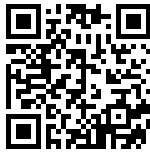


# Media and Communication Review (MCR)

Volume 4 Issue 2, Fall 2024

ISSN (P): 2790-8356, ISSN (E): 2790-8364


Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/mcr>



Article QR

**MCR** Media and  
Communication  
Review



- Title:** **Media and Drug Abuse: A Critical Assessment of the Role of Newspapers in Curbing Drug Abuse among Youth in Nigeria**
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- DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32350/mcr.42.04>
- History:** Received: September 10, 2024, Revised: November 13, 2024, Accepted: November 15, 2024, Published: December 24, 2024
- Citation:** Wonuola, M. M. (2024). Media and drug abuse: A critical assessment of the role of newspapers in curbing drug abuse among youth in Nigeria. *Media and Communication Review*, 4(2), 62–83. <https://doi.org/10.32350/mcr.42.04>
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- Conflict of Interest:** Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of  
The School of Media and Communication Studies  
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

# Media and Drug Abuse: A Critical Assessment of the Role of Newspapers in Curbing Drug Abuse among Youth in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The youth in Nigeria is bedeviled with series of crime-related activities, such as malpractice, bullying, and drug abuse among others. Drug abuse is the mother of all crimes since it is believed to have the power of making people temporary insane. Mass media as a change agent is saddled with the responsibility to influence societal values in order to uphold national integrity. However, there is an alleged accusation against the Nigerian mass media that it is yet to properly educate youth on the danger inherent in drug abuse. Hence, the current study aimed to explore the newspapers' role in curbing drug addiction among the Nigerian youth. The study was underpinned by agenda setting and framing theories. Quantitative content analysis and discourse analysis were employed to examine *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers published between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The findings revealed that the Nigerian newspapers condemned the drug menace among youth by focusing more on security implications of drug abuse with little attention paid to societal and health implications of the menace. The study concluded that the Nigerian newspapers play a critical role in enlightening people pertaining to the security threat that accompany the drug abuse among youth. Furthermore, the study recommended that the Nigerian newspapers should employ interpretative approach to drug abuse reporting since this may orient the youth on the danger inherent in the menace. This if done, may empower the youth thereby, enhancing orderliness, national development, and national security in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** drug abuse, drug addiction, Nigerian newspapers, national security, society, youth

## Introduction

Drug trafficking and use of illicit drugs are contemporary social challenges globally (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (United Nations, [2023](#)).

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The increase in crimes, juvenile violence, health conditions, and untimely deaths all over the world are attributed to drug trafficking and consumption of hard drugs among youth (Sharma et al., [2016](#)). United Nations ([2023](#)) noted that drug-related issues are impediments to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with peace, security, and human rights' promotion, especially in Africa. This is because the United Nation Information Service Vienna's ([2023](#)) report indicated that Nigeria is a transit country in Africa for hard drugs, to Europe and the United States. This, according to the report, allows criminal groups to thrive along with putting the country at forefront in drug trafficking. For instance, between 2015 and 2020, the amount of cocaine seized in the Sahel increased to 13 Kilograms. In 2021, 35 Kilograms were seized, while 863 Kilograms were confiscated in 2022 (United Nations, [2023](#)). Additionally, the report added that between 2017 and 2021, globally, Africa recorded half of the quantities of the seized pharmaceutical *opioids*.

In Nigeria, commercial drivers, farmers, undergraduates, and secondary school students including many others predominantly indulge in drug addiction in an attempt to strengthen themselves, reduce stress, and derive pleasure (Jatau et al., [2021](#)). Furthermore, Jatau et al. ([2021](#)) added that students and youth constituted 20-40% and 20.9% of drug abusers, respectively. Precisely, young adults between 25 and 39 years of age constituted drug addicts, as they mostly consumed cannabis, pharmaceutical opioids, and syrups (Health Think Analytics, [2021](#)). An entertainer association, creative industry group, added that illicit drug consumption among Nigerian youth is worrisome. This is because it has increased the level of vices in the Nigerian society (Ajose, [2023](#)).

Additionally, 40% of Nigerian youth between 18 and 35 years of age was deeply indulged in drug abuse (Lere, [2014](#)). Similarly, over 11% of Nigerian youth was involved in syrup, tramadol, diazepam, cocaine, and shisha (Chindo, [2022](#)). Additionally, in 2021, over 275 million people consumed drugs worldwide, while drug-related disorders affected over 36 million people (United Nations, [2021](#)). Meanwhile, in 2018, a report published by the National Drug Use Survey declared that Nigeria harbored 14.3 million drug addicts as the number of drug users in the country increased by 22% between 2010 and 2019 (Chindo, [2022](#)). The report added that the projections suggested an 11% increase in the number of drug users globally with 20 million drug users in Nigeria by 2030.

The prevalent rate of drug abuse among Nigerian youth is of considerable concern to various world agencies, leaders, governments, communities, scholars, traditional rulers, religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, and the mass media (Unya & Onya, [2022](#)). For instance, UNODC spent millions of dollars on research and campaigns to reduce the number of drug abusers and traffickers globally (United Nations, [2022](#)). Additionally, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has commenced a nationwide enforcement program to eradicate drug consumption through sensitization, rehabilitation of the victims, and checkmating trafficking of illicit drugs across the nation. Reforms move to check indiscriminate sale of drugs. (The Laurels, [2022](#)). Furthermore, the National Orientation Agency, in collaboration with NDLEA, has also put measures in place to leverage grassroots penetration and citizens' engagement drive (National Orientation Agency [NOA], [2023](#)). Development Initiative for Child Health, People Against Drug Dependence, Christ Against Drug Abuse Ministry (CADAM), and Ignorance (PADDI) in their capacities as non-governmental organizations also embarked on a series of campaigns to eradicate the menace of drug addiction.

The mass media, as indisputable purveyor of information (Freimuth et al., [2011](#)), has been striving to curb this menace by disseminating campaigns through social media and mainstream media (Freimuth & Quinn, [2004](#); US Department of Health and Human Services, [2012](#)). These campaigns entail entertainment, educative and informative programs, health communication and discussion (US Department of Health and Human Services, [2012](#)) pertaining to the consequences of drug addiction. All these initiatives were taken to stem the tide of drug addiction in Nigeria.

In spite of all the campaigns, the menace of drug is still rampant, especially among the Nigerian youth and teenagers between the ages of 15 and 29 years (Vanguard News, [2023](#)). For instance, on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019, 15% of Nigerian youth, which is equivalent to 14.3 million people, were reported to have been addicted to drugs in 2018 with an incredible involvement of women (Premium Times, [2023](#)). Similarly, on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021, UNODC submitted that 14.4% of the Nigerians were indulged in drug-related crimes (United Nations, [2021](#)). Additionally, a report on a national Survey on Drug Use and Health by UNODC and the National Bureau of Statistics stated that one in ten people were indulged in drug abuse in Nigeria and this doubled the world's average (United Nations,

2018). Furthermore, the World Drug Report revealed the dearth of empirical reports that explored risks and protective factors for adolescents involved in drug abuse, especially in the developing countries (United Nations, 2023) in which Nigeria is inclusive. Hence, there is a need to explore how the mass media, especially the newspapers report drug abuse. It is against this backdrop that the current study examined the role of newspapers in eradicating drug addiction.

### **Research Objectives**

The current study aimed to examine the selected Nigerian newspapers' role in eradicating drug addiction. Specifically, the objectives included to:

1. Determine the extent to which the Nigerian newspapers report drug abuse among the Nigerian youth
2. Examine the strategies adopted by the selected newspapers in reporting drug abuse among youth,
3. Establish the implications of newspaper strategies in reporting drug abuse to eradicate this menace among Nigerian youth

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study is underpinned by agenda setting and framing theories. Agenda setting theory was propounded by McCombs and Guo (2014). It posited that mass media has the power to determine salient issues through their reportage. Judina and Platonov (2018) asserted that agenda setting theory indicated that mass media has the power to influence salience and prioritization of issues through selective presentation. According to this theory, media influences public opinion through agenda setting and priming. Agenda setting occurs when media determines issues that deserve public attention, while priming entails the shaping of public thinking about those issues by presenting them in a particular way (Wonuola & Akashoro, 2020). According to Nugent (2018), four elements are involved in agenda setting which include the frequency of reportage, the prominence accorded to the stories, the degree of conflict emanated from the stories, and impacts that messages or issues generate over time. All these elements are critical in determining the perceptions of media audiences. In relating the theory to the current study, the mass media, especially newspapers, play a critical role in influencing peoples' perceptions based on the prominence newspapers accord to drug menace. Subsequently, this may determine the importance

ascribed to drug abuse by media audience as reportage could shape public opinion on drug abuse.

Another theory relevant to this study is framing theory. Framing theory is an offshoot of agenda setting theory (Dan, [2018](#)) as explained by Arowolo ([2017](#)). According to this theory, mass media focuses on specific stories and presents them with strategies/techniques which may influence the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the audience by connecting a particular meaning with such stories. Furthermore, this theory is regarded as the original agenda setting thought. According to Arowolo ([2017](#)), mass media draws public attention to certain topics by deciding on people's thoughts, for instance how a specific thought crossed their minds. He regarded the frame as a way through which media gatekeepers organize and present stories (media frame) and the way through which audiences interpret such stories (audience frame). Dan ([2018](#)) added that framing theory can be referred to as the second level agenda setting theory. Radwan and Ayyad ([2024](#)), stressed that the manner in which media frames an issue and the code (words, cartoons, and other media instruments) may mitigate or escalate that issue. This is because mass media may be regarded as a sword with two sides.

In relation to the current study, the choice of strategies or frames adopted by Nigerian newspapers in reporting drug abuse-related activities may either contribute to the reduction or exacerbation of the menace among youth in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

### Drug Abuse

Several scholars have examined drug abuse. For instance, Christopher et al. ([2023](#)) submitted that drug addiction is the intake of illegal substances, such as alcohol, certain medicines, and tobacco. This implies that drug addiction refers to an excessive consumption of illicit substances. Similarly, Fatima ([2017](#)) described drug abuse as an unlawful use of substances which may harmfully impact the mental state of an individual. Drug abuse is complex since it may lead towards serious consequences resulting from various phenomenon, such as social factors. These factors include social disorganization, depression, peer pressure, family, genetic, and environmental factors (John et al., [2023](#)). This is because people may

indulge in it due to certain issues, for instance separation from their families, absence of love and care, as well as decline of moral values.

Additionally, industrialization, urbanization, and migration are other factors that contribute to the increasing consumption of drugs among youth (Fatima, [2017](#)). This is based on the premises that an increase in population as well as movement of people from one place to another may result in behavioral changes, such as indulgence in drug-related crimes. Not only hard substances, such as heroin and opium are consumed, however, prescription medications including painkillers, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers might also cause similar problems. The World Health Organization (WHO, [n.d.](#)) has stated that drug abuse entails the illicit consumption of drugs. Consistent drug abuse, therefore, heralds drug addiction. The physical dependence on drugs may be due to the user's inability to perform or act (Nyameh, [2023](#)). Drug addicts may engage in any forms of crimes, such as robbery, theft, and aggression to meet their needs (Nwannennaya & Abiodun, [2017](#)). This trend, therefore, needs to be addressed by all stakeholders, especially the media in order to facilitate positive attitudinal change among youth.

Indulgence in drugs and substances may affect cognitive, affective, and psycho-motive skills of users (Nabofa, [2021](#)). This is because substances, such as India hemp, marijuana, heroin, tobacco, cigarette, and cocaine physically and psychologically stimulate and intoxicate the brain. Drugs and substances addiction is pervasive in secondary schools and higher institutions (Arowolo, [2017](#)). Hence, mass media plays an important role in addressing drug addiction to embark on prevention advocacies. This is based on the submission of Loveth et al. ([2022](#)) that mass media is impactful in addressing drug related-issues.

### **Newspapers and Drug Abuse**

The mass media, especially newspapers play a crucial role in curbing social vices, such as drug abuse menace. This is based on the agenda setting power that the newspapers are endowed with. Newspapers are powerful tools to disseminate development messages to mass audience. The mass media, according to Valenzuela and Mccombs ([2019](#)), is critical in setting agenda on issues, especially drug abuse. This can be achieved through setting an agenda for discourse pertaining to drug abuse by framing the causes, implications, and solutions. This implies that the continual reportage

regarding the consequences of indulging in drug consumption would attract discourse in the public. Furthermore, it would help shaping readers' perceptions and interpretations. Hence, newspapers can change the narratives on drug addiction and other forms of social vices among the public.

According to Bolin and Jerslev (2018), newspapers, while performing the surveillance functions, survey the environment to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) which may affect the society. Hence, surveillance can be classified into two types, that is, warning surveillance and instrumental surveillance. Warning surveillance entails the gathering of information and informing the members of a society about the dangers that exist in a society (Bolin & Jerslev, 2018). These dangers may include economic depression, environmental hazards, impending disasters, unemployment, and different crimes (Coats, 2017). Whereas, instrumental surveillance is the transmission of information about events or issues that provide benefits to people (Bolin & Jerslev, 2018). Through surveillance functions (Paul & Rai, 2023), newspapers may curtail the illicit menace of drug abuse by surveilling drug traffickers and users as well as promptly informing the public about the threats. The mass media is helpful in keeping the masses abreast of dangers inherent in the abuse of drug; thereby, empowering people with knowledge on the risk factors accompanying the menace. This is based on the agenda setting power of the media on critical issues, such as drug abuse, through the adoption of various reporting strategies. These strategies may inform the members of Nigerian society, especially youth, of the dangers inherent in drug abuse.

### Methodology

The current study adopted mixed methods approach. Quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis were employed to conduct the research. This is because the objective was to unravel the Nigerian newspapers' role in the eradication of drug addiction in Nigeria. Hence, the manifest content of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* were analyzed. According to Ho and Limpaecher (2023), discourse analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyze words and sentences in order to establish a deeper meaning about the language used in a particular context. This is because the analysis of language used in newspaper reports on drug abuse provides insights into the consequences of drug use on the Nigerian society. Writing



conversation and communicative events are variously defined as coherent sequences, prepositions, and speech or turns-at-talk as the objects of discourse analysis (Bahaziq, [2016](#)). The lexical linking that holds a text together and gives it meaning is termed as ‘cohesion’ (Crossley et al., [2016](#)). Discourse analysis is used to construct meaning pertaining to the role played by newspapers in the eradication of drug abuse. Hence, qualitative content analysis was used to establish the implications of the languages used in the newspapers in reporting drug abuse.

The study population comprised all the editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers published online in Nigeria between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. These two newspapers were selected purposively due to their accessibility, visibility, strong investigative journalism, distinct editorial voice, wide coverage of national and international issues, as well as their regular presence online. Hence, the population amounted to 180 editions; 90 editions of each selected newspaper. All the editions of the selected newspapers constituted the sampling frame from which the sample was drawn. Twenty-seven (27) editions of the two newspapers mentioned above were purposively selected. This is done based on the fact that drug abuse is neither a daily nor a regular topic in the Nigerian newspapers.

The unit of analysis for this research was story types on drug abuse which included news stories, features, editorials, columns, and opinions. Hence, the study adopted deductive coding which involves pre-determination of a certain frame as content analytical variables to establish their extent of occurrences in the news. Thus, the content categories developed for this study were based on the existing literature. The concepts and categories are stated below:

*Direction:* Condemnation, enlightenment, promotion, neutral

*Implication:* Health, security, social

*Frame:* solution-oriented frame, problem-oriented frame, consequence frame, responsibility

Additionally, content validity was used to validate the instrument, while inter-coder agreement was employed to establish the reliability of the research instrument. This was done by giving instrument to two senior lecturers from the Department of Mass Communication and Peace and Security studies for validation. Their observations were properly incorporated. To ensure the instrument’s reliability, the research employed

inter-coder reliability test where four coders were divided into two groups and the same coding guide was used to code the same contents. The data gathered was analyzed and findings revealed that the instrument was reliable as same meanings were assigned to the measured concepts.

## Results

The data gathered through the coding sheets was presented using frequencies and simple percentage, while texts were used to present the data generated from qualitative content analysis. The analysis was presented based on the research objectives.

### Nigerian Newspapers Reporting Drug Abuse

To measure the extent of newspapers' reportage of drug abuse, story types and frequency were employed. Table 1 and 2 present the findings.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Reportage on Drug Abuse*

Newspapers	News	Percentage
<i>The Punch</i>	17	63%
<i>Daily Trust</i>	10	37%
Total	27	100%

Table 1 presents the total number of stories published in each selected newspaper on drug abuse within the study period. A total of 27 stories were content-analyzed. *The Punch* newspaper published 17 (63%), while *Daily Trust* issued 10 (37%) stories, respectively. It could be deduced from Table 1 that the newspapers did not adequately report the menace since only 27 editions of the selected newspapers reported the menace. Perhaps, the newspapers attempted to protect the image of country's youth. This may be based on the assertion that "Today's youth is the leader of tomorrow".

**Table 2**

*Story Types for Newspapers' Report on Drug Abuse*

Newspapers	Story Type					Total (%)
	News	Editorial	Cartoon	Feature	Opinion	
<i>The Punch</i>	17 (63%)	-----	4 (14.8%)	-----	-----	17(63%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	10 (37%)	-----	4 (14.8%)	2(7%)	-----	10 (37%)
Total	27(100%)	-----	8 (30%)	2(7%)	-----	27 (100%)

The data in Table 2 indicates the story types adopted by the selected newspapers to report drug abuse in Nigeria. Furthermore, table shows that the selected newspapers focused on news, features, and opinions with 17 (63%), 8 (30%), and 2 (7%), respectively. *The Punch* published 13 (48%) news stories and 4 (14.8%) features, while *Daily Trust* issued 4 (14.8%) news stories, 4 (14.8%) features, and 2 (7%) opinions. It may be deduced from Table 2 that the newspapers accorded significance to the report as news was prominently used to present the report.

### Strategies Adopted by Newspapers in Reporting Drug Abuse

The direction of stories and frame were employed to examine the strategies used by selected newspapers to frame the drug menace. Thus, Table 3 and 4 present the findings.

**Table 3**

*Direction of Stories on Drug Abuse*

Newspapers	Condemn	Neutral	Neutral	Total (%)
<i>The Punch</i>	17 (63%)	-----	-----	17(63%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	10 (37%)	-----	-----	10 (37%)
Total	27(100%)	-----	-----	27 (100%)

Table 3 presents the direction of stories published on drug abuse in Nigeria. All 27 stories condemned the menace. Specifically, all 17 and 10 stories published by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* condemned the act. Table 3 suggests that the newspapers view drug abuse as an impediment to individual and national development through their condemnation.

**Table 4**

*Framing Strategy to Curb Drug Abuse among Youth in Nigeria*

Newspapers	Solution	Consequence	Responsibility	Total (%)
<i>The Punch</i>	13 (48%)	4(15%)	-----	17(63%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	7 (26%)	3(11%)	-----	10 (37%)
Total	20(74%)	7(26%)	-----	27 (100%)

Table 4 presents the strategy adopted by the selected newspapers to frame drug abuse. Solution strategy was mostly used as *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* issued 13 (48%) and 7 (26%) on solution, respectively. For the consequence strategy, *The Punch* published 4 (15%) and *Daily Trust* issued 3 (11%) stories. The findings implied that the selected newspapers focused

on the need to proffer solution to the menace as they see it as a threat to individual and national development. The instances of proffering solutions through newspapers include the reportage in Oyelud ([2024](#)), Sanusi ([2024](#)), and Giginyu ([2024](#)).

### **Implications of Newspaper Strategies in Reporting Drug Abuse Eradication in Nigeria**

The data that provide answers to the implications of newspaper strategies in reporting drug abuse eradication among Nigerian youth was presented and analyzed qualitatively using discourse analysis. However, to make the data manageable and sizeable, a few sampled editions of newspapers regarding drug addiction were presented and analyzed using cohesive elements and repeated words.

**Table 5**

*Implications of Newspaper Strategies in Reporting Drug Abuse Eradication in Nigeria*

No	Newspaper	Edition	News Item	Cohesive Element
1.	The Punch (Oyelud, <a href="#">2024</a> )	1 January, 2024	...every Nigerian should be involved in the current efforts to tackle hard drug consumption in the country.	tackle hard drug
2.	The Punch (Sanusi, <a href="#">2024</a> )	February 12, 2024	Drug abuse as a public health crisis requires a compassionate and multifaceted response. We must challenge the stigma associated with drug addiction and foster a culture of empathy, understanding, and solidarity towards those struggling with substance use disorders.	challenge drug abuse
3.	The Punch (Adejoro, <a href="#">2024</a> )	14 February, 2024	The Nigerian Governor's spouse's forum has called on the Federal and State Governments to declare a state of emergency on substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking in the country.	declare substance abuse
4.	The Punch (Yakubu, <a href="#">2024</a> )	6 March, 2024	The Federal Ministry should come up with prescription policy to address incessant cases of drug abuse, particularly by young Nigerians.	address

No	Newspaper	Edition	News Item	Cohesive Element
5.	The Punch (Ayeni, <a href="#">2024</a> )	17 March, 2024	“The problem is so big and many artistes are turning to drug abuse. The issue needs to be tackled collectively to find ways in order to help creatives in Nigeria and Africa when faced with rejection”. MI Abaga said.	tackle
1.	Daily Trust (Mohammad, <a href="#">2024</a> )	January 1, 2024	There are linkages between terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and consumption, the former inevitably fueled the latter.	illicit drug terrorism fueled
2.	Daily Trust (Daily Trust, <a href="#">2024</a> )	February 5, 2024	Drug abuse kills directly. It triggers both personal and interpersonal violence.	violence drug abuse
3.	Daily Trust (Giginyu, <a href="#">2024</a> )	January 17, 2024	Some of the actions of students must have been influenced by the rising cases of illicit drugs and related substance abuse in society.	influenced illicit drugs substance abuse
4.	Daily Trust (Yaba, <a href="#">2024</a> )	February 23, 2024	Lack of peace and security are mitigating factors to success of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development plans of Nigeria. While, drug remains the immediate predisposing factor for insecurity in several states across the country.	insecurity mitigating drug abuse
5.	Daily Trust (Datti, <a href="#">2024</a> )	March 2, 2024	The decision to relocate the drug sellers was based on public interest and to guard against the unwholesome practice of selling illicit drugs.	guard against illicit drugs

Table 5 depicts lexical words that form the cohesive elements in all the data. It could be found that all lexical words have negative tendencies towards drug abuse as they indicate the notion for solution towards the menace. Additionally, some synonyms were used in newspapers to show the cohesive status of the texts that constituted the data. Synonyms, such as mitigating, tackle, declare, address, challenge, insecurity, violence, hard drug, illicit drug, drug abuse, and substance abuse were featured in the

reports amidst the use of various sources to gather information for reportage.

Additionally, the findings also indicated that the stories on drug abuse were framed through various cohesive elements to highlight the need for solution in spite of the fact that four elements make-up cohesion. These elements include repeated words/ideas, reference words, substitution, and ellipsis. However, the reportage did not use substitution and ellipsis as the reports totally condemned the act and advanced the need for stakeholders to pay attention to the menace in Nigeria. Hence, the reports implied that the newspapers as agenda setters are contributing positively to the eradication of drug abuse. This is because these reports viewed the menace of drug abuse as a trigger to insecurity; thereby, educating the masses on the need to proffer lasting solution to the menace.

### Discussion

The current study aimed to examine the newspapers' role in eradicating drug abuse among the Nigerian youth. Data was collected from the manifest content of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* published between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Findings inferred that the newspapers accorded significance to drug abuse since most of the stories were displayed through news story. This finding concurred with the submission of Judina and Platonov (2018) that the agenda setting theory assured that the mass media may determine the salience and prioritization of issues through selective presentation of news. The findings also supported the views of Anyanwu et al. (2022) which perceived information dissemination as a cardinal responsibility of the mass media in Nigeria. Meanwhile, scholars, such as Odiegwu-Enwerem et al. (2020) submitted that news story focuses on significant issues in a society. Hence, the mass media messages disseminated through news play a significant role as these messages might elicit public discourse. This may be the basis for various stakeholders' interventions in drug abuse.

Furthermore, it was observed that stories on drug abuse tilted towards condemnation by emphasizing the consequences together with the solutions to contain the menace in society. This finding aligned with the views of Bolin and Jerslev (2018) that mass media is a watchdog as it alerts the public to SWOT in socio-cultural challenges affecting the masses. In addition, the findings concurred with the views of Paul and Rai (2023) that newspapers

play a vibrant role to curtail the menace in a society through their surveillance function. Moreover, the findings corroborated the submission of Loveth et al. (2022) that the mass media, especially newspapers, may have a positive impact in addressing the drug menace. Hence, the Nigerian newspapers play a significant role in the fight against drug abuse. Relating to this is the finding from the qualitative method (discourse analysis) which implied that drug abuse is a threat to national security and there are needs for solution-oriented strategy to eradicate the menace. This is based on the cohesive elements that were found in the discourse analysis, such as tackle, address, challenge, violence, insecurity, etc. The findings, therefore, attuned to the submission of Nwannennaya and Abiodun (2017) that drug addicts often become aggressive and display a cruel attitude to the society. Moreover, the findings agreed to the view of United Nations (2023) that drug-related issues are impediments to SDGs in line with the promotion of peace, security, and human rights, especially in Africa.

Furthermore, the findings corroborated the submission of *Daily Trust* (2024) that the proliferation of controlled drug fuels crimes in Nigeria, as consumption of hard drug, drives insecurity in some parts of the country. Moreover, the findings were in tandem with the submission of Giginyu (2024) that viewed drug abuse as a menace and responsible for different violent acts and destruction in the society. Furthermore, the findings supported the observation of Mohammad (2024) that drug abuse has a linkage with terrorism since it inevitably fuels terrorism. Therefore, drug abuse contributes to insecurity as it is an impediment to national peace and development in the society.

## Conclusion

The current study confirmed that the Nigerian newspapers are critical in eradicating drug menace through the adoption of various strategies. Thus, Nigerian newspapers act as catalysts in curbing the incessant increase in the number of drug abusers through setting agenda on the consequences of indulging in the act as well as championing the call for solution. This study therefore, concluded that the Nigerian newspapers are playing a critical role in curbing drug addiction by adopting various strategies that can let the masses, especially the youths view it as a threat to national security and the need to guard against the unwholesome practice among the youths in the country.

Therefore, the current research urged the newspapers to employ interpretative approach to drug abuse reportage which may adequately orient the Nigerian youth on the danger inherent in the menace. This would have a long-term impact to empower the youth with the knowledge and implications of engaging in drug abuse. Thereby, it would enhance orderliness, national development, and national security in Nigeria. Additionally, the study suggested that the stakeholders in drug abuse, such as NDLEA, Ministry of Youth and National Development, religious leaders, and traditional rulers should collaborate with the mass media, especially newspapers to advocate for positive attitudinal change among drug users.

### **Future Recommendations**

Further studies should be conducted to determine social media's role in curbing drug abuse. This is because studies have established that youth constitute the major users of social media platforms. Additionally, future studies may also be conducted on indigenous communication's efforts to eradicate the drug menace in Nigeria. Further studies can be carried out on effective communication strategies to combat the drug menace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. In other words, future researches should determine appropriate communication strategies that may facilitate positive attitudinal change among drug users in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Finally, future studies may also be conducted on radio framing of drug abuse since it would unravel the perception that people, especially, rural dwellers have on broadcast media's efforts in curbing drug abuse.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

### **Funding Details**

No funding has been received for this research.



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