

ANALYSIS OF DAILY SUN, GUARDIAN AND VANGUARD NEWSPAPERS COVERAGE OF METHAMPHETAMINE CONSUMPTION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS



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Abstract

Consumption of Methamphetamine by the Nigerian youth is a serious danger to the lives of consumers as well as the entire society. Its economic, health and social implications are generally negative to the society at large. As partners in social rehabilitation and attitude change advocate, the news media are expected to devote space to educate the masses on the dangers of consumption of Methamphetamine and other related substances. In line with the contributions of the press for a drug free society, this study examined the newspaper coverage of Methamphetamine consumption among youths with a view to ascertaining the dominant implication and control measure of Methamphetamine consumption presented to the masses by the select newspapers within the period of six months. The study was based on the social responsibility and agenda setting theories of the press. Findings of this content analytical study of Daily Sun, Guardian and Vanguard newspapers revealed that the dominant implication of Methamphetamine consumption presented in the select newspapers was the health implication while the major control measure was parental upbringing and self-control. Findings also revealed that relative source of news dominated the coverage instead of expert source whereas the major cause of Methamphetamine production, importation and distribution which is drug regulation failure was downplayed in the media reports. It was recommended that the news media should deal more with expert sources rather than family and relative source. As well, the study recommended that rather than blaming the parents and the victims, the media should look at institutional failure that led to production, importation and distribution of Methamphetamine in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Methamphetamine, health implication, Newspapers, coverage, institutional failure*

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Introduction

The quest for money making among the youth around the globe has led to the manufacturing and consumption of different kinds of hard drugs among youths. The consumption of these harmful substances could be traced to peer pressure and the desire to belong among the happening guys in the society. Unfortunately, because the manufacturers and distributors see their harmful deals in the society as a business, they lack the moral thought to examine the harmful effects of these substances to the society. Consequently, majority of those who have been influenced into taking these substances act in total ignorance of the future health implications of what they take. As a result of this ignorance, the number of consumers continues to increase by the day and multiply by the week, thereby, unleashing significant economic and health damages.

Globally, abuse of substances has formed major source of concern among several governments if not all governments around the world. In their views about the global challenge posed to government around the world by drug abuse, Jatau, Sha'aban, Gulma, Shitu, Khalid Isa, Wada & Mustapha (2021) argued that drug abuse is drastically emerging as a global public health issue. The implication of the position held in this study is that since drug abuse has assumed this dimension, efforts should be intensified from all angles including the media to see if the level of ignorance of the consumers can be reawakened to see the dangers associated with the actions they take. By August 09, 2021, 40 percent of Nigerian youths are confirmed abusers of different harmful drugs.

The recent world drug report of 2023 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) revealed that the population of drug abusers is 39.5 million (6.7%) of the global people within 15 and 64 years. This is 45 percent increase from what obtains in the last decade. The implication of this is that the number of youths who are drug-dependent has continued to increase yearly. Drug use in Africa is very rampant among the youths in the region. This was captured in the UNODC reports of 2023 where the United Nations concluded that 70 percent of the population receiving drug treatments in Africa, are youths. Considering the population of Nigeria and its socio-economic state, the population of the above population are Nigerians.

Studies like Dumbili, (2020a); Nelson, (2021) have shown that drug use for non-medical purposes among Nigerian youth is on the increase in the recent past. Specifically, since the production and distribution of the methamphetamine in the country, Nigerian youths have added another deadly illicit drug to their usual non-medical use of prescribed drugs such as tramadol and codeine (Dumbili, 2020b). Considering the rate at which Nigerian youths engage in illicit and non-medical drug use, Dumbili and Ebuenyi (2022) argue that drug use has become a serious public health problem in the 21st century Nigeria. As part of their unruly

behaviours, Nigerian youths also make use of methamphetamine, a substance that has the capacity of making consumers lose their sense and act strange (Shehu and Rao, 2020c). Methamphetamine abuse has encouraged organized crimes, illicit financial flows, corruption, terrorism and even insurgency in Nigeria. Incidentally, the abuse of drug has sent millions of youths to an earlier grave. This was captured more clearly in World Health Organization report of 2019 cited in Oleruweju, *et al* (2022) where it was found that more than 2.6 million people within 10 to 24-years die of drug and substance abuse annually. Further, while considering the influence of drug abuse on the users, Enamhe and Maxwell-Borjor (2021) confirmed that abuse of illicit drugs is a risky behaviour for mental health problems among the users. According to series of media reports, (News Agency of Nigeria, 2021; Njoku, Odita & Thomas-Odia, 2021; Ulasi, 2021), a reasonable number of Nigerian citizens especially in the South East extraction have added methamphetamine to their drug consumption collection. The rate of its consumption has led to several cases of drug use disorder in the country. Hence, it is no longer news that drug use disorder has ruined the lives of several drug addicts around the globe.

Responding to the gross damage that drug abuse cause to the society, the global community has initiated different efforts to procure measures to manage drug use among the youth. Among several other measures set out to tackle drug abuse globally is the establishment of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking through resolution 42/112 of December 7th 1987 (United Nations, 2019). The major aim of this initiative is to raise awareness about the significance of treating individuals who use drugs with respect and empathy. The day is globally marked and observed on 26th June every year with the intention of strengthening action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse (UNODC, 2023).

On this day yearly, emphasizes are placed on the provision of evidence-based, voluntary services to all while offering alternatives to punishment. The day also focuses on prioritizing prevention and approaching the issue with compassion. Additionally, it aims to address and combat the stigma and discrimination faced by people who use drugs, promoting language and attitudes that are respectful and non-judgmental (UNODC, 2023).

In Nigeria particularly, the government of the federation has in an effort to combat all kinds of drug importation, manufacturing and consumption, established the NDLEA by the promulgation of decree no. 48 of 29th December, 1989, corroborated by an act of parliament whose major target was aimed at exterminating illicit drug trafficking and consumption in Nigeria. Again, the

government established NAFDAC through Decree 15 of 1993. This establishment was crowned in 2004 through National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Act Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

Unfortunately, despite all these regulatory laws in the country, the fight against drug use resist virtually all efforts towards its control and continues to spread wider by the day. According to UNODC (2023), incessant record of illicit drug supply and increasingly agile trafficking networks are compounding intersecting global crises and challenging health services and law enforcement responses. This is because different drug dealers and suppliers have seen drug distribution as their business and source of income and therefore, decided to even wage war with every effort initiated by the government to tackle drug use among the ignorant youths who consume everything they see without recourse to the implication on their health condition. They form gangs and fight against government officers and threaten them without any protection from the security agencies. Today, the country is at the cross road with its youth captured in the web of drug traffickers who conquer government regulatory and security networks to infiltrate their substances for financial gains.

Methamphetamine consumption has increased drastically and is today a rampant occurrence leading to different social ills in the country. This is the challenge that negatively influences the economic, social and security life of the people. In this regard, it requires media attention considering their role in the society. The role of the media in engaging collective interest was captured in Ikegbunam and Ezekwelu (2023) where they argued that the role of the media in achieving positive collective goal has been a culture that earned the Nigerian media organisations the marks they enjoy in the country. Relying on the above views by Ikegbunam and Ezekwelu (2023) it is obvious that media in the country watch the youth while they abuse methamphetamine and as well see the impact on their health and the larger society. In the interest of humanitarian service, it is expected that the Nigerian media issue reports on the damages that are associated with the consumption of Methamphetamine by the youth as a means to educate and enlighten future potential methamphetamine consumers in order to save the society from harmful effect of drug abuse. Whether the newspapers in this country had issued reports on the rate of spread of methamphetamine and its consumption cannot be verified with an empirical study of this nature. It was in line with the position of the last statement that this study is set to evaluate select daily's report on the consumption of meth in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

A cursory look at the rate at which the Nigerian youth indulge in drug abuse shows that the act of abusing drugs of different kinds especially

methamphetamine has reached an epidemic level in Nigeria. According to Agency Report (2021), NDLEA made it clear that statistics of hard drug consumers in Nigeria is worrisome as over 40 percent of Nigerians within 25-64 years are into it. Considering the health, security and economic implications of drug abuse, making concerted efforts to curtail the spread of methamphetamine use among youths becomes a matter of serious and urgent concerns. With the consumption of methamphetamine, the youth get exposed to some negative behaviours that pose economic, security and health threats to the society and their home towns specifically. Behaviours like stealing and selling of stolen goods, beating of parents or beheading relatives, raping of young girls and banditry are associated with methamphetamine consumption. One of the means through which the consumption of this deadly drug that has hit the youth in the country can be combated is through the media. By obligation, it is the duty of the media to embark on and investigate methamphetamine consumption, bring it to disrepute through exposing the masses to the dangers associated with it by educating and enlightening the youth on the negative impact of methamphetamine consumption for a better society. It is on the need to ascertain how the newspapers tried to serve humanity by getting the Nigerian youth and the entire society out of the dangers of the associated risk behaviours accompanying methamphetamine consumption, that this study was initiated.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the frequency of select newspaper coverage of methamphetamine consumption among the youth?
2. What is the dominant implication of methamphetamine consumption reported in the select newspapers?
3. What is dominant measure advanced by select newspapers for the control of methamphetamine consumption among the youth in Nigeria?
4. What is the dominant source of newspaper coverage of methamphetamine consumption among the youth in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

In a democracy, the press is an integral part of the instruments that are expected to defend the masses' interest and hold the government accountable to the citizens. In this regard, this study is important to media practitioners and their institutions, the government itself, the citizens and the academia. To the media practitioners and institutions in Nigeria, this study is a pointer to failure in service delivery which makes journalism a profession. The profession of journalism is more on its humanitarian function to the weak, the less privileged and neglected population

who deserve the care that usually elude them for their total lack of strength to speak for themselves. To the government, this study is an appeal to remember that social contract places upon the machinery of the government to take care of the citizens who have given their mandate to them. In the interest of posterity, governments in Nigeria need to pause their movement and self-examine their administration of social services especially in the health sector to know if what they are doing is considerable. To the masses, this study is a wakeup call to duty. The duty of self-examination aimed at finding out whether they are part of the decay in health sector. It is a call for dinner reflection with emphasis to attitude change in the areas that have failed to do well. This is because there can be no government without the people. Should the Nigerian citizens realize themselves and ask some of the critical questions that sustain the shortage of their life expectancy in this country, they would change. To the academia, this study is a plus to the teaming literature of academic investigations into the tripartite relationship between the media, the government and the poor masses.

Scope of the Study

This study was based on the contents of *Daily Sun*, *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers published within January to June, 2023. The target of the study is to look at the frequency of coverage, the dominant implication of meth consumption as reported in the select newspapers, the correctional measures advocated as well as the major source of information on the newspaper coverage of meth consumption in Nigeria. The study did not cover other reports on any other kind of drug being abused among the youths. As well, the study did not cover any report on methamphetamine consumption from any other newspaper other than the three select newspapers mentioned above. In the same manner any report above or beyond the six-month coverage span of this study is not covered in the study. On the other hand, apart from the select newspapers published from 1st January, 2023 to 30th June, 2023, no other editions of the select newspapers were covered.

Social Responsibility Theory

Social responsibility theory is an offshoot of the libertarian ideology that places serious noble responsibility of serving the people in the press. While citing John Milton (1644), Uzochukwu and Ikegbunam (2022) traced the origin of social responsibility to the inventive thinking and ideas of Political free thinkers, the proponents of libertarian ideas who introduced and nurtured a democratic leadership spirit that is supposed to guide every sane society. The authors further stated that social responsibility theory was brought into academic use by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. In the views of Kobiruzaman (2021), the target of

social responsibility theory was to promote press freedom with little or no censorship. According to Ikegbunam and Agudoso (2020) the mainstay of the theory is improvement in objectivity in news coverage and display of sincere responsibility in interpretation of events to the people in the society where the media serve. Through frequently exposing the masses to the implications of methamphetamine consumption, the media in Nigeria can draw attention to the need to stay away from all the factors that serve the humanity which is one of the major functions of the press. By presenting the duties of various stakeholders in the management and control of methamphetamine consumption, the media will be sensitizing the various stakeholders of the roles and responsibilities in setting the society free from drug abuse and its impending disorders. In executing this job diligently, the media will place every stakeholder on their toes as to the expected roles towards a drug free society.

Relying on the above premise, it is the duty of the media to help the *helpless* against all forms of danger. Victims of methamphetamine consumption are set of helpless people whose lives are largely dependent on their rehabilitation. Importantly, the survival of any rehabilitation effort will start with dissemination of important health information and awareness creation aimed at getting the victims to see the implications of their attitudes themselves. According to Ikegbunam and Ezekwelu (2023), the media by virtue of their social responsibility roles are expected to engage in actions that can promote humanitarian need by issuing reports that have elements of general interest in them.

Hence, it is expected that the media in Nigeria will explore the opportunity presented to them by frequent arrest and general beating of methamphetamine consumers by local vigilantes to make impactful contribution to the control of methamphetamine consumption in Nigeria. Considering that it is the duty of the media to educate the people and call the attention of the necessary stakeholders to the damage that methamphetamine consumption has caused and is still causing to the society, this theory was considered very apt in providing a template for the understanding of this study.

Empirical review

In a recent study, Ezegwu, Obichili, Ono, and Ezeji, (2023) examined newspaper framing of methamphetamine (MkpuruMmiri) campaign in select newspapers in Nigeria. The study used content analysis research method to examine if the newspapers gave prominent coverage to the campaigns against methamphetamine and its consumption as well as the tone of the messages and major source of information used in the coverage of the campaigns. Relying on the provision of the framing theory, the study found that the major media source of information in

the coverage of Methamphetamine campaign was vigilante officials. It was recommended that newspapers should as well explore the sources of experts and regulatory agencies to encourage robust reports on the issue. This study is related to the current study because they are both premised on the newspaper coverage of methamphetamine. However, the study differs from the current one in the target objective. While the previous study looked at the tone of the contents and forms of news coverage, the current study is interested in the frequency of coverage, the dominant implication of methamphetamine and consumption represented in the media and the remedial measures suggested for the control of the challenge.

Relying on the rampant nature of substance abuse and its resistance to control in Nigeria, Alhassan (2023) conducted theoretical and conceptual analyses of the causes and effects of illegal drugs and its impacts on the present generation in Nigeria. The study which was based on review of literature examined the causes and effect of drug and substance abuse on the youth of the country. Findings revealed that peer pressure, disappointment, depression and frustration lead to drug abuse among youths which translate to physical, mental-health challenges and high crime rate in the society. It is therefore, recommended that parents and guardians stop being conservative but brace up to face the challenge of drug abuse while federal government should strengthen the laws against abusers, producers and traffickers of illegal drugs and substances. This study is related to the current one in the sense that it is on drug abuse and its influence on the youth. On the other hand, this study is based on the causes of drug abuse and its effect while the current one is an evaluation of the role played by the newspapers in the fight against meth consumption in Nigeria. Moreover, while the previous study is a literature study, the current one is an empirical study.

Kwokori, Ogbonna and Anatoh (2023) adopted the narrative review of literature in studying the socioeconomic impacts of drug and substance abuse on secondary school students and studies by researchers in Nigeria. The specific target objective of the study is to narratively review studies on the socioeconomic impacts of drug and substance abuse on secondary school students and studies by researchers in Nigeria. Methods: The study was a narrative review of the literature covering the socioeconomic impacts of drug and substance abuse on secondary school students in Nigeria from 1980 to 2023. Data were extracted and summarized with descriptive statistics. Findings demonstrated that available studies done on the impacts of drug and substance abuse focused more on the social impacts, with little or no attention to the economic effect. It was recommended that future studies should focus on the economic implications of the social effects of drug and substance abuse on secondary school students in Nigeria. This study relates to the current one considering the involvement of drug and economic implication which forms the objective of the current one. However,

while the previous study is premised on literature research, the current one is interrogating the newspapers and what they have done in the wave of rising drug abuse in the society.

Considering the effect of harmful drug use among youths, Okoh, Okoh, and Adeluju (2023) engaged in a study on the cause and effect of substance abuse among youths using literature review approach. The study found that curiosity, ignorance, frustration, lack of proper counseling or guidance, depression and not following the physician's prescription have all been indicted as possible factors that could potentially predispose to an abuse. It was concluded that health challenges, security threat to the community and economic wastes are some of the identifiable impacts of substance abuse among youths. The study also concluded that fighting drug abuse is all round war that can only be successful if combated from all angles such as the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders like the Government, Drug Control Agencies, Community, traditional media, Schools and the family. It was recommended that educational curriculum should be designed on drug education and active implementation of drug laws to combat the menace. This study is related to the current one in the sense that they both looked at the harmful effect of drug. However, while the previous study is interested in the causes and effect of drug abuse, the current one is interested in what the newspapers have done to encourage the fight against drug abuse which has cost much to humanity in recent time.

Similarly, Okoye, Agbim, Ohaji, Etumnu, Okodogbe, and Chimeremeze (2022) adopted the survey research method in investigating the effectiveness of mass media in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Imo State. Relying on the proposition of the theory of reasoned action, it was found that there is a moderate level of awareness on media campaigns against illicit drug use among respondents. It was also found that mass media efforts have not been effective in reducing the threat of drug abuse among undergraduates in Imo State's tertiary institutions. It was concluded that mass media campaigns are ineffective because the campaigns have not succeeded in curbing the menace considering the fact that students continue to engage in it. The researchers recommended that the media should intensify their publicity and commitment to drug abuse in order to raise public awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in the society. It was also suggested that mass media should be more creative in their contents and in some cases, they should employ persuasive communication to be able to influence a good number of youths positively and make them shun drug abuse. This study is related to the current study in area of use of media to combat drug use among youths in Nigeria. However, while the current study is based on content analysis, the previous one was based on survey with a target to what media campaigns have done in the fight against drug abuse.

Drawing from the above empirical literature review, it is clear that there are insufficient studies on newspaper coverage of methamphetamine consumption among youths in Nigeria. Majority of the studies reviewed are literature-based studies with only one on the function of the newspapers. The implication of this is that the current study is needed to call out the newspapers on the fight against methamphetamine consumption among the youth.

Method of study

By its nature and design, this study adopted the content analysis research method in examining how the select newspapers reported incidences of methamphetamine consumption among youths in the country. The newspapers under study include the *Daily Sun*, *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The choice of these newspapers was based on their degree of circulation and reach in the country. It was also based on their accessibility to the researchers. The period of the study was six months ranging from January to June, 2023. The choice of the period was because the rate at which cases of methamphetamine consumption arise in the localities in the country is high following the massive distribution of the substance in the society. Cases of beaten up of parents and selling of some properties belonging to family and relatives by the methamphetamine consumers liter everywhere in the localities. The period also characterized general beating of consumers by local vigilante operatives in different localities. The researchers used the composite week sampling technique in selecting the newspaper editions studied within the months under investigation. For the instruments of data collection used in the cause of generating data for this study, the coding system of data collection through the use of the Coding Guide and Coding Sheet were used.

Inter Coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Holsti's inter-coder reliability formula. The Holsti's inter coder reliability test was calculated thus:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(M)}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where:

M= the number of coding decisions which two coders agree.

N_1 & N_2 = the number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively.

Therefore, Inter-coder reliability

$$\begin{aligned} R &= \frac{2(20)}{25+20} = \frac{40}{45} \\ &= 0.88 \end{aligned}$$

Units of Analysis and content categories

Frequency of coverage: This is the number of times of events concerning youths' abuse of methamphetamine in the select newspapers. The categories examined here are the number of stories on methamphetamine stories covered per newspaper. The rating included: one story, two stories, three stories and 4 stories. 1 is rated at very low frequent coverage, 2 is low frequency of coverage and 3 at frequently covered whereas 4 stories mean very frequently covered.

Dominant implication: Consumption of methamphetamine among youths has different implications to the society. Among the implications of this bad drug habit is security implications, health implication, economic implication and moral implication. Stories that exposed readers to the violent actions such as rape, killing of relative or neighbor, beating others and setting property ablaze were classified as **security implications**. Stories revealing how the drug cause madness, sleeplessness, short of blood or weak organs are classified as **health implications** while stories pointing at the cost of consuming the drug to the victims or his immediate family is seen as **economic implication**. Among such stories are selling of their property to buy the drug, borrowing from people to buy were all seen as the economic implications.

Remedial measures: These are the suggested means through which this challenge can be handled as advanced in the select newspapers. Among the remedial measures include control measures like parental control, government efforts, self-control, societal control and religious control. Stories that present the means of controlling methamphetamine consumption among youths on the efforts of the parents towards good upbringing of their children are regarded a **parental control measure** while those which look at its spread as a matter that requires the use of law enforcement agents to control the production, importation, distribution and consumption of methamphetamine were classified as **government control measure**. In the same manner, stories warning the youths to take care of themselves by examining who they associate with and what they do as a person are seen as a call for **self-control measure** whereas others that place the effort on community to try to educate their children are seen as **community control measure**. Finally, stories that are centered on the use of the churches and mosque or any religious institution as a means of preaching moral to youths to stop the consumption of methamphetamine are regarded as **religious control measure**.

Dominant source of stories: This means the source of media contents as published in the three newspapers. Sources here can be victim sources, expert sources, government sources, security sources and relative sources. Stories on

methamphetamine reported from a victim or consumer is regarded as the **victim sources** while those of medical doctors or other experts discussing the effect of methamphetamine consumption are regarded as **expert sources**. Stories on methamphetamine consumption that are reported from government officers or representations of the government is regarded as **government sources** while those which emanate from a relative of the victim such as their parents, brothers or sisters are classified as **relative sources**. Same is seen of stories arising from security personnel such as the police or the vigilante groups showcasing the challenges of methamphetamine were classified as **security sources**.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Average distribution of stories on methamphetamine consumption among youths covered in the select newspapers

Newspapers	Total average number of pages Per day	Average number of main/lead stories per page	Total average main stories per day	Total main stories in a month	Total main stories in 6 months	Number on methamphetamine stories	Total % covered in 6 months
Daily Sun	54	4	204	6120	36720	23	0.06
Guardian	48	4	192	5760	34560	19	0.05
Vanguard	56	3	163	5040	30240	28	0.09
Total	156	11	559	16920	101520	70	0.06

Researchers' content analysis, 2023

This table shows the general news items published by the three select newspapers in the period of six months understudy. According to the table, out of 101520 stories published, only 70 accounting for 0.06% were on methamphetamine consumption among youths. The implication of this table is that methamphetamine consumption did not command media attention among the Nigerian media organizations if compared to the rate at which the victims are arrested and collectively beaten around different communities in Nigeria.

Table 2: Frequency of newspaper coverage of methamphetamine consumption among youths

Variables	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Freq	%
1 story per paper	15	13	21	50	71.4
2 stories per paper	8	6	7	20	28.6
3 stories per paper	0	0	0	0	0
4 stories per paper	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23	19	28	70	100

Researchers' content analysis, 2023

The table shows there is very low frequency of coverage of meth consumption. This is evident in the total number of stories published in the three newspapers in six months. The implication of this is that Nigerian newspaper-readers are less likely to be exposed to the dangers of methamphetamine abuse in the society.

Table 3: The dominant implication of methamphetamine consumption depicted in the select newspapers

Frames	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Freq	%
Health implication	11	9	14	34	48.5
Security implication	4	3	4	11	15.7
Economic implication	8	7	10	25	35.7
Total	23	19	28	70	100

Researchers' contents analysis, 2023

Table 3 is a perfect demonstration of the fact that drug abuse among youths is a threat to several aspects of life with higher impact on the health of the victims.

Table 4: Suggested remedial measures of controlling methamphetamine consumption among Nigerian youths

Variables	<i>Daily sun</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Freq	%
Parental control	8	6	10	24	34.3
Government control	3	3	4	10	14.3
Self-control	5	5	7	17	24.3
Societal control	3	2	3	8	11.4
Religious control	4	3	4	11	15.7
Total	23	19	28	70	100

Researchers' content analysis, 2023

This table revealed a shocking data that shows that the Nigerian media acted as if they never knew that accessibility of methamphetamine is a threat that brought about its use among the youths by playing down on the government control measure in the issue. This is because Nigeria has drug laws and regulatory agencies whose duty is to investigate, arrest and prosecute drug offenders. Where are the drug law enforcement agencies that should regulate importation, manufacturing and distribution of drugs in Nigeria?

Table 5: The dominant source of story used in the coverage of methamphetamine consumption in the select national dailies

Frames	<i>Daily sun</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Freq	%
Victim source	2	2	3	7	10
Expert source	2	3	4	9	12.8
Relative source	7	5	8	20	28.7
Government source	6	4	6	16	22.8
Security source	6	5	7	18	25.7
Total	23	19	28	70	100

Researchers' contents analysis, 2023

The implication of the table above is that the target of the reports shifted from the sources of information that can give a better remedial outcome to the source that can only end up recounting losses.

Discussion of findings

This study was based on four research questions which include the frequency of coverage of methamphetamine among youths, the dominant implication of methamphetamine consumption covered in the select newspapers, the remedial measures suggested for its control and the source of news reports on methamphetamine consumption. In the period of 6 months, a total of 323 news items were published in the select newspapers.

On the first research question that investigated the frequency of coverage of methamphetamine consumption among youths, it was found that the select newspaper coverage of the issue does not reflect the rate at which the arrest and beating of victims occur in the local communities in the country. According to the data in table one which represented the total average number of main news items published by the select newspapers, it was discovered that of the total of 101,520 main stories published by the select newspapers, only 70 items accounting for 0.06 percent were on issues related to methamphetamine consumption. Further, on the number of stories published per day in one newspaper editions, 71.4 percent of the items published were one story per edition while the remaining 28.6 percent has two stores per edition. The implication of this is that the newspapers never gave frequent coverage to methamphetamine consumption thereby starving the masses of the needed information on the harmful effect, economic loss and security challenge that such attitudes cause the society. Denying the masses access to important information as the effect of methamphetamine consumption with its attending health and socio-economic implications is a gross violation of the social responsibility role assigned to the

press under the provision of the social responsibility theory (Ikegbunam and Ezekwelu, 2023). The act of paying deaf attention to the consumption of methamphetamine is against the provision of the social responsibility theory which according to Ikegbunam and Agudosy (2020) places the onus on the media to engage in actions that can promote humanitarian need satisfaction by issuing reports that benefit the general interest of greater number of people. Without being told, the rate at which methamphetamine consumption confronts the youth is enormous that publishing only 70 stories in six months by these newspapers can be considered negligence of the people and societal need by the media as well as a mark of irresponsibility.

The second research question investigated the dominant implication of methamphetamine consumption represented in the newspapers within the period understudy. Data from table three demonstrated that majority of the reports represented more of health and economic implications of methamphetamine consumption among the youth. This finding is a welcome development because the worse hit of this social vice is the victims' health. The research finding corroborates the assertion in Dumbili and Ebuenyi (2022) that drug use has become a serious public health problem in the 21st century Nigeria. However, it is worth noting that the security challenge that methamphetamine consumption pose is an issue that should surpass its moral implications. The dominance of health angle to the consumption of methamphetamine cannot be divorced from the fact that victims are mainly seen with mental challenges as a result of its consumption. This finding corroborates that of Shehu and Rao, (2020c) where it was argued that methamphetamine consumption has the capacity of making consumers loss their sense and act strange. Further, the finding of this study is also in tandem with that of Enamhe and Maxwell-Borjor (2021) who confirmed that abuse of illicit drugs is a risky behaviour for mental health problems among the users.

On the third research question posed to ascertain the major remedial control suggested by the newspapers, it was found that the burden of control of this illicit drug consumption was shifted to the parents. This finding is highly revealing and is completely in lack of the true expectations of the media in a matter of this nature. Issues concerning drug abuse and disorder are mainly rampant in societies because of its availability to the people. It will be important to note that before 2016, many Nigerians are not aware that a substance called methamphetamine existed talk more of what it is used for. It was the porous nature of the government institutions saddled with the responsibility of keeping the border clear of importation, manufacturing and distribution of harmful substances that led to the widespread of methamphetamine consumption. Empirical evidence as documented in Olanrewaju, Hamzat, Enya, Udekwu, Osuoya, Bamidele, Johnson, Johnson, Olanrewaju and Owolabi, (2022) has shown that availability of any

substance is what determines the rate at which such substance is abused. Relying on Ezegwu, Obichili, Ono, and Ezeji (2023), one can make bold to conclude that the spread of methamphetamine and its consumption among youths started from its introduction into Nigeria in 2016. This harmful substance crossed the border to enter the country. Media organizations and practitioners should have by virtue of the social responsibility theory look beyond the roles of the parents and victims in both upbringing and self-control but think of the means of stopping further importation of the drugs into Nigeria. The protection of the border is a duty that the parents and the individual-consumers of methamphetamine cannot do for themselves irrespective of how they need it. Playing down the part that the security architecture and the drug regulatory agencies should step up their functions but relying on parental and self-control measures never reflected the expectations of the media as a watchdog to the government.

The fourth research question looked at the sources of stories of the consumption of the drug among the select newspapers. On this question, data from table 5 show that the major source of stories on methamphetamine and its consumption is relative sources. This study disagrees with that of Ezegwu *et al* (2023) where it was found that the dominant source of newspaper coverage of methamphetamine and its consumption is the community vigilante source. The finding also disagrees with that of Apuke and Omar (2020) who found that NCDC was the major source of news stories on the coverage of covid-19 pandemic among select newspapers. The concentration of media reports on the relatives of the victims and local vigilante group reveals two things about of the media in Nigeria; one is that they try to avoid the government in their reports on issues that affect the masses, the second is that the media are not ready to engage the government on the manufacturing, importation and consumption of methamphetamine in Nigeria. This is the reason why Agudosy, Ikegbunam and Obiakor (2018) insist that the responsibility of the press is to stand for the people and ensure that the government looks after the public who they are there to serve. The implication is that the press should open up on the government by calling them out to their responsibility which is protection and provision of good life and an encouraging atmosphere that is free from drugs.

Conclusion

Relaying on the research data as seen in the tables presented, it can be seen that three newspapers published a total of 70 news stories in six months with *Vanguard* newspaper leading the table with 28 items. Based on the findings, it is concluded that although the mass media represented methamphetamine and its consumption from the health angle, they failed in their social responsibility function by playing down the role of the government in checkmating

methamphetamine consumption but shifted the responsibility to the parents and the victims.

Recommendations

Relying on the research findings from this study, the researchers recommended that:

1. The media should ensure effective and frequent coverage of methamphetamine and its consumption in such manner that will expose the various implications and harmful effect on the society, the victims, the economy and the health of the consumers.
2. While acknowledging media efforts in their representation of their contents mainly from the health implication angle, more efforts should be intensified to bring up more health implications projected from a more vulnerable perspective to increase perceived vulnerability among the youth. This will create the fear that can command attitude change.
3. Rather than shifting the responsibility of methamphetamine consumption control measure on the parental upbringing and self-control of the victims, media efforts should be shifted to weakness of government institutions which are there to regulate the importation, manufacturing and distribution of harmful substances. If access to these substances is denied through effective institutional regulation, its consumption will be checkmated automatically.
4. The media should do well to pay more attention to expert and government sources of information to their coverage of methamphetamine consumption. In doing this, they will expose the people to more scientific information on the crisis and challenge the government on the need for protection of the country from drug inversion which is dangerous to the economic and social well being of the State.
5. The government must have to reinforce the various regulatory institutions to be able to perform their functions judiciously without any fear or favour. Harmful substances are imported, manufactured and distributed in Nigeria because of poor regulatory framework and corruption in the law enforcement agencies.
6. Parents should do more to give their kids moral upbringing to distinguish between what is good and right from what is bad and harmful.
7. The Nigerian youth should examine their lives to verify whether what they consume is expected to be consumed by human beings in the manner in which they do that.

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