

**NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**



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VOL.10, ISSN 1119-29 IX

JUNE, 2011

**NIGERIAN JOURNAL
OF
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

VOL. 10 ISSN 1119-28 IX

2011

**Published by:
Department of Social Work
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.**

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ASSESSMENT OF INSIDIOUS EFFECTS OF NOISE POLLUTION FROM PERSONAL MUSIC PLAYING FUNCTIONS ON AUDITORY PERCEPTION OF YOUTHS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the insidious effects of noise from personal music playing functions on the perception and understanding of speech sounds among the sampled youth population. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study through the use of purposive sampling technique. Two hundred and fifty (250) samples drawn from the youth population in Ibadan metropolis participated in the study. A validated Hearing and Health Risk Exposure Scale, with reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was used to generate data for the study. The results were analysed, using frequency counts, percentage and bar charts. The findings revealed that continued usage of Music Playing Functions (MPFs) by the youths has negative effect on their auditory perception and functional ability of their hearing mechanism. 73.6% of the participants experience difficulty with their hearing as a result of exposure to MPFs. 66% of the participants claimed that exposure to such noise has affected their ability to concentrate and learn smoothly; while 68% of the participants always ask people to repeat themselves whenever on telephone or interpersonal conversation which in effect indicated reduced hearing functions and insensitivity of the hearing organs to speech sounds. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the youths should avoid hearing exposure to high music playing functions that can generate health hazards. Government should come up with an enforceable policy that will enable the manufacturers of personal music players reduce the maximum sound output level of such gadgets, while all stakeholders, ministries and institutions concerned with education, health, youth affairs and related issues should mount up a regular public awareness campaign to curtail the insidious effects of noise exposure on the general wellbeing of all and sundry.

Key words: Auditory Perception, Music Playing Function, Noise, Sound, Youth

Introduction

Hearing as one of the sensory functions is referred to as the ability to localize, detect and perceive sound signals through the use of in-built mechanical and physiological apparatus, bio-electrical impulses and cognitive functions to attach meaningful understanding to the perceived sound signals based on the auditory perceptive functions whenever there is acoustical vibrations and stimulation (Martin & Clark, 2012). As vital as this sensory function might be, this ability to perceive sound signals can be impaired by a lot of factors in which excessive exposure to noise (high and loud sound) is one of them.

Sound is an essential and constant component of human environment (Pope & Mays, 1995), but whenever it is excessively high (loud), then it becomes unwanted, unexpected by virtue of its being unpleasant, interfering and harmful to human systems (Osisanya, 2008). In line with this, any loud sound is referred to as "Noise" because of its discordant and negative impacts on the general well-being of the people. Noise is any sound regarded as unwanted sound for having irregular frequencies and intensities (Osisanya, 1998). It may be a continuous or intermittent sound, and may be of high frequency or low frequency, which is undesired for a normal hearing. For example, the typical cry of a child produces sound which is mostly unfavourable to normal hearing since it is unwanted sound or better to be classified as 'Noise' (Rao, 1995).

Noise can be defined as a loud, irritating, unpleasant sound or a kind of random disturbance in an electric circuit which interferes with the reception of sound signals. According to Deepak (2008), 'Noise' has several types which include: air-traffic noise; noise from rail road; construction noise; noise in building; noise from

consumer products; noise in industry and road-traffic noise which is more peculiar to the cities. The main sources of road-traffic noise are motor and exhaust system of automobiles, smaller trucks, buses and motor cycles, narrow streets, and tall buildings which produce a canyon in which traffic noise reverberate (Environmental Protection Agency, 1994). In the world over today, road-traffic and community noise remain the leading environmental noise pollution. On the other hand, air-traffic noise is a kind of loud sounds from engines of aeroplanes, helicopters and all kinds of aircraft (Cantoni, 1991; & Weiner, 1990). Rail road noise comprises of excessive noise from locomotive engines, horns and whistles, and shunting operation in rail yard (Cantoni, 1991). Hence, this can affect neighbouring communities and rail road workers. Deepak (2008) in his article on noise pollution, asserted that rail engines can produce a high frequency and high level screech that can reach peak levels of 120dB or 140dB at distant feet. Construction noise which includes noise from the construction of high ways, city streets and buildings is the major contributors to noisy situation in urban areas. The source of this noise includes pneumatic hammers, air compressors, bulldozers, loaders, dump trucks (and their back up signals) and pavement breakers. Due to this kind of noise, apartment dwellers are often annoyed by the effect of such noise in their homes, especially, if the building is not well designed and constructed. Internal building noise which emanated from plumbing, boilers, generators, air conditioners, and fans can also be audible and annoying (Wetherill, 1987). In addition, improperly insulated walls and ceiling can as well reveal the sound of amplified music, people's voices, footballs and noisy activities from neighbouring units. Use of certain household

equipments such as vacuum cleaners and some kitchen appliances has also been identified to be noise producing equipment. The contributions of the household equipments and kitchen appliances to daily noise dose are usually minimal. Also, it has been found that yard maintenance equipment, such as lawn mowers and snow blowers which can be hazardous to hearing, if used over a longer period of time, as it has been identified as noise makers (Weiner, 1990; Cantoni, 1991).

Industrial noise is usually considered mainly from the point of view of environmental health and safety, in the sense that sustained exposure to noise can cause permanent hearing damage, as the noise generated by numerous operation which take place in the industrial settings through the sound output of various engines used, usually have a deleterious effect on man. Adegbenro (1998) observed that in Nigeria, noise pollution is becoming a great nuisance to environmental sanitation, especially, in urban and industrial cities. However, industrial noise is capable of generating noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) which occurs when loud sound is transmitted into the auditory system. In relation to this, Owolawi (1998) affirmed that noise induced hearing loss has been one of the commonest hazardous conditions suffered by most workers at high risk occupation and locations such as industries, factories, airport. Noise-induced hearing loss is an increasingly prevailing disorder resulting from continuous exposure to high intensity sounds, especially, over a long period of time. Gelfand (2001) further submitted that noise-induced impairments are usually associated with a notch shaped high frequency sensori-neural loss, although, the notch often occurs at 3000Hz, but it is worse at 4000Hz. The symptoms of noise-induced hearing loss are

usually presented equally in both ears and usually occur initially at high frequencies (3; 4 or 6KHZ) and then spread to the low frequencies such as 500Hz; 1KHZ; 2KHZ (Chen & Tsai, 2003).

Effect of noise varies from its effect on hearing, to communication, health and could also have some psychological effects. For instance, Gelfand (2001) observed that some of the abnormalities of noise include metabolic exhaustion of the hair cells, structural changes and degeneration of structure within the hair cells. Osisanya (1998) noted that high level of noise always interferes with verbal communication. Thus, when an individual's communication is interfered, such poses threat on the life of such person, because noise is capable of causing some physiological problems such as heating on human, a sensation of vibration in the bones of the cranium, movement of air in the sinuses and nasal passage, blurring of the visual organ and difficulty in maintaining balance and coordination (Sampath, Muratis & Kuma, 2004; Nakamoto, Lino & Kodera, 2005).

To this end, Rabinowitz (2000) admitted that noise influences man physiologically and socially, and that, it can impair hearing, intrude on communication, be disturbing, and could lead to fatigue and reduce effectiveness and productivity of anyone exposed to such noise. In essence, continuous exposure to intense noise or long term exposure to noisy environment can lead to permanent impairment of auditory cells, and consequently, diminishes hearing ability. Ademokoya (1995) noted that noise-induced hearing loss could lead to mental breakdown. Also, it has been observed that exposure to excessive noise is a major cause of hearing disorders worldwide, according to the findings of the Scientific Committee on

Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCEN-IHR, 2008).

In line with the general observation and assertion, the leading cause of noise pollution is industrial noise. However, nowadays, noise from Personal Music Playing Functions (PMPFs) has more devastating effect compared to all other types and sources of noise pollution. According to SCENIHR (2008), excessive noise can damage several cell types in the ear and lead to tinnitus, temporary or permanent hearing loss. In fact, studies have shown that excessive exposure to PMPs and functional music at maximal or near maximal output volume can lead to temporary and irreversible hearing impairment with regular evidence of tinnitus (ringing in the ear), as well as psycho-social imbalance. Tinnitus and hearing fatigue may occur more frequently in teenagers chronically exposed to music, including PMP users, than non-users (SCENIHR, 2008). Also, in line with the Year 2008 report of SCENIHR, it was evident that every individual who is exposed to noise from personal music players and mobile phones, including a music playing functions is liable to some health hazards or difficulties. The report also indicated that over the last few years then, there was a trend of an increasing population risk due to constant usage of PMPFs, with improved qualities, better packaging and attractive design. Based on the improved design of these PMPFs, the increase in unit sales of portable audio devices including Music players three (MP3) has been phenomenally high in Europe and African countries over the last four years (2004 - 2007). Since then, there has been increase in the health risk associated with the use of personal music playing functions. A sample of social noise on a sampled population of 18 - 25 years of

age in the United Kingdom (UK) by Smith, Davis, Ferguson and Lutman (2000) showed that the level of preferred listening on PMPs was 74dB(A); which was 72.6% in the low noise category and 80.3% in those with significant social noise exposure. At the tail of distribution, it was found that 6.9% adjusted to levels in excess of 90dB (A). The average level of adjustment in a quiet room was 85dB (A) with a mean value of 92dB in those who had significant social noise exposure (Smith et.al, 2000). Similarly, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) in the year 2005 carried out a study regarding hearing loss and the use of MP3 players and personal stereo over a period of 12 days. The result of the study showed that 66% of young people (18-30years old) go clubbing at least once a month. 73% of people who have ever been to a club, gig, concert or festival have had ringing in their ears (tinnitus); 64% of the respondents reported that PMPFs have negative impact on their lives; 46% of the same category of respondents acknowledged that ringing in the ears shows an indication of a kind of ear damage. At the same time, some of the respondents acknowledged that the ear damage may be permanent depending on the length or period of exposure.

Based on the above and the rate at which students are being exposed to noise from personal music playing functions; it is evident that most of them seem not aware of the potential health risk and implication of this as deleterious to their hearing and general well being. In fact, some of the youths who are exposed to the excessive use of music playing functions lack the understanding of the side effects of this electronically controlled acoustic energy producing gadgets. Hence, it is worthwhile to expose the youths to the potential health

risk as a result of continuous exposure to noise from personal music playing functions.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions among the youths in Ibadan. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. assess the level of awareness of the students on the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions;
2. identify major potential health risks of exposure to noise from music playing functions;
3. examine the effects of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions on the general well being of the youths;
4. determine how exposure to regular high musical sounds can lead to health imbalance;
5. suggest ways of educating adolescents on the potential risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions and
6. serve as an advocacy for the preventive care and strategies to safeguard the hearing mechanism and to dissuade the youths from indiscriminate or excessive use of personal music playing functions.

Research Questions

1. Are the youths aware of the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions?
2. What are the major potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions?
3. How can exposure to personal music playing function lead to health imbalance among the youths?
4. What are the ways through which public awareness could be raised on the hearing conservation, insidious effects of

excessive sound exposure and the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing functions among the youths?

Methods

Research design

The method adopted for this study was the descriptive survey research design. This method was chosen because it helped to describe, record, analyse and interpret the conditions that exist naturally.

Population

The main population for the study comprised all the youths in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo state.

Sample and sampling techniques

This study involved Two hundred and fifty (250) youths purposively selected from Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The samples were between the ages of fifteen (15) and thirty five (35) years, and were of both masculine and feminine gender.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for the study was a validated research scale which covers both the objectives and research questions of the study. The scale "Hearing and Health Risk Exposure Scale" was an adapted version from the Potential Health Risk Exposure to Noise Scale (PHRENS), to suit the existing nature and culture of Nigerian society. The instrument consists of thirty-six (36) structured questions, divided into three sections. The first section consists of personal information about the respondents, while the second consists of items which provide information on the hearing functions and use of personal music players, and the third section involved some set of statements that require the sincere responses of the respondents to health related issues and advocacy. Cronbach alpha was used to test

the reliability of the instrument and reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.75.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected through the research instrument were analysed with the use of descriptive statistical techniques of frequency counts, percentage and bar charts.

Results

The demographic information of the participants based on the responses in line with age and gender was presented in the bar chart and tables below.

Table 1: Age-range of the respondents based on percentage

Age range	Frequency	Percent
15-20 years	46	18.4
21-25 years	121	48.4
26-30 years	64	25.6
31-35 years	19	7.6
Total	250	100



Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Figure 1 above shows that 18.4% of the respondents were between 15-20 years while those between 21-25 years represented 48.4%. Others were between 26-30 years and

31-35 years, and they were 25.6% and 7.6% respectively. By implication, those who were between the age- ranges of 21-25 years represented the largest proportion among the sampled proportion.

Table 2: Sex distribution of the respondents based on percentage

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	146	58.4
Female	104	41.6
Total	250	100

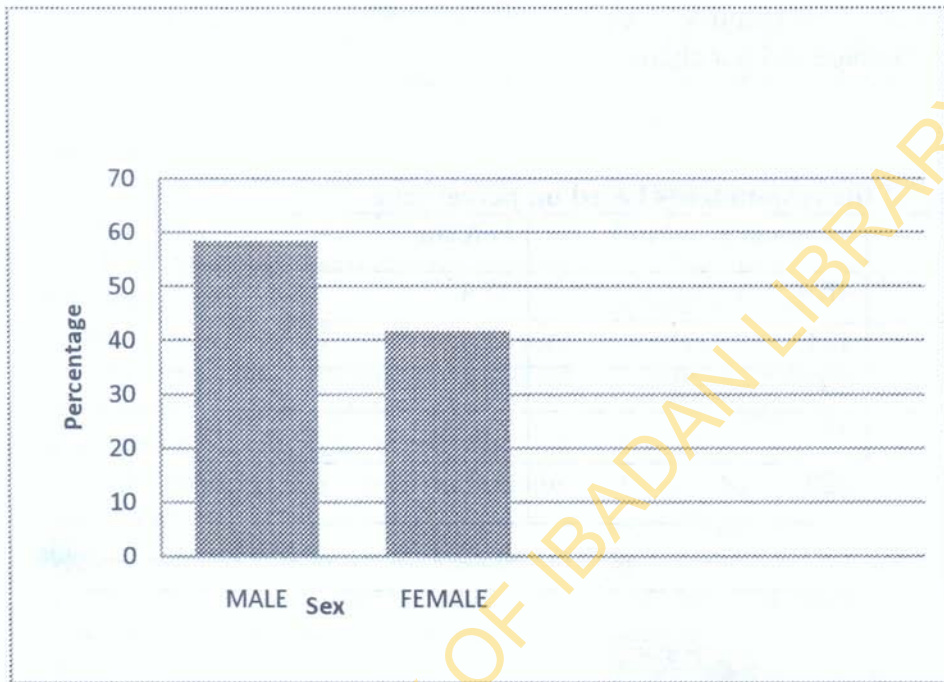


Figure 2: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Figure 2 above shows that 58.4% of the respondents were males, while 41.6% were females. This indicates that male gender is more vulnerable to the use of personal music player.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of the respondents in percentage based on personal assessment of hearing functions

Which statement best describes your hearing function?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	199	79.6
With little trouble	39	15.6
With lot of trouble	2	0.8
Difficulty in hearing sounds	9	3.4
Total	249	99.6
Have you had your hearing tested at any time before now?	Yes	84
	No	165
	Total	249
If yes, when was the last time it was tested?	Less than 1 year	56
	1-3 years ago	14
	3-5 years ago	9
	More than 5 years	3
	Total	82
Have you ever worn any type of hearing aid prior to this time?	Yes	2
	No	248
	Total	250

Table 3 shows that 79.6% of the respondents regarded their hearing as "good", 15.6% reported having "little trouble", 0.8% claimed having a "lot of trouble", while 3.4% reported "difficulty in hearing sound signals". 33.6% of the respondents have had their hearing tested and 66% of the respondents have not had their hearing tested. 22.4% of those had their hearing tested did so within the last one year, while

5.6% had their hearing tested in the last 1-3 years, 3.6% had their hearing tested in the last 3-5 years and the remaining 1.2 % had their hearing tested more than five years ago. As regards wearing of any kind of hearing aid, it was found that 0.8% of the tested had worn a hearing aid prior to this study, while the remaining 99.2% of the respondents had not worn a hearing aid.

Table 4: Frequency distribution based on the use of personal music player

How often do you listen to a personal stereo/mp3 player?	Frequency	Percent (%)
How often do you listen to a personal stereo/mp3 player?	Regularly	42.0
	105	34.3
	Occasionally	16.8
	87	6.0
	Rarely	42
	Not sure	14
	Total	249
When using personal stereo, how long do you listen to it?	Less than 1 hour p/day	4.0
	10	31.2
	2-3 hours per day	43.6
	78	19.6
	More than 3 hours p/day	109
	More than 5 hours per day	49
	Total	247
Do you always use headphone with your mp3 player?	Yes	62.4
	156	30.8
	No	77
	Total	233

From table 4 above, as regards the listening time to personal stereo on a daily basis, it was revealed that 42.0% of the respondents regularly listen to personal stereo, while 34.3% of the respondents listen to MPFs occasionally. 16.8% rarely listen to it while the remaining 6.0% of the respondents claimed not sure how often this is used. Based on the usage of their personal music players, 4.0% of the respondents stated using MPFs less than 1 hour per day, while 31.2% admitted using it up to three hours per day.

43.6% use it more than three hours per day, and 19.6% indicated using it more than five hours per day. On the issue of using headphone, 62.4% claimed that they always use headphone with their mp3 player, while only 30.8% said "No". By implication, majority of the youths in our society use MPFs more than three hours per day regularly and continuously.

Figure 3: Bar chart showing different kinds of music listening to when using personal stereo

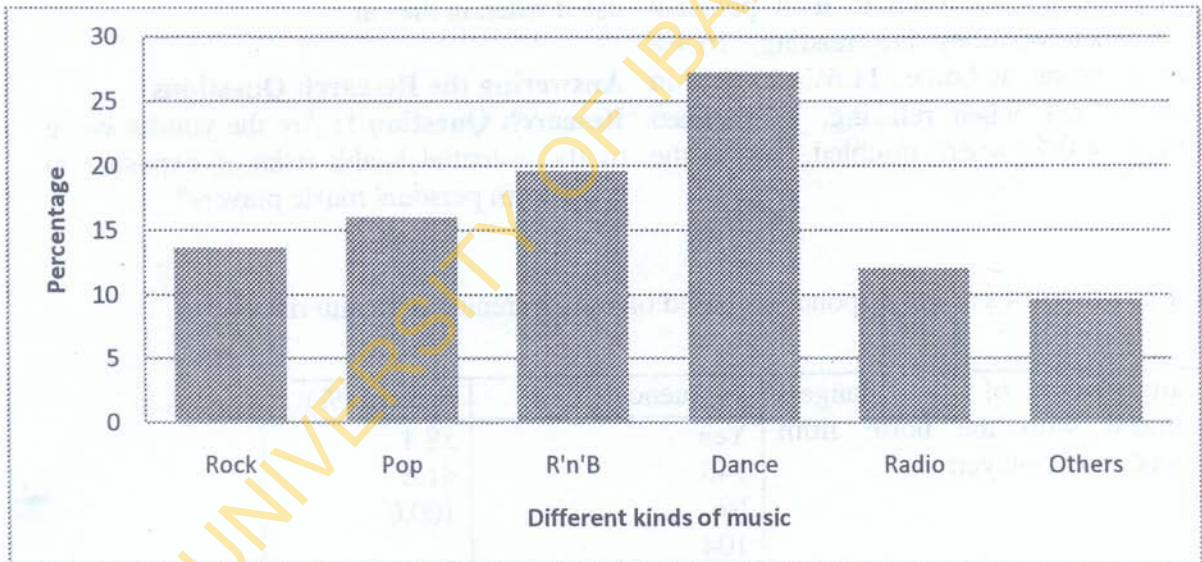


Figure 3 above shows that 13.6% of the respondents do listen to rock music, 16% pop, 19.6% listen to R'n'B, 27.2% do listen to dance music. 12.0% listen to radio/TV only. While the remaining 9.6% listen to any other kinds of music such as Gospel music

etc. With these findings, there is a clear indication that majority of the youths listen to dance music, rock, pop and R'n'B regular.

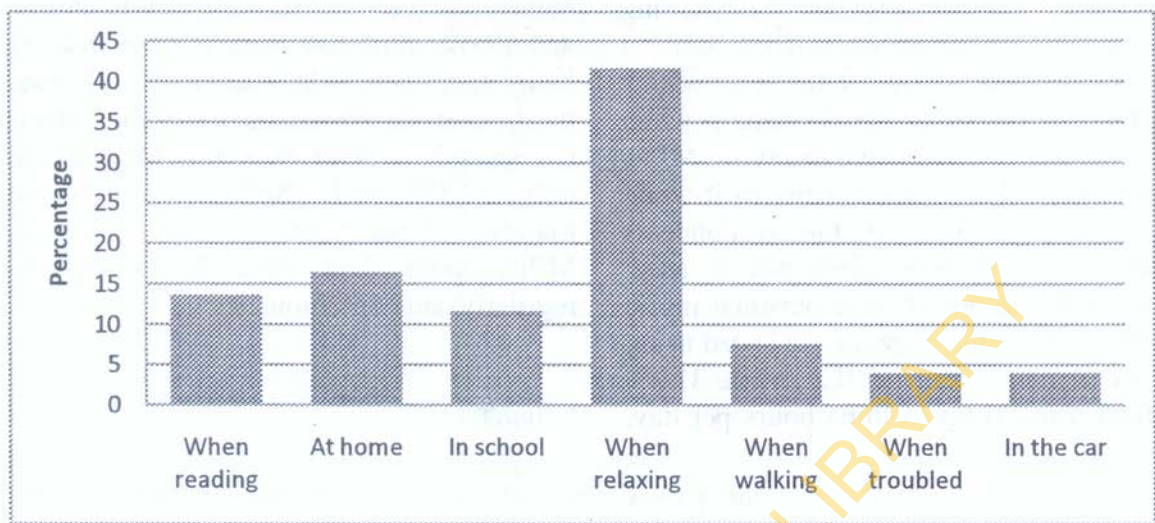


Figure 4: Bar chart showing the respondents in line with when using personal stereo

The information above reveals that 13.6% of the respondents do listen to their personal stereo whenever they are reading, 16.4% listen to music at home, 11.6% do that in school, 41.6% when relaxing, 7.6% when walking, 4.0% when troubled, while the remaining 4.0% of the sampled population use it when in the car.

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: Are the youths aware of the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music players?

Table 5: Responses of the respondents based on the awareness of health risks

I am aware of the dangers associated with the noise from personal music players.	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	146	58.4
No	104	41.6
Total	250	100.0

Table 5 above shows that 58.4% of the respondents were aware about the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music playing function, while 41.6% were not aware of the health risks prior to the time of this study.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the responses of the respondents about awareness of health risks of exposure to noise from personal music players, it was discovered that majority of

the respondents had the knowledge of damaging effects of MPFs to their healthy living but they still used it. The study corroborated the year 2005 study of Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) which admitted that 80% of youths interviewed knew the risk and implication of exposure to high volume noise. This continued usage in spite of the awareness of the risk involved attests to the addictive properties and value attached to MPFs by the you this all over the world.

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Response	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Aware	18	58.4%	30
Not aware	12	41.6%	30
Total	30	100%	30

Research Question 2: What are the major potential health risks from personal music playing functions?

Table 6: Types of Health risks from MPFs

When I use personal music players consistently, I usually feel headache.	Frequency	Percentages (%)
	Yes	64.4
	161	35.6
	No	89
	Total	100.0
Noise from personal music players always disturbs my daily life/activities	250	
	Yes	25.2
	63	74.8
	No	187
I have to get people to repeat themselves whenever I am using phone.	Total	100.0
	250	
	Yes	68.0
	170	32.0
I cannot hear people very well when I am using personal music players except they speak louder.	No	80
	Total	100.0
	250	
	Yes	70.0
Most times I experience difficulty to hear and speak for a period of time immediately I stop using personal music players.	175	30.0
	No	100.0
	75	
	Total	250
	Yes	73.6
	184	26.4
	No	66
	Total	100.0
	250	

Table 6 reveals responses of respondents as regards major potential health risks from personal music players; this implies that the respondents who claimed to have headache when using personal music players were 64.4%, while those who claimed otherwise were 35.6% of the sampled population. Only 25.2% agreed that noise from personal music players constitutes nuisance to their daily life, while 74.8% claimed not having any difficulty with noise on their daily activities. 68% of them agreed that they always get people to repeat themselves whenever they are using the phone, while those who disagreed were 32%. As regards hearing well when using personal music players, 73.0% of the respondents responded having difficulty hearing others when using music players. Also, 73.6% of the respondents reported having difficulty to communicate very well after using their personal music players.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed having difficulty in interpersonal communication most of the time as a result of regular exposure to personal music players. Most of the respondents always feel uncomfortable, restless and constant headache due to regular usage of personal music playing functions. The finding was in line with that of Muralikrishna (1995) that noise has a severe impact on human and living organisms, and that noise is capable of causing annoyance, physiological problems, poor human performance, sleeplessness and thereby inducing the people to become restless, lose concentration and presence of peace of mind during their daily activities.

Research question 3: How does exposure to personal music playing functions (noise) affects the general well being of youths?

Table 7: Effects of Noise on General- well being

	Frequency	Percentage
I can hear better in one ear than the other- one of my ears is better in function than the other	Yes	73.6
	184	26.4
	No	100.0
	66 Total 250	
I can hear better in a quite environment than in a noisy area	Yes	49.6
	124	50.0
	No	99.6
	125 Total 249	
I feel exposure to noise has hampered my ability to read and memorise well.	Yes	63.6
	159	36.4
	No	100.0
	91 Total 250	
I feel, exposure to noise has affected my ability to concentrate and learn smoothly.	Yes	66.0
	165	34.0
	No	100.0
	85 Total 250	
After listening to loud music, I sometimes hear a high frequency in my head with no external source of sound being presented (ringing in the ear.)	Yes	51.2
	128	48.4
	No	99.6
	121 Total 249	

Table 7 above shows responses of the respondents as regards how exposure to noise affects the youths as a result of constant usage of personal music playing functions. 73.6% of the respondents claimed better hearing in one of their ears, 63.6% observed that their ability to read and memorise well has been affected considerably and that they could not concentrate and learn smoothly as a result of constant usage of personal music playing function. 51.2% of the respondents confirmed having ringing in the ear (tinnitus), which is the basic effect of exposure to noise.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the responses of the respondents on the effect of noise on the youths, it is evidently clear that personal music playing functions have deleterious effect on the

general well being of the youths. Majority of the respondents reported having difficulty with their daily activities. This finding is in agreement with that of Osisanya (1998) which affirmed that exposure to noise is capable of creating tinnitus (ringing in the ear), poor memory and inability to hear well with competing sound signals. Also, the outcome is in line with the observation of Royal National Institute for Deaf people (RNID) in the year 2005 that 73% of people who have ever been to club, concert or festival have that ringing in their ears after a night out or in the morning after.

Research Question 4: What are the ways through which public awareness could be raised on the hearing conservation, insidious effects of excessive sound exposure and the potential health risks of exposure to noise from personal music players among youths?

Table 8: Responses to Methods of Public Awareness Considered Effective

	Frequency	Percentage	
To alert users to stop listening to music at high volume for long period of time because it might damage hearing mechanism.	Yes	210	84.3
	No	39	15.6
	Total	249	99.6
Youths should be discouraged from wearing or using headphone/ ear piece without adequate control.	Yes	201	80.4
	No	49	19.6
	Total	250	100.0
Government should mandate the manufacturers of the music playing functions to limit the maximum sound output of the gadgets.	Yes	191	76.4
	No	59	23.6
	Total	250	100.0
If you were aware that noise from personal music players can damage your ears, would you stop using it?	Yes	205	82.0
	No	45	18.0
	Total	250	100.0
To advocate for industrial safety regulation/ control	Yes	214	85.6
	No	35	14.0
	Total	249	99.6
Promotion of health talk/ education is considered necessary.	Yes	213	85.4
	No	37	14.8
	Total	250	100.0

Table 8 above reveals that 84% of the respondents preferred the users of MPFS to be dissuaded from listening to music at high volume for a long period of time, while 80.4% of the respondents expressed that the users should be discouraged from using earpiece without adequate control measure. 76.4% of the respondents expect government to come up with enforced policy on the maximum sound limit of the MPFS. 85.6% support advocacy/ direct public campaign to curtail exposure to noise, especially, from MPFS, while only 14.8% did not support advocacy for industrial safety regulation control. Finally those who supported the promotion of health talk/education as one of the media through which awareness can be disseminated on the potential health risk exposure to noise from personal music players among the youths were 85.2%; while 14.8% represented those who feel there is no need for such promotion of health talk/education.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study served as a way to sample the mind of the consumers towards the pros and cons of personal music playing functions. The outcome in a way represents the expectation and feeling of the consumers towards the prevention of insidious effects of exposure to MPFs. This study concurred with the findings of Kim, Hong, Shim, Kim, Cha and Yeo (2009) in which no significant difference in hearing was found with respondents who used Personal Listening Devices (PLDs) daily, however; respondents who used PLDs for longer than five years had higher hearing thresholds, while those respondents who used PLDs for longer than 15 years also had higher hearing thresholds at 4,000 Hertz. These findings suggested that hearing was negatively affected with longer PLD usage,

particularly at higher frequencies. Kim et. al (2009) therefore suggested that consumers be made aware of the long term effects of PLDs on hearing health and learn to adopt safer listening practices to prevent hearing loss.

Conclusion

Continuous usage and exposure from music playing functions has been found to have deleterious effects on the auditory perception and functional hearing ability of the youth population. The effects are capable of placing a serious plague on their communication ability as well as impair their socio-educational advancement if preventive measure is not in place. In fact, the exposure has greatly affected the general wellbeing of the sampled youths, based on ignorance and addictive psycho-social lifestyle. Therefore, this paper is of the opinion that both teenagers and adolescents should be dissuaded from regular usage of music playing functions, and concerted advocacy cum enlightenment campaign be mounted to curtail the explosion of sudden hearing impairment among the Nigerian youths.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

- i. youths should try to avoid regular or uncontrolled exposure of their hearing functions to technological gadgets such as earpiece of personal music player that can generate damaging noise for a long period of time;
- ii. ear protectors should be worn by youths that engage in menial jobs in noisy environments such as autom-obile, industries, quarries, manufacturing firms, feed mills and gun firing areas;
- iii. all youths should be made to go for hearing assessment so as to determine the status of their hearing sensitivity or

insensitivity, and endeavour to conform to conservation guides;

- iv. youths should take regular breaks from using head-phones in order to give their ears a rest;
- v. youths should avoid using high volume to draw out background noise because this could adversely affect their hearing sensitivity;
- vi. manufacturers of techno-logical gadgets should be constrained by law to install a sound limit on personal music players or reduce the maximum sound output level of all the personal music playing functions;
- vii. health authorities should educate youths on the poten-tial dangers of continuous exposure to loud music, and how to protect themselves against it;
- viii. parents should try to dissuade their wards from using personal music players for long period of time;
- ix. religious societies should ensure that maximum sound output of their public address system (PAS) should be made low in line with Health and Safety Act;
- (x) individuals should consider perfect hearing as a necessity. Therefore, they must not allow any habit or attitude to send them out of natural speaking and hearing realm;
- (xi) government should come up with an enforceable policy that will enable the manufacturers of personal music players reduce the maximum sound output level of such gadgets and
- (xii) all stakeholders, ministries and institutions concerned with education, health, youth and related issues should mount up a regular public awareness campaign to curtail the insidious effects of noise exposure on the general well being of all and sundry.

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