Drug Abuse, Sexual Violence and University Environmental Conflict in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examines the connection between drug misuse and sexual violence as a complex and significant factor contributing to environmental warfare and conflict in Nigerian universities in Rivers State. The paper provides insights that will help universities in comprehending the interconnectedness, consequences and repercussions of drug abuse and sexual violence in relation to environmental conflict. It also discusses how to effectively prevent the ways in which it can escalate different forms of conflict. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys to collect data on prevalence rates and qualitative interviews to gain insights into the underlying factors and experiences of students. This approach was further informed by an extensive review of the existing literature and policies, which guided the analysis and recommendations of the study. The study revealed that drug abuse and sexual violence are prevalent and significant social problems among university students. These issues contribute to conflicts within university environments worldwide,

including Nigeria and specifically Rivers State. Failure to effectively address and control these problems can result in large-scale protests, unnecessary deaths, sexual assault, and suspension of academic activities, among others. Conflict and wars are unavoidable in any society. If not promptly controlled or extinguished, these aggressive societal conflicts and wars can have significant and severe consequences for Rivers State, neighbouring states in the Niger Delta and the entire country. Although conflicts within academic settings may seem limited to a certain area, they can have wider societal consequences. Unresolved disputes within universities have the potential to extend into neighbouring communities, intensifying pre-existing divisions and adding to broader social unrest. Unresolved conflicts inside universities can, in extreme situations, act as triggers for larger conflicts and erupt into full-scale war, particularly in locations with pre-existing historical tensions or bloodshed. The study employed the Routine Security Theory, which was propounded by the criminologist Marcus Felson in 1986. Felson's theory posits that certain crimes, such as substance abuse and sexual violence, are more likely to occur when specific conditions are present. These conditions include the presence of vulnerable and uninformed target (such as students who lack knowledge about the effects of drug abuse and sexual violence on campus), presence of a motivated offender (such as cultists or rapists), and a lack of capable guardians (such as security guards or student monitoring teams with reporting channels both online and offline). The presence of substance abuse and sexual violence in poorly lit and isolated areas of the university campus can lead to environmental war and conflict. This can be exacerbated by the absence of regular monitoring teams, security guards, and electronic surveillance systems such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) in and around hostels. Additionally, lack of a legal reporting system for crimes and lack of commitment from the university administration to punish offenders contribute to this issue. The paper suggests immediate mobilisation, training, and deployment of teams consisting of students and staff to monitor

and address issues related to substance addiction and sexual violence.

Introduction

Substance addiction and sexual assault are global issues that have harmful consequences for individuals and society. These issues have the potential to create significant disputes and even lead to wars within communities or states (Ogunfowokan et al., 2023). They are significant and widespread issues that have a detrimental impact on the overall health, safety and academic achievements of university students in Nigeria (Wada et al., 2021). The interconnection between these difficulties in certain universities in Rivers State, Nigeria could have significant consequences for the welfare of students and the prestige of the institutions. The confluence of drug misuse, sexual violence and environmental conflict in universities is a multifaceted issue shaped by different socio-economic, cultural and environmental elements. There is an increasing level of apprehension around substance misuse and sexual violence in several universities located in the southern region (Ezeh et al., 2015). According to Ihua (2019), Rivers State and certain Nigerian universities have gained commendable recognition for their academic and cultural research studies. However, substance abuse and sexual violence are prevalent issues on many university campuses in Nigeria, despite the common belief that universities provide a safe haven from the social and economic difficulties of the external environment. University campuses in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, are believed to be peaceful environments where students can avoid the social and economic challenges of the outside world. They are seen as places where students can gain academic knowledge in a protected atmosphere that is free from societal problems like substance abuse and sexual violence. Many parents want their children to attend these universities for a better future, as they are seen as centres for academic excellence, moral learning and character development. Nigerian higher institutions are renowned as centres of education that cultivate responsible and disciplined persons for significant contributions to national development (Ezugoh et al., 2021).

Recently, there has been a growing focus on tertiary institutions in Nigeria due to the disturbing reports of sexual harassment and abuses occurring on campuses. Reports indicate that authorities of higher institutions make little effort to resolve

the problem; anecdotal data suggest that some sources dismiss accusations of sexual abuse and harassment in the name of collegial camaraderie (Afolabi & Adeyemi, 2019; Ihua, 2019). In certain instances, students who reported incidents of substance misuse and sexual violence are subjected to victimisation by the very academics, colleagues and institution they sought help from (Ihua, 2019).

Osakwe and Atalor (2017) and Abayomi et al. (2019) conducted research that provided evidence supporting the claim that substance abuse is a growing problem among Nigerian university students. The occurrence of the aforementioned issues in Rivers State is attributed to its distinctive geographical and socioeconomic situation in relation to other states in Nigeria. Rivers State is situated in the southern region of Nigeria and is a constituent of Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, which also encompasses Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Edo States. The South-South zone is renowned for its harmonious cultural variety and its significant role in the nation's economy, primarily due to its abundant oil and gas resources. River State is bounded by Imo, Abia and Akwa Ibom States in the east, Bayelsa and Delta States in the west, and the Atlantic Ocean in the south. This advantageous geographical position allows for convenient access to both land and maritime transportation routes. The state is renowned for its diverse cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, which provide abundant tourist attractions. These include Port Harcourt Zoo, Rivers State Cultural Centre and Museum, and Pleasure Park, as well as various annual festivals and events that highlight the state's cultural diversity and scenic splendour. The state has a tropical monsoon climate that consists of two different seasons: the rainy season, which occurs from April to October, and the dry season, which occurs from November to March. During the rainy season, there is a significant amount of rainfall, while the dry season has lower levels of precipitation. Rivers State boasts a strong educational system, encompassing a multitude of basic and secondary schools, along with institutions of higher education. The state is host to universities that are federal, state, and private universities. The University of Port Harcourt, renowned for its academic excellence, has produced numerous distinguished alumni.

The economy of Rivers State is thriving due to its status as a prominent oil-producing state, hosting numerous major oil firms, including Shell, Chevron,

Mobile, and Total. A study conducted by Akanle et al (2016) found that substance abuse, which includes the improper use of alcohol, cannabis, and prescribed medicines, is widespread among Nigerian university students. This behaviour presents significant health and social dangers. The prevalence of drug usage among students in Rivers State is influenced by the ready availability and easy accessibility of drugs, as well as the influence of peer pressure and the stress connected with academic demands (Fareo, 2019).

Sexual violence, encompassing harassment, assault and rape, is a widespread problem that exists on university campuses across the globe. Research conducted in Nigeria revealed disturbingly elevated levels of sexual violence against female students, with factors such as gender disparity, cultural norms and institutional deficiencies intensifying the issue (Ajuwon et al., 2018). Instances of sexual violence on university campuses in Rivers State have been documented. The studies emphasised the necessity for efficient ways to prevent and address such incidents (Balogun et al., 2019). Recent incidents of aggressive sexual assaults and armed crimes committed by criminals, as reported in certain national newspapers, have led to the rape of female students in university dormitories and surrounding areas. Mezie-Okoye et al. (2014) assert that the incidence of social offences targeting female students on campuses is worrisome, indicating an increase in sexual violence, potentially attributable to substance abuse. Eeguranti et al. (2009) avers that these two societal problems are intensifying, demonstrating potential implications that their consequences impact both males and females.

Sahara Reporters of January 20th, 2023 published a piece of news titled "Armed Robbers Invade Hostel of Nigerian University UNIZIK, Rape Nine Females Students. *PM News Nigeria* of May 17th, 2023, published a piece titled "Controversy trail alleged rape of 5 students at Rivers State University of Science and Technology". *Sun Newspapers* of August 24th, 2023, published a piece of news titled "Female Students of Rivers Varsity Protest Rape, Robbery in Campus." *Vanguard Newspapers* of August 25th, 2023 published a piece titled "Robbersinvade Rivers Varsity Hostel, rape female students, and cart away valuables". *British Broadcasting Corporation News Pidgin* of August 23rd, 2023 published a news item titled "Armed Robbery for Rivers State University Female Hostel – Wetin We Know". *Premium Times* of September 7th, 2023 published a piece of news titled

"Alleged Rape! Police Arrest Nigerian University Lecturer of the University of Lagos".

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate the interconnection between drug abuse and sexual violence, and how they contribute to or exacerbate environmental conflicts within the university environment. The objectives of the study were to:

i. examine the prevalence rate, patterns and socioeconomic, cultural,and environmental factors of drug abuse and sexual violence among students in universities in Rivers State;
ii. investigate the incidence and forms of sexual violence experienced by students within university settings in Rivers State, and explore the relationship between drug abuse and sexual violence, particularly how one may facilitate or increase the occurrence of the other;
iii. assess the impact of drug abuse and sexual violence on the overall university environment, and identify existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing drug abuse and sexual violence within universities in Rivers State; and
iv. propose recommendations for preventive measures and interventions to mitigate the prevalence of drug abuse and sexual violence, and their associated environmental conflicts in universities.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

i. What are the prevalence rate, patterns and socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors of drug abuse and sexual violence among students in universities in Rivers State?
ii. What type of drug abuse incidence and forms of sexual violence are experienced by students within university settings in Rivers State, and the relationship between drug abuse and sexual violence, particularly how onemay facilitate or increase the occurrence of the other?
iii. What are the impact of drug abuse and sexual violence on the overall university environment, and the existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing drug abuse and sexual violence within universities in Rivers State?

iv. What recommendations are appropriate for preventive measures and interventions to mitigate the prevalence of drug abuse, sexual violence and their associated environmental conflicts in universities in Rivers State?

Significance of the Study

i. This research shall help identify how the issues of drug abuse and sexual violence are interconnected, providing insights into the underlying dynamics and contributing factors.
ii. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of these problems, it shall help university stakeholders develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes, rather than addressing them as isolated concerns.
iii. It helps the university understand the underlying connections that can facilitate the development of targeted strategies to address drug abuse and sexual violence issues, including prevention programmes, campus policies and support services.
iv. It shall assist in exploring ways to enhance campus safety measures by considering the various factors that contribute to a hostile or unsafe environment. By addressing drug abuse and sexual violence, universities can create a safer and more supportive learning environment for students and staff.
v. By investigating the nexus between drug abuse, sexual violence and environmental conflict, the study can also shed light on the long-term sustainable development of universities.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study concentrates on how drug abuse and sexual violence contribute to environmental conflict in universities in Rivers State and explores the complex interrelationships between these social issues and their potential impact on the university environment. By examining the intersection of drug abuse, sexual violence, and environmental conflict, the study acknowledges the interrelatedness of these phenomena and the potential impact they may have on each other. The study recognizes the need for context-specific insights that can inform targeted interventions and policies tailored to the local environment. The findings from this study have the potential to inform the development of policies,

interventions, and preventive measures aimed at addressing drug abuse, sexual violence and environmental conflict within university settings.

Since the study is conducted within the specific context of universities in Rivers State, caution is exercised in extrapolating the findings to other regions or university settings. Variations in institutional cultures, social norms and structures across universities pose a limitation in the generalizability of the study's findings. The study's sample size and composition may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives within universities in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Routine Security Theory, which was propounded by Marcus Felson (1986), as theoretical framework. Felson's criminological theory elucidates the occurrence of crime in society by positing that the presence of a vulnerable target, a motivated perpetrator, and a lack of effective guardianship increases the likelihood of criminal activity. Environmental warfare and conflict can be triggered and exacerbated when instances of substance misuse and sexual violence are permitted to proliferate in areas on a campus that have inadequate lighting or is situated in secluded areas.

Engaging in substance misuse raises the probability of experiencing sexual violence. Based on Felson's framework, university campuses should implement effective preventative and intervention programmes that address the relationship between substance misuse and sexual violence caused by weakening inhibitions, increasing impulsivity and impaired judgement. For instance, the institution may establish initiatives aimed at instructing students on the perils of substance misuse and sexual violence, as well as methods to mitigate these dangers. Utilising Felson's Speculative Theory enables universities to establish sufficient security measures that discourage criminals, heighten the likelihood of capture and diminish the rewards of criminal activity, hence facilitating the development and implementation of more efficient security systems. For instance, institutions could assess the efficacy of employing CCTV cameras, security guards and student patrols in mitigating instances of substance misuse and sexual violence. Applying this theory helps in creating interventions that focus on the specific circumstances

that facilitate these crimes, such as enhancing illumination and security measures in places with high likelihood of criminal activity.

Methodology

The study utilized the mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys, to gather data on prevalence rates and qualitative interviews, to gain insights into the underlying factors and experiences of students. Additionally, an extensive review of the literature and policies aided the analysis and recommendations of the study.

Literature Review

Experts from several academic fields have endeavoured to address the issues of substance misuse and sexual assault by examining them through the lenses of health, social sciences and natural sciences. Awodele, Owoeye and Akinyemi (2020) view substance misuse and sexual violence as significant and growing difficulties in educational environments globally. In Nigeria, specifically in colleges in Rivers State, the extent of these problems is captured in numerous studies and reports. According to Wada, Khalid, Shitu and Ibrahim (2021), drug and substance abuse among university students is a significant public health issue. It poses a global threat to the education system and has a particularly detrimental impact on the academic performance of those struggling with addiction. The World Health Organisation states that drug misuse has detrimental impacts on physical and environmental well-being.

Drug misuse and sexual assault are prominent societal problems that can lead to environmental conflicts in university environments, especially in Rivers State, Nigeria. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships between these two is essential for effectively tackling the intricate issues they present. Drug misuse and sexual violence are significant concerns that can have extensive repercussions, including their effects on the environment and social cohesion in colleges. The complex interplay of drug misuse, sexual violence, and environmental conflict in colleges in Rivers State points to the pressing necessity for comprehensive interventions that tackle these interconnected crises. Moreover, the ecological ramifications of medication manufacturing, distribution, and disposal can exacerbate wider environmental disputes within university

communities. Illegal drug cultivation and production can lead to deforestation, water pollution and land degradation, which can cause disputes related to the use and preservation of natural resources (UNODC, 2020). This can also drive illicit individuals and student consumers to engage in heinous activities, such as rape, kidnapping, and other societal misconduct both on and off campus.

Drug Abuse: Idowu (2018) defines substance misuse as the detrimental or perilous utilisation of psychoactive substances, encompassing alcohol and narcotics. It is the improper use of psychoactive substances, resulting in detrimental effects on both physical and mental well-being. Within the context of universities, drug addiction can manifest in diverse forms, encompassing the consumption of illegal substances, prescribed pharmaceuticals or alcohol. Research has confirmed a causal relationship between substance misuse and a range of adverse outcomes, such as diminished cognitive abilities, heightened aggression and a propensity for antisocial conduct. Nwagu et al. (2020) demonstrate a correlation between substance misuse and a heightened propensity for participating in acts of violence. This study specifically examined the correlation between drug usage and youth violence in Nigeria. It emphasised how drug abuse can create an atmosphere of dread and insecurity within university campuses.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence includes actions such as rape, sexual assault and harassment. In colleges, it might manifest in romantic relationships, among peers, or even through authority figures. Sexual violence occurring on university campuses presents a substantial danger to the welfare of students and has the potential to foster a hostile atmosphere that encourages conflict. Olabisi and Abimbola (2018) stress the widespread occurrence of sexual violence in Nigerian colleges and its harmful effects on the physical and mental well-being of victims, as well as the overall atmosphere on campus. Sexual violence inside the campus community can create fear, distrust and a sense of insecurity, which may contribute to conflict dynamics. Sexual violence is a troubling problem that exists in Nigerian colleges. Amoran et al. (2018) found significant prevalence of substance misuse among university students in Nigeria.

Drug misuse among students is attributed to the presence of drugs, influence from peers, and the strain of academic responsibilities (Nwadiaro et al., 2020).

Okechukwu et al. (2018) claim that there is widespread occurrence of sexual violence targeting female students, frequently committed by their peers, professors or other personnel within the university. Gender disparity, cultural norms and ineffective institutional regulations contribute to the existence of sexual violence on campuses.

Sexualviolence has a lot of environmental impacts, including the following:

a. Fear and Unsafe Spaces: Sexual violence creates an atmosphere of fear and insecurity on campuses. Students may avoid certain areas; this affects their use of public spaces.
b. Reduced Participation: Survivors of sexual violence may withdraw from academic and extracurricular activities; this impacts their engagement with environmental initiatives.
c. Social Fragmentation: Sexual violence erodes trust and cohesion within the university community, hindering collective efforts for environmental conservation.

Environmental Conflict: Onuoha (2020) views environmental conflict as conflict or tension resulting from environmental degradation, shortage of resources, or conflicting interests in resource utilisation. With regard to universities, environmental conflict can arise through land conflicts, pollution and disruption of academic activities. Rivers State, renowned for its abundant oil reserves, has substantial environmental issues, including pollution and deterioration of land and water resources.

Environmental conflicts in universities can occur as a result of factors such as limited resources, inadequate waste management and industrial pollution. The studies conducted by Egbai (2017) and Nwankpa and Ibeanu (2019) shed light on the underlying factors and consequences of environmental disputes in Nigeria. However, these studies do not explicitly establish a connection between these conflicts and the issue of drug usage or sexual violence in universities. The coexistence of drug usage and sexual violence can intensify tensions within the campus community, sometimes resulting in disputes around safety, resources and social standards. Furthermore, the physical environment on university campuses may suffer degradation as a result of drug misuse and sexual violence, manifested

in behaviours like littering, vandalism and neglect of community spaces. There are many environmental impacts of drug abuse on the university environment, particularly the following:

i. Littering and Pollution: Drug users often discard drug paraphernalia (such as needles, wrappers and containers) carelessly, contributing to litter and environmental pollution on campuses.
ii. Chemical Contamination: The production and disposal of drugs can release harmful chemicals into the environment, affecting soil, water and air quality.
iii. Deforestation: Illegal cultivation of drugs (e.g. cannabis) can lead to deforestation, disrupting ecosystems and biodiversity.

High Prevalence Rate of Drug Abuse and Sexual Violence

Olanrewaju, Hamzat, Enya, Udekwu, Osuoya, Bamidele, Feyisike, Johnson, Olanrewaju and Owolabi (2022) aver that previous research has indicated a high occurrence and awareness of drug and substance abuse among undergraduate students in universities in southwestern Nigeria. This has been found to result in complications, such as psychiatric disorders and the risk of addiction. Agbaje, Arua and Umeifekwem (2021) assert that sexual violence in colleges is an often unreported problem, while few studies have provided insights into its disturbing prevalence. An analysis conducted from 2000 to 2015 indicated that college sexual assault is prevalent, as indicated by a systematic review conducted by Owolabi and Olayinka (2015).

Ajayi and Nwokocha (2018) found a significant frequency of sexual violence among universities located in Rivers State, Nigeria, with substance misuse as a notable risk factor. Ezugoh et al. (2021) observe that sexual violence has an adverse impact on students' safety, dignity and education. In addition, Adediran (2023), cited the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime report (UNODC, 2020), which stated that the southern geo-political zones had the highest prevalence of drug use in the past year, ranging from 13.8 percent to 22.4 percent. In contrast, the northern geo-political zones had a lower prevalence, ranging from 10 percent to 13.6 percent. The 2021 study done at the University in Katsina State, located in north-west Nigeria, unveiled a prevalent occurrence of drug and substance misuse among undergraduate students. This issue affects both male and female students.

According to Abayomi et al. (2019), over 33.5% of students in Rivers State, Nigeria, have consumed some form of psychoactive substance. This rise in substance usage is attributed to factors such as peer pressure, stress and a need for social approval.

Effects of Drug Abuse and Sexual Violence on the University Environment

While the direct link between drug abuse, sexual violence, and environmental conflictin universities in Rivers State lacks explicit research, indirect connections can be inferred. Drug abuse and sexual violence can create social disruptions and instability within university communities, potentially making them more susceptible to other forms of conflict, including those related to environmental issues. Additionally, both issues can negatively impact the well-being and mental health of students and staff, hindering their ability to engage in pro-environmental behaviours or participate effectively in conflict resolution efforts. The following are other impacts of the two:

i. Drug abuse can contribute to conflicts within universities by fuelling aggression, altering behaviour and leading to impaired decision-making. This can create tensions among students and result in violent confrontations or group clashes (Diala et al., 2019).
ii. Drug trade within universities may also create rivalry among groups competing for control over distribution networks, which could escalate conflicts (Obadan, 2016).
iii. Drug abuse can lead to impaired judgment and aggressive behaviour, increasing the likelihood of sexual violence on campuses (Havelkaet al., 2018).
iv. The presence of drugs and alcohol in university settings may contribute to environmental degradation through littering, pollution and damage to natural habitats.
v. Sexual violence can exacerbate conflicts within universities by generating deep-seated tensions and grievances. Sexual harassment and assault can lead to confrontations between individuals or groups, which could degenerate into broader conflicts (Amobi & Kalu, 2019). Failure to address cases of sexual violence adequately within university settings can erode trust, exacerbate grievances and contribute to tensions (Duru, 2017).
vi. Sexual violence creates a hostile and unsafe environment for

students, undermining their well-being and academic pursuits. It can also lead to protests, demonstrations and disruptions in university operations (Jewkes et al., 2017).

In summary, drug abuse and sexual violence intersect, impacting not only individuals but also the environment and the social fabric of universities. Addressing these issues holistically is crucial for fostering a safe, supportive, and environmentally conscious campus community.

Impact of Drug Abuse and Sexual Violence on Environmental Conflict

Both drug abuse and sexual violence can contribute to environmental conflict within university campuses in Rivers State in the following ways:

- **Disruption of Social Cohesion:** Drug abuse and sexual violence can erode trust and cohesion within the university community, leading to tensions and conflicts among students, faculty and staff (Adinoyi-Ojo et al., 2019).
- **Safety Concerns:** The prevalence of substance abuse and sexual violence creates an unsafe environment, deterring students from fully engaging in academic and extracurricular activities, and impacting their overall well-being (Amzat et al., 2017).
- **Resource Misallocation:** Universities may be compelled to divert resources from academic programmes to address the consequences of drug abuse and sexual violence, such as providing counselling services, security measures and healthcare support (Akinlabi et al., 2018).

Recommendations

Drug abuse and sexual violence are significant challenges for universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, contributing to environmental conflict and undermining the well-being and academic success of students. Tackling these issues requires a multifaceted approach that addresses their underlying causes and promotes a safe and supportive campus environment.

To eradicate or minimize the rampant occurrence of drug abuse and sexual violence in the universities in Rivers State in relation to causing environmental conflicts, the following recommendations are important:

(i) The universities should initiate effective strategies encompassing prevention programmes and enforcement of institutional policies, support services for survivors, and environmental conservation efforts to promote a safe, healthy, and sustainable academic environment.

(ii) The universities need to develop intervention plans targeting the opportunities for curbing these crimes, such as improving campus lighting and the presence of security in different campus high-risk areas.

(iii)The universities could develop programmes to educate and enlighten students aboutthe risks of substance abuse and sexual violence and how to reduce being victims ofsuch crimes.

(iv)The university communities need to invest in acquiring adequate security gadgets and put in place measures that deter offenders, increase the risk of apprehension, and reduce the benefits of crime, like developing and implementing more effective security strategies. For example, the universities could evaluate the effective use of CCTV cameras, security guards, and campus police and student patrols in regular turns.

(v)The universities need to implement policy and intervention strategies aimed ataddressing environmental conflict stemming from drug abuse and sexual violence in universities, which will require comprehensive strategies involving multiple stakeholders (both staff and students).

(vi) For the sake of preventive measures, the universities should implement awareness campaigns, training programmes, and policies aimed at preventing drug abuse and sexual violence, promoting healthy relationships and fostering a culture of respect and accountability (Ojo et al., 2020).

(vii) For support services, the universities should enhance support services, such as counselling, medical assistance, and legal aid for survivors of sexual violence, as well as rehabilitation programmes for individuals struggling with substance abuse (Balogunet al., 2019).

(viii) There is a need for institutional collaboration among universities. Collaboration among universities, government agencies, law enforcement and community organizations is important to address the root causes of these issues and implement effective responses (Amzat et al., 2017).

(ix) It is crucial to promote parental support, implement social intervention programmes, and encourage prevention and support programmes on campus to address drug abuse (Ezeugwa and Eze, 2013).

(x) The Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN), along with other gender-based organizations, established the Rivers State Violence Against Women and Girls Response Team to address sexual violence in Rivers State by raising awareness, educating on prevention, and providing response mechanisms on environmental conflict. This effort should be made to work.

(xi) Within the university environment, drug-related activities (cultivation and trafficking) should be prohibited with different categories of sanctions, for allowing such maylead to territorial disputes and resource conflicts.

(xii) Survivors of sexual violence may face stigma, affecting their participation in environmental initiatives. These forms of discrimination should be discouraged, for divisions within the university community hinder collaborative efforts.

(xiii) All forms of institutional challenges in the universities should be settled so that they will not be struggling to address these issues effectively, leading to tensions and conflicts.

(xiv)The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in Rivers State should play a role in advocating women's rights and addressing gender-based violence on university campuses.

Given the limited direct research on drug abuse, sexual violence and environmental conflict in universities in Rivers State, further research is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding. Future studies could investigate the prevalence of drug abuse and sexual violence within Rivers State universities, examine any correlations between these issues and environmental conflict, and explore potential indirect pathways through which they might contribute to conflict dynamics.

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