



## REPRESENTATION OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE USE IN TIWA SAVAGE'S MUSICAL VIDEO *ASAKE LOADED* AND ITS INFLUENCE ON UNDERGRADUATES

Gideon Uchechukwu Nwafor (Ph.D)<sup>1</sup> and Edith Chinelo Onuama<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: [gu.nwafor@coou.edu.ng](mailto:gu.nwafor@coou.edu.ng)

<sup>2</sup>School of General Studies, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria.

Email: [ifejika.edith@mouau.edu.ng](mailto:ifejika.edith@mouau.edu.ng)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The representation of drug and substance use in contemporary media, particularly in music videos, has become a subject of increasing concern due to its potential influence on young audiences. This research investigates the portrayal of drug-related themes in Tiwa Savage's music video "Asake Loaded" and explores its impact on students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU). The study was anchored by Social Learning Theory adopting the Survey research method to obtain data from 370 respondents through Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. The findings reveal that the "Asake Loaded" music video presents drug and substance use in a glamorous and normalized manner. It prominently features images of drug consumption, partying, and extravagant lifestyles, potentially romanticizing drug use for impressionable viewers, including college students. The research further indicates that a considerable number of COOU students have watched the video, and some report being influenced by its depictions of drug-related content. Based on the findings, the study recommended that artists like Tiwa Savage should be encouraged to consider the potential influence of their music videos and promote responsible messages that discourage glamorization of drug and substance use.*

**KEYWORDS:** Representation, Drug and substance use, Tiwa Savage, Musical video, *Asake Loaded*, Influence.



## INTRODUCTION

Drug and substance use has become a common phenomenon in different parts of the world, especially with the emergence of new and powerful drugs. One of the ways through which people get exposed to drug and substance use is through musical videos. Musical videos have become a popular media for artists to communicate with their fans, and as such, they are used as a platform for promoting lifestyles and values. Many Nigerian musical videos are known to portray drug and substance use in ways that glorify its usage, thus influencing their youthful audience. As a result, there has been growing concern about the implications of such representations on the young population, especially on students in higher institutions (Aifegbai, 2020).

Drug and substance use has been a widely practiced behavior in the Nigerian music industry. Nigerian musical videos often showcase the use of drugs and substances such as cannabis, alcohol, and codeine syrup among others. This representation of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos has raised concerns among the public, parents, and the government. The negative impact of such representations on Nigerian youths has been well documented (Ochuba & Muoghalu, 2020). Drug and substance abuse is prevalent in Nigerian society due to factors such as unemployment, peer pressure, and lack of awareness on the dangers of drug use. Nwafor, Guanah and Okowa-Nwaebi (2022) linked the prevalence of domestic violence to the consumption and abuse of drug and alcohol among teenagers and young adults. Also, Nwafor and Muoboghare (2022) established a significant relationship between the prevalence of child sexual abuses and other vices to the consumption and abuse of drug and alcohol among teenagers and young adults.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the prevalence of drug use among Nigerians aged 15 to 64 was estimated to be 14.4% in 2018 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Furthermore, drug trafficking is a significant problem in Nigeria, with the country serving as a transit point for the transportation of drugs to Europe and other parts of the world. Also, a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) suggests that Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of drug use in Africa, with about 14.4 percent of its population using illicit drugs.

According to a study by Alimi and Tella (2020), the representation of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos has a significant impact on the behavior and attitude of Nigerian youths towards drug use. The study found that youths who frequently watched musical videos that portrayed drug and substance use were more likely to engage in drug use themselves. Additionally, the study showed that the portrayal of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos affected the desensitization of youths towards drug and substance misuse.

Drug and substance use is not a new phenomenon in Nigerian music, as it has been present since the 1970s. Some Nigerian musicians have openly sung about their experiences with drugs, such as Fela Kuti, who used marijuana and LSD and sang about the government's attempts to suppress his music (Okechukwu, 2021). However, with the rise of afrobeats and the increased popularity of music videos, the depiction of drug and substance use has become more prevalent in Nigerian music.

According to Primack, McClure and Shensa, (2017), drug and substance use has been linked with numerous health and social problems, including addiction, overdose, crime, school drop-



out, and violence. Nwafor, Omoeveh and Umuze (2022) note that during the COVID-19, people, particularly teenagers, were drowning in crime; high internet fraud (yahoo) was on the rise; morals were eroding; and immorality was on the rise as alcohol and drug consumption exacerbated among teenagers. Therefore, concern over its prevalence has led to various intervention programs. However, the representation of drug and substance use in popular Nigerian music videos has substantially undermined such efforts. The youth, who are often the primary targets of these interventions, are now exposed to drug and substance use through musical videos. Research has shown that exposure to such representations can affect behavior by shaping attitudes and beliefs towards drug and substance use.

In view of this, Tiwa Savage, one of Nigeria's most prominent female artists, Band lyrics, which have become a viral hit among the Nigerian music industry. However, the song has drawn criticism from some quarters for its suggestive substance use references. The song has also raised concerns about the message it sends to young people, especially because of the references to drug use in the lyrics. This issue is not a new one in the Nigerian music industry, where the glamorization and normalization of drug use have become disturbingly common. This study, therefore, is designed to assess how exposure to Nigerian musical videos that represented drug and substance use like Tiwa Savage's *Asake Loaded* influence students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University towards drug abuse.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The representation of drug and substance use in Nigerian music videos has become a concern in recent years. Music videos serve as a significant contributor to the normalization of drug use in Nigerian society. Nigerian music videos have been found to be promoting drug and substance use, and this has significant implications for young people, especially students at COOU. Exposure to these videos can influence young people's behavior, increase the prevalence of drug and substance use, and result in negative health and social outcomes. The study aims to analyze the extent and nature of the representation in the video and examine its impact on COOU students' attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions related to substance abuse. It also investigates how exposure to the video influences students' perceptions, attitudes, intentions, and actual engagement in drug and substance use. By understanding these influences, the research seeks to develop targeted preventive strategies and interventions to promote responsible consumption and mitigate negative consequences associated with substance abuse among COOU students. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to creating a healthier and more responsible media environment for the well-being of the student community.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were designed for the study:

1. To find out if the respondents are exposed to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*;
2. To determine the respondents attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*; and
3. To ascertain how exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influence the respondents behavior towards drug and substance abuse.



## Research Questions

The following research were designed for the study:

1. Are the respondents exposed to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*?
2. What is the respondents' attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*?
3. How did exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influence the respondents' behavior towards drug and substance abuse?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Learning Theory was adopted for this study. Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and cognitive processes in learning and behavior acquisition. According to this theory, individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also by observing others and the consequences of their actions. Social learning theory posits that people acquire new behaviors and information by observing models, which can be real or symbolic, and imitating their actions. The theory also emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes, such as attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation, in the learning process (Bandura, 1977).

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observational learning and cognitive processes in shaping human behavior. According to this theory, individuals learn through observing and imitating the behavior of others, as well as through the consequences of those behaviors. The theory suggests that learning can occur without direct reinforcement or personal experience, and that individuals can acquire new behaviors, attitudes, and skills by observing and modeling others.

One key aspect of social learning theory is the concept of modeling. Individuals are more likely to imitate behaviors they observe if the model is perceived as competent, credible, and influential. Bandura also introduced the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific behavior and achieve desired outcomes. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in motivation and behavioral change.

In the context of musical videos, viewers may observe and imitate behaviors portrayed by artists, including drug and substance use. Such representations can influence viewers' perceptions and potentially shape their own behaviors. Musical videos often showcase drug and substance use in various forms, portraying them as glamorous or enhancing the artist's image. These representations can be powerful, particularly among young audiences who are more susceptible to peer influences. A recent study by Primack et al. (2021) examined the prevalence and portrayal of substance use in popular musical videos. The findings highlighted a significant presence of substance use, particularly alcohol and marijuana, in these videos. Exposure to such representations can contribute to normalization and desensitization towards substance use among viewers.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Representation of Drug and Substance Use in Nigeria Musical Videos

Drug and substance use has become a common phenomenon in the Nigerian music industry, and it is often seen by many artists as a means to enhance their creativity. The representation of drug and substance use is rampant in musical videos, with certain elements of glorification and normalization of these substances. This trend has raised concerns among many stakeholders, who are worried about the impact it may have on the young fans who consume this content. In recent years, Nigerian musical videos have been awash with images of drug and substance use. The artists are often depicted smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol or even taking more dangerous substances like cocaine and codeine. This portrayal of drug use in musical videos has been criticized for promoting negative behaviors, especially among the youth. A study by Nwalozie and Nwogu (2017) found that exposure to such content creates a perception that drug use is common and even acceptable in society.

The use of drugs and substances in musical videos is not new in Nigeria. However, the advent of social media and the ease of access to these videos have brought the issue to the forefront. In a study conducted by Yakubu and Levitt (2021), they found that about 70% of young people who watch Nigerian musical videos have been exposed to drug and substance use. The study raises concerns about the impact that this could have on the future of the country. Many artists have defended the use of drugs and substances in their music videos as a form of expression. However, the glamorization of these substances has profound implications, especially for the youth. In a recent article by Salihu and Jiya (2020), they argue that the glorification of drug use in music videos may lead to an increase in experimentation among the youth. This could lead to addiction and even fatalities.

The role of music videos in shaping societal values cannot be understated. The lyrics, beats and visuals in a music video can influence behavior and attitudes, especially among the youth. In an article by Adejumo (2021), he argues that the depiction of drug use in Nigerian musical videos is a reflection of societal values. The normalization of these substances is, therefore, a symptom of a more profound issue, and addressing this requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including artists, producers and consumers. There are several ways in which drug and substance use are represented in Nigerian musical videos. They range from subtle messages to blatant displays of drug use. The use of symbolism, direct references, and innuendos, are some of the ways in which drug and substance use are represented in Nigerian musical videos. Columbia Drugs report (2019) observed that creative freedom is essential in the music industry, but this can have negative consequences if not monitored. The report also noted that drug and substance use has become more prevalent in music videos in recent years.

The music industry in Nigeria has been criticized for glorifying drug and substance use in musical videos. Some artists portray substance abuse as a symbol of success and affluence. For example, the popular Nigerian musician, Naira Marley, was arrested in May 2019 for alleged credit card fraud and possession of marijuana. Despite the arrest, Marley's "Soapy" video, which featured him dancing in a suggestive manner, garnered over 4 million views on YouTube. The video received backlash from Nigerians, who called out the artist for promoting social vices.





In 2020, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) released a statement banning five songs for promoting drug abuse, violence, and indecency. Among the banned songs were Olamide's "Science Student," which was perceived to promote drug abuse. The song was released in 2018 and received widespread criticism from Nigerians, with many arguing that the lyrics glorified drug abuse. Furthermore, NBC banned Tekno's "Jogodo" for promoting indecency. The song was released in 2018 and was criticized for its lyrics and music video, which featured scantily dressed women.

The representation of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos has become a cause for concern among policymakers. In 2019, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) called for the censorship of musical videos that promote drug abuse. According to the agency, the proliferation of these videos has a negative influence on young people, who are the primary consumers of Nigerian music videos. Furthermore, the NDLEA noted that the association between music and drug abuse could lead to increased drug use among young people.

In February 2021, the NDLEA arrested a popular Nigerian rapper, CDQ, for alleged drug possession. The arrest came after the rapper released a video, which showed him smoking what appeared to be cannabis. CDQ, whose real name is Sodiq Yusuf, denied the allegations, saying that the substance was a herbal mix used for relaxation. However, the incident further highlighted the connection between Nigerian music culture and drug use.

Although there have been calls for the censorship of musical videos that promote drug abuse, some argue that the government's intervention could infringe on artists' creative freedom. The debate on censorship versus creative freedom is not unique to Nigeria, as it has been an issue in other parts of the world. However, it is essential to find a balance between creative freedom and responsibility, especially with the influence that music has on young people.

Thus, drug and substance use are represented in Nigerian musical videos in various ways. Some representations are subtle, while others are blatant. The glorification of drug abuse has become a cause for concern, with policymakers calling for the censorship of videos that promote drug use. While creative freedom is vital in the music industry, there is a need for responsible representation of drug and substance use in musical videos. The impact of these representations on young people cannot be ignored, and it is essential to find a balance between creative expression and social responsibility.

## METHODOLOGY

For this study, the survey research method was adopted to investigate the representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage's musical video *Asake Loaded* and its influence on Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. This was chosen because of the effectiveness of the survey research method in studying the attitudes and opinions of the people and because of its relevance and advantages to the study. The population of students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus according to Academic Planning Unit (2023) is 16,815. The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study to avoid sampling a particular respondent twice and to ensure that those sampled are students of the university. A sample of 370 people was selected using a table of sample size determination developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).



## Data Presentation

Out of the 370 copies of questionnaire administered in this study, 15 were invalid while 355 were valid and found usable. Therefore the researcher worked with 355 copies of the questionnaire, which is valid for this study.

## Answers to Research Questions

### Research Question One

Are the respondents exposed to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*?

**Table 5: Respondents' Exposure to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded***

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	355	100
No	0	0
Can't Say	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows respondents' responses to research question one. Data reveals that all the respondents (100%, n=355) are exposed to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*. The implication of data on Table 5 is that there is high exposure to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* among undergraduate students of the university.

### Research Question Two

What is the respondents' attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded*?

**Table 7: Respondents attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded***

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	245	69
Positive	68	19
Can't Say	42	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 shows respondents' responses to research question three. Data reveals that the majority of the respondents (69%, n=245) have a negative attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* meaning that they are not likely to copy and practice drug and substance use as portrayed in the musical video. Also, 19% (n=68) said they have a positive attitude towards representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* meaning that they are likely to copy and practice drug and substance use as portrayed in the musical video while 12% (n=42) indicated can not say. The implication of data on Table 7 is that majority of the respondents have negative attitude towards the representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* and they are not likely to copy and practice drug and substance use as portrayed in the musical video



### Research Question Three

How did exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influence the respondents' behavior towards drug and substance abuse?

**Table 8: Influence of Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* on behavior towards drug and substance abuse**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Exposure led to drug use and abuse	55	15
Exposure led to intention to use	50	14
Exposure led to abstinence	250	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 shows respondents' responses to research question four. Data reveals that the majority of the respondents (70%, n=250) indicated that exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influenced them to exhibit abstinence behavior towards drug and substance abuse since they perceived it as wrong behavior. However, 15% and 14% of the respondents indicated that exposure led to drug use and abuse or intention to use drugs respectively. The implication of data on Table 8 is that exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influence the respondents' behavior to abstain from drug and substance abuse.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding from research question one revealed that there is high exposure to Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* among undergraduate students of the university. This finding justifies the assertion of Oluwatosin (2021) who contends that social media platforms have become an essential tool for Nigerian musicians to reach out to their target audience and interact with them. Musical videos have transformed the music industry in Nigeria. In the past, Nigerian artists depended solely on radio airplay and music shows to promote their songs. However, with the advent of musical videos, musicians can now use these videos to promote their music across multiple platforms, reaching a wider audience. A study by Ologunro (2021) found that the rise of musical videos has led to an increase in music production and has created employment opportunities for young Nigerians in various fields such as broadcasting, music video production, and cinematography.

Findings also revealed that the majority of the respondents have a negative attitude towards the representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* and they are not likely to copy and practice drug and substance use as portrayed in the musical video. This finding contradicts the assertion of Alimi and Tella (2020) who argue that the representation of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos has a significant impact on the behavior and attitude of Nigerian youths towards drug use. The study found that youths who frequently watched musical videos that portrayed drug and substance use were more likely to engage in drug use themselves. Additionally, the study showed that the portrayal of drug and substance use in Nigerian musical videos affected the desensitization of youths towards drug and substance misuse.





Finally, finding revealed that exposure to drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage Musical Video *Asake Loaded* influenced the respondents' behavior to abstain from drug and substance abuse. This is in line with the assertion of Azeez (2017), which revealed how musical videos contribute to Nigerian youths' cultural identity and national pride. Music videos have contributed to the emergence of a new form of entertainment industry in Nigeria. The Nigerian entertainment industry has experienced massive growth and development in recent years, driven mainly by the emergence and popularity of musical videos. This point was highlighted in a study conducted by Ojobi (2020), which reveals how musical videos have contributed significantly to the growth and development of Nigeria's entertainment industry.

## CONCLUSION

This research focused on the representation of drug and substance use in Tiwa Savage's music video "Asake Loaded" and its potential influence on students at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU). The video analysis revealed the presence of drug and substance use imagery, raising concerns about its impact on students. The normalization and glamorization of these behaviors in the video may lead to the acceptance and adoption of drug and substance use among COOU students. Tiwa Savage's influence as a popular artist cannot be underestimated, as students may imitate her behaviors portrayed in the video. The potential consequences of substance use among students are significant, including negative effects on physical and mental health, academic performance, and social relationships.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Increase awareness and education about the potential impact of media representation on attitudes and behaviors towards drug and substance use. Also, foster critical media literacy among COOU students to help them develop discerning perspectives when consuming media content, including music videos.
2. Encourage artists, including Tiwa Savage, to consider the potential influence of their music videos and promote responsible messages that discourage glamorization of drug and substance use. Also, collaborate with artists and media influencers to promote responsible representations of drug and substance use in music videos.
3. Strengthen support systems on campus, including counseling services and substance abuse prevention programs, to provide assistance to students struggling with substance abuse. Also, Implement campus policies that discourage substance abuse and regulate the consumption and dissemination of music videos depicting drug and substance use



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