

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON DRUGS USAGE AMONG YOUTH: A
CASE STUDY OF UPPER SAKPONBA IN NIGERIA**

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COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

MARCH, 2026.

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MASS
COMMUNICATION.**

MARCH, 2026.

DECLARATION

I, **Oduware Richardson Osasere**, hereby declare that this project entitled "Impact of Social Media on Drugs Usage Among Youth: a Case Study Of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria" is my original work and is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Benin, under the supervision of Miss Uduak Ekpenyong. All sources of information, data and materials used in the preparation of this work have been duly acknowledged through appropriate references.

ODUWARE RICHARDSON OSASERE

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work: "Impact of Social Media on Drugs Usage Among Youth: A Case Study Of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria" was carried out by **Oduware Richardson Osasere**, with Matriculation Number **ART2201279**, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The work embodied in this project is original and completed under my supervision. It is therefore certified as meeting the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree in Mass Communication.

MISS UDUAK EKPENYONG
Project Supervisor

DATE

DR. D.O. EKHAREAFO
Head of Department

DATE

STUDENT'S THESIS
AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following personalities:

God almighty, the source of wisdom, strength and understanding, may His name be highly praised.

My Uncle, Mr. Smart Oduware, whose encouragement, advice and constant support inspired me to stay focused and determined. His belief in my abilities motivated me to give my very best.

My Aunty Miss Loveth Oduware, whose sacrifices, patience and unwavering assistance made the successful completion of this project a reality.

May this work stand as a token of my deep appreciation and gratitude to them all.

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I doff my academic hat for my uncle, Mr. Smart Oduware, whose encouragement and support inspired me to keep moving, despite the ups and downs that accompany this journey. I salute my beloved sister, Success Oduware, whose sacrifices, unwavering commitment and assistance have played a significant role in completing this academic journey. I am deeply thankful to my beloved mother, Grace Ozigbo, for her endless love, prayers, sacrifices and moral support. My mother's encouragement has been my greatest source of strength. I also appreciate my elder brothers, Ikponmwonsa Oduware and Austin Oduware, as well as Joy Oduware, for their financial assistance, encouragement and belief in my ability to succeed.

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I apologise to anyone who had contributed in one way or the another to this journey, but found his/her name missing here. It was not my own making but due to space and time, I appreciate you-all in no little measure. May God in His infinite mercy reward your good works.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the *Impact of Social Media on Drugs Usage among Youth: A Case Study of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria*. The study sampled 395 respondents in Upper Sakponba, Benin City and was anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Social Learning theories. The findings revealed that drugs usage among youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, Nigeria, is significantly correlated with social media, with Instagram serving as the main platform for drug-related content. The results show that easy access to drugs and cultural normalisation are major contributors to drug abuse, along with poverty, unemployment, peer pressure and a lack of parental guidance. The study further suggests that focused social media interventions, ethical influencer marketing, digital literacy courses and community-based projects. Stakeholders can encourage healthy lifestyles, offer counseling services and lower youth drug abuse by utilising social media platforms.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The advancement of technology has revolutionised the mindset of the people towards information dissemination and reception in the society. This rapid development paved way for the world to become a global village, where information travels easily on a high speed to the receiver, breaking other journalistic roadblocks and gatekeeping functions, which it ought to observe prior to now. The mass media audience today receive news on the spot, live coverages, timely reportage and contributing to the events, as opposed the 'stale news style' and delayed feedback mechanism of the conventional mass media. Despite these blessings, the curses are part of the core challenges bedeviling the conventional media and the society today.

Vester (2010) asserts that the Social media is "fast becoming the default Internet mode of interaction, communication and collaboration." Prior to the development of technology, people interacted with one another using letter writing, radio communication, Newspaper and others were the major forms of media in the past, but the Internet is now regarded as an integral part of contemporary society that cannot be ignored. The metamorphosis of conventional media interaction birthed a new social structure, which rose as a result of the transition into this new technological era. Over the past ten years, social networking sites and social media applications have risen to the limelight of the society. Teenagers and college students use social media

apps to access the world, study, etc, which is the cause of this sharp rise. According to Internet World Statistics (2022), there are 5,053,891,122 internet users worldwide, 590,296,163 in Africa, and 154,301,195 in Nigeria. Today's undergraduates use social media at a rate that is commensurate with the general increase in internet users.

Social media, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2015), is 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.” Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and other social media platforms are common examples. Web-based and mobile technologies enables interactive communication between individuals, groups and communities (p.62). In contrast to traditional media like television and radio, most social media platforms allow user interaction, as demonstrated by features like “retweeting” on Twitter and “comment” options on Facebook. For this reason, these tools are referred to as media.

Asemah and Edogoh (2012) posit that the social media platforms have become an integral part of young’s people’s lives, shaping their attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and taste for edibles. The aggrandisement of drug use and trafficking illicit drugs in the Nigerian society is part of the issues birthed by the aforementioned advancement. The youth in Nigeria today have been addicted to social media platforms which made them easily imbibe and glorify drug usage. Upper Sakponba is a town in Benin City in the present Edo State Nigeria and is not excepted from this ongoing trend of drug usage in Nigeria, which has burned down many youth like wide

fire and left others in a mentally deranged state. The free access of social media and celebrity endorsement of unhealthy substance seen in several contents on the social media space, had raised awareness about the potential impact of social media on drug usage among youth in the locality.

Currently, there is a national outcry over the crisis which has been resulted from the severe use and misuse of many pharmaceuticals due to improper application, as evidenced by the recent outcry in the country (Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2021, p.58). Drug abuse, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) (2018), is the illegal and non-medical use of substances that have inherent qualities that can change a person's mental state in a variety of ways and are considered by societal norms and values to be inappropriate, undesirable, harmful, threatening, concerning, and culturally alien. It is a departure from the appropriate, authorised or lawful use of pharmaceuticals. It includes all cases of non-medical substance use by people, whether deliberate or inadvertent, with the intention of changing one or more of its intrinsic functions, impairing the person's ability to function normally and effectively within socially, physically, emotionally or psychologically acceptable bounds. According to Akanbi et al. (2019, p. 379), drug abuse known as drug/substance use disorder, has become a dangerous and unsettling global issue with complex consequences for both international and Nigerian peace. It is a major factor contributing factor to the high levels of anti-social, economic, health, and political problems that the world is currently experiencing. Homicide, abduction, sexual assault,

cult-related violence, banditry, suicide, armed robbery and self-inflicted problems like accidents, withdrawal syndrome, dependency, depression, animosity, and poor academic performance and failures make up the majority of criminal acts.

Social media platforms like Facebook, X(formerly Twitter), Instagram, etc, usually feature media contents that showcase drug as a normal or good habit (Bunchanan, 2017). This exposure could lead to normalisation of drug use among young people in Nigeria, of which youth in Upper Sakponba in Benin City are not exceptional, growing the possibility of them imbibing in such shenanigans. The Nigerian youth are specifically vulnerable to new media exposures due to their high level of engagements on the social media space, limiting their critical thinking skills. It is against this backdrop that this work seems to evaluate the *impact of social media on drugs usage among youth: A case study of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Drugs are compounds capable of influencing one's biological function through chemical processes, mood, perceptions, cognition and general bodily functioning. It is not meant to kill, destroy or deplete, but to cure, refill and build one's body system if applied in line with the right recommend procedures. However, the state of the society has revealed that most medications have constantly been misused due to wrong application cum administration by individuals who are not medically inclined or do not stick to doctor's prescription. This unpleasant development has been ushered in

predominantly by young people and it has travelled across the length and breadth of the world and Nigeria is no exception.

The application of drugs among Nigerian youths in Upper Sakponba of Benin City inclusively, keeps sending bitter taste to many mouths, with media reports showcasing a massive increase in the abuse of substance. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA (NDLEA) in Nigeria has unveiled that majority of drug users in Nigeria are within the age bracket of 15-30, underscoring the alarming state of drug misuse among young people in Nigeria. According to Onyeonoru (2019), the new media regularly feature media messages that glorify drug use and it has impacted negatively on the young people, who constitute the majority of populace on the space. This has created anxiety that the social media may be encouraging the increase rate of drug usage among youth in Upper Sakponba in Edo State.

Amidst the aforesaid concern, there is a dearth of research on the impact of social media on drug usage among youth in Upper Sakponba in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, existing literatures dwell on the general population of Nigeria or specific aspects of social media use, leaving a gap in the understanding of specific impact of social media on drug usage among youth in Upper Sakponba Nigeria. This academic work seeks to break down the huge existing population using the given locality as a case study, which would provide concrete and realistic solutions on how to reduce the uprising influence of social media on drug usage.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the connection between social media and drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth.
2. Evaluate the level of drug usage in Upper Sakponba and what informed their decision.
3. Identify the social media platforms that promote drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth.
4. Ascertain the type of drugs that are mostly abused on Social Media.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions were drafted out from the research objectives:

1. What is the connection between social media use and drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth?
2. What is the level of drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth and what factors informed their decision?
3. Which social media platforms promote the usage of drugs in Upper Sakponba?
4. What types of drugs are mostly promoted on social media?

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, who are between the age brackets of 15-30 years. The researcher will investigate the types of social media platforms they access frequently, the nature of their communication and how often they imbibe the drug use content therein. This work will equally evaluate the type of drugs often used by them the perceived risks and significance accompanied the usage. Focusing on this specific locality will help to generate accurate firsthand information that could enhance policy decision in ameliorating this issue.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study tends to explore on the connections between social media activities and drug use, which in turn help to erase the knowledge gap on the intersection of new media and drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth, a locality that is rapidly addicted to substance usage. The results of this academic exercise will contribute to societal store of solutions in minimising the widespread of drug abuse, promoting digital literacy programmes on drug usage and help policies cum strategies on how to promote healthy attitudes toward drugs by the Nigerian youth.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

The following concepts used in this study were properly defined in this section and arranged in alphabetical order:

1. Drugs

Drugs are any psychoactive substances used for non-medical purposes that have the potential to cause abuse, dependence or addiction, whether they are prescription drugs (like opioids or stimulants) or illicit substances (like marijuana or cocaine). This study examines how social media affects the access, perceptions and usage patterns of substances that are frequently abused by young people in Upper Sakponba.

2. Impact

The term "impact" describes how social media have a major impact on the attitudes, actions and choices that young people in Upper Sakponba make about using drugs. This includes the ways that exposure to social media affects their attitudes, piques interest or normalises drug use, all of which ultimately lead to the start, continuation or increase of drug use in this population.

3. Social Media

Social media refers to online platforms, applications and websites where users create, share and engage with content, in order to promote communication, socialization and information sharing. Social Media platforms included but not limited to the following: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, etc.

4. Upper Sakponba

This study focuses on the local context of youth drug and social media use in Upper Sakponba, a specific geographic location in Benin City in Edo State Nigeria. Youths' drug-related behaviours could be influenced by the socio-cultural dynamics, economic circumstances and resource accessibility of the area.

5. Usage

Usage refers to the act of consuming or using drugs, including how often, how much, how and in what situations young people in Upper Sakponba use them. This covers use that is experimental, recreational or habitual as well as elements that influence consumption, like social media influence, peer pressure, or stress relief.

6. Youth

The term “youth” describes people in Upper Sakponba between the ages of 15 and 30, a crucial developmental stage characterized by identity formation, social exploration and vulnerability to outside influences. Youths navigate peer relationships, social media and other environmental factors that shape their attitudes and behaviours regarding drug use during this phase.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focused on a review of related literature relevant to the study, as it provided illustration, information and a framework for this project, as well as an understanding of the current state of social media and drug usage in Upper Sakpomba, Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. There can be no academic work that does not draw on previous works. Therefore, the review was presented with the following subheadings:

2.1 Historical Review

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.3 Review of Related Literature.

2.4 Theoretical Review.

2.1 Historical Review

2.1.1 Historical review of Social Media and Drug Usage

The rapid drug usage among young people in Upper Sakponba has been fueled by the ongoing revolution brought to the media space due to technological advancement. Social media performance in promoting drug usage could be likened to the role played by pepper in the making of the famous Nigerian local dish called ‘pepper soup.’

The story behind how social media and drug use have developed over the years is intricate and multidimensional, spanning several decades. Online communities and

forums first appeared in the early days of the internet as ways for people to connect with like-minded people and exchange information. According to Uchechukwu (2018), the Usenet was established in 1979 and allowed users to exchange files and talk about a variety of subjects, including substance abuse, is among the first instances of an online community. The style of online interactions have evolved alongside the internet. Social media sites like Facebook, 2go, Twitter and MySpace became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s, serving as the major social media platforms where Nigerians mostly use to quench their entertainment hunger. These online sites helped the users to share content, connect with friends, colleagues, and strangers and create profiles that enable their personality and page to be noticeable.

Unfortunately, this ongoing technological advancement designed to be a blessing were abused by many Nigerian youth. The social media gave users the premise to showcase themselves and talents, of which many have been brought to the limelight of the social and others chose to glorify and promote substance abuse as a lifestyle. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) posits that there are a lot of content about substance abuse on the aforementioned media platforms, with some users posting explicit lyrics, pictures and videos that promoted drug use to young people in Nigeria.

The spread of drug usage was further promoted by the famous use of smartphones and easy accessibility of internet services. New media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok have made it easier for users to create and publish content on the media space, comparing of the promotion of substance usage and

abuse. Several authorities in the field of communication and media studies had questioned the growing popularity of social media in Nigeria, especially on how online contents may affect the drug abuse of youth in Nigeria. According to Research, Nigerian youth who are exposed to substance usage or abuse contained on social media are more likely to abuse drugs (Adeoye & Olowu, 2018).

The issues associating with social media and drug usage had emerged and aggrandised due to social media's development. The birth and rise of influencer culture has given people with a big platform, the chance to advertise and influence their audience with substance abuse and other dangerous behaviour. Asemah (2015) argues that some celebrity and influencers on social media, especially those with sizable fan bases, have been known to encourage drug abuse and other unhealthy behaviours, frequently with little accountability. This has sparked worries about how influencer culture affects young people's substance abuse and the need for more accountability and regulation. The historical development of drug use and social media emphasises the need for an all-encompassing strategy to deal with the problem. Along with cooperation between stakeholders, such as legislators, educators and social media companies, this also entails education, awareness and regulation. We can create efficient methods to reduce the risks and encourage healthy behaviors in young people by comprehending the intricate and varied relationship between social media and substance abuse.

2.1.2 Upper Sakponba Benin City

Upper Sakponba is a community in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. This community has been tagged as "the most dangerous hood in Benin City" due to its reputation as a hotspot for cult conflicts, criminal activity and violence (Ojedokun & Epega, 2015). Residents day in and out are facing serious social and economic difficulties as a result of this circumstance. Although Upper Sakponba was once a prosperous neighborhood, it has since come to be associated with cultism, drug abuse, armed robbery and other social vices. The region is home to a number of infamous cult groups that have terrorised locals and engaged in violent conflicts, such as the Mafia, Vikings, Eiye and Aye (Black Axe) (Abiodun, 2019).

The issues facing the community are complex; cultism and crime are on the rise due to a number of factors, including youth unemployment, poverty and a lack of opportunities. Political manipulation has also impacted the region; according to Ojedokun and Epega (2015), some politicians are accused of supporting and shielding cult organizations. This has made the issue more entrenched and fostered a culture of impunity. The Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, in 2020, as noted by Edo celebrity (2025) has issued threats and issued warnings as part of efforts to address the situation.

The larger Benin City community is significantly impacted by the circumstances in Upper Sakponba. The city's perception of instability and insecurity has been exacerbated by the region's issues, which can discourage investment and

impede economic growth (Ojedokun & Epega, 2015). This emphasizes the necessity of a thorough strategy to deal with the problem.

Creating successful interventions requires an understanding of Upper Sakponba's historical and social context. According to Adeoye and Olowu (2018), tackling the underlying causes of crime and cultism necessitates an all-encompassing strategy involving citizens, community leaders, and government organizations. This can support economic growth and aid in bringing peace and stability back to the neighborhood.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Concept of Social Media

The definition of "social media" varies among authors, ICT specialists, and users. According to Merriam-Webster (2019), social media is a type of electronic communication (like social networking and microblogging websites) where users create online communities to share ideas, information, private messages, and other content (like videos). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) assert that social media are a group of web-based programs that make use of Web 2.0's technological and ideological tenets to facilitate the production and sharing of user-generated content. It encompasses web-based and mobile technologies that transform communication into interactive discourse among individuals, communities, and groups. Social media platforms typically include websites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube, as well as interactive features like Twitter's "retweeting" function. These devices are

called media because they are tools for sharing and storing information. The majority of social media platforms, unlike traditional media such as radio and television, allow user interaction, as evidenced by features such as "re-tweeting" on X and "comment" options on Facebook.

A. Social Media Networks

Rugova and Prenaj (2016) define a social network as an online service that enables users to create a public or semi-public profile, create a list of other users they are connected to, and view and manage both their own and other users' connections. The type and name of these links may vary based on the website. However, it seems that this new phenomenon is often referred to as a "social network site." In today's world, there are a lot of social networking sites on the Internet. According to Keitzmann and Kristopher (2016), Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram and YouTube are the most popular social networking sites for business purposes.

These websites connect people who share interests and give businesses the opportunity to promote their goods in an effort to persuade and sway potential customers to buy by enabling users to create profiles and add friends.

- i. **Facebook:** Facebook was established in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, with the intention of promoting social networking platforms. There are 2.234 billion Facebook users globally as of March 2018 (Statista, 2018).
- ii. **X:** This was previously known as Twitter and was founded by Jack Dorsey in March 2006; X debuted in July of that year. This social networking site

requires users to stay up to date on what they find interesting, as opposed to Facebook, where users can share a large amount of content with their friends.

- iii. **Instagram:** Instagram is another social networking platform, depending on where users of this mobile social network are, they can share both photos and videos. Before posting their photos and videos on other social media sites, users can use this tool to apply digital filters.
 - a. **Blogs:** Millions of people write and publish their own content on blogs, which are an open-source intelligence collection platform that permits the free exchange of any type of information. Today, blogging has reached businesses and become widely accepted.
 - b. **Google:** This social media site is based on a user's Google account. It enables one to keep up their interests and establish connections with community members. Circles show that in order to participate, one must receive an invitation from Google or another Google+ user.
- vii. **YouTube:** YouTube, a website that enables users to upload, watch and share inspirational and useful videos for people all over the world, was founded in February 2005.
- viii. **WhatsApp:** WhatsApp is an app for instant messaging. WhatsApp was created in 2009 by Jan Koum and Brian Acton to facilitate communication with friends and family. In addition to creating groups and sending and receiving messages, WhatsApp allows users to share documents, images, and

other data with other registered users. LinkedIn began in 2002, but its official launch date was May 5, 2003. Many professionals have joined LinkedIn in recent years to share their expertise and perspectives in over one million groups. The company manages the internet's largest professional network, with over 135 million members in more than 200 countries and territories.

B. Drug Usage

It's said that drugs have existed for as long as people. Drug abuse and use have a long history in many societies. A drug is a substance that is used to treat or prevent an illness or condition, or to lessen its symptoms. According to Dasaraju (n.d.), a drug is defined in pharmacology (the study of drugs) as a chemical substance with a known structure that is not a nutrient or a necessary dietary component and that has a biological effect when given to a living thing. As a result, substances like cocaine, heroin, marijuana and insecticides can all be considered drugs.

However, drugs can be hazardous and even lethal if used improperly. Many times, drug misuse is mistaken for drug abuse. Drug use is defined by the World Health Organization and the National Library of Medicine (2008) as the use of a substance for purposes that are not compliant with legal or medical guidelines. However, drug abuse can involve substances other than drugs, such as glue and petrol, and does not require a prescription from a physician. If a substance is intentionally used to produce physiological or psychological effects for purposes other than therapeutic ones, it will be deemed "abuse". The Cambridge Dictionary defines

"abuse" as using something for the wrong purpose in a way that is harmful or immoral. When the terms are combined, "drug abuse" can be defined as either excessive, maladaptive, or addictive drug use for non-medical purposes despite the possibility of social, psychological, and physical problems (Encyclopaedia Britannica) or drug use in amounts or ways that are detrimental to the person or others (Wikipedia). Substance abuse, typically associated with drinking and smoking in adolescence. Drug abuse among students can result from a variety of factors, including peer pressure, curiosity, and the influence of culture and society..

The term "abuse" describes improper or detrimental use. Drug abuse can include using drugs in ways that are inappropriate, deviating from accepted pharmacological guidelines, or using drugs in ways that go against accepted medical or social norms. Drug abuse is the unlawful, excessive or inappropriate use of drugs, including prescription drugs and other substances. Compulsive drug-seeking behavior and use, regardless of the negative consequences, are the hallmarks of this chronic syndrome (Barerah, 2018). Inappropriate use of drugs, whether legal or illegal, is known as drug abuse. People abuse drugs to reduce stress, improve their mood, or escape reality; when they are unable to stop using, they become addicted (Kumar & Dangi, 2019).

The following are seven different types of drugs that are frequently abused, based on their physiological effects:

1. Stimulants: Stimulants increase activity in the central nervous system by interacting with various neurotransmitter systems, including dopamine and norepinephrine. This could eventually lead to an increase in vigor, focus and alertness. Stimulant abuse can result in a variety of detrimental effects, such as psychosis, paranoia and anger, in addition to increasing the risk of overdose toxicity and major physiological repercussions like heart attack, seizure, and stroke (Erubami, Nwabueze, Anorue, Ufuophu-Biri, & Orekyeh, 2021).

Stimulants can be taken orally, smoked, injected or snorted. They come in a variety of forms, including pills, capsules, injectable liquids, and powder. In addition to their intended medical benefits, stimulants are occasionally abused to boost self-esteem, decrease appetite, create a feeling of excitement, prolong wakefulness, enhance mental and physical performance, increase activity, and get high. Buffo, Jacquelyn (2023).

2. Narcotics: These are substance used to treat or moderate severe pain. Originally, the term "narcotics" was used in medicine to describe any psychoactive substance that had paralysing or numbing effects. Since then, it has been linked to opiates and opioids in the US, most frequently heroin and morphine, as well as byproducts of numerous substances present in raw opium latex. Morphine, codeine, and thebaine are the three main ones. Although thebaine is only very mildly psychoactive, it is an essential precursor to most semi-synthetic opioids, including oxycodone and hydrocodone. (Source: Wikipedia).

- 3. Cannabis:** The plant *Cannabis sativa* is the source of cannabis, commonly referred to as marijuana, a psychoactive substance. It is illegal to use for medical purposes and has little therapeutic value. In Nigeria, cannabis use is common, particularly among youth. It was initially introduced to Nigeria by World War II veterans.
- 4. Depressants:** A depressant is a medication that decreases neurotransmission levels, thereby lowering arousal or stimulation in different parts of the brain, according to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia. Additionally, depressants are sometimes referred to as "downers," because they reduce arousal when taken. Since stimulants, also known as uppers, improve mental or physical function, they are the opposite class of drugs to depressants.
- 5. Inhalants:** The term "inhalants" refers to a class of substances that are rarely, if ever, consumed through any means other than inhalation, despite the fact that other abused substances can be inhaled. This definition encompasses a broad spectrum of compounds that may have different pharmacological effects and are present in hundreds of different products. This makes it difficult to accurately categorize inhalants. One classification system classifies inhalants into four broad categories: volatile solvents, aerosols, gases, and nitrites, based on the forms in which they are commonly found in industrial, medical, and household products.

6. Aphrodisiac: Aphrodisiacs are any foods or substances that enhance arousal, sexual desire, behaviour, pleasure or performance. There are several reasons why individuals might wish to take aphrodisiac to enhance their sexual experiences. Sometimes people want to just try to enjoy sex more, but other reasons include improving sexual performance or having a low libido (Kendra 2022).

2.3 Review of Related Literature

Social media's widespread use has had a big impact on many facets of human behaviour, including drug use among young people. Examining social media's influence on drug use among Nigerian youth, especially in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, is crucial since it continues to influence attitudes and perceptions regarding substance use. In order to contextualize the study's focus on Upper Sakponba, this review of related literature attempts to summarise the body of research on the subject of social media's role in drug abuse, emphasising important findings, methodologies and knowledge gaps.

2.3.1 Social Media and Substance Abuse among Nigerian Adolescent (2018) Conducted by Adeoye and Olowu

Adeoye and Olowu in 2018 carried out a study on *social media and substance abuse among Nigerian adolescents*, the study used a cross-sectional survey research design to gather data from 400 adolescents in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that excessive social media exposure to illicit drugs contributed to the rise in

drug abuse. According to the study, teenagers who saw content about substance abuse on social media were more likely to act in a similar way. This study contributes to closing the knowledge gap regarding how social media affects teen substance abuse. However, the study did not specifically focus on a community or location, instead focusing on adolescents in general.

The study focused on adolescents in general rather than a specific community or location, making it difficult to apply the findings to a specific context. Furthermore, the study used a cross-sectional design, which may have underestimated the dynamic nature of social media and substance abuse. The current study, "Impact of Social Media on Drug Usage among Youth: A Case Study of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria," seeks to fill this gap by focusing on a specific community (Upper Sakponba) and providing more targeted information and recommendations. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach to capture the complexities of social media use and substance abuse in the community.

2.3.2 Social Media Influencers and Substance Abuse Promotion in Nigeria (2020) by Oyewole, O. and Oyewole, B.

The study was carried out among 200 Nigerian university students using a qualitative research design. The study found that social media influencers frequently glamorise substance abuse, which contributes to its spread among youth. The study highlighted the importance of targeted interventions to combat social media-based

substance abuse promotion. The study collected data through in-depth interviews, which were then analyzed thematically.

The study sheds light on the role of social media influencers in substance abuse promotion, but it does have some limitations. The study targeted university students, who may not be representative of the general youth population. Furthermore, the study did not look into the specific mechanisms that social media influencers use to influence youth substance use. The current study aims to fill this gap by investigating the specific ways in which social media influences substance abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba and making recommendations for targeted interventions. To gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon, the study will take a case study approach.

2.3.3 Peer Influence and Substance Abuse among Nigerian Youth (2019), conducted by Abiodun, O.

The study used a survey research design with 300 youth in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study discovered that peer influence was a significant factor in substance abuse among Nigerian youth. The study concluded that social media platforms can be used to encourage positive peer influence and reduce substance abuse. The study collected data through a structured questionnaire, which was then analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

Although the study sheds light on the role of peer influence in substance abuse, it is not without limitations. The study looked at peer influence in general, not the

specific role of social media in peer influence. Furthermore, the study did not look into the specific mechanisms by which peer influence contributes to substance abuse in youth. The current study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the specific ways in which social media influences peer interactions and substance abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach to investigate the complexities of peer influence and substance abuse.

2.3.4 Social Media Use and Substance Abuse among Youth in Nigeria (2021) conducted by Okoro, C. C., and Okechukwu, F.

The researchers used a cross-sectional survey research design in the study, which included 250 youth from Enugu State in Nigeria. The study found that social media use was a significant predictor of substance abuse among Nigerian youth. The study recommended that parents, educators, and policymakers collaborate to address social media's impact on youth substance abuse. The study collected data through a structured questionnaire, which was then analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

The study sheds light on the impact of social media on substance abuse in youth, but it has some limitations. The study looked at social media usage in general, not specific platforms or mechanisms that influence substance abuse. Furthermore, the study did not focus on a specific community or location, making it difficult to generalize the findings to that context. The current study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the specific social media platforms and mechanisms through which

social media influences substance abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba. The study will take a case study approach to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon,

2.4 Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on two communication theories, namely, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Social Learning Theory (1977), to provide a framework for understanding the *impact of social media on substance abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba, Nigeria*.

2.4.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943)

Abraham Maslow proposed the Hierarchy of Needs Theory in 1943. According to the theory, in order for people to realise their full potential, their various levels of needs must be satisfied in a particular order. The five categories of needs are self-actualisation, esteem, safety, love and belonging, and physiology. According to the theory, people are driven to satisfy their most basic needs before moving up the hierarchy to more intricate and abstract needs. Additionally, the theory is predicated on the idea that human needs are universal and arranged in a hierarchy, with the most basic needs at the bottom and the most complex at the top. The theory functions by providing a framework for comprehending human behaviour and motivation as well as by identifying the variables that affect human growth and wellbeing.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory is pertinent to this study on the influence of social media on drug use among young people, which is a case study of Upper Sakpomba in Nigeria. The theory states that young people may use substance abuse as a coping strategy if their basic needs, such as physiological and safety needs, are not met. Social media can have an impact on young people's behaviour and ideas of what

is desirable and acceptable, particularly if they are trying to find love and a sense of belonging. This study will examine the relationship between youth drug use and social media use, as well as how social media can be used to meet the needs of Upper Sakponba youth and encourage positive behaviours.

2.4.2 Social Learning Theory (1977)

Albert Bandura introduced the Social Learning Theory in 1977. According to the theory, people pick up new behaviours, attitudes and knowledge by watching and copying others as well as by getting praise or criticism for their deeds. According to the theory, people are more likely to adopt new behaviours if they witness others receiving rewards for them. It also highlights the importance of observation, imitation and reinforcement in the learning process.

According to the theory, people actively learn from their surroundings as well as from their own ideas and actions. The theory functions by offering a framework for comprehending how individuals pick up and implement new behaviours as well as for determining the variables that affect behaviour and learning.

Social learning theory can be connected to this study on how social media affects drug usage among young people in Upper Sakponba, Nigeria. According to the theory, young people are more likely to abuse drugs if they witness others, like their peers or social media influencers, being rewarded for it or promoting it as normal. Youth behaviour and their ideas of what is desirable and acceptable can be

greatly influenced by social media, especially if they are exposed to advertisements or content about substance abuse. The study can investigate the relationship between youth substance abuse and social media use, as well as how social media can be utilised to encourage healthy habits and lessen substance abuse.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preamble

This chapter explained the research methodology used in this study. The researcher used a variety of approaches and methods to collect accurate data, process it carefully and present it in an orderly format for easy interpretation. The aforementioned will be explained under the following subheadings:

- Research Design
- Population of the study
- Sample Size
- Sampling Technique
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Validity and Reliability of the instrument
- Method of Data Collection and
- Method of Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted using a survey research design. A survey research design is a descriptive, non-experimental research method in which participants are asked questions to gain insight into their attitudes and actions. It is thought to be one of the best techniques available to researchers who want to gather original data about

a population that is too big to be directly observed, requiring the use of a smaller population (i.e., sample) that is representative of the larger respondent. (Erbami, 2019).

According to Simon (1969), as cited in Onabajo (2010:50), a survey research method is used to collect data on what people say and about variables that exist in the world. It can also be defined as a method of collecting data primarily through communication or rapport with a representative sample of people (referred to as respondents).

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of residents of Upper Sakponba, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, with a total population of 30,145, as published by Ochongor (2024). According to Nworgu (1991), a population is made up of all the elements or topics that the researcher is interested in and from which a sample is taken.

3.3 Sample Size

The Taro Yamane's (1967) population reduction formula was used to determine the sample size for this study, which consists of 30,145 residents of Upper sakpomba in Benin city Edo state. A total of 395 thousand respondents were selected for this study. Because this has a large population, the researcher decided to use the Taro Yamane formula.

To determine the sample size, Taro Yamane's formula was be used:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$$

where:

n = sample size

N = population of the study (30,145)

e = margin of error (assumed to be 5% or 0.05)

$$n = 30,145 / (1 + 30,145(0.05^2))$$

$$n = 30,145 / (1 + 30,145(0.0025))$$

$$n = 30,145 / (1 + 75.3625)$$

$$n = 30,145 / 76.3625$$

$$n \approx 395$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is approximately 395 respondents.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The phrase "sampling technique" refers to the various approaches, strategies, and methods a researcher employs in order to locate study participants. Egbule (2003) defines sampling technique as the process of selecting the necessary samples from a population in a given research study, whereas Okoro (2001: 65) defines it as the process of using any portion of a universe or population in his study to represent the

population. The stratified random sampling method was used to choose the study's sample.

Stratified random sampling is when an entire population is split into homogeneous groups and subgroups using the probability sampling technique. This method was selected based on the traits that respondents had in common. The respondents were chosen based on their background, so only Upper Sakpomba residents were recruited for the study. Population representation in research is made possible by the stratified random sampling method (Oziwele & Erubami, 2022). The researcher used this sampling because he was unable to collect data from the entire population.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

This study used a questionnaire as its data collection tool. The questionnaire was mailed to Upper Sakponba residents via a number of online platforms, and the researcher visited the area in person to gather data from them in Benin City. Three sections made up the questionnaire: section A asked about demographics like gender, age range, occupation, etc.; sections B and C used a Likert-type scale with options like "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree" to gauge respondents' opinions on a variety of topics." The respondents' identities were kept private.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

This study used two-stage validation process to ensure the questionnaire's reliability, which is defined as the consistency and dependability of the measurement tool. First, the researcher's supervisor, Miss Uduak Ekpenyong, reviewed and modified the questionnaire to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant and consistent with the research objectives.

3.7 Method for Data Collection

The data collection method used in this study is a field survey with self-administered questionnaires. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents via mail and face-to-face, ensuring that all copies were obtained and reducing the possibility of missing data. This approach resulted in a high response rate and allowed the researcher to clarify any questions or concerns that respondents may have had, ultimately improving the quality of the data collected.

3.8 Method for Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics, such as simple percentages and frequency counts. The findings were presented in tables, which provided a clear and concise representation of the data. This analytical approach was chosen because it can summarise large datasets and highlight key trends and patterns, making the findings easier to interpret. The use of tables allowed the researcher to present complex data in a concise and organised manner, making it easier to draw meaningful conclusions and identify areas for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presented and analysed the information obtained from a questionnaire that was mailed and delivered in person to a sample of 390 respondents, yielding a 100% response rate. The data is analysed using frequencies, percentages and tabular presentations, in order to give to shed light on the research questions and objectives.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Section A: Demographic Data

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	95	24%
Female	284	72%
Prefer not to say	16	4%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The data presented in Table 1 shows a significant distribution of respondents by their gender, with women making up the majority (72%) and men making up about a quarter (24%) of the sample as a whole. This shows a noticeable domination of the female gender over the male, which is a representation that could be tied to the basis

that Upper Sakponba community women are willing to take part in surveys or be available for such interactions than the male counterpart. It is also pivotal to take into account the 4% of respondents who said they would rather not reveal their gender, since they might represent a portion of the population with particular reservations or concerns regarding gender disclosure.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age range

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	60	15%
20-24	219	55%
25-29	101	26%
30 and above	15	4%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The majority of respondents (55%) in this table 2 are between the ages of 20 and 24. This indicates a sizable representation of youths in the sample. The 25–29 age group (26%) and the 15–19 age group (15%) come next. The percentage of respondents who are 30 years of age or older is 4%. The demographics of Upper Sakponba, where this age group are more common or involved in survey participation, reflected in the concentration of respondents in the 20–24 age range. The

representation of younger age groups is important given the emphasis on drug abuse among youth, since they are more exposed to substance abuse problems.

Table 3: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	100	25%
Employed	275	70%
Unemployed	20	5
Others	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This table 3 showed that majority of respondents (70%) are employed, showing a sizable representation of working class people in the sample. The 25% percent of respondents are students and only 5% percent are unemployed. The low population of the "Others" category in the presentation could indicate that either no respondents fit this description or the information was not recorded.

Table 4: Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Education	5	1%
Secondary Education	269	68%
Tertiary Education	121	31%
Others	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The above presentation shows that 68% of the respondents have completed secondary school, while a small percentage (1%) have only completed primary school, while those with postsecondary education (31%) follow. The domination of secondary-educated respondents indicate that this group is more accessible for the survey or more common in the community. The high proportion of respondents with secondary education could suggest that interventions should focus on this group given the context of drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City.

Table 5: Respondents' most frequent-used social media platform

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	120	30%
Instagram	240	61%
X (formerly Twitter)	30	8%
Others	5	1%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The data in Table 5 shows that Instagram is the most popular social media platform among Upper Sakponba respondents, accounting for 61% of the total sample. This is followed by Facebook, which has 30% of respondents. The usage of X (formerly Twitter) and other social media platforms is comparatively low, at 8% and 1% respectively in the area.

Instagram's dominance as the preferred social media platform implies that interventions aimed at combating drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba should prioritise this platform for awareness campaigns and outreach programmes. Instagram's popularity among respondents can be explained by its visually focused interface and widespread use among youth in this community in Edo state, which make it a perfect medium for reaching the target audience and spreading targeted messages.

Section B: Knowledge and Perception of Drugs

Table 6: Respondents' Views on whether Drug Abuse is a major problem in Upper Sakponba

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	246	62%
Agree	105	27%
Disagree	21	5%
Strongly Disagree	23	6%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This shows the broad agreement among respondents that drug abuse is a serious issue in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, with 27% agreeing and 62% strongly agreeing. This indicates that almost nine out of ten respondents (89%) recognise the severity of the problem. The overwhelming majority's belief that drug abuse is a serious issue highlights Upper Sakponba's urgent need for interventions. The results suggest that community members have a high degree of awareness and recognition of this issue, which could support community-based initiatives and anti-drug abuse campaigns.

Table 7: Respondents’ assessment on the contribution of social media in the spread of drug abuse among youth

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	287	73%
Agree	106	26%
Disagree	2	1%
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This shows that many of the respondents strongly believe that social media contribute to the spread of drug abuse among youth of Upper Sakponba, with 73% strongly agreeing and 26% agreeing with the statement. This suggests that almost all respondents (99%) believe social media plays a significant role increasing the issue.

The results indicate that social media's impact on young people's behaviour is widely acknowledged, underscoring the necessity of focused tactics to lessen its detrimental effects. The majority of respondents see social media as a contributing factor, suggesting that promoting digital literacy and addressing online content could be important aspects of anti-drug abuse initiatives.

Table 8: Respondents' experience with drugs on social media platform

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	288	73%
No	107	27%
Maybe	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The presentation in table 8 shows that a high majority (73%) of respondents who have experience with drug on social media platforms, while 27% of respondents say they have never used drugs on social media. There is no response in the option of "Maybe" and "Prefer not to say" categories, this indicates that respondents were clear-cut in their responses.

The results show that respondents were heavily exposed to drug-related content on social media, which underscored the platforms' potential to normalise or encourage substance use. This emphasises the necessity for social media companies to improve content moderation and launch focused awareness campaigns to reduce the dangers of drug exposure online.

Table 9: Audience’s Perception of Drug abuse as a cause for serious health problems

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	288	73%
Agree	107	27%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This table unveils that the respondents (73%) 'Strongly agree' and 27% 'agree' that drug abuse contributes to major health issues. This implies that each respondent is aware of the serious health challenge associated with the habit of drug abuse.

The community's awareness of the serious health consequences of drug abuse is demonstrated by the overwhelming agreement. Because of this consensus, health-challenge campaigns will have a significant impact on the audience and help prevention initiatives. The agreement highlights the need for a pivotal campaign against this ugly trend in the society.

Table 10: Audience’s exposure to Drug use post on social media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	281	71%
Often	112	28%
Rarely	2	1%
Never	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This Table revealed a majority with 71% of respondents who have been exposed to drug-related contents on social media on a regular basis, with an additional 28% encountering such content frequently. Just 1% of respondents say they have been exposed not frequently, and none say they have never been exposed.

This result points to extensive exposure to drug-related publication on social media, underscoring the necessity of focused approaches that will facilitate in confronting this issue. Social media companies and legislators should give top priority to taking steps to stop the spread of such content and encourage young people to be digitally literate, given the frequency of exposure.

Table 11: Audience’s Perception on whether influencers promote drug use on social media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	258	65%
Agree	82	21%
Disagree	46	12%
Strongly Disagree	9	2%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The majority of respondents believe influencers encourage drug use on social media, with 258 (65%) strongly agree and 82 (21% agree). However, 46 respondents (12%) disagree with the idea and 9 respondents (2%) strongly disagree.

The results indicate that many respondents believe influencers are encouraging drug use on social media, emphasising the need for digital literacy programmes and responsible influencer marketing to reduce potential harm, particularly among youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City.

Table 12: Respondents’ views on whether social media can be used to reduce drug abuse among Upper Sakponba youth

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	258	65%
Agree	129	33%
Disagree	8	2%
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The majority of respondents with 258 (65%) “Strongly agree” and 129 (33%) “Agree” think social media can be used to lower drug abuse among young people in Upper Sakponba. There is an agreement about social media's ability to solve the problem, as only 8 (2%) respondents disagree. This positive opinion implies that using social media platforms could be a successful tactic for anti-drug abuse campaigns and interventions aimed at young people in Upper Sakponba.

Table 13: Assessment of Audience’s Acceptability of Social Media Campaigns Against Drug Abuse

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	155	39%
No	222	56%
Maybe	-	-
Undecided	18	5%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This table 13 shows that while 155 (39%) respondents support social media campaigns against drug abuse, 222 (56%) respondents disagree. 18 (5%) individuals are unsure. The findings highlight the need to understand and address problems in order to boost campaign efficacy, even though a significant portion of the audience is open to social media campaigns.

Table 14: Assessment of the kind of Contents that respondents view on Social Media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment	197	50%
Education	93	24%
Health/Wellness	29	7%
Others	76	19%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

The data in table 14 reveals that the majority of respondents use social media to interact with entertainment content, with 197 respondents (50%) stating that this is their favorite kind of content. Education ranks second, with 93 respondents (24%), followed by others (76, 19%) and Health/Wellness (29, 7%). The findings indicate that social media is primarily used for leisure rather than education or information. This trend could be used to produce interesting, entertaining content that informs viewers about crucial topics like drug abuse.

Table 15: Assessment of the kind of types of drugs being promoted or discussed on Social Media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Cannabis/Marijuana	63	16%
Cocaine	23	6%
Heroin	12	3%
Tramadol	165	42%
Others	132	33%
Total	395	100%

Field Survey, 2026.

This table 15 shows that 165 respondents (42%) mentioned tramadol, making it the most popular medication being advertised or discussed on social media. Others (132, 33%), cocaine (23, 6%), heroin (12, 3%), and cannabis/marijuana (63, 16%) come next. Discussions about tramadol are remarkably common, indicating the need for focused interventions that address its use and promotion. The "Others" category (132, 33%) also shows a wide variety of substances being discussed, necessitating an all-encompassing strategy to keep an eye on and deal with drug-related content on social media.

The following is the summarisation and analysis of the information elicited from the respondents, on the open-ended questions administered to them, in order to complete this academic work:

16. What do you think are the major factors contributing to drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba?

Respondent 1: “The primary causes of drug abuse among our youth in Upper Sakponba are peer pressure and a lack of parental guidance.”

Respondent 2: “Poverty and unemployment are driving young people into drug abuse and trafficking.”

Respondent 3: “In our community, drugs are easily accessible, very cheap and some cultures here even consider it normal.”

Respondent 4: “Lack of educational training: Youth in Upper Sakponba need more education and awareness campaigns; they are not aware of the dangers of drug abuse.”

There are many different factors (as revealed by the respondents) that contribute to the spread of drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. One of the important factors is peer pressure and the influence of friends who are already addicted to the habit of abusing drugs. Young people often experiment with drugs as a result of this social influence, which can quickly develop into addiction. The absence of parental supervision and guidance is another pivotal reason which usually make young people to look for other sources of solace and

support, in the bid to alleviate their worries. Additionally, some young people develop to drug trafficking or abuse as a way to survive due to the socioeconomic environment, which is marked by poverty and unemployment. This emphasises that in order to address these underlying problems, a realistic and strategic support systems are required.

The issue of drug use is made worse by the community's easy access to inexpensive, illegal and self-administered drugs, as well as cultural and societal norms that promote drug use. There is the need for a community-oriented programmes that lower the availability of illegal drugs and encourage a culture of health and wellness among young people in Upper Sakponba, Benin City.

17. How do you think social media can be used to address the issue of drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba?

Respondent 1: "Social media can help raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse among a large number of young people at once."

Respondent 2: "Local celebrities and influencers can use social media to promote anti-drug messages."

Respondent 3: "We can use social media to inspire others by sharing stories of people who have overcome addiction."

Respondent 4: "Young people can use social media as a platform to discuss their challenges and receive support."

According to the aforementioned responses gotten from indigenes of Upper Sakponba, Benin City, social media can be a powerful tool in combating drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba by raising awareness and sharing educational content about the dangers of drug abuse on platforms popular with young people. Youth attitudes towards drug use can be significantly impacted by working with local influencers to promote positive lifestyles and amplify anti-drug messages. The act of offering online support groups and sharing success stories of addicts who have recovered could give those battling addiction hope and encouragement on their liberation. Social media can also be employed to disseminate information about counseling services and hotlines, in the bid to ensure that all youth in Upper Sakponba have access to the assistance they require.

Social media can also be used to effectively engage youth in healthy lifestyle-promoting events and competitions. It is feasible to change the perception of drug use and motivate youth in Upper Sakponba to make better decisions by utilising these platforms.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Connection between Social Media and Drug Usage among Upper Sakponba Youth

The study reveals a significant connection between social media and drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth. As shown in Table 7, a substantial 73% of respondents strongly agree that social media contributes to the spread of drug abuse, with 99% acknowledging its role in promoting substance use (Table 7). The widespread exposure to drug-related content on social media platforms, particularly Instagram (61%) (Table 5), highlights the need for targeted interventions. The majority of respondents (86%) believe influencers promote drug use on social media (Table 11), emphasising the importance of responsible influencer marketing and digital literacy programs.

The findings suggest that social media can be a powerful tool for anti-drug abuse campaigns, with 98% of respondents agreeing that it can be used to reduce drug abuse among youth (Table 12). However, the acceptability of social media campaigns against drug abuse is relatively low (39%) (Table 13), indicating a need to understand and address concerns to improve campaign effectiveness. The study's results support the notion that social media has a significant impact on youth behavior, underscoring the need for focused strategies to mitigate its negative effects. This meets with the first objectives which seeks to examine the connection between social media and drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth.

4.2.2 Level of Drug Usage among Upper Sakponba Youth and Influencing Factors

The study reveals a high level of drug usage among Upper Sakponba youth, with 89% of respondents acknowledging it as a major problem (Table 6). Peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, poverty and unemployment are identified as key factors contributing to drug abuse (Open-ended question responses). The easy accessibility and cultural normalisation of drugs in the community exacerbate the issue.

The respondents' awareness of the serious health consequences of drug abuse (100% agreement) (Table 9) presents an opportunity for health-centric anti-drug abuse campaigns. The unanimous agreement on the health risks highlights the potential for community-based initiatives and awareness campaigns to address the issue.

The study's findings emphasise the need for a comprehensive approach, addressing underlying socioeconomic issues and promoting a culture of health and wellness among youth in Upper Sakponba. This meets fulfils the second objective which evaluates the level of drug usage in Upper Sakponba and what informed their decision.

4.2.3 Social Media Platforms Promoting Drug Usage among Upper Sakponba Youth

Instagram emerges as the dominant social media platform (61%) among Upper Sakponba youth, followed by Facebook (30%) (Table 5). The visually-focused interface and widespread use among youth make Instagram an ideal medium for

awareness campaigns and outreach programs. The study's results highlight the need for targeted strategies to address drug-related content on social media platforms, particularly Instagram, in order to collaborate with local influencers and promoting positive lifestyles which will impact youth attitudes towards drug use.

The findings support the importance of leveraging social media platforms to disseminate information about counseling services, hotlines, and healthy lifestyle-promoting events, ensuring that youth in Upper Sakponba have access to necessary support.

4.2.4 Types of Drugs Mostly Abused on Social Media

The study shows that Tramadol is the most commonly discussed and promoted drug on social media, with 165 respondents (42%) identifying it as such (Table 15). Substances such as cannabis/marijuana (63, 16%), cocaine (23, 6%), heroin (12, 3%), and a significant percentage of other drugs (132, 33%) come next. The frequency of Tramadol in these conversations highlights the necessity of focused interventions to address its abuse and related health risks. Additionally, the variety of substances in the "Others" category emphasizes how complicated the problem is, requiring a multipronged strategy to keep an eye on and control drug-related content on social media. To lessen the promotion and glorification of drug use online, this could entail working with social media platforms, public awareness campaigns, and legislative actions.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION
FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.1 Summary

This study evaluated the *impact of social media on drugs usage among youth: a case study of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria*. The results showed a strong link between social media and drug usage among youth in this community in Benin City, Edo State. The majority of respondents identified Instagram as the most popular social media platform among youth and acknowledged that social media plays vital role in the dissemination of drug related contents. The study also made clear how important it is to address the problem with strategic plans and focused interventions.

The respondents' knowledge of the detrimental effects that drug abuse has on one's health offers a chance for health-focused anti-drug abuse initiatives. Poverty, unemployment, peer pressure and a lack of parental guidance were found to be the major causes of drug abuse. Also the problem is made worse by the community's easy access to drugs and their cultural normalisation of such.

The study's findings lend credence to the idea that social media significantly influences young people's behaviour, highlighting the necessity of targeted solutions to lessen its detrimental effects. The results highlight how crucial it is to use social media platforms to spread information about hotlines, counseling services and events that promote healthy lifestyles.

Overall, the study emphasises how urgently drug usage among youth people in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, needs to be addressed.

5.2 Conclusion

The results of the study unequivocally show that social media significantly influences youths behaviour and exacerbates the problem of drug use in Upper Sakponba, Benin City. The youth are more likely to experiment drugs due to the widespread exposure to drug-related content on social media sites like Instagram, which also normalises substance use. There is the need for stakeholders, including social media companies, legislators and local leaders, to create and implement relevant strategies that can be used to lessen these negative effects. These should include helping young people become more digitally literate, working with influencers to encourage positive lifestyles and using social media platforms to spread important information about counseling services and hotlines. It is possible to use social media as a force for good, encouraging healthier choices and lowering the prevalence of drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba and beyond, by adopting a proactive and diverse approaches in order to counter this issue.

5.3 Recommendation

The following are the recommendations offered by the researcher in the bid to address the problem of drug usage among youth in Upper Sakponba, Benin City, in light of the study's findings:

1. **Targeted Interventions:** The Federal and Edo State government in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in the community should implement a realistic and focused interventions on social media platforms, especially Instagram, in order to address drug-related content and encourage healthy lifestyles among the youth of Upper Sakponba community.
2. **Responsible Influencer Marketing:** Efforts should be made to work together with local, regional and famous influencers in Nigeria, in order to spread anti-drug messages and encourage healthy lifestyles on the social media platforms.
3. **Digital Literacy Programmes:** The government and stakeholders in the community and Benin City should create and execute digital literacy initiatives to inform youth about the dangers of drug use on social media.
4. **Community-Based Initiatives:** Put community-based initiatives into action to address underlying socioeconomic problems and encourage youth to adopt a culture of wellness and health.

5.4 Suggestions for Additional Research

There is the need for a more research in the bid to fully understand the role of social media in promoting drug use among youth Upper Sakponba and Nigeria at large.

The following areas are proposed for future research:

1. **Drugs Promoted on Social Media:** Conduct additional research to determine the types of drugs being promoted on social media platforms.

2. **Social Media's Effect on Particular Age Groups:** Look at how social media affects particular age groups, like teenagers or young adults.
3. **Effectiveness of Anti-Drug Abuse Campaigns:** Assess how successful anti-drug abuse initiatives are on social media.

These studies will aid in the creation of successful interventions to deal with the problem of drug abuse among young people in Nigeria and other countries.

APPENDIX

(Questionnaire)

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,
University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria.

Dear Respondents,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final-year undergraduate in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Benin, conducting a research on the topic entitled: Impact of social media on drugs usage among youth: a case study of Upper Sakponba in Nigeria. This research is a partial requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass Communication.

I kindly request for your participation in this study by completing the attached questionnaire. All information supplied shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. There is no special benefit attached to participating in this study. You retain your right to withdraw from this study at any point in time. By responding to this questionnaire, you authorise that your response(s) be used for research purposes only.

Your cooperation and support in this academic endeavour are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Faithfully,

Oduware Osasere Richardson
Researcher

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender? A. Male [], B. Female [], C. Prefer not to say []
2. What is your age range? A. 15-19 [], B. 20-24 [], C. 25-29 [], D. 30 and above []
3. What is your occupation? A. Student [], B. Employed [], C. Unemployed [], D. Other (please specify) []
4. What is your level of education? A. Primary [], B. Secondary [], C. Tertiary [], D. Other (please specify) []
5. Which social media platforms do you use most frequently? A. Facebook [], B. Instagram [], C. Twitter [], D. Other (please specify) []

Section B: Knowledge and Perception of Drugs

6. Do you think drug abuse is a major problem among youth in Upper Sakponba? A. Strongly Agree [], B. Agree [], C. Disagree [], D. Strongly Disagree []
7. Do you think social media has contributed to the spread of drug abuse among youth? A. Strongly Agree [], B. Agree [], C. Disagree [], D. Strongly Disagree []
8. Have you ever been offered drugs by someone you met on social media? A. Yes [], B. No [], C. Maybe [], D. Prefer not to say []
9. Do you think drug abuse can lead to serious health problems?
A. Strongly Agree [], B. Agree [], C. Disagree [], D. Strongly Disagree []

10. How often do you see posts about drugs on social media?

A. Very Often [], B. Often [], C. Rarely [], D. Never []

11. Do you think social media influencers promote drug use?

A. Strongly Agree [], B. Agree [], C. Disagree [], D. Strongly Disagree []

12. Do you think social media can be used to reduce drug abuse among youth? A.

Strongly Agree [], B. Agree [], C. Disagree [], D. Strongly Disagree []

13. Would you follow social media campaigns aimed at preventing drug abuse? A.

Yes [], B. No [], C. Maybe [], D. Undecided []

14. What type of content do you typically create or share on social media? A.

Entertainment [], B. Education [], C. Health /Wellness [], D. Others []

15. What types of drugs were being promoted or discussed?

A. Cannabis/Marijuana [], B. Cocaine [], C. Heroin [], D. Tramadol, Codeine)
[], E. Others[]

Section C: Open-Ended Questions

16. What do you think are the major factors contributing to drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba?

17. How do you think social media can be used to address the issue of drug abuse among youth in Upper Sakponba?

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