

Research Article

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Youth exposure to and usage of illicit drugs as an imperative in security discourse in Nigeria: Media's role in curbing the menace of drug

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Abstract: Terrorism, armed robbery, ritual killings, and other sundry criminal acts have put Nigeria's security under pressure. Insecurity is now a daily topic of discussion in all parts of the country. More disturbing is the fact that most perpetrators of criminal acts associated with insecurity are youth who abuse drugs. Yet, there seems to be a paucity of studies that probe some of the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. This study, which relied on Social Learning Theory, measured the level of exposure youth have to illicit drugs via social media; established the relationship between illicit drugs consumption and crime/insecurity, and examined the role the media can play in curbing the consumption and/or use of illicit drugs. It used a quantitative research method. Three hundred twenty-two copies of a questionnaire were administered to students of Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro, Delta State, Nigeria selected through a simple sampling technique. Results showed some youth get to know about illicit drugs through social media. A correlation was also found between illicit drug consumption and insecurity. The media can help curb drug abuse by the youth through enlightenment campaigns, among others. The study concluded that the attainment of appreciable security in Nigeria may remain a mirage without adequately addressing the issue of drug abuse. Thus, it was recommended that the media should create more awareness about the negative implications of illicit drug use by the youth by pointing out the dangers associated with drug abuse.

Keywords – Abuse, Crime, Drugs, Exposure, Insecurity, Youth

1. INTRODUCTION.

Nigeria is now experiencing a high level of insecurity. Citizens' lives and property are at the mercy of criminals who assault them at will. Insecurity has previously been defined by Igbuzor (2011), and Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), as the presence of dangers to a country's peace, stability, national cohesion, political, and socioeconomic objectives. Olabanjo et al. (2014, as cited in Ekesiobi, Madubueze & Ude, 2015) define insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil,

social, or political, that fuels conflicts and results in the indiscriminate destruction of lives and property. When a person does not sense any threat, concern, or risk to cherished value/s, he is said to be secure. Fear perceptions, like feelings of security, differ from person to person, context to scenario, and state to state (Okafor & Nwankwo, 2014).

According to a survey conducted by NOIPolls Limited, a country-specific polling service in West Africa, that conducts regular opinion polls and studies on various socio-economic and political issues, the security situation in Nigeria is arguably the worst it has been since the Civil War. The survey's results were released on May 27, 2022. According to a public opinion poll, 68 percent of adult Nigerians believe the country is dangerously unstable. Similarly, the study found that seven out of ten Nigerians think the country's present security situation is bad (Odeniyi, 2022). Similarly, the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria has prompted Catholic and Anglican Archbishops from across the country to lament the country's high level of insecurity, with some calling for the then President Muhammadu Buhari to resign for failing to protect lives and property, which they believed is the primary reason for the existence of government. A similar demand had previously been made by the Northern Elders Forum-NEF (Nkwopara, Olawale & Hassan-Wuyo, 2022).

Illicit drug use has been cited as a source of insecurity. Brigadier General Mohammed Buba Marwa (Rtd), the Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), describes the country's drug demand consumption level as alarming, stating that for the country to emerge from the current state of insecurity, drug intake and abuse must be drastically reduced. To demonstrate that illicit drug use is a social blight, Abubakar Malami, Nigeria's former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, boasted about sharing cars with party delegates in Kebbi state while others shared hard narcotics (Opera News, 2022). Drug subculture has its own set of beliefs, rules, roles, rituals, and jargon, thus it is no surprise that drugs have been linked to violence and criminality on multiple occasions (Ikoh, Smah, Okwanya, Clement & Aposhi, 2019).

Most of the perpetrators of security breaches in Nigeria are considered to be youth, as attested to by police records, armed robbery and kidnap victims, and media reports (Osumah & Aghedo, 2011; NOIPolls Limited, 2017; Bamas, 2021; Vincent, 2021; Jannamike, 2022a). Professor Usman Yusuf, the former Chief Executive of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), who accompanied renowned Islamic cleric, Ahmad Abubakar Gumi, deep into large forests across States in northern Nigeria to meet with six different bandits commanders, said the bandits were primarily children aged 10 to 12 who had become completely addicted to hard drugs. The author claimed they were heavily armed, and that they were even killing each other while under the influence of drugs. He identified the bandits' drugs of choice as codeine, tramadol, Pentazocine, intravenous drugs, Sudrex which is paracetamol and hydro-caffeine, Boska and marijuana (Jannamike, 2022b). For statistical reasons, the United Nations (UN) classified youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24, without regard to other member nations' definitions (UNESCO, 1985). However, Guanah, Obi, Egbra and Akumabor (2017) point out that the definition of "youth" differs per country, based on socio-cultural, institutional, economic, and political aspects. According to the African Youth Charter, "youth" refers to "any person aged 15 to 35 years" (Ayakoroma, 2019).

According to Ettang (2017), drug misuse among African teenagers exposes them to a variety of dangers, with many falling prey to crime and violence. According to the International Narcotics Central Board - INCB (2003), there is a link between drug usage and criminal offenses, and case studies of offenders who have committed violent crimes show that drug consumption is frequently a crucial element. According to

some studies, higher rates of violence are linked to more frequent drug consumption. According to Eiser and Main (Science Direct, 2022), the 15-to-24-year-old period can be defined as a period of experimentation with a variety of legal and illegal substances. Youth abuse drugs like tobacco, tramadol, sedatives, marijuana, 'alomo', gum, mkpuru mmiri, opiate, barbiturate, hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, benzodiazepines (Valium), and bromazepam (Lexotan), crack cocaine, methamphetamine, amphetamines, and other unidentifiable tablets and capsules.

To get high, some of these substances are injected into their veins, muscles, or thighs. Their exposure to lethal drugs is sometimes through the media, particularly social media and films, and this has exacerbated insecurity in Nigeria, as many of them engage in criminal activities while under the influence of narcotics. According to Buchholz (2022), due to their youthful populations, developing countries and emerging markets continue to spend the most time on social networks throughout a normal day, with the 16 to 24-year-old category driving worldwide growth. The author claims that Nigerians spend the majority of their time on social media, spending more than four hours every day on the Internet. Furthermore, multiple studies have found that teenagers use smartphones and social media for several reasons (including education, business, socialization, communication, politics, entertainment, and religion), and that they derive a range of benefits from doing so. According to Hilliard (2021), social networking sites provide new and potentially dangerous opportunities for adolescents to be introduced to drugs. Children can view harmful drug and alcohol-related behaviours being engaged in by both famous and regular people on Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat.

Against the foregoing backdrop, the motivation of this study, which was intended to draw attention to the fact that there is a relationship between drug abuse and insecurity in Nigeria, therefore, was to determine the level of exposure youth have to illicit drugs via social media; establish if there is any significant relationship between illicit drugs consumption and crime/insecurity, and to examine the role the media can play in curbing the consumption and/or use of illicit drugs.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1. Objectives of the study

The major objective of the study was to broaden the analysis of insecurity in Nigeria by introducing the youth and drug dimension to the discourse. More specifically, the study's aims were:

- i. To determine the level of exposure youth have to illicit drugs via social media.
- ii. To establish the relationship between illicit drugs consumption and crime/insecurity.
- iii. To ascertain the role of the media in curbing the consumption and/or use of illicit drugs.

2.2. Theoretical guide

This study finds support in the Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory in psychology was postulated by Albert Bandura. According to authors such as West (1988) and Feldman (1993), the theory is often associated with Albert Bandura's work and study on modeling and imitation. Bandura stated that by studying other people's acts, one may learn behaviour at the cognitive level (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989). Albert Bandura stated in his studies in 1977 that behaviour is acquired from the environment through observational learning. Children witness individuals in their environment behaving in a variety of ways. This was demonstrated in the famous bobo doll experiment, in which pre-schoolers saw a film in

which an adult pounded, kicked, hurled, and hammered a 3.5-foot tall, inflatable Bobo the clown doll (Bandura, 1961, as cited in McLeod, 2011).

Children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new ways of conduct through filmed and broadcast modelling, according to Bandura, as referenced by Wirtz (Guanah, Agbongiator & Obi, 2017). As a result, the author warned that watching television (TV) could lead to a violent reality, which should be feared because of its ability to impact how we interact with people daily. The following is a summary of his theory: (i) the author claims that we learn by watching others. (ii) He emphasises the value of role models and the power of examples. (iii) the author emphasises the relevance of vicarious behaviour as a method of behaviour modification (Guanah, Agbongiator & Obi, 2017).

Feldman (1993) claims that Bandura concentrated on the operant conditioning theory's main elements of reinforcement, punishment, and motivation. People, according to Bandura, are capable of envisioning themselves in comparable situations and suffering similar outcomes (Ewen, 1980). This holds for the media as well. The idea applies to many everyday concerns such as clothes, look, style, eating and drinking, styles of contact, and personal consumption, and it has a broad application to the socialising impacts of media and the adoption of various patterns of action. Television is rarely the sole source of social learning, and its impact is influenced by other factors such as parents, friends, and teachers (McQuail, 2005). The consequences of the behaviour may be used to encourage or penalise it once it has been learned. People are more inclined to emulate the behaviours that they see their idols or role models exhibit in the media and are praised for, and less likely to emulate the behaviours that their idols or role models are criticised for.

According to Ajilore and Abdul (2019), when celebrities advertise drug and alcohol, it makes smoking and drinking look like enjoyable, cool activities, which can entice young individuals to try the same goods. They go on to say that sharing drug-related content on social media has been found to encourage people to believe that using drugs and drinking alcohol is risk-free. The depiction of drug use on social media may contain drug-related comments and imagery that may affect social media users and be suggestive of offline drug use. As a result, according to Hilliard (2019), social media advertising may be responsible for up to 30% of adolescent cigarette and alcohol usage. Some of these celebrities are drug addicts that must not be emulated. The case of Cory Monteith is a good example. The 31-year-old singer and actor is most known for his role as Hudson in the film 'GLEE.' However, he was not without his "demons," as he checked into a rehab facility to treat his addiction issues (Kwakpovwe, 2022). A few months later, he died of an overdose and was discovered in a Vancouver hotel room on July 13, 2013. Fans and the television community were grieved by his death. His character on "GLEE" was "killed off" on the screen after his death.

This theory is appropriate for this study because, in the same vein, media audience can learn, take after, and imitate the idiosyncrasies of the models they have observed in the media, be it on the television, films, or social media which youth effortlessly have access to through their mobile phone. Nigerian musicians like Naira Marley and others do not hide that they smoke Indian hemp, and they boldly flaunt it on social media. Actions like this can influence their fans (youth) who see them as role models. Celebrities like Justin Bieber, Drake, and Cardi B regularly post photographs of themselves drinking and getting high on social media, and this is beginning to affect the young people who are watching (Hilliard, 2021).

2.3. Some causes of insecurity in Nigeria

Negatively, security has been characterised as the absence of, or freedom from, threat, fear, or danger (Nnoli, 2006), or as the absence of harm to treasured ideals (Okafor & Nwankwo, 2014). Insecurity, according to Awojobi (2014: 358), is "the state of being vulnerable to attacks. It is a feeling of intense anxiety and fear." Insecurity, according to Ogege (2013), as cited in Ekesiobi, Madubueze and Ude (2015), is the polar opposite of security. It is a condition in which members of a society are unable to carry out their regular activities due to threats to and damaging disruptions to their lives and possessions. The problem of insecurity in Nigeria has reached such grave proportions that the media rarely fail to highlight examples of security breaches. Armed robbers, bandits, assassins, terrorists, kidnappers, and insurgents pose a threat to people's lives and property (Guanah, 2021). The causes of insecurity in the land have been attributed to a variety of factors. A few of them are discussed further down.

The rate of unemployment in the country is high, and this cuts across all age groups, especially the youth who are mostly graduates. Since they will want to keep body and soul together by all means, they become susceptible to criminal acts like armed robbery, hooliganism, and other acts that cause security breaches. Peter Obi, a former presidential candidate for the Labour Party (LP) in Nigeria says the unemployment rate in the country is extremely concerning and cautions that any country that is unable to employ its vast pool of educated youths will undoubtedly struggle with social vices like crime and criminality (Vanguard, 2020). Poverty level, a breeder of insecurity in Nigeria, is on the increase. When people find it difficult to feed there is a likelihood for them to go into crime. 82.9 million Nigerians are currently living in poverty, according to the National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS) 2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria Report. According to projections from the World Bank (Kazeem, 2018), this percentage equals 40.09% of the entire population, designating her as the world's poorest country (Ikeji, 2020). By 2022, the World Bank projected that 95.7 million Nigerians will be living in poverty (Soniya, 2020). The World Poverty Clock and World Economic Forum say "Nigeria is now the world headquarters for extreme poverty" (Omokri, 2020: 3). The Chandler Good Government Index report for 2021 released in April also ranked Nigeria as the third-worst governed country in the world (Adepegba, 2021).

Frustration on the part of citizens who feel that the government is not doing enough to protect them can make them take the law into their hands. That is to say that the non-committal attitude of the government to tackle and deal decisively with the culprits of violent attacks is now leading to self-help. Hence, Dakas (2005: 4) warns that, "failure of political leaders in a democracy to deliver the dividends of democracy often leads to military intervention or the breakdown of law and order in a polity". Guanah (2021) also identifies the consumption of banned substances and illicit drugs as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. He observes that when people are under the influence of heavy doses of drugs like Gadazi, Zakami, lizard pooh, comorado, codeine, cocaine, heroin, speed, AZT, ecstasy, rofyfenol, fentanyl, meth, oxy, marijuana, toothpaste, and dry lemon grass, they feel 'high' and merciless, and could do anything.

2.4. Interweave among social media, illicit drug, and insecurity

Over the past few years, terrorism, banditry, ritual killings, assassination, and sundry other criminal acts have put Nigeria's security under pressure. However, there is no way insecurity can be effectively handled if the issue of its root causes is not addressed, chief among which is illicit drug consumption by perpetrators of heinous crimes in society. Illicit drug use and abuse by criminals continue to be the stimulant of choice for them to go out and carry out crimes. According to Brigadier General Mohammed

Buba Marwa (Rtd), the Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), drug usage is the leading cause of insecurity in Nigeria. He says it is a national disaster that has turned into the country's biggest problem, and that bandits, kidnappers, and a slew of other people are usually high on narcotics (Oyewale, 2021).

When drug abusers are high on narcotics, they brazenly walk out and perpetrate heinous actions with no remorse. As a result, illegal substances pose a security risk. According to a 2015 analysis by the Institute of Security Studies-ISS, unless members of the criminal justice system identify and deal with youth involved in illegal activities at an early stage, disrupting illicit markets, youth who use drugs may resort to forming criminal gangs, which can create and sustain organized crime. Dr. Paul Nwachukwu, General Superintendent and Presiding Bishop of The Grace of God Mission International, Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria, led a prayer rally against the recent spate of ritual killings, cultism, and drug consumption in the society. The rally moved through well-known streets in the commercial city, stopping occasionally at well-known intersections for prayers and a sprinkling of anointed oil, among other things (Today.ng, 2022). The rally's goal was to free Onitsha's youth from ritual killings, hard drugs, and cultism. Also, Brig-Gen Buba Marwa (Rtd) wrote a letter to Senator Abdullahi Adamu, the then Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), requesting that NDLEA officials be given access to conduct drug integrity tests for politicians seeking political offices in the country (Ekanem, 2022).

There is hardly any community in Nigeria today that does not have "joints" where hard drugs are being traded and abused, and which invariably also double as a home for criminal elements. Many people will not be surprised to learn that the NDLEA arrested a businessman named Ukatu Afamefuna Mallinson, the managing director of Mallinson & Partners Ltd, for allegedly importing two containers containing 1,284 cartons of Tramadol worth N22 billion in 2019 as well as for allegedly being responsible for an N3 billion shipment of Tramadol linked to the disgraced police chief, Abba Kyari (Egbe, 2022).

Drugs are abused when they are used for non-medicinal purposes in an excessive, maladaptive, or addictive manner. Drug abuse is defined as an emotional and occasionally physical state marked by a continual need to consume drugs to experience its mental consequences (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, as cited in Oluwole, Habibat & Babatunde, 2018). The reality that drug consumption is linked to security is becoming increasingly obvious by the day. The media are parts of the most important players in the security debate. This is because some youth learn about illegal drugs through the media, particularly social media. Also, when it comes to reaching out to the youth, the media, particularly social media, are powerful and successful. Records show that teenagers spend a significant amount of time on the Internet each day. 95% of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet everyday, with 70% doing so on a weekly basis, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project (Lenhart, 2015).

Although social media have a lot of advantages, they have also brought in their trail debasement, abuse, and nemesis on the society by the freedom they offer to the extent that materials that are inimical to the wellbeing of individuals and society are freely posted online; for instance, the way drugs are abused openly without check. This makes the youth imitate what they see online, being unable to distinguish between what is good and what is bad. According to Wahed (2019), a survey done by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2016 found that 1.9 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 had used illicit drugs within 30 days of the survey. A majority of these teenagers said that a peer had provided them with drugs or alcohol. Illicit drug is one of the evil trees that breeds insecurity hence the menace has to be uprooted. Drugs are the real trouble beating the hides under the waters of insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, for us to make

headway in a bid to have a secure country, we must build a conversation around illicit drug consumption, especially among the youth. There must be deliberate steps to be taken to combat drug abuse in the land. Recapitulating that the impact of drug use and abuse goes beyond health distortion to affect even the economy and security of the people, Ikoh, Smah, Okwanya, Clement and Aposhi (2019) claim that when young people are influenced by drugs, they pose an impediment to society's peace and security.

After his release, News Hub Creator (2022a) quotes the kidnapped Methodist Church of Nigeria Prelate, Dr. Samuel Kanu-Uche, as saying that while in captivity, he tried to outsmart his kidnappers by speaking with the Bishop of Owerri in Igbo, and that when he was allowed to speak on the phone to negotiate the ransom amount to be paid for his release, he discovered that the gang leader could speak Igbo. The gang leader warned him and threatened to ruin the Prelate's life by he (gang leader) ingesting a strange substance (illicit drug). Sheikh Gumi (as cited in News Hub Creator, 2022b) claims that if Nigeria's borders are closed, bandits will have nowhere to go because drug and gun smuggling will be stopped as well.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

3.1. Statement of the problems

Insecurity in Nigeria has assumed a high level. Nowhere seems safe. Innocent and armless citizens are attacked periodically in homes, offices, markets, schools, churches, mosques, on the highway while travelling, on their farms, and even at police stations and army formations. This problem is compounded by the inability of the federal, state, and local governments to map out strategic plans to pointedly address insecurity. Associated with this problem of insecurity is the consumption of illicit drugs by some youth which has made them pliable to committing crimes and security breaches. According to Oladele Fajana, a security expert, Nigeria is in jeopardy due to recent insecurity, and everyone should expect an attack at any time. The author claimed that paupers, priests, and other well-to-do Nigerians have been targeted (Odeniyi, 2022).

Factors like governments' inability to provide the basic needs of the citizens, lack of proper parental responsibility, and our social system and values, amongst others, have been implicated as reasons for the increase of insecurity in Nigeria. While there have been numerous studies on the insecurity situation in Nigeria generally, there has been scant analysis of drug abuse as one of the fundamental causes of insecurity. The problem of youth involvement in drug abuse and insecurity is so pathetic because it involves both the male and female genders. Consequently, this study is an attempt to fill the huge gap in the existing literature on insecurity in Nigeria.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey as its research design. Undergraduate students at the Delta State University of Science and Technology in Ozoro, Delta State, Nigeria, were the focus of the inquiry. The 2,000 university's undergraduate students made up the study's population (Ojetobor, 2022; Ijaw Nation Forum, 2022). The university comprises 45 departments and 7 faculties (Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro website, 2022). Using Cozby's (2004) Precision of Estimate table, which was constructed using conservative assumptions about the nature of the true population numbers, the sample size was determined to be 322. The table specifies that $\pm 5\%$, a population between 2000 and 4999 shall have a sample size of 322. Consequently, the study's sample size was 322.

Two mass communication research specialists from the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria face-evaluated the questionnaire before it was used by the researchers to collect data. To assess the instrument's reliability between replies from 20 respondents given identical questions on two different occasions, the Pearson product-moment correlation was used. The first and second responses of the respondents had a strong positive connection that was statistically significant ($r = 0.6, n = 20, p = 0.05$). The researchers employed the straightforward percentage approach to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The study made use of a multistage sampling method. The 7 University faculties were chosen at the initial stage by the researchers. The following departments make up the faculties: Agriculture, Earth Science, Engineering, Information Technology, and Management Science. In the second stage, the researchers chose two departments at random from each of the seven (7) faculties of the university, giving a total of 14 departments. Since the institution is new, and only has 100 level students, the researchers purposefully chose 100 level students from each of the departments for the third stage. In the fourth stage, 322 copies of the questionnaire—or 23 per department—were purposefully administered on the students chosen from the 14 departments. 308 (95.65%) copies were retrieved from the numbers distributed and confirmed to be authentic.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: Level of exposure to illicit drugs via social media

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
High Exposure	198	64.29
Medium Exposure	37	12.01
Low Exposure	73	23.70
Total	308	100.00

Keys: High- 70% - 100%; Medium- 40% - 69%; Low- 1% - 39%.

The data presented in Table 1 show that majority of the students are exposed to illicit drugs on social media. Albeit, there was no indication whether the respondents were into illicit drug use or abuse or not, even if they were exposed to their use or advertisement on social media.

Table 2: Views on the relationship between illicit drugs consumption and crime/insecurity

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	138	44.81
Agree	118	38.31
Undecided	4	1.30
Strongly Disagree	22	7.14
Disagree	26	8.44
Total	308	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Likert - type five points rating scale and dichotomous were used: 5= Strongly Agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3= Undecided (U), 2= Strongly Disagree (SD), and 1= Disagree (D) responses as well as open-ended questions. Data from Table 2 show that there is a correlation and significant relationship between drug consumption and crime in society. This implies that the increase in illicit drug intake can make a youth commit more

security breaches in society.

Table 3: How the media can assist in curbing the consumption and/or use of illicit drugs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness creation	40	12.99
Enlightenment programmes	37	12.02
Education	39	12.66
Advocacy and Campaigns	33	10.71
Role of socialisation	41	13.31
Motivation & persuasion	39	12.66
Debates and discussions	34	11.04
All of the above	45	14.61
Total	308	100.00

Source: Foeld Survey, 2022.

The import of the data in Table 3 is that the media, comprising the conventional media and social media, can be veritable tools through which the menace of drug abuse can be curtailed.

2.1. Discussion of findings

The study has shown, through its perceived findings, that some youth get exposed to illicit drugs through social media. This finding resonates with Ajilore and Abdul's (2019) claim that the usage of social media platforms has grown over time, allowing teenagers and young people to be exposed to and affected by drug and alcohol-related information. They added that celebrities utilise social media to share snippets of their lives with the public and that in the course of doing so, they also promote drug and alcohol consumption. When teenagers come across a post on any social media platform in which their role model is seen ingesting any substance, they are generally inspired. According to Costello and Ramo (2017), substance abuse is widespread and is praised by celebrities on social media. For a variety of reasons, youth look up to their role models, particularly in the entertainment industry. To some youth, their models are teachers whom they idolise, learn from and see as infallible, hence all they do are correct.

The most successful smoking and drug control programmes for youth, according to Eiser and Main (as cited in Science Direct, 2022), have emphasised the development of skills needed to resist peer pressure and media enticement to use tobacco. This shows that the media, particularly social media, can push young people to use illegal drugs. As a result, the youth are taught to recognise social pressure from classmates and the media, as suggested by McGuire (2007), which is, by practice, designed to avoid social pressure in a controlled environment. This confirms that social media can be a source of influence on behaviour according to such behavioural models as social learning theory (Newcomb, Maddahian, Skager & Bentler, 1987). According to a study conducted by Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, teenagers who regularly use prominent social media sources are more likely to drink, use drugs, and purchase tobacco than those who do not use social media, or use it less frequently (Hilliard, 2021).

The second finding from this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between illicit drug consumption and crime/insecurity. This conclusion is supported by the UNODC's 2011 declaration that drug misuse serves as a catalyst for both terrorism and insurgency. Drug-related violence often drives general violent crime patterns in communities that are seeing significant increases in violent crime, and the homicide rate usually fluctuates as a direct result of the drug-related homicide rate (McCue, 2007). Sharma, Sharma and Barkataki (2016) discovered that there is an intimate relationship between drugs and

criminal behaviour after conducting an extensive analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics and current trend of substance usage among juveniles in New Delhi. They concluded that the more substance abusers take, the more violence and criminality there is. Also, armed robbery, burglary, pickpocketing, and rape exacerbated by narcotics have all been reported in Nigeria (UNODC,2014). Rodriguez, Katz, Webb, et al. (2005) further support the idea that there is a link between adolescent drug misuse and criminality, citing the substantial correlation between stimulant use and criminality. According to the former Chief Executive of National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Professor Usman Yusuf, drugs are fuelling the insecurity witnessed all across Nigeria, “drugs are fuelling all the criminality in the society, not just banditry, but also Boko Haram, ISWAP, and IPOB/ESN” (Jannamike, 2022b: 2).

Buba Marwa, Director-General of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), insists that there is irrefutable evidence of a link between drug use and a wave of insecurity, stating that drugs are a clear catalyst for insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, the felonious acts of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), and other criminal activities. He claims that insurgents, bandits, and those responsible for the kidnapping of hundreds of schoolchildren are all under the influence of drugs because they use them before embarking on their heinous operations. When several arrested militants were asked what their greatest worry was in their operations, they responded that it was not running out of ammunition, food, or guns, but running out of narcotics (Vanguard, 2021).

The third finding of this study showed that the media can assist in tackling drug abuse among the youth through awareness creation, enlightenment programmes, education, advocacy and campaigns, socialisation, motivation, persuasion, debates, and discussions. No quantum of army or security outfit in the world can guarantee perfect security and safety of life and property anywhere, hence alternative means to tackle insecurity and the issues around it, like abuse, must be adopted, and the media are very germane in this aspect. The media possess the power to inform, but transformation in the lives of the receivers of such information in terms of acting according to the information they get, depends largely on how such information is interpreted and utilised. The media must work hard to reverse the country's unfavourable trend of drug misuse by educating the people about the dangers of drug intake and abuse, to reduce illicit drug consumption, which exacerbates insecurity, to the bare minimum. They must be active in the tenacious struggle to eradicate drug misuse, particularly among the youth, because the pandemic is wreaking havoc on Nigeria's security architecture.

Through the creation of awareness about the danger that accompanies illicit drug consumption, the media can discourage the youth from drug abuse. They should report the cases of recalcitrant youth who persistently abuse drugs, and eventually develop mental problems, other problems, or even die. These reports by the media may serve as a deterrent to potential drug abusers. The media should concentrate more on educating the youth on the need not to venture into illicit drug consumption and the harm that comes with drug abuse, rather than just reporting cases of illicit drug transactions in society. The West African Commission on Drugs` (2014) report, for example, emphasises that drug use is associated with impaired coordination and a loss of self-control in addition to an increase in the number of patients admitted to hospitals due to drug abuse, addiction, and dependence.

There should be sustained media advocacy and campaigns against drug abuse. The media should constantly feature stakeholders like members of the health, family, and security communities in the various publications, either electronic or print. This will allow these experts to elucidate more on the import of drug abuse of the youth on them as individuals, and the society as a whole. For instance,

Klantschnig (2013) and Origer and Cloos (2003) agree that drug abuse leads to emotional breakdown and a loss of self-control, which are linked to inner-city crises, crime, and adolescent violence. These kinds of facts should be regularly presented by the media in their analyses and remarks.

Socio-economic issues that would have prevented crime and insecurity in the society, if those in government had handled them well, should also be the focus of the media. The media should hold governments at all levels responsible for not providing the basic needs of the people. The media should call the attention of all stakeholders in the fight against drug abuse to areas like the outlets through which drugs are distributed and sold, and to the peddlers of illicit drugs. They should employ the stakeholders to also beam their searchlights on chemists where drugs like tramadol, pentazocine, and others are being sold.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Though there should be freedom of expression, and free speech should not be gagged, yet, an effective and acceptable way to properly regulate social media must be put in place to curtail the incessant posting of materials that are injurious to the wellbeing of society on social media platforms.
2. Governments should look beyond confronting insecurity only through force, rather, they should be more interested in the root causes of insecurity in the society, and map out strategies on how to address them.
3. All forms of media should be deployed to expose the dangers of drug abuse, to educate the public, and to proffer solutions on how it can be curtailed.
4. The media should create more awareness about the negative implications of illicit drug use by the youth, by pointing out the dangers associated with drug abuse.

7. CONCLUSION

Threats and retaliation against security breach culprits in Nigeria have not alleviated the problem of insecurity. This necessitates an immediate review of the current efforts being taken to combat insecurity, as well as a shift in strategy to securing life and property as a result. Therefore, this paper argues that illicit drug abuse by the youth is a strong factor to consider in the security discourse in Nigeria. When this is identified as a problem, and its implications are properly studied and understood, the government can now strategise on how to take decisive steps to address insecurity. This must be done, taking into consideration the youth's minutiae. The attainment of appreciable security in Nigeria may remain a mirage without adequately addressing the issue of drug abuse.

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