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**Social Media Comments on Nigeria's NDLEA War against  
Drug Abuse and Propensity to Reduce Drug Peddling**

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**Abstract**

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, terrorism, drug misuse and drug peddling are currently regarded as the three worst societal issues in the world (UNODC, 2015). In UNODC's annual National Survey report released in 2018, 14.3 million persons aged 15 to 64 were said to have taken drugs in 2017. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Nigeria has frequently updated the public on its successes in the war against drug abuse in the nation. It is necessary to find out the views of the masses on the war against drug misuse. Adopting the discourse analysis method, the following findings were discovered after analysing the comments of Facebook users on the war against drug abuse and the propensity of those comments to end drug peddling in Nigeria. Firstly, Nigerians on Facebook support and commend the NDLEA's strategies for reducing the country's epidemic of drug abuse. Second, Nigerians expect that the NDLEA's efforts to curtail drug trafficking and abuse in the nation will be aided by their Facebook remarks. The study concluded by advocating the need for social media control of explicit content that shows the usage of hard drugs. The study thus recommended that this research should be replicated using other social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok among others with NDLEA's war against drug abuse as its main focus.

**Keywords:** *Comments, Drug abuse, Drug peddling, NDLEA, Social media.*

## **Introduction**

Drug abuse has grown to be a serious issue with wide-ranging effects on the society, including crime, health care, child welfare and many other sectors. Tsai, Hsu, Chen and Kao (2019) aver that drug abuse raises the risk of continuing to engage in additional serious crimes like assault, fraud and theft compared to other major crimes. Terrorism, drug abuse and drug peddling are currently considered to be the three most significant social challenges in the world (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2015). Additionally, drug offenders typically do not proactively report their illegal activity to the authorities. Therefore, the possible concealed crime number may significantly understate the current drug problem. Recent data from the World Drug Report (2017) shows a strong association between drug-related crimes and terrorism. In Nigeria, 14.3 million persons aged 15 to 64 were reported to have taken drugs in 2017, according to the annual National Survey report published by the UNODC in 2018.

Drugs are chemical compounds. Drugs are natural compounds or pharmaceutical formulations primarily employed to alter an existing progression or state (physiological, psychological or biochemical). A substance that affects one's physical or mental health is known as a drug. In certain situations, it is legal to use alcohol and cigarettes as medications. If taken excessively, frequently, for an extended period, inappropriately coupled, etc., drugs like heroin, cocaine, etc. can be damaging to the body and the mind.

Drug abuse is a pervasive social and health problem that includes a variety of signs and problems. Drug abuse can be considered as a repeated, persistent brain illness defined by addiction to substances and usage, despite its detrimental effects. Barerah (2018) defines drug abuse as the regular use of a drug in doses or ways that are detrimental to the person or others.

Drug abuse has negative impacts on a country's growth and reputation to the extent that both national and international organisations are concerned about the epidemic's spread among teenagers in Nigeria. Rape, anarchy, mental illness, the 419 syndrome, neighbourhood miscreants (both boys and girls), juvenile violence, armed robbery and several other social ills are some of these impacts. The manufacturing, marketing and sale of chemicals that are illegal under international laws are all included in what is known as drug peddling. It may also be viewed as the distribution of illegal substances. The extent of this act, though, is unbelievable.

Nigeria, the most populated country in Africa with a projected population of over 200 million, has achieved notoriety as a centre for drug abuse and peddling, particularly among youths (Jatau et al., 2021). A person's drug use might be influenced by factors such as biological and societal factors, psychological issues, peer pressure, a family history of addiction, etc. Internationally recognised organisations, authorities and governments of many nations, as well as health communication specialists like Lawhon and Herrick (2013), Okon (2016), Ojebuyi and Salawu (2015), and other national bodies like the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in Nigeria, have increasingly focused on and actively worked to address these issues due to their social, political and economic ramifications.

A government law enforcement agency in Nigeria called the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is in charge of stopping the manufacture, sale and trafficking of dangerous drugs. According to the agency, the demand for codeine, tramadol and other prescription drugs for abuse skyrocketed in 2018, and the drug problem reached a crisis level and became extremely widespread. Ojebuyi and Salawu (2015) explain that Nigeria cannot be disregarded in the global effort to combat drug abuse due to its prominence and advantageous location in the West African sub-region. Furthermore, the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2013) states that Nigeria is a transit country for heroin and, cocaine are being exported to Europe and intermittently to the United States, and the country's level of corruption empowers crime. The report also emphasises how Nigeria's advantageous location next to key trafficking ways allows criminal groups to thrive and turn the nation into a hub of drug peddling.

Because of social media, more people are now exposed to drug abuse. Social media are interactive computer-based tools that make it easier to share knowledge, ideas and interests in particular occupations, and other kinds of expression through online groups and networks. Social media communications' strength rests in their ability to simultaneously and instantly reach a sizable, diverse audience while also having an impact on social life and the participants easily generate contents (Mohammed, 2021; Talabi et al., 2021; Talabi et al., 2022). Social media has a huge part to play in encouraging drug misuse among people, especially young people who are easily inclined by what they see on various social media platforms. Ding et al. (2016) avers that social media has grown to be a significant

information source for analysing drug usage patterns and spotting new trends in drug addiction because of its size and immediate nature.

Aribamikan (2022) discovered that people have recently exploited social media to publicise drug usage. Social media platforms like Facebook, Zoom, WhatsApp, Telegram and Twitter, among others, are now sources of information and crucial tools for helping researchers pinpoint problems and spread knowledge about drug usage. Researchers can gain insights into drug abuse-related behaviours and ways of usage by observing social media interactions. While the public has grown accustomed to government regulatory organisations regulating traditional media outlets like radio, television and print, social media has not historically received the same level of attention until recent times. Social media users are free to express their views and opinions on a variety of topics that are posted on various social media platforms. Governmental organisations are free to disseminate information about their various operations on social media, just as it allows citizens to share their opinions on societal concerns. The NDLEA posts information about the arrests that have been made and the actions that are being taken to reduce drug abuse in Nigeria when a war is being waged against drug users. Since everyone is allowed to publish his opinions on social media, it is necessary to learn the diverse views of social media users on the war being fought by the NDLEA in Nigeria. Moreover, this paper seeks to examine the propensity of these comments to reduce drug peddling in the country.

## Literature Review

### *Drug Peddling in Nigeria*

Drug peddling is harmful to the peace, law and order of the entire world community because it can range from being used in minor crimes to posing a serious threat to a country's security. *Cannabis Sativa* (Marijuana) was brought to Nigeria by soldiers who served in Burma and India during World War II (Nwannennaya & Abiodun, 2017; Nwagboso, 2016). And after experimenting with it, they found that the plant thrives in some areas in Nigeria and this prompted an increase in the cultivation of the plant. The most prominent drugs sold in Nigeria, according to Alden and Schoeman (2013), are heroin, morphine, crystal methamphetamine, cocaine and *Cannabis Sativa*, also called Indian hemp.

Over the past few decades, Nigeria has grown to be a prominent hub of drug trafficking. Nigerians are overrepresented among Africans

imprisoned for carrying drugs over international borders. Nigeria has developed over the past 10 years into one of the main transit hubs of cocaine being supplied from Latin America to Europe, according to the National Drug Control Master Plan for 2015 to 2019. Further, there is growing worry over methamphetamine manufacture and export from Nigeria. For the past 30 years, cannabis has been produced at a significant rate, with big commercial scale crops concentrated in Nigeria's south-western states.

According to the NDLEA's 2019 annual report, the agency characterised drug peddling as a growing industry and a severe problem in Nigeria that requires substantial, coordinated efforts to suppress. According to the data, 612,903.48 kilogrammes of illicit narcotics were seized in 2019 as opposed to 317,764.85 kilogrammes in 2018, a 48.15%. From the NDLEA's 2019 annual report, there were 273,249.08 kilogrammes of cannabis seized in 2018 and 602,654.49 kilogrammes in 2019. This was an increase of approximately 54.66%. In 2018, there were 43,734.64 kilos of psychotropic substances, while in 2019, there were 10,112.10 kilogrammes. In comparison to 2018, when there were 113 kilos and 23.89 kilogrammes, respectively, cocaine and heroin were 124.86 kilogrammes and 59.62 kilogrammes in 2019. The report also revealed that, compared to 2017, there was a significant rise in the amount of cannabis farmland that was ruined in 2018. In 2019, a total of 473.15 hectares of cannabis plantations were found and destroyed, compared to 3,660.64 hectares in 2018.

### **Instances of NDLEA's War against Drug Abuse in Nigeria**

The Dangerous Drugs Ordinance was passed in 1935, marking the beginning of the Nigerian government's serious war against drug trafficking. The Nigeria Police and the Board of Customs and Excise were required by this direction to combat local drug trafficking. Aikhionbare (2015) states Decree No. 20 of 1984, which eliminated capital punishment for anyone found guilty of drug trafficking, as crucial turning point in Nigeria's fight against drugs. Following loud criticism, the law was altered to allow for sentences ranging from two years to life imprisonment, depending on the crime. After Decree 48 of 1989 was approved, the Federal Military Government established the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to address the issue of drug abuse and peddling (Nwannennaya & Abiodun, 2017).

The NDLEA publicly torched 5,605.45 kg of cocaine that it had seized from traffickers in January 2009 in Badagry, Lagos. About 5,157.56 tonnes of marijuana and 376.45 kilogrammes of cocaine were burnt by the organisation in 2015 while 71.46 kilos of heroin were also burned. In Ogun State, the NDLEA discovered 6.5 tonnes of marijuana in an individual's home purported to be 114 years old in April 2009. A woman was stopped by NDLEA officers in July 2009 as she was getting ready to board a KLM flight at Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport. She later passed 42 wraps of cocaine, totalling 585 grammes. At the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, the NDLEA detained a Guinean woman carrying 6.350 kg of pure cocaine; she was en route from Brazil to Europe. The NDLEA announced, in September 2009, that a 24-acre cannabis cultivation in an Osun State forest reserve had also been destroyed (Wikiwand, 2022).

According to the NDLEA's 2013 annual report, the Agency found and destroyed 1,404.3 hectares of cannabis farms nationally in 2012, while 847.46 hectares of cannabis plantations were found and ruined in 2013. Similarly, 8,826 alleged drug offenders in total were detained in 2014. In its annual report, the organization stated that it publicly destroyed 56,729.134kg of different medicines in 2015, compared to 129,342.752kg in 2014. The agency detained 8,778 alleged drug offenders in 2015; 8,143 of them were men and 635 were women. Additionally, in 2015, 377.12 hectares of marijuana plantations were found and destroyed while 4,529.15 hectares of marijuana cultivation were eradicated in 2014.

In its annual report for 2016, the agency indicated that 8,257 suspected drug offenders were detained. A total of 267,591.49 kg was taken in 2016 and a total of 718.78 hectares of marijuana plantations were found and destroyed in 2016. In 2017, a total of 317.118 hectares of cannabis plantations were found and destroyed, and 10,009 drug suspects were detained nationally, according to the agency's 2017 annual report. A total of 9,831 drug suspects were detained around the country, according to the agency's annual report for 2018. In 2018, cannabis plantations totalling 3,660.64 hectares were found and eradicated. The yearly report for 2019 from the NDLEA states that a total of 473.15 hectares of cannabis farms were discovered and destroyed. Additionally, in 2019, the Agency detained 9,444 drug suspects around the country. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) reported in December 2022 that it had detained 18,940 people in 2021 and 2022 for various drug-related offences (Ali, 2022).

Ojebuyi and Salawu (2015) look at how the media may assist Nigerian law enforcement agents to reduce the usage and peddling of illicit drugs. The report used secondary data to illustrate the incidence of drug abuse and peddling in Nigeria. A variety of social change tactics were discussed in the study that Nigerian media outlets may employ to address drug-related vices. Catchphrases, spot announcements, terror appeal/scare tactics, and education are among the strategies proffer to combat illicit drugs. According to data made available by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2015, Nigeria is one of the most afflicted African nations, despite the fact that the problem of drug abuse is more ubiquitous in developing nations. The study suggests combating abuse and trafficking effectively on a national level. The media has to be involved, using journalists and media campaign planners to make sure the messages are verifiable, trustworthy and devoid of hyperbole. The study also emphasised the need for direct and interpersonal communication strategies as well as traditional media in the war against drug abuse and peddling in the country. In Kenya, Wakoli (2018) explores the link between teenage secondary school students' exposure to the media and drug abuse. The study found that because the media serves to link individuals, it has a significant impact on people's opinions and behaviours. The study also highlighted the importance of media dissemination and globalisation in defining and identifying the current generation of young people. Using a descriptive survey research design and 390 respondents who provided information via questionnaire and interview, the study found that adolescents in Kenya are influenced by easy access to broadcast media like television, radio, video and mobile phones, which typically have destructive content and actions. Findings from the study also showed that over 35% of Kenyan teenagers who use drugs do so as a result of what they see in the media. However, this study failed to have a theoretical framework to guide the discussion of findings.

Aribamikan (2022) conducted a descriptive study on the influence of social media on the incidence of substance misuse among secondary school students in the Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. The research's findings demonstrated a direct link between using social media and drug abuse. The study demonstrated that social media significantly affects how aware students are of the potential for substance usage. The study also showed that social media has been used to raise awareness of the negative effects that substance use can have on one's health and has aided in making substance use prevention programmes more effective among secondary school students in the study area. However, the use of social

media by key national authorities to combat drug usage was not included in this study.

Tsai et al. (2019) studied drug-related crimes in Taiwan while examining social networks. The study made the point that despite the substantial resources law enforcement agencies have committed in the hope of enhancing the prevention of drug-related crimes, the quick changes in social norms have given drug offenders room to look for ways to evade law enforcement inquiries by producing, transporting and selling drugs through different regions, making drug prevention more challenging. Through the use of social network analysis methodologies, the influence of drug-related criminal networks was investigated. Findings from the study show that criminals divide network users to thwart law enforcement initiatives. However, the findings did not offer a theoretical foundation. The study also neglected to make recommendations for ways that law enforcement organisations could block the escape routes used by drug traffickers.

## **Social Media and Drug Abuse in Nigeria**

Social media are online platforms that let users create and distribute messages to other users. People can engage by utilising a variety of message elements, including images, text, graphics, video and audio, among others, through the use of social media. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, WhatsApp and numerous other social media platforms. The fact that the media environment facilitates interconnection as easily as feasible is attested to by the majority of media researchers. Interactivity is the downfall of new media, according to Njoroge (2011), referenced by Abdul and Ajilore (2019). Social media, which is more recent (Galabi et al., 2021), has enhanced chances for marketing harmful goods and behaviours as well as for spreading them socially. According to Ojebuyi and Salawu (2015), the media has an important role to play in reducing drug consumption in Nigeria because it is a potent platform for informing the public. Additionally, Abdul and Ajilore (2019) made note of the fact that teenagers are exposed to evil individuals when they make friends on social media, which is harmful to their welfare. Because they are both early adopters and very susceptible to peer pressure, teenagers and youths are particularly sensitive to the effects of social media specifically, and digital communication at large. Drug peddlers market their goods on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube. To minimise young people's propensity for drug abuse, Ahmad

et al. (2022) assert that social media has the ability to be a platform for delivering therapies. To increase awareness of the need to address the problem of drug abuse, the NDLEA has taken advantage of this opportunity by highlighting the organisation's accomplishments on a number of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The Public Sphere theory, propounded by German philosopher Jurgen Habermas in 1992, serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. Habermas is credited with coining the term "public sphere," which he defines as comprising private persons who have gathered together as a public and who express the needs of society to the government (Overland, 2017).

According to the theory, the public sphere is where individuals come together to form beliefs and attitudes through collective actions. This occurs through deliberation, which involves the exchange of ideas and arguments, critical examination of evidence and reasoning, and the formation of informed opinions. Through this process, individuals can develop a shared understanding of public issues and arrive at common positions and actions.

However, the public sphere is not a neutral or natural space. Rather, it is shaped by society's social, cultural and political structures and is influenced by power relations and inequalities.

The public sphere can take many forms, including traditional media outlets, social media platforms, community organisations and public spaces. The key is providing a space for individuals to come together as equals, share their perspectives and experiences, and work towards common goals. The public sphere can help to shape public attitudes and beliefs and promote a more democratic and inclusive society.

The concept explains how the public forms beliefs and attitudes through collective actions and discourse that support or oppose how business is conducted by the government, which in turn influences how business is conducted by the government. While dealing with issues of public interest without pressure, citizens represent the public. This theory is also pertinent to the subject of this study, which examines how social media users' opinions and social media users' deliberations on Nigeria's fight against drug abuse contribute to the war's success.

## **Materials and Methods**

The methodology adopted for this study is discourse analysis. A discourse analysis looks at spoken or written language in the context of society. In contrast to linguistic techniques that exclusively focus on grammatical rules, discourse analysis emphasises the context of words. It emphasises the use of language to accomplish specific goals as well as the social aspects of communication (e.g. to build trust, create doubt, evoke emotions or manage conflict). Instead of focusing on smaller language units, such as tones, words, or sentences, discourse analysis examines larger language chunks such as complete conversations, texts or collections of texts. The researchers used discourse analysis in this study to better understand the varied views that social media users had on the war against drug abuse in Nigeria and to determine whether or not these views would have an effect on the country's drug peddling.

This study adopted a non-human population by focusing on the comments of social media users. Since it will be impossible to analyse comments on drug abuse on every social media available in Nigeria due to the large number of different social media platforms, the researchers were concerned with comments on the NDLEA page on Facebook. Facebook was selected because, according to statistics released by Kemp (2022), it is the most populated social media platform. Facebook is also the best option for this research. Unlike other social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc., it is a messaging platform that gives users greater room to post thoughts. Facebook was also purposively selected for this research because it makes it easier to find and follow conversations which consequently makes it easier to research.

In this study, the comments were captured to show the contents of members' interaction or communication online, and how they contributed to the war against drug abuse and drug peddling in Nigeria using Facebook. It is impossible to examine the comments of all Facebook users on the war against drug abuse in Nigeria, hence the need to purposively select the NDLEA page on Facebook as the sample for this study. The researcher purposively selected a post that comments were selected from for this study. This post was selected based on having a news story that covers the activities of the agency from January 2021 to October 2022.

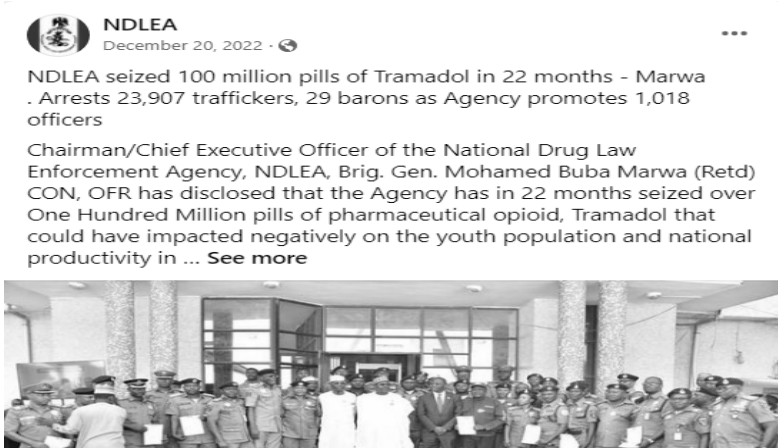


Fig. 1: NDLEA post on Dec. 20, 2022

There were 26 comments under this post. The researcher used the online survey tool, Survey Monkey, and with a 95% confidence level and a 22% margin of error, a sample size of 12 comments were generated.

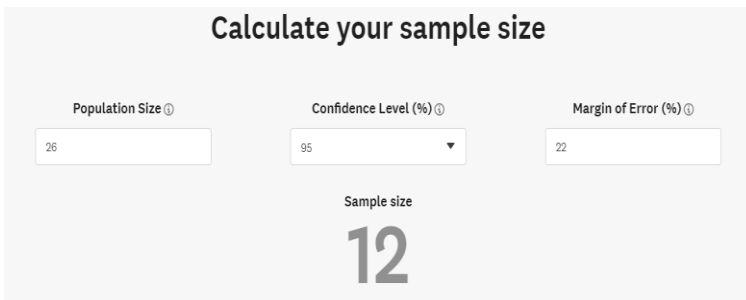


Fig. 2: Survey Monkey used to calculate sample size

The 12 comments were chosen because they expressed opinions related to the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria and the propensity to curtail drug peddling in the country. The comments chosen from this page helped to steer clear of ambiguous and unsupported remarks that had nothing to do with the research. Data analysis was done, using discourse analysis.

## Results

Twelve comments were analysed based on the sample size. The first six comments analysed were on the views of social media Facebook users on the war waged by the NDLEA against drug peddling in the country.

### Comment 1

Fig. 3



**Muhammad Bello Musa**

Just look at them all please,they're all healthy & good looking but unfortunately lack of self esteem made them look the other way round just desperate to make & earn a living fah,i pity us Nigerians,God come to our aid & rescue us for good 🙏 They need rehabilitation & counsel for good.

### Comment 2

Fig. 4



Top fan

**Abdulsalam Dahiru Ohiare**

Every conceivable item has been used to conceal drugs by the perpetrators of drug crime in order to evade detection and possible arrest. By the turn of the day their trajectory is always been deflated. Congrats team NDLEA .

### Comment 3

Fig. 5



**Joshua Parah**

Great job! The statistics is mind blowing, with the arrest of 29 barons it's shows it no longer business as usual. More acclode to the Agency bravo CCE for your leadership style

#### Comment 4

Fig. 6

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Top fan

**Abdulsalam Dahiru Ohiare**

The better this illicit business is kept at bay the better for the perpetrators as they cannot escape the NDLEA dragonet.

#### Comment 5

Fig. 7

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**Shaaban Mahamud Rafindadi**

good job. Keep it up. NDLEA. We the good peopleS of Nigeria never had this kind of good News and development that NDLEA keep doing it day in and day out to keep Nigeria and Nigerians clean from drugs. Thank you for the good leadership of marwa and his men ...

#### Comment 6

Fig. 8

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**Asiwaju Olugbenga Faleye JP**

That's awesome  
National Assembly should legislate capital punishments for hard drugs offences to serve as deterrent to other lazy people who seek for easy ways of making money.  
Kudos to the Sheriff, Brigadier General Buba Marwa (Retrd) and his Boys in NDLEA.  
Shalom

From the six comments above, it can be seen that Nigerians on Facebook approve and appreciate the methods employed by the NDLEA to combat and alleviate the spate of drug abuse in the country. Some of the views derived from these comments are the following: government should legislate laws that will punish drug abusers and peddlers; the NDLEA is doing a good job in fighting drug abuse; drug abusers and peddlers now find different means to cover up their crimes; and lack of self-esteem makes people go in drug abuse and drug peddling.

Meanwhile, the second six set of comments serve to elaborate on how NDLEA can be better inclined towards reducing drug peddling in the country.

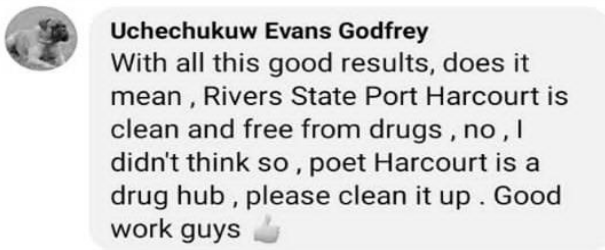
### Comment 7

Fig. 9



### Comment 8

Fig. 10



Comment 9

Fig. 11



**Yahaya Limago**

Good work keep it up , I will like to draw your attention to ijekomo man power drink that is sold by those women Hocking agbo is like it contains some illicit substance.

Comment 10

Fig. 12



Top fan

**Abdulsalam Dahiru Ohiare**

The mountain of illicit drugs intercepted and seized is frightening and more worrisome is the ever changing tactics of the traffickers is such a trajectory that the NDLEA had always been able to demystify. Stop this illicit business today.

Comment 11

Fig. 13



Top fan

**Akh Tracada**

This people are so stupid and senseless, with all these Arrests and sized Illicit and Control Drugs by NDLEA, people are bent on taking the NDLEA for granted. AKH-TRACADA suggest that Drug Law should tougher, better still, carry a Death penalty for illicit Drug in Nigeria ■ ■ and 20 years to 30 years jail term for control Drug illegal Traffickers, with that we believe that it will minimize illicit Drug and control Drug Trafficking in Nigeria. Meanwhile,

## Comment 12

Fig. 14



**Suleiman Nuhu**

President Muhammad Buhari.asist  
This great Agency with good salary  
and allowances.because there are  
doing a good job.may Almighty Allah  
continues to protect and guide this  
great Agency NDLEA Ameen.

From the six comments above, it can be inferred that Nigerians hope that their comments on Facebook will help NDLEA in their tendencies towards reducing drug peddling and abuse in the country since their comments also serve as suggestions.

## Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the first research objective inferred that Nigerians on Facebook approve and appreciate the methods employed by the NDLEA to fight and alleviate the spate of drug abuse in the country. This supports the claim made by Ahmad et al. (2022) that social media has the ability to be used as a platform for delivering ways meant to lower youth drug abuse tendencies. The NDLEA has taken the use of this potential by sharing the agency's accomplishments on various social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others, to make users of these sites aware that drug usage is a problem that has to be addressed. The NDLEA's efforts to reduce drug abuse in the nation have reached milestone. And for this reason, Facebook users have shown their gratitude online.

For example, comment 3 reads:

Great job! The statistics is mind blowing, with the arrest of 29 barons. It shows it [is] no longer business as usual. More accolade [accolade] to the agency bravo CCE for your leadership style (sic).

Another example is comment 5 which says:

Good job. Keep it up, NDLEA. We the good people of Nigeria never had this kind of good news and development that NDLEA keep doing it day in and day out to keep Nigeria and Nigerians clean from drugs. Thank you for the good leadership of Marwa and his men... (sic).

From the above, it can be understood that most Facebook users who constantly follow up on NDLEA's update on the war against drug abuse are well aware and appreciative of their achievements as per reducing drug abuse in Nigeria as a larger society.

The analysis of the second research objective inferred that Nigerians hope that their comments on Facebook will help NDLEA in their war towards reducing drug peddling and abuse in the country since their comments also serve as suggestions. This finding is evident in the fact that inasmuch as the social media is open for citizens to express their views on societal issues, governmental agencies are also free to post their various activities on the site. When war is waged against drug users in Nigeria, the NDLEA posts about the arrests made and steps that are taken to stop the abuse of drugs in the country (Aribamikan, 2022).

Notwithstanding, since Facebook users are constantly abreast of the achievements of NDLEA in reducing drug peddling in the country via their Facebook feeds, there is a need for NDLEA to look at the various suggestions that their audience on the social media platform offer on how best to combat drug peddling in the country. An example comes from comment 9 thus:

Good work keep it up, I will like to draw your attention to ijekomo [Jekomo] man power drink that is sold by those women hocking [hawking] agbo [it] is like it contains some illicit substance...(sic).

It is also worth noting that some comments are a call for the government to offer more financial and logistic support to NDLEA in their crusade towards reducing drug peddling in the country. Comment 12 buttresses this:

President Muhammad Buhari assist this great agency with good salary and allowances because they are doing a good job. May almighty Allah continues to protect and guide this great agency NDLEA Ameen (sic).

Another example is comment 7 which reads thus:

I suggest NDLEA should be equipped with modern technologies (sic). Some users also called for stricter punitive measures to be considered such as comment 11 which reads thus:

This [These] people are so stupid and senseless, with all these arrests and sized [seized] illicit and Control Drugs by NDLEA, people are bent on taking the NDLEA for granted. AKH-TRACADA suggests that Drug Law should [be] tougher, better still, carry a death penalty for illicit Drug in Nigeria and 20 years to 30 years jail term for control Drug illegal traffickers, with that we believe that it will minimise illicit drug and control Drug trafficking in Nigeria (sic).”

From the above, it can be ascertained that Nigerians on Facebook want NDLEA to speed up the process of reducing drug peddling in the country by making suggestions after lauding their efforts so far. They firmly believe that if their suggestions are taken seriously by the agency, the rate of drug peddling in the country will reduce exponentially.

## **Conclusion**

This study looked at social media comments on the NDLEA's effort to combat drug addiction and the likelihood of lowering drug peddling. Two objectives formed the basis for this research. This study used discourse analysis as its method. Discourse analysis was used for this study because the researcher wanted to learn about the different perspectives that social media users had regarding the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria and whether or not such perspectives had the potential to lower drug peddling in Nigeria. This study adopted a non-human population by focusing on the comments of social media users. Therefore, the study scrutinised and analysed the comments of Facebook users that are in line with the research objectives from which the conclusion and recommendations were extrapolated.

According to the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn: Nigerians on Facebook support and applaud the NDLEA's efforts to combat and alleviate the country's drug abuse epidemic, and they hope that their Facebook comments will aid the NDLEA in its efforts to lower the incidence of drug abuse and peddling in the nation since their comments also serve as recommendations.

## Recommendations

1. Censorship must be made in the transmission of explicit content that depicts the use of hard drugs on social media.
2. For the prevention of drug abuse among Nigerian youths to be effective, NDLEA must orientate their social media followers on the dangers of drug abuse and the legal consequences of drug peddling in the country.
3. This research should be replicated, using other social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok among others, with NDLEA's war against drug abuse as its main focus.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest whatsoever.

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