

Media Campaigns Against Drug Abuse and Use of Colorado (Colos) Among Youths in Nigeria

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10449139

ABSTRACT

Nigeria's present drug pandemic has become a major impediment to the country's political and social growth. Drug misuse is defined as the excessive use of prescription or sedative drugs that have the potential to alter mood or induce drunkenness. It is critical to remember that using these medications in excess might have serious consequences. The employment of media campaigns as an intervention to regulate and prevent drug use is one strategic strategy that aids in the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle. This study looked into Colorado-based advertising campaigns aimed at young Nigerian adults who abuse and consume drugs. The investigator used exploratory research methods, relying on secondary sources of information such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. According to the survey, peer pressure, a lack of parental supervision, and poverty are some of the factors that influence young people's decision to use drugs. Drug use has a dramatic impact on society, causing law and order to crumble and perpetuating a variety of cycles of usage, insufficiency, criminality, and abuse. The use of synthetic (Colorado-sourced) cannabinoids has been linked to a number of health hazards and negative effects. Tachycardia, hypertension, vomiting, confusion, visual and auditory hallucinations, seizures, and, in rare circumstances, death are all possible symptoms. The study suggests that Colorado needs to implement more rules and enforcement measures to successfully govern the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of illegal narcotics. To effectively address the issue, the public media campaign against drug use should target drug consumption in primary and secondary schools from the start.

Keywords: Media, Campaign, Drug abuse, Colorado, Youth.

Cite as: Ifeanyi Martins Nwokeocha. (2023). Media Campaigns Against Drug Abuse and Use of Colorado (Colos) Among Youths in Nigeria. *Journal of Management & Educational Research Innovation (JOMERI)*, 1(3), 16–24. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10449139>

INTRODUCTION

Our society's drug use rate has increased, posing a significant hurdle to growth. Drug addicts and individuals who are reliant on drugs restrict societal growth. Prostitution, criminal activity, and other related societal ills would all increase dramatically in a country where drugs are misused, abused, or abused. Furthermore, it generates an environment that encourages the spread of drug trafficking among the public. It is a huge threat to public health and a reflection of societal instability, resulting in unconscious patients and a slew of illnesses that harm a country's reputation. According to Hanafi's (2022) research, drug use in Nigeria has increased alarmingly, particularly among young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, who are developing drug addictions on a regular basis. A 2018 report financed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, revealed that 25% of drug users in

Nigeria are female, providing further support to the aforementioned data. Studies have shown that teenagers, adults, and students in various Nigerian cities and rural areas are increasingly consuming cocaine and other narcotic drugs, according to Nelson, Ekhorugue, and Asemah (2021). Among the substances that are abused are heroin, pethidine, morphine, barbiturates, Chinese pills, methaqualone, and tramadol. Substance abuse is closely linked to the disintegration of law and order as well as the formation of multiple cycles of abuse, deprivation, criminality, and more abuse. A study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Nigeria found that 14.4% of people aged 15 to 64, or 14.3 million people, use drugs. Furthermore, Hassan (2023) estimates that 30 million Nigerians spend \$15,000 each year on mental medicines. The misuse of scarce resources for the development of mental hospitals, the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, and the erosion of cultural norms and values have resulted from drug abuse. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in instability, anarchy, and other undesirable tendencies in society, which has exacerbated rather than alleviated problems. Nonetheless, in order to solve the problem and reverse the negative consequences it has had on our society, rigorous investigation is required. This project must involve the mainstream media in order to convey knowledge and educate the public about the detrimental impacts of drug usage on society and persons. Marijuana is a commonly abused drug. According to drug specialists, Colorado is a harmful narcotic that youngsters regularly smoke to improve their mood and get stoned, often resulting in mental instability. Due to its composition from a synthetic plant and inclusion of dangerous metals, Colorado is deemed unsuitable for human consumption. It frequently produces hallucinations and puts people in a state of instability. This study looks at Colorado (colors) media initiatives against drug abuse and youth use.

Theoretical Framework

Okoro and Olley's 2019 "development media theory" is a primary source of inspiration for this project. According to Okunna (1999, p. 136), development theory originated in the 1980s in reaction to the growing disparity between industrialised and poor countries. According to Nwodu and Ukozor (2003, p. 515), the development media theory is based on the idea that the government and mass media should collaborate to ensure that the media promotes the nation's overall development. Okoro and Olley (2019) established the development media theory, which explains four essential normative ideas of the press.

1. The media should actively participate in positive development projects and adhere to national policies.
2. Media freedom should be balanced against the needs of society's growth and economic goals.
3. The media should prioritise news and information that forges linkages with other developing nations that are geographically, culturally, or politically close.

Journalists and other media professionals have both rights and obligations when it comes to acquiring and delivering information. The development media theory is particularly important to this research since it aims to find media campaigns targeting drug use and the use of Colorado (colours) among Nigerian youth. Implementing the development media concept can help convey appropriate information and campaign against drug and marijuana use among young Nigerians.

An Assessment of the Media Campaign against Drug Abuse in Nigeria

Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet have all been proven to be useful in lowering drug usage. Numerous radio and television discussion shows focus on the hazards and health difficulties linked to adolescent and young adult drug addiction. The anti-drug campaign in Nigeria employs a range of written media, such as editorials, opinion pieces, feature articles, and letters to the editor. Without a doubt, one of the primaries aims of the media is to provide the general public with access to information, education, and entertainment. The head of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's (NDLEA) Ekiti State Command has been invited by African Independent Television (AIT) to speak to

young people about the dangers of substance abuse. During the presentation, the commander pleaded with the audience to collaborate with the agency by providing important information that may aid in the reduction of drug abuse among young people.

(<https://ait.live/drugabusendleidentifiescausesofmenace/>)

Nigeria's broadcast media, which includes both privately owned and government-run television networks, has been airing a variety of shows, workshops, and conferences severely condemning the country's extensive drug consumption and illegal drug trade. In 2022, one example of a UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking that addresses drug-related concerns is "Dealing with Drug Challenges in Health and Humanitarian Crises." Arise TV was one of many television networks that broadcast live coverage of the accident. Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, Nigeria's former vice president, asserted confidently during the ceremony, "We are triumphing in this conflict." It is apparent that the days of drug misuse and addiction are coming to an end, but more devotion and tenacity will be required to achieve long-term rehabilitation. Visit the following link for more information on drug misuse in Nigeria: <https://www.arise.tv/Edsaysvp/Osibanjo/>. The media has disseminated critical information on drug usage and the underground market. According to Arise TV, the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 2023 to collaborate in combating drug trafficking in Nigeria. The website <https://www.arise.tv/nigeriacustomsndleasignmoutotackledrug-trafficking/> provided this information. This is a huge step towards stopping adolescents and others under the legal drinking age from accessing and exchanging illegal substances. Radio shows are an essential kind of broadcast media in Nigeria's fight against drug addiction. Radio shows, like television series, strive to inform, educate, and alter listeners' attitudes about drug usage and trafficking issues. Because of its accessibility and low cost, radio programming is a significant and effective instrument in the fight against drug addiction, particularly in rural areas. As a result of its ease of use and accessibility, radio has a significant audience. Radio's growing popularity can be attributed in great part to mobile phones that include radio applications. Radio stations, both public and private, constantly inform the public about the dangers and health consequences of drug misuse and trafficking. Nonetheless, it is vital that the broadcast media step up its efforts to combat drug addiction by regularly educating the public about the importance of drug abstinence. Television networks have the financial resources to aid the film industry in producing films that serve the dual purposes of entertainment and education. These movies aim to educate viewers by using dramatic pictures and actual stories of people who have overcome drug addiction (Adediran, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Media Campaign

Initiatives by the media are critical for increasing public awareness of the benefits of physical activity and health. In media campaigns, it is usual practice to broadcast messages to a large audience. Organizations can use billboards, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and a variety of social media platforms to accomplish this (Nelson, Ekhoruge, & Asemah, 2021). A media campaign often consists of a well-planned sequence of television episodes, newspaper articles, and other media items. These projects are designed to achieve specific objectives, such as combating the COVID-19 pandemic or raising public awareness of flash floods. According to Wakefield and Loken (2010), media campaigns can be short-term or long-term in duration. These components can be linked to other structured programme components, such as clinical or institutional outreach, or they can function independently. If health or environmental efforts are part of a larger social marketing initiative, distributing recently launched or ongoing goods and services can improve accessibility. Park and Hove

(2017, quoted in Abdulazeez, Kadiri, & Asemah, 2021) argue that the mass media changes the attitudes and perceptions of its audience through education, campaigns, and information transfer. This is accomplished by controlling the focus, framing, valence, and tone of the news coverage. The media's presentation and coverage of these issues influence how individuals respond to and comprehend the messages of media campaigns. A public communication campaign is an intentional endeavour to educate or sway the attitudes of a large number of people over a set period of time. To deliver a range of messages, it employs a number of channels and a predetermined sequence of communication operations. These initiatives aim to achieve positive outcomes for individuals and society as a whole, rather than being largely motivated by profit (Rice & Atkin, 2021). According to Marshall, Owen, and Bauman (2004), mass media campaigns are ineffective at changing people's behaviour. As a result, providing adequate avenues for effective and successful communication is vital (Akarika, 2020). A communication strategy is a technique used by programme planners and implementers to successfully transmit their intended meanings and messages to the target audience in the face of internal and external challenges.

Concept of Drug Abuse in Nigeria

Pharmacological agents are substances that can affect the physiological condition or function of the body. Carroll (1989), referenced in Hassan (2023), defined a drug as any substance that can change the structure or function of an organism when ingested. On the other hand, drug abuse is the act of consuming more drugs than recommended. It could be interpreted as utilising illegal narcotics or abusing legally prescribed or over-the-counter medications. According to Abdulazeez, Kadiri, and Asemah (2021), Carroll (1989) defines drug misuse as the intentional use of substances for purposes other than their intended medical use, negatively impacting the user's mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being. Drug misuse occurs when people use drugs for illegal purposes or do not follow the manufacturer's guidelines. Researchers have proposed many hypotheses to understand the complex roots of drug use and misuse. It implies that drug use may persist in young people at risk of developing a drug addiction if they live in the same social milieu in which they previously used drugs. A variety of psychological reasons cause the majority of drug use and misuse. According to Ahire (1990, referenced in Hassan 2023), socioeconomic background and personality disorders are the primary predictors of a person's proclivity for drug usage. Furthermore, stress management, self-esteem enhancement, drug accessibility, peer pressure, and the need for social connection are all factors associated with drug use and misuse. Sensitivity can be inherited, leading to a greater vulnerability to a specific medicine. Some chemicals, according to Moronkola (2003, referenced in Nelson et al., 2021), have the ability to directly modify the brain, altering emotions, sensory perceptions, behavioural patterns, and cognitive processes. According to global studies on drug use and abuse, the initiation of drug use is a potent predictor of future drug misuse and reliance. For example, compared to people who begin using drugs at the age of 21 or older, those who begin using drugs before the age of 14 are more likely to develop drug-related issues later in life. Drug usage has long been a crucial component of occultism, according to Osayomi (1999, as described in Marshal et al., 2004), and many young people attending higher education institutions participate in this practice. Drugs pose two major risks: the danger of addiction and the negative impact on behaviour and physical health. There are two categories of substances: illegal or officially prohibited drugs and socially and legally sanctioned substances. Drugs that have been used and accepted by society over time are legally recognised and acceptable. Nelson and colleagues cite Ballas (2006). Nonetheless, due to the huge intake and outflow of particular pharmaceuticals, the government levies import duties on them. The two major groups are alcohol and tobacco. People all over the world widely smoke tobacco. Tobacco is appealing to both the government and industrial businesses because of its substantial financial incentives. Given the risks of smoking cigarettes, such as the risk of developing lung cancer and dying young from coronary heart disease, the federal government

has mandated that a warning appear in all cigarette advertisements that reads, "Cigarette smoking is dangerous to health, and smokers are liable to die young." As a result, putting in place a thorough plan to quit smoking cigarettes will significantly lower the rate of early death. According to Obot (1992), reported in Akarika (2020), smoking is substantially more widespread among young people, particularly students, and this trend appears to be continuing. Furthermore, he emphasised that the use of illegal narcotics is not as strongly linked to mortality and illness as smoking and drinking alcohol are. Humans have traditionally used alcohol as a drug to induce distinct physical sensations, and it holds a rich cultural history that spans many diverse global civilizations. Many individuals are unaware that alcohol is a chemical with pharmacological properties, despite its widespread use. According to Odejide (1989, as reported in Wakefield and Lokan, 2010), a sizable proportion of Nigerians do not regard alcohol as a particularly dangerous substance because it is easily available and socially acceptable. Aside from Nigeria, drinking habits are critical to the overall social structure in a number of other countries. As a result, society regulates and forbids alcohol consumption in conformity with societal norms. Alcohol has been a prominent element in a large number of crimes and traffic accidents in Nigeria. Adult males were the only ones who used alcohol in the past, according to Odejide (1989, referenced in Wakefield and Lokan, 2010). Recent studies, however, reveal that alcohol intake is becoming more widespread among women and young people. Beverages can contain a wide variety of alcohol, with varying appearances and intensities. The alcohol content of a product can range from 0.3% to 20% in some situations and up to 50% in others. Drinking too much alcohol can cause the neurological system to become numb. 2. The heart rate quickens. It also causes vasodilation. 4. It impairs digestion, which has a negative influence on vitamin B absorption, especially when taken on an empty stomach. 5. It taints the neurological system and cerebral cortex, affecting the ability to make sound decisions, among other things. Aside from tobacco and alcohol, the government is concerned about other substances known by different names but classified as narcotics. Hard drugs, such as heroin, codeine, and other similar substances, are classified as the most deadly substances. The drugs include heroin, codeine, and other similar substances. In fact, these two are popular selections among the several categories accessible in Nigeria. Morphine and pargoric methadone are two further examples. Morphine and pargoric methadone reduce psychological and physical sensitivity, which in turn reduces dread, tension, and anxiety, as well as a sense of being separated from reality. It also reduces physical effort and produces tiredness, constipation, nausea, and vomiting in some people. Excessive dosing might result in a coma, death, or loss of consciousness. The investigation was conducted by Nelson et al. (2021). Sedatives include nicotine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, and other medications. Sedatives can lower inhibitions, tension, and anxiety, promoting relaxation and sleep. Medication overdosing can result in symptoms such as slurred speech, shaky movements, weariness, delayed reflexes, abrupt emotional swings, and irregular sleep habits. Stimulants include well-known medications such as paracetamol, caffeine, cocaine, and codeine. When not used as an anaesthetic by a professional, these pharmaceutical classes can boost mood, manage appetite, reduce fatigue, and create emotions and sensory hallucinations. According to Obot (1992), as described in Akarika (2020), many consumers of these substances are young professionals in their twenties and thirties, as well as newly wealthy individuals or youngsters.

The Impact of Colorado Drug on the Mental Health of Nigerian Youths **What is Colorado?**

Colorado, also known as Colos in Nigeria, Black Mamba, K2, Spice, and Baba are examples of synthetic substances that influence the brain's cannabinoid receptors. Despite popular belief, the substance in question is a blend of several chemical compounds applied to dehydrated herbs rather than a plant. Users can then roll up and smoke the leaves like conventional marijuana, or store them in vaporizer cartridges. The dried herbs appear to be similar to normal marijuana at first glance. When adolescents in Nigeria consume Colorado drugs, they suffer substantial physical health hazards. Synthetic

cannabinoids are synthetic compounds that replicate the physiological and psychological effects of marijuana. However, these medications typically have higher potencies and unpredictable effects, which can have serious physiological repercussions. In Colorado, drug usage can cause convulsions, tachycardia, hypertension, and possibly organ failure. Without regulation and strict quality control during the manufacture of these substances, the risks are heightened. Nigerian teenagers who use Colorado drugs risk developing possibly fatal medical issues. There is no doubt that Colorado pharmaceuticals have a significant impact on the psychological health of Nigerian youngsters. Synthetic cannabinoids have the potential to produce anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, and even psychosis. The unexpected nature of these medications may result in significant psychological discomfort and long-term mental health consequences. According to Adekunle (2023), teenagers from Nigeria who use Colorado drugs may endure mood swings, memory issues, and cognitive decline, all of which could harm their general well-being and potential. Research has linked synthetic cannabinoids to a range of undesirable side effects and health hazards. Tachycardia, hypertension, nausea, vomiting, confusion, hallucinations, seizures, and, in severe circumstances, death are all possible indications and symptoms. Long-term use can result in dependence and the onset of withdrawal symptoms.

Causes and Effects of Drug Abuse among Users in Nigeria

The underlying cause of an event comes before its consequences. Causality and effect are inextricably linked, similar to the inseparability of smoke from fire. Before we examine the effects of drug use on individuals in Nigeria, we must first investigate the causes of drug addiction. Odivwri (2014, p. 536) cites Haladu (2003), who identified several factors that contribute to drug dependence. These include a desire to try new things, peer pressure, inadequate parenting, personality problems caused by socioeconomic circumstances, a need for more energy for longer periods of time, the availability of drugs, and the desire to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Furthermore, inquisitive curiosity refers to the urge to understand new drug-related facts, which motivates young individuals to use drugs. Their initial encounter with drugs makes people feel euphoric and enjoyable, raising their level of arousal, which motivates them to continue taking drugs. Peer influence is a crucial factor in Nigerian drug addiction, particularly among young. Peer pressure has a tremendous impact on young people's socialisation as well as their societal behaviours and views. Peer group membership has a strong influence on a person's behaviour, leading them to act contrary to social norms and standards. Furthermore, peer pressure causes some youngsters to become hooked on narcotics. Many young people comply because they fear rejection by their classmates and society. Inadequate parental supervision is another factor that contributes to drug use. Many parents have ignored their duties to care for their children's development and supervision, allowing them to assume responsibility and make decisions on their own. Some parents spend little or no time with their children, while others put undue pressure on their children to perform well on tests or outperform their classmates in school, which can be detrimental to the children's well-being. As a result, many children become addicted to drugs and other substances to increase their hormone levels and allow them to remain up later at night to read and study. Another element that contributes to drug use in Nigeria is poverty. Chronic drug use caused by poverty has led to the development of personality issues in some people. Furthermore, the requirement for constant energy to function for extended periods of time has resulted in a widespread prevalence of substance abuse in Nigeria (Adekunle, 2023). Furthermore, the need to avoid the onset of withdrawal symptoms has increased the use of narcotics in society. When a medicine is abruptly discontinued, the patient experiences "withdrawal symptoms". These sensations are characterised by shaking, profuse sweating, discomfort, and worry. The drug user's inability to withstand the symptoms is the reason for their continued use. Adediran (2023) includes several negative effects associated with drug addiction and use. Physical indications of these side effects include tiredness, a chronic cough, red and glazed eyes, recurring infections, and diminished energy. Emotional signs include personality changes, rapid mood

swings, risky behaviour, poor judgement, and impatience. Drug abuse can manifest as tardiness, disciplinary issues, poor academic performance, and a negative attitude in the classroom. Drug abuse can cause social problems such as upsetting people, generating useless conflicts, and having a negative attitude. Finally, drug use can produce problems in families by producing arguments, acting erratically, disregarding rules, concealing, and withdrawing from family activities. The dangers of drug addiction include fatal overdoses and other undesirable consequences. Drug abuse can cause a variety of health issues, including mental illness, liver or renal failure, and brain damage. Drug use also has legal consequences, including the possibility of jail time (for rape, cultism, and armed robbery), financial penalties, and the formation of a criminal record (Adediran, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

For data obtained through the library research method, this study employs an exploratory strategy that utilizes secondary sources. We obtained information about the issue by using academic journals, books, newspapers, magazines, seminar and conference papers, and internet sites.

Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse and drug addiction are currently serious problems in Nigeria. A sizable portion of the youth population smokes marijuana (in Colorado and Arizona), inhales gas from balloons (Laughing Gas), eats shish kabobs, and takes hard narcotics such as methamphetamine, cocaine, Molly, and Tramadol. Users of drugs suffer from tremendous emotional discomfort, which has a negative impact on them and makes them less acceptable in a civilized culture. Indeed, Colorado drugs, often known as "spice" or synthetic cannabinoids, have been more popular among Nigerian teens in recent years. The goal of this research is to shed light on media activities targeted at reducing drug misuse and marijuana use among Nigerian youth.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

The key terms were defined for easy understanding:

Media: Here, it refers to all channels (Radio, television, social media, newspapers, magazines and traditional communication) of communication in order to reach large number of people.

Campaign: This refers to the various techniques employed by the media to carry out its responsibility of preventing drug abuse, such as the preparation of conferences, workshops, and programs.

Drug: The neurological system is stimulated and addictive by these drugs, which include heroin, cocaine, and alcohol.

Abuse: This refers to the excessive or inappropriate use of narcotics such as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol without the approval of a doctor or the advice of health professionals.

Colorado: It is a street lingo for synthetic cannabinoids, Colorado is a trending cocktail of psychotropic drugs commonly used by many Nigerians especially youths.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study confirms the high incidence of drug misuse among teenagers and young adults in Nigeria. This study also looked at the origins and consequences of substance abuse. This essay also examined the significance of media coverage of the drug war. The media is one effective tool for reducing drug use. The media has the ability to efficiently reach a large range of people and influence public opinion. According to the paper, media campaigns in Nigeria against drug addiction and juvenile drug use should focus on pushing for legislative changes and providing forums for interested parties to exchange techniques for reducing drug misuse.

Recommendation

To address the increased use of drugs or drug misuse, particularly among kids in Colorado, a multifaceted approach is required, which includes:

1. The government and the media should enhance public knowledge of the dangers and risks of synthetic cannabinoids. Educational initiatives targeting schools, communities, and parents can provide factual information and debunk misconceptions regarding these medications.
2. There should be the installation of tougher laws and enforcement measures to curb the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of Colorado drug drugs. Collaboration between law enforcement agencies, healthcare specialists, and lawmakers can help build a comprehensive framework to tackle the issue efficiently.
3. The government should provide accessible and inexpensive mental health care. It is crucial to address the underlying causes contributing to Colorado drug use.
4. The mass media campaign against drug misuse should also be extended to primary and secondary schools; it should start early in order to curtail the danger early.
5. Counselling, therapy, and support groups can aid Nigerian youth in overcoming addiction and managing the mental health difficulties connected with substance usage. Investing in rehabilitation clinics and treatment programmes specifically developed for synthetic cannabinoid addiction can also provide a pathway to recovery for affected individuals.
6. There should be more instructional shows displayed on television or broadcast on the radio to inform people more about drug usage.

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