

The Role of Social Media in the Prevalence of Substance Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State

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Abstract: This study investigated the role of social media in reducing the prevalence of substance abuse among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State. This was necessitated by the observed growing influence of social media on the substance use among teenagers in the study area. The descriptive type of research design was used for the study. A total of 360 persons were included in the sample. The technique used was simple random sampling. To test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, the data obtained from the administered questionnaire was analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis. It was found that there was significant relationship between social media and substance use; there was significant influence of social media on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use; there was significant in creating awareness of health implications of substance use; there was significant influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use and finally, social media significantly helped to increase the effectiveness of substance use prevention among secondary school students in the study area. It was therefore recommended that information, programmes and podcasts that dissuades teenagers and adolescents from substance abuse should be made to go viral on social media and any information on substance abuse to be passed across to teenagers and adolescents in the society should be made through social media platforms as a larger percentage of teenagers are social media users.

Keywords: Adolescents, Social Media, Substance Abuse, Teenagers

1. Introduction

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Social media has now so much permeated students lives to the extent that it is now a medium of interacting which has redirected students views, behaviours and involvement in some activities indicative of addiction. [18]. Researches proved that students of social media concerning substance use tends towards positive adoption and students were actively hailed for showing such displays [6]. Studies analyzing alcohol, marijuana and other substance issues on Twitter are seen to

support the use of these substances.

Social media is an avenue to get the support of young adults. Recent studies found that the media are used by adolescents to publicize the use of drugs and alcohol. It is, therefore, expedient that the same tools should be employed to dissuade the taking of drugs and alcohol to enhance recovery [19]. Energy to keep teens off drugs is still on, but recent improvement in ICT has provided new impediments for those working on keeping adolescents off drugs. Technological advancements have provided a completely different world for young adults to incite others into drugs and alcohol use [1].

Young adolescents of today are so found of social media like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Whatsapp, Twitter and

several others in which users can easily upload materials thereby generating communication and conversation among users [13].

Social media is not only to push young adolescents to substance use, it provides a channel for virtual drug dealers [20]. This means that dealing in drugs and alcohol through social media, whereby there is a connection between acquaintances or an unknown person to initiate a drug deal. Also, this may require young adolescents to purchase drugs virtually usually through the social media [5]. Users now produce content and user collaboration is applicable to drug and alcohol use (eg, marijuana misuse) are rampant and are quickly evolving types of communication through social media sites [10]. Social media facts on this topic provide a scale of knowledge and perception on the movement of problematic substance use and immediate appropriate dangers as well as the capability to determine the combined human conduct of an exceptionally huge community of interest [7]. Social media facts entails huge computerized data backing that hold occurrence that manifest without human input picked from social media sites and that can be used in statistical or adatable solutions to bring out facts-propelled conclusions. Apart from people converging and speaking the same opinions, inquiry and thinking about how fall outs on networking sites, but also adolescents with dependence difficulty look for help through people sharing same dependence difficulty via sites and broadcasts found on social media [2].

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Social media like Facebook, Zoom, Whatsapp, Telegram, Instagram, Linkedin and Twitter are now avenues of getting information and have become essential tools in assisting researchers in identifying issues and disseminating information concerning addictive substances such as marijuana, alcohol, drugs and so on. Social media interactions can help researchers understand and have an inkling into methods of use, fallouts and behaviours linked to substance use. Social media provides platforms essential in disseminating messages about health. Social media will therefore assist in identifying, preventing and curing addiction of substance use.

It was on this view that the researcher investigated the role of social media in reducing the occurrence of substance abuse among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State.

1.2. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses postulated for the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho¹ There is no significant relationship between social media and substance use among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State.

Ho² There is no significant influence of social media sensitizing the student about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of

Ekiti State.

Ho³ There is no significant influence of social media in creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State.

Ho⁴ There is no significant influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State.

Ho⁵ Social media will not significantly help to prevent substance use among secondary school students in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State.

1.3. Design of the Study

The research design for this study was the descriptive design of survey. This type of research design enhances data collection to be done in a structured process. Descriptive research is a statement of affairs as they are at present with the researcher having no control over variable.

1.4. Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of students in the public secondary schools in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. There are ten (10) public secondary schools in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti state. The total population of secondary school students in public secondary schools in Ikere local government were eight thousand three hundred and forty-six (8,346) (Source: Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, 2021). All students in the senior secondary classes were considered for this study. Both male and female students were considered as population target for the study.

The respondents were students from senior secondary schools in Ikere local government area of Ekiti State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select six (6) coeducational secondary schools out of ten (10) public senior secondary schools in the local government area. Simple random sampling technique was used to select sixty (60) respondents from each secondary school. The selection cut across both male and female students from SS I to SS III.

2. Procedure

The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researcher. It contained 35 items which was designed in line with the hypotheses formulated for the study. With each of the variables generating four optional items, the questionnaire used Yes or No format for responses.

In order to validate the instrument for this study, a draft of the questionnaire was presented two experts in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti in order to establish face and content validity. Based on the suggestions that were made by these experts, items were restructured where necessary.

Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using split half method. One of the schools that did not form part of the study was used. Thirty (30) students were randomly selected. The instrument was administered to the selected respondents, and two sets of data will be generated from the split. The data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Spearman Brown's formular. The coefficient (r) of 0.71 was obtained.

Inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression was used to

test the hypotheses postulated at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

3.1. Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant relationship between social media and substance use among secondary school students in the study area.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation of social media and substance use among secondary school students.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	p
Social media	370	18.61	5.251	0.647*	0.000
Substance use	370	6.62	1.266		

*p<0.05

Table 1 showed that the computed r value (0.647) was significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there was significant relationship between social media and substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The relationship between social media and substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti

State is moderate and statistically significant in a positive direction.

3.2. Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant influence of social media sensitizing the student about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in the study area.

Table 2. Regression analysis showing the influence of social media on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	2.774	1.160		2.391	.017
Social media	.614	.060	.471	10.234	.000

Multiple R=0.471, Multiple R²=0.222, Adjusted R²=0.219, F_{1,368}=104.728

*p<0.05

The result on table 2 showed that there was significant influence of social media on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State (F_{1,368}=104.728, p<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected. The result showed that there was significant positive multiple correlation between the predictors variable (social media platform) and sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State (R=0.471, p<0.05). This implied that the predictor variable was a factor that can exert influence on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The coefficient of determination

(R²=0.222) indicated that the variable of social media platform accounted for about 22.2% of the observed variance in sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State while the remaining 77.8% unexplained variance was largely due to other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term.

3.3. Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant influence of social media in creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in the study area.

Table 3. Regression analysis showing the influence of social media in creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	2.946	1.050		2.807	.005
Social media	.676	.054	.545	12.454	.000

Multiple R=0.545, Multiple R²=0.297, Adjusted R²=0.295, F_{1,368}=155.103

*p<0.05

Table 3 indicated that there was significant influence of social media in creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State ($F_{1,368}=155.105$, $p<0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. The result showed that there was significant positive multiple correlation between the predictors variable (social media platform) and creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State ($R=0.545$, $p<0.05$). This implied that the predictor variable was a factor that can exert influence on creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The coefficient of determination

($R^2=0.297$) indicated that the variable of social media platform accounted for about 29.7% of the observed variance in the creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State while the remaining 70.3% unexplained variance can be attributed largely to other factors outside the regression model other than the social media platform.

3.4. Hypothesis 4

There will be no significant influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use among secondary school students in the study area.

Table 4. Regression analysis showing the influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use among secondary school students.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.508	.933		.544	.587
Social media	.850	.048	.676	17.606	.000
Multiple R=0.676, Multiple R ² =0.457, Adjusted R ² =0.456, $F_{1,368}=309.986$					

* $p<0.05$

Table 4 indicated that there was significant influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State ($F_{1,368}=309.986$, $p<0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. The result showed that there was significant positive multiple correlation between the predictor variable (information gained on social media) and eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State ($R=0.676$, $p<0.05$). This implied that the predictor variable was a factor that can exert influence on eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.457$) indicated that the

variable of information gained on social media explained for about 45.7% of the observed variance in the eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State while the remaining 54.3% unexplained variance can be attributed largely to other factors outside the regression model other than the information gained on social media.

3.5. Hypothesis 5

Social media will not significantly help to prevent substance use among secondary school students in the study area.

Table 5. Regression analysis showing the influence of social media in preventing substance use among secondary school students.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	-.826	.745		-1.109	.268
Social media	.963	.039	.793	24.987	.000
Multiple R=0.793, Multiple R ² =0.629, Adjusted R ² =0.628, $F_{1,368}=624.340$					

* $p<0.05$

Table 5 showed that social media significantly helped to prevent substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State ($F_{1,396}=624.340$, $p<0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. The result showed that there was significant positive multiple correlation between the predictors variable (social media platform) and increase prevention of substance use ($R=0.793$, $p<0.05$). This implied that the predictor variable was a factor that can exert influence prevention of substance use. The coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.629$) indicated that the variable of social media platform accounted for about 62.9% of the observed variance in the increased effectiveness of substance use

prevention while the remaining 37.1% unexplained variance can be attributed largely to other factors outside the regression model other than the social media.

4. Discussions

Hypothesis 1 which stated that there will be no relationship between social media and substance use among secondary school students in the study area was rejected. The study was supported by the statement of [12] that Young people experimenting with drugs and alcohol is nothing new; nevertheless, social networking sites are

exposing adolescents to drugs in new and dangerous ways. Teens are more vulnerable to the consequences of what they see on social media because they are more receptive to peer pressure and peer influences. Sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat provide an environment where kids are exposed to famous and normal people alike engaging in risky behaviours involving drugs and alcohol. Public health officials are concerned about the use and abuse of substances by young adolescents. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to the effects of social media and digital communication in general because they are early adopters, almost ubiquitous users, and very subject to peer pressure [14].

Hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be no significant influence of social media on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State was rejected. This finding was supported by the affirmation of [16] that Social media offers the ability to close significant gaps in our present understanding of cigarette, alcohol, and drug use, as well as improve the efficacy of substance misuse interventions [16]. User-generated social media interactions, for example, can disclose vital information about substance usage habits and other social aspects. By delivering digitally mediated solutions, social media platforms have the potential to improve the success of substance use prevention and treatment programs.

In support of the findings, Evans, W. D. et al. [9] stated that new technologies, such as the Internet, social media, and mobile phones, have enormous potential to increase the reach and efficacy of public health initiatives. As noted, some prevention programmes have used social media such as Facebook as delivery channel and effort to create a social community of youth sharing narratives related to the avoidance of marijuana [3]. Interactive platforms like Facebook and Twitter have become key sources of public knowledge, and they can help researchers uncover widespread attitudes and beliefs regarding alcohol, cigarettes, and other addictive substances and communicate accurate information to the public [18].

Hypothesis 3 which stated that there will be no significant influence of social media in creating awareness of health implications of substance use among secondary school students in the study Area of Ekiti State was rejected. The result of the finding was supported by the opinion of [11] that Most teenagers use social media to extend friendships formed in other settings, such as school, religious organizations, sports, and other local activities. Teens can use social networking sites to feel more connected to one another and learn from one another [11]. In a vital developmental period, teens go to social networks for information and advice, with 57 percent of teen social networkers saying they seek counsel from their online social network [19]. Seventeen percent of teenagers who use the internet say they use it to research health issues that are not easy to share with others, such as drug use and sexual health [13].

Hypothesis 4 which stated that there is no significant

influence of information gained on social media in eradicating substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State was rejected. The result of the finding was complimented by the assertion of [8] that Media campaigns as a drug prevention intervention are quite widespread, although they are not without controversy. Both policy makers and practitioners have questioned whether such efforts are useful in reducing drug use among young people, and it is possible that they are ineffective. Social media campaigns in public health disseminate information about health, or threats to it, in order to persuade people to adopt behavioural changes [8]. This can be implemented via social media such as as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many applications such as online television.

Hypothesis 5, which stated that social media would not significantly help to increase the effectiveness of substance use prevention among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State was rejected. The result of the finding was supported by [16] that social media platforms also have the potential to promote the prevention of substance use and treatment efforts by providing technologically mediated solutions. Because of the ubiquity and widespread use of social media, numerous questions about the intersection of social media and substance use and abuse must be addressed, as social media was replete with videos of teenagers and adolescents engaging in individual and group drug abuse, such as smoking and alcohol consumption.

5. Conclusions

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

Social media influences substance use. Social media has an influence on sensitizing the students about the risk of substance use as well as creating awareness of the health implications of substance use. The information gained on social media helps in eradicating substance use and that social media helped to prevent substance use among secondary school students in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions drawn from the findings:

- 1) Information, programmes and podcasts that dissuades adolescents and teenagers from substance abuse should be made to go viral on social media. Teenagers should be trained to be responsible in the use of social media such as not recording themselves while abusing substances and should not upload such on the internet. This will assist in preventing drug and substance abuse such that will enhance healthy living.
- 2) Teachers, Ministries of Education, Health, Youth and Sports should make use of social media platforms in

communicating with secondary school students on risks involved in substance abuse such as accident, trauma, mental health derailment and so on.

- 3) Health institutions should make use of social media platforms and the internet in communicating to secondary school students as most people are rapidly inclined to the use of social media and the internet on the possible effects of substance abuse on the health and wellbeing of an individual. Government and Health Bodies should enforce law and policies that will ban substance abuse and outlaw its promotion on social media.
- 4) Teenagers should always consider any legitimate information from reliable sources such as Ministry of Health, Registered Non-Governmental Health Agencies, Health Organizations and so on as shared on social media platforms as valid and useful to their wellbeing.
- 5) Information to be passed across to teenagers and adolescents on substance abuse in the society should be made through social media platforms as the larger percentage teenagers and adolescents are social media users.

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