

Smoking and Self-justification among University Students

Pilot Mudhovozi¹ and Takupiwa Nyanga²

¹Department of Psychology, University of Venda, South Africa

²Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe

KEYWORDS Cigarette Smoking. Tobacco. Cognitive Dissonance. University Students

ABSTRACT The present study explored university students' perceptions of cigarette smoking. A sample of 60 participants who were attending a leadership training course for student leaders was selected. A 16 – item questionnaire was administered to the participants to gather their opinions on cigarette smoking. The study found that there was a high prevalence of cigarette smoking among the students. The onset of smoking was high at high school with a comparable proportion at university level. The main agents of influences were peers, television and radio. There was a high level of awareness of the effects of cigarette smoking, although, perceived benefits were cited as self-justification for smoking. Most of the participants expressed willingness to quit smoking and suggested the use of lectures and graphic images as effective strategies for anti-smoking campaigns. The study recommended further research to explore gender differentiation on smoking.