

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN PORT HARCOURT**Eze Thelma Eze, Prof. Fred, A. Amadi & Dr. Njoku, C. Justice***thelma.eze@ust.edu.ng, amadi.azubuike01@ust.edu.ng & Justice.njoku@ust.edu.ng***Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies. Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

This study examined the impact of social media usage on drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt. The research was grounded in four theoretical frameworks: Uses and Gratification Theory, Technological Determinism Theory, Perception Theory (Selective Exposure), and Symbolic Interaction Theory. The study employed a survey research design, targeting a population of 1,132,160 youth in Port Harcourt, with a sample size of 400 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, and the analysis was conducted using frequency counts, simple percentages, and weighted means. The results indicated that the most commonly abused substances among youth in Port Harcourt include cocaine, heroin/codeine, tramadol, marijuana, and alcohol. The study identified Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok as the social media platforms that contribute to promoting drug abuse among the youth. Additionally, findings revealed a high level of social media-driven awareness campaigns against drug abuse in Port Harcourt. The primary sources of anti-drug abuse messages on social media were found to be government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In conclusion, the study found that social media has a significant effect on drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt. It recommended that social media platforms should provide and promote accessible information on the dangers of drug abuse and educate youth on the appropriate use of substances prone to misuse.

INTRODUCTION

Media are recognized as social institutions established to fulfill specific societal functions, including providing information, interpretation, education, and entertainment. To carry out these roles effectively, media utilize various communication technologies, such as radio, television, the internet, films, telegraphs, newspapers, and magazines, to convey messages to a broad, diverse, anonymous, dispersed, and transient audience. Media can be broadly categorized into two groups: print and non-print media. The non-print media are further divided into electronic media, which encompass social media, mass media, and other forms (Oyesomi & Okorie, 2015, p.190). Kaplan and Haenlein (2015) characterise social media as a "collection of internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Social media include web-based and mobile technologies that facilitate interactive discussion among people, organisations, and communities (p.62). Common instances of social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, among others. These instruments are termed media as they serve as tools for both the storage and dissemination of information; in contrast to traditional media such as television and radio, most social media platforms enable user interaction, exemplified by features like "re-tweeting" on Twitter and "comment" options on Facebook. Lawhon and Herrick (2018, p.990) asserted that social media significantly influences agenda-setting by serving as a principal platform for public attention, highlighting specific issues (such as drug abuse), and

framing perceived causes and solutions to those issues. This indicates that if social media consistently reports on drug usage issues, such matters will dominate public debate and gain significance. This may influence how individuals perceive and interpret drug misuse.

In Nigeria, social media serves as an efficient platform to engage the general populace. Similar to television and radio, social media serves as a prominent medium for raising awareness and enhancing understanding of profession, health, and other socially pertinent matters. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have excelled in information distribution, public education, and advocacy, notably in the war against drug misuse (Olubiyi & Olamileke, 2020, p.228). Fareo (2012, p.19) asserts that medications are intended to construct rather than to obliterate, to cure rather than to terminate, and to restore rather than to deplete. They are compounds that may alter an individual's biological activities via chemical actions, affecting perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour, and overall bodily functioning.

Recent outcry in the country highlights that many pharmaceuticals are severely abused and misused due to improper application, resulting in a national and perhaps worldwide crisis (Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2021, p.58). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) (2018) defined drug abuse as the illicit and non-medical utilisation of substances that possess inherent properties capable of altering an individual's mental state in various manners, deemed by societal norms and values as inappropriate, undesirable, harmful, threatening, concerning, and culturally alien. It constitutes a deviation from the proper, legal, or authorised use of pharmaceuticals. It encompasses all instances of non-medical substance use by individuals, whether intentional or unintentional, aimed at altering one or more of its inherent functions, thereby hindering the person's capacity to operate effectively and normally within socially, physically, emotionally, or psychologically acceptable parameters. Akanbi et al. (2019, p. 379) assert that drug misuse, now referred to as drug/substance use disorder, has emerged as a perilous and troubling worldwide problem, with multifaceted repercussions for both global and Nigerian peace. It is a significant driving element contributing to the elevated levels of anti-social, economic, health, and political issues facing the globe. It constitutes the bulk of criminal actions, including homicide, abduction, sexual assault, cult-related violence, banditry, suicide, armed robbery, and self-inflicted difficulties such as accidents, withdrawal syndrome, dependency, depression, hostility, and poor scholastic performance and failures.

Drug misuse is prevalent for several reasons, as pointed out by Muanya and Onyenucheya (2019, p.114). This is particularly true among young people. To rephrase, there are a lot of people who point fingers at parents, friends, classmates, a lack of self-confidence, academic pressure, lack of sleep, sexual ability, athletic ability, and social media ads as causes of drug misuse among young people. According to Adeyeye (2018, p.12), some young people start abusing drugs because they mimic what they see on various social media sites. Some parents and friends may have an impact on their children's drug and alcohol use. There is a robust correlation between drug usage and parental deprivation as a result of death, divorce, separation, or conflict. Other social and environmental variables that contribute to substance misuse include not being at home as often, less strict parental supervision, feeling estranged from family, being exposed to drugs at a young age, influenced by peers, and having easy access to drugs (Fareo, 2012, p.20). Tobacco, alcohol, stimulants (caffeine, nicotine, cannabis, amphetamine, tramadol, codeine), volatile solvents (glue, chloroform, correction fluid, etc.), psychotropic medications (sedatives, anxiolytics, hypnotics, lysergic acid diethylamide, mescaline, vasodilator, anaesthetic, gases manpower, paraga, sepe,

etc.), and so on are mentioned in the literature (Adeyeye, 2018, p.33; Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2021, p.57).

Statement of the Problem

Drugs are intended to build, not destroy; to cure, not kill; and to refill, not deplete. They are compounds that may influence an individual's biological function via chemical processes, influencing perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour, and general bodily functioning. However, current global anger highlights the reality that most medications have been repeatedly abused and misused due to incorrect and improper application. As a result, drug misuse among young people is a major worldwide problem with far-reaching implications, and Nigeria is no exception. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s 2022 World Drug Report highlights the rising issue of drug misuse among Nigerian teenagers. According to the research, illegal drug usage in Nigeria has increased, especially among young people. Interestingly, social media has emerged as a significant influencer on human behaviour. It affects attitudes, makes communication easier, and promotes a feeling of belonging and identity. Young people, in particular, are actively involved with social media, which has a tremendous influence on their views, attitudes, and decision-making processes. Unfortunately, social media, which is meant to encourage information dissemination, awareness building, and educating the public about drug misuse, seems to be pushing these youngsters to participate in drug abuse via the many messages and statuses they read on social media. Research (Aribamikan, 2022; Olubiyi, 2022) shows that social media platforms may function as both facilitators and enablers of drug misuse behaviours.

These platforms are used for sharing information about drug use, accessing drug-related content, and even purchasing drugs. Additionally, social media can perpetuate the normalization of drug use through the glorification of substance abuse in music, videos, and popular culture. However, some studies have been carried out on the effect of social media on drug abuse in Nigeria. Unfortunately, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of these studies carried out focused on how social media has contributed to drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt where there is high level of drug abuse. This creates a gap in knowledge/literature that this study aims to bridge. It is in line with the identified problems and the gap that this study seeks to carry out an investigation of the effect of social media on drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of social media on drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt. Other specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Identify the various drugs that are commonly abused on social media platforms by youths in Port Harcourt.
- ii. Identify the social media platforms that promote drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt.
- iii. Identify sources of messages on social media platforms that are active on the campaign against drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt.
- iv. Establish the level of awareness creation of social media against drug abuse in Port Harcourt.
- v. Examine out the effect of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

In line with the specific objectives, the following research questions were posed and were answered in the course of this study:

- i. What are the various drugs that are commonly abused on social media platforms by youth in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What are the social media platforms that promote drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt?
- iii. What are the sources of messages on social media platforms that are active on the campaign against drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt?
- iv. What is the level of awareness creation of social media against drug abuse in Port Harcourt?
- v. What is the effect of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt?

LITERATURE REVIEW**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) as discussed in this section below:

Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz in 1970)

In 1970, Katz established the theory of uses and gratifications, sometimes known as UGT. Researchers have found a lot of success using the uses and gratifications theory to study the interests and goals of conventional media audiences (Daramola, 2012). The theory provides a framework for thinking about the reasons why individuals seek out certain forms of media and the material they produce. According to the hypothesis, people deliberately seek out media that may fulfil many needs at once, such as satisfying a demand for information, fostering social contact, or providing a distraction. This view holds that viewers and readers are not only passive recipients of media but rather actively participate in making sense of it and finding ways to incorporate it into their own lives. According to the thesis, people should take responsibility for their own media consumption in order to achieve their own personal gratifications. The media, according to this notion, compete with other information sources for the attention and happiness of viewers. The uses and satisfaction model, as proposed by Katz, Blumer, and Gurevitch, consists of five parts.

Here are the parts:

- a. "People looking on are seen as participating"
- b. "The audience has a great deal of agency in the mass communication process when it comes to associating satisfaction with media choice."

The media face competition from different channels that aim to satisfy their clients, which include readers, viewers, listeners, and media users.

- d. "Several of the aims of mass media use can be inferred from data provided by individual audience members themselves, from a methodological standpoint."
- e. "Audience orientations should be investigated independently, while value judgements regarding the cultural importance of mass communication should be put on hold."

All of these things contribute to a better understanding of the media's function in people's lives. According to the uses and gratification theory, an audience member's preference for one medium over another (in this case, a newspaper) is based on the fact that the medium in question has catered to the individual's tastes and immediate needs, which in turn increases the likelihood that the individual will continue to consume the medium in question.

If a newspaper ad design catches the eye of a certain person or group of people in society, then it's safe to assume that those people read that publication to have their urgent requirements met. Having said that, you shouldn't sloppily construct your article in the hopes that some readers would be fascinated "any way it looks." The selection of people is influenced by factors such as colour combination, style, design, arrangement, and originality, yet it is generally believed that all persons are influenced by beautiful things.

Application of The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory can be applied to this study in the sense that it can help explain why individuals engage with drug-related content on social media and how these interactions satisfy their psychological needs. The theory also directly addresses the negative consequences of media use, such as the potential for promoting drug abuse. In addition, the theory focuses on users' motivations and gratifications as well as other factors, such as peer influence, societal norms, and the content's persuasive strategies, which play a crucial role in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors regarding drug abuse.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Social Media

The word 'Social Media' has been variously defined by users, ICT specialists, and writers. In 2019, Merriam-Webster characterised social media as "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users establish online communities to exchange information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)." Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) characterised social media as a "collection of internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content." It encompasses web-based and mobile technologies used to transform communication into interactive discourse among people, organisations, and communities. Common instances of social media platforms include websites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube, along with its participatory features, such as the "re-tweeting" function on Twitter. These instruments are termed media because they serve as tools for the storage and dissemination of information. Unlike traditional media such as television and radio, most social media platforms enable user interaction, as demonstrated by features like "re-tweeting" on X and the "comment" options on Facebook.

Social Media Networks

Rugova and Prenaj (2016) define Social Network as an internet-based service that enables individuals to create a public or semi-public profile, create a list of users with whom they share a connection, and view and navigate their own and others' connections. The type and naming of these links may vary from site to site. While the phrase "Social Network Site" seems to be often used to characterise this new phenomena. In today's society, there are several social networking sites available on the society Wide Web. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the most well-known social networking platforms for corporate usage (Keitzmann & Kristopher, 2016).

These sites let users to build profiles and add others as friends, bringing people with similar interests together, and allowing companies to raise awareness about their products in order to convince and influence prospective consumers to purchase.

- i. Facebook: Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook, a social networking service, in February 2004. As of March 2018, Facebook has 2.234 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2018).
- ii. X: Jack Dorsey founded X in March 2006, and it debuted in July of the same year. Unlike Facebook, where people may share many items with their friends, Twitter requires users to stay up to date on what they find interesting.
- iii. Instagram: Instagram is a mobile social network that allows users to share photographs and videos depending on their location. This tool enables users to add digital filters to their photographs and videos before sharing them on other social networks and platforms.
- iv. Blogs: Blogs are an open-source intelligence gathering in which millions of individuals write and post their own material without interference, allowing any kind of information to flow freely. Blogging has now permeated the mainstream and reached companies.
- v. Google+: Google+ is a social media platform that is built around one's Google+ account. It allows one to connect with people in the community and maintain their interests. Circles indicate that one needs get an invitation from Google or another Google+ user in order to participate.
- vii. YouTube: YouTube was founded in February 2005 as a video sharing website where users may post, watch, and share videos that are both useful and inspiring to people across the world.
- viii. WhatsApp: WhatsApp Messenger is a free instant messaging program. Brian Acton and Jan Koum launched WhatsApp in 2009. WhatsApp lets users to exchange messages, establish groups, and share photographs, documents, and other information with other registered users. LinkedIn began in 2002, but was formally launched on May 5, 2003. In recent years, many professionals have joined LinkedIn to share their skills and insights in over a million groups. The corporation administers the world's biggest professional network on the internet, with more than 135 million members in over 200 countries and territories.

Concept of Drug Abuse

The term abuse denotes improper or detrimental usage. Drug abuse may be defined as the improper utilisation of drugs, a deviation from established pharmacological guidelines, or the use of a drug in a way that diverges from sanctioned medical or societal practices. Drug abuse refers to the illicit use of drugs, including prescription medications and other substances, either in excessive quantities or improper methods. It is a chronic syndrome characterised by compulsive drug-seeking behaviour and use, irrespective of its detrimental effects (Barerah, 2018). Drug abuse occurs when drugs, whether legal or illicit, are used inappropriately. Individuals misuse substances to alleviate stress, enhance mood, or escape reality, and when they cannot cease using, they develop an addiction (Kumar & Dangi, 2019).

Review of Empirical Studies

In their 2024 study, Usoro, Muhydeen, Tolulope, Emmanuel, and Onoja examined the prevalence of substance abuse among young people in South-South Nigeria as well as the factors that contribute to this problem. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional design. Through a multi-stage sample approach, 450 participants were questioned utilising interviewer-administered, structured questions. Once the data had been manually analysed, a chi-square test statistic was used to see whether the categorical variables were significantly related (p -value < 0.05). Among them, alcohol, paracetamol, and cigarettes ranked highest in popularity, according to the survey. Nearly nine in ten people (93.1% to

be exact) cited negative peer pressure and nearly eighty-seven percent cited a lack of parental attention as factors that contribute to substance misuse.

Research on the effectiveness of the Nigerian government's anti-drug media campaign was conducted by Ismail (2024). This study used a variety of research methodologies, including conceptual analysis, to define key terms like "drugs," "drug abuse," and "media." It will also use the critical assessment method to examine the media's role in the fight against drug abuse among Nigerian youth. In its last section, the study confirmed that the rising and, therefore, harmful and hazardous drug use among Nigerian teenagers is a real concern.

Secondary school pupils in Delta State, Nigeria, were the subjects of an investigation by Odofin and Igabari (2023) on the possible links between drug misuse and social media usage. The study used an ex-post facto research strategy based on correlational methods. With a sample size of 500 students from each of Delta State's three senatorial districts, this research aims to capture the experiences of secondary school students throughout all 25 LGAs in the state. According to the study's results, secondary school students in Delta State who use social media are more likely to abuse substances, and the study also found that the type of school had a significant moderating effect on this relationship.

Levels of drug use and program knowledge among Lagos state's adolescents were studied by Sahid and Bamiro (2023). Using a descriptive survey and a purposive sampling approach, researchers surveyed 210 recovering addicts and youths from the University of Lagos. This survey found that although while people are aware of the show, they don't really listen to what it has to say. Adolescents and young adults continue to experiment with various drugs and self-medicate. Since they discovered that none of the television channels were productive, they have moved their attention to social media.

The effects of hard drug/methamphetamine (mkpuru mmiri) misuse on the mental health of Nigerian university students were investigated by Nwadike, Okwu, and Soli (2023). The research found that while there are currently numerous hard drugs that young people use, such as cannabis, rafenol, tramadol, alcohol, etc., the addition of "Mkpuru Mmiri," or crystalmeth, to these substances by students is a major cause for public worry.

In their 2023 study, Adeyefa and Awofadeju looked at the use of social media in raising awareness about drug abuse among young people in Owo Local Government. In this study, agenda setting theory was used. In addition, the Owo local government region was chosen as the study's focus, and the research strategy used was a survey design. The overall population of the chosen region was 341,400, which was the population of the study. However, using the Taro Yamane method, the study's sample size of 400 participants was calculated from the 341,400 total populations of the chosen LGAs. This study's results show that campaigns on social media have been quite effective in making young people aware of the dangers of drug usage. Additionally, the research found that in order to decrease or eliminate drug usage in the study region, attitudes need to be changed and the public needs to be educated about the consequences of drug abuse.

A study of vanguard and daily trust was conducted by Chibuike (2023) to assess media coverage of drug misuse among Nigerian adolescents. During the time frame of the research, the news articles published by Vanguard and Daily Trust did not often discuss adolescent drug misuse. The second discovery was that, in terms of placement pattern, the newspaper did not highlight the drug misuse activities and communication among young Nigerians. According to the third result, the newspapers in Nigeria often portray drug use among young people in a positive light. The fourth discovery was that the health and legal/moral frameworks were heavily included in the Vanguard and Daily Trust newspapers'

reporting. Fifthly, both Vanguard and Daily Trust were more concerned with matters pertaining to the police, drug-related harm, and trials.

Orukwou (2022) conducted a comprehensive study on the topic of drug addiction and the prevalence of mental illness in Nigeria. It used PubMed to conduct a comprehensive search of articles on drug use in Nigeria from the database's launch until March 13, 2020. In Nigeria, drug abuse often stems from factors like low socioeconomic status, peer pressure, family issues, and poor academic performance. Psychiatric admissions are common due to the prevalence of debilitating conditions like schizophrenia and psychosis, which can be attributed to drug use. The most common places to find drugs in the country are pharmacies and patent medicine stores, as well as drug hawkers and friends who abuse them.

Olubiyi (2022) looked at how commercial motorcyclists in Magboro Community, Ogun State, were affected by anti-drug social media efforts in terms of both knowledge and practice. An explanatory mixed-methods design was used in the research and study. There were 325 respondents chosen at random and data was collected using a structured questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide. Tables, frequencies, percentages, and narratives were used to show and analyse the data that was studied and collected using the descriptive data analysis approach. Even though commercial motorbike riders were affected by anti-drug social media efforts, most of them continued to consume drugs, according to the study's results. Substance misuse among secondary school pupils in Ekiti State's Ikere local government area was studied by Aribamikan (2021) to determine the impact of social media on this issue. This investigation made use of a descriptive research strategy. The sample size was 360 individuals. A method known as simple random sampling was used. Data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis to evaluate the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Results showed a strong correlation between social media use and substance abuse, that it had a notable impact on students' risk perceptions of substance use, that it raised their awareness of the negative health effects of substance abuse, that the knowledge gained from social media could be used to end substance abuse, and that it greatly enhanced the efficacy of drug abuse prevention programs for secondary school students in the research region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, descriptive survey research design is adopted. A descriptive survey is a means of gathering information from diverse groups or individuals, mostly via questionnaires or personal interviews, in order to present a somewhat full picture of what is occurring at a specific time and place.

Population of the Study

The study's population included all of Port Harcourt's youngsters. According to the 2006 National Population Commission Census, the young population of Port Harcourt City Local Government is anticipated to be 1,132,160 by 2022. This constitutes the study's population.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used convenience sampling. However, since the population of this research is known, the sample size is calculated using Taro Yamane's method at the 5% significance level. The mathematical formulation of Taro Yamane formula is as follows:

:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,132,160}{1 + 1,132,160 * (0.05)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample Size, N = Total Population, e = Tolerable error (0.05) With the total of 1,132,160 and 95% level of confidence (0.05 significance level), the sample size of this study is determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{1,132,160}{1 + 1,132,160 * (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,132,160}{1 + 1,132,160 * (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,132,160}{1 + 2830.45}$$

$$n = \frac{1,132,160}{2831.4}$$

$$n = 400 \text{ (approximately)}$$

The sample size for this study consisted of four hundred (400) which were obtained from youths' population in Port Harcourt.

Instrument for Data Collection

This research used a questionnaire as its data gathering technique. The questionnaire is broken into two parts (sections 1 and 2): Section 1 had information on the respondents' personal data, whereas Section B contained information about the impact of social media on drug usage among adolescents in Port Harcourt.

The questionnaire was based on a four-point Likert scale. These include: Strongly agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be utilised to analyse the demographic data for this study. These contain tables, frequencies, and simply percentages. In addition, weighted averages and standard deviation were employed to respond to study questions. The mean was derived by giving notional values to the following answer categories: strongly agree (SA) 4, agree (A) 3, disagree (D) 2, and severely disagree (SD) 1.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter, just like in any other research, is important. It gives meaning and shape to the data collected during the research. The chapter contains data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Thus, this chapter will present and analyse the data collected from the respondents. The chapter also discusses the findings.

Data Analysis

The summary of the administered questionnaire is presented in table 4.1 below:

Table 1: Analysis of Questionnaire

Particulars	Number of Questionnaire	Percentage
Number of Questionnaire Administered	400	100
Number of Questionnaire Returned	367	92.0
Number of Questionnaire not Retrieved	33	8.0
Number of invalid Questionnaire	7	2.0
Number of Valid Questionnaire	360	90.0

Source: *Field Survey (2023).*

Table 1 which presented the summary of questionnaire administered showed that 400 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents while 360 (90.0%) copies of the administered questionnaire were the valid copies of questionnaire returned.

Table 2: Analysis of Demographic Data

Observation	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
16 -20 years	36	10.0
21 - 25 years	154	42.7
26 - 30 years	102	28.3
31 years and above	68	18.9
Total	360	100.0
Gender		
Male	201	55.8
Female	159	44.2
Total	360	100.0
Educational Qualification		
SSCE	20	5.6
OND/HND	110	30.6
BSc	190	52.8
MSc	32	8.9
PhD	8	2.2
Total	360	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	286	79.4
Married	68	18.9
Divorced	3	0.8
Widowed	3	0.8
Total	360	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

The distribution of the respondents by age in Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents were within age bracket 21 - 25 years. Also, the distribution of the respondents by gender in Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents were males. In addition, the distribution of the respondents by educational level shows that majority of the respondents were BSc holders. Lastly, the distribution of the respondents by marital status shows that majority of the respondents were single.

Analysis of Research Questions

This section presents the statistical analysis of the information gathered with the views and opinions of the respondents as regards answers to the research questions. Descriptive statistics (tables, frequencies, simple percentages and weighted mean scores) were used.

Question One: What are the various drugs that are commonly abused on social media platforms by youth in Port Harcourt?

Table 3: Results of Analysis of Questionnaire Items on the Various Drugs That Are Commonly Abused on Social Media Platforms by Youth in Port Harcourt

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	REMARK
1.	Cocaine	183 (50.8%)	141 (39.2%)	16 (4.4%)	20 (5.6%)	3.35 Accepted
2.	Heroin/Codeine	166 (46.1%)	157 (43.6%)	15 (4.2%)	22 (6.1%)	3.30 Accepted
3.	Tramadol	121 (33.6%)	179 (49.7%)	35 (9.7%)	25 (6.9%)	3.10 Accepted
4.	Marijuana	117 (32.5%)	206 (57.2%)	19 (5.3%)	18 (5.0%)	3.17 Accepted
5.	Alcohol	130 (36.1%)	168 (46.7%)	23 (6.4%)	39 (10.8%)	3.08 Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, = Weighted Mean Scores

The descriptive statistical analysis of the responses to items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 is presented in Table 3, which is scaled on a four-point Likert scale. The table results indicated that the respondents were in agreement with each of the five statements/items regarding the commonly abused social media platforms by youth in Port Harcourt. The total number and percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" significantly exceeded the total number of respondents who "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed." This conclusion is further supported by the weighted mean ratings of items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, which are 3.35, 3.30, 3.10, 3.17, and 3.08, respectively. These ratings exceed the criterion mean of 3.0 and are therefore accepted. Consequently, it is possible to infer that the following are the various substances that are frequently abused by young people in Port Harcourt on social media platforms: Cocaine, heroin/codeine, tramadol, marijuana, and alcohol

Question Two: What are the social media platforms that promote drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt?

Table 4: Results of Analysis of Questionnaire Items on the Social Media Platforms that Promote Drug Abuse Among Youth in Port Harcourt

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	REMARK
6.	Facebook	145 (40.3%)	171 (47.5%)	27 (7.5%)	18 (5.0%)	3.24 Accepted
7.	WhatsApp	147 (40.8%)	161 (44.7%)	36 (10.0%)	16 (4.4%)	3.22 Accepted
8.	Instagram	179	134	22	25	3.30 Accepted

9.	X	168	140	10	23	3.15	Accepted
		(49.7%)	(37.2%)	(6.1%)	(6.9%)		
10.	Tik Tok	151	166	8	17	3.15	Accepted
		(41.9%)	(46.1%)	(2.2%)	(4.7%)		

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

The descriptive statistical analysis of the responses to items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 is presented in Table 4, which is scaled on a four-point Likert scale. The results in the table indicate that the respondents were in agreement with each of the five statements/items on the social media platforms that promote drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt. The total number and percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" significantly surpassed the total number of respondents who "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed." Additional statistical evidence to substantiate this conclusion is that items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 had weighted mean ratings of 3.24, 3.22, 3.30, 3.15, and 3.15, respectively. These ratings exceed the criterion mean of 3.0 and are, therefore, accepted. Thus, it is possible to deduce that Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, and TikTok are the social media platforms that encourage substance abuse among young people in Port Harcourt.

Question Three: What are the sources of messages on social media platforms on the campaign against drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt?

Table 5: Results of Analysis of Questionnaire Items on What Constitutes Drug Abuse Among Youth in Port Harcourt

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	REMARK
11.	Government Agencies	165	150	10	20	3.19 Accepted
		(45.8%)	(41.7%)	(2.8%)	(5.6%)	
12.	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	158	149	12	21	3.12 Accepted
		(43.9%)	(41.4%)	(3.3%)	(5.8%)	
13.	Healthcare institutions and professionals.	124	161	14	33	2.89 Accepted
		(34.4%)	(44.7%)	(3.9%)	(9.2%)	
14.	Religious groups	163	151	20	26	3.25 Accepted
		(45.3%)	(41.9%)	(5.6%)	(7.2%)	
15.	Celebrities and influencers	133	164	25	39	3.09 Accepted
		(36.9%)	(45.6%)	(6.9%)	(10.8%)	

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

The descriptive statistical analysis of the responses to items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 is presented in Table 5, which is scaled on a four-point Likert scale. The results in the table indicate that the respondents were in agreement with each of the five statements/items regarding the sources of messages on social media platforms in the campaign against drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt. The total number and percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" significantly surpassed the total number of respondents who "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed." Further statistical evidence to substantiate this conclusion is that items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 had weighted mean ratings of 3.19, 3.12, 2.89, 3.25, and 3.09, respectively. These ratings exceed the criterion mean of 3.0 and are, therefore, accepted. Thus, it is possible to infer that the following entities are the sources of messages on social media platforms regarding the campaign against drug abuse among

youth in Port Harcourt: government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), healthcare institutions and professionals, religious groups, and celebrities and influencers.

Question Four: What is the level of awareness creation of social media against drug abuse in Port Harcourt?

Table 6: Results of Analysis of Questionnaire Items on the Level of Awareness Creation of Social Media Against Drug Abuse in Port Harcourt

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	REMARK
16.	There is high level of awareness of drug abuse on social media.	190 (52.8%)	135 (37.5%)	18 (5.0%)	17 (4.7%)	3.38 Accepted
17.	There is frequent drug abuse related post on social media.	130 (36.1%)	168 (46.7%)	23 (6.4%)	39 (10.8%)	3.08 Accepted
18.	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency post on social media curb drug abuse.	151 (41.9%)	166 (46.1%)	8 (2.2%)	17 (4.7%)	3.15 Accepted
19.	Religious centres' post on social media curb drug abuse.	164 (45.6%)	133 (36.9%)	39 (10.8%)	25 (6.9%)	3.19 Accepted
20.	Post of institutions of learning of drug use by celebrity on social media curb drug abuse.	121 (33.6%)	179 (49.7%)	35 (9.7%)	25 (6.9%)	3.10 Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, = Weighted Mean Scores

Table 6 displays the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the responses to items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 as measured on a four-point Likert scale. The results in the table indicate that the respondents were in agreement with each of the five statements/items regarding the level of awareness creation of social media against drug abuse in Port Harcourt. The total number and percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" significantly surpassed the total number of respondents who "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed." Additionally, the weighted mean ratings of items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 were 3.38, 3.08, 3.15, 3.19, and 3.10, respectively. These ratings exceed the criterion mean of 3.0 and are, therefore, acceptable. Consequently, it can be inferred that there is a significant increase in the level of awareness generated by social media regarding substance abuse in Port Harcourt.

Question Five: What is the effect of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt?

Table 7: Results of Analysis of Questionnaire Items on the Effect of Social Media on Drug Abuse among Youths in Port Harcourt

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	REMARK
21.	Maladaptive and inappropriate responses to the learning and social environment.	137 (38.1%)	173 (48.1%)	10 (2.8%)	20 (5.6%)	3.08 Accepted
22.	Increasing cases of mental disorder and social vices.	173 (48.1%)	162 (45.0%)	25 (6.9%)	8 (2.2%)	3.43 Accepted
23.	Poor academic performance and lack of educational attainment.	166 (46.1%)	158 (43.9%)	17 (4.7%)	17 (5.2%)	3.30 Accepted

24. Destruction of vital body organs like the brain, heart, liver, lung, etc.	134 (37.2%)	177 (49.2%)	29 (8.1%)	20 (5.6%)	3.18	Accepted
25. Health challenge and death.	156 (43.3%)	155 (43.1%)	38 (10.6%)	11 (3.1%)	3.23	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree,
= Weighted Mean Scores

The descriptive statistical analysis of the responses to items 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 is presented in Table 7, which is scaled on a four-point Likert scale. The results in the table indicate that the respondents were in agreement with each of the five statements/items regarding the impact of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt. The total number and percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" significantly surpassed the total number of respondents who "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed." Additional statistical evidence to substantiate this conclusion is that items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 had weighted mean ratings of 3.08, 3.43, 3.30, 3.18, and 3.23, respectively. These ratings exceed the criterion mean of 3.0 and are, therefore, permitted. Therefore, it is possible to infer that the impact of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt is as follows: maladaptive and inappropriate responses to the learning and social environment, an increase in the prevalence of mental disorders and social vices, poor academic performance and lack of educational attainment, the destruction of vital body organs such as the brain, heart, liver, and lung, as well as health challenges and death.

Discussion of Findings

The finding obtained through the data analysis are discussed in this section below:

The Various Drugs that are Commonly Abused by Youth in Port Harcourt

The finding that emanated from this study shows that the various drugs that are commonly abused by youth in Port Harcourt: Cocaine, heroin/codeine, tramadol, marijuana and alcohol. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016) who found cocaine, caffeine, nicotine, amphetamine, heroin, opium, morphine, codeine, tramadol, marijuana, alcohol, barbiturate, tranquilizer and Rohypnol as the drugs commonly abused by youth in Nigeria.

The Social Media Platforms that Promote Drug Abuse among Youth in Port Harcourt

The finding that emanated from this study shows that the social media platforms that promote drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt are Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X and Tik Tok. This finding relates to the finding of Olubiyi and Olamileke (2020) which stated that X, Facebook and Instagram are the common social media platforms used by youths to promote drug abuse.

What the Sources of Messages on Social Media Platforms on the Campaign Against Drug Abuse among Youth in Port Harcourt

The finding that emanated from this study shows that the sources of messages on social media platforms on the campaign against drug abuse among youth in Port Harcourt include the following: government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), healthcare

institutions and professionals, religious groups and celebrities and influencers. This result is in agreement with the finding of Oluremi (2020) who found that government agencies and religious groups are the major sources of messages on social media platforms on the campaign against drug abuse among youth.

The Level of Awareness Creation of Social Media Against Drug Abuse in Port Harcourt

The result of this study showed that there is high level awareness creation of social media against drug abuse in Port Harcourt. This finding relates to the finding of Oshikoya and Alli (2017) who found that there is high level of awareness on social media by government agencies, celebrities and non-governmental organizations that helps in curbing drug among youth.

The Effect of Social Media on Drug Abuse Among Youths in Port Harcourt

The finding that emanated from this study showed that maladaptive and inappropriate responses to the learning and social environment, increasing cases of mental disorder and social vices, poor academic performance and lack of educational attainment, destruction of vital body organs like the brain, heart, liver, lung, etc as well as health challenge and death are the effect of social media on drug abuse among youths in Port Harcourt. This finding relates to the finding of Okafor (2021) who established that promotion of drug culture on social media is one of the major effects of social media on drug abuse among youths in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The incidence of drug addiction is rising at an accelerated pace, accompanied by a decline in socio-economic development. It is alarming to observe the methods by which young people obtain drugs through both illicit and legal sources, despite the government's regulation and the public's awareness of the health risks and perils associated with drug abuse. Regrettably, numerous adolescents are compelled to emulate the behaviours they observe on various social media platforms, which leads to substance abuse. This study investigated the impact of social media on substance abuse among young people in Port Harcourt, based on the aforementioned. The study concludes that substance abuse among adolescents in Port Harcourt is significantly influenced by social media, as indicated by the findings.

Recommendations

on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Social media platforms should acquire and distribute information regarding the appropriate use of drugs that are frequently exploited by young people, as well as strategies for overcoming the risks associated with drug abuse.
2. In order to establish a drug-free society, the Ministry of Education (Federal and State) should enhance their anti-drug campaigns on social media platforms in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, with a particular emphasis on adolescents and young people.

3. It is imperative that parents sincerely educate their children about the detrimental effects of substance addiction on their health and the well-being of others, as it is said that charity begins at home.

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