	D	SD
Available cigarette warning labels are poorly advertised	5 (4.2)	0 (0)	55 (45.8)	60 (50)
Multimedia warning labels are more informative than graphics and textural labels	34 (28.3)	55 (45.8)	21 (17.5)	10 (12.7)
Cigarette warning labels pass on vital information on the consequences of smoking	76 (63.3)	24 (20)	14 (11.7)	6 (5)
Cigarette warning labels do not influence smoking	16 (13.3)	4 (3.3)	63 (52.5)	37 (30.8)
Total	33	21	38	28
%	(27.5)	(17.5)	(31.7)	(23.3)

Values in brackets are percentages

Relations between undergraduate smoking behaviour and cigarette warning labels

Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to determine the nature of association between cigarette smoking behaviour and education student attitude toward cigarette warning labels. The r-value result in Table 4 indicated a low positive and significant relationship between students' cigarette smoking behaviour and their attitude toward cigarette warning labels ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicated that education students' cigarette smoking behaviour is directly related to their attitude towards cigarette warning labels. This may logically imply that as students develop positive attitude, the tendency of smoking reduces and vice versa.

Table 4: Pearson’s correlations cigarette smoking behaviour and education students’ attitude towards cigarette warning labels

Test statistics	Cigarette smoking behaviour	Attitude towards cigarette warning labels
Pearson Correlation	1.00	.417**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
N		120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Window Output Version 20.0

Conclusion

The study indicated that education students are aware of cigarette smoking labels, but their attitudes towards the messages influence their smoking behaviour. This perhaps is translated to the number of sticks smoked daily and occasionally. The result revealed that multimedia messages are most accessible cigarette warning label. The study therefore suggested that cigarette warning labels should be incorporated into academic curricula to create more awareness of the health consequences of tobacco use and abuse.

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