

**STREET LIFE INVOLVEMENT AND SUBSTANCE USE AMONG
“YANDABA” IN KANO, NIGERIA**

Abeeb Olufemi Salaam

Community Reintegration
Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Representative members (N=173) of yandaba (young, male, urban gangs in Kano, Nigeria) aged 13-29 years (mean age= 19.3years, SD = 3.81), recruited through street outreach, were invited to complete self-report anonymous questionnaires about their patterns of drug and alcohol use. Of these, nine participants were randomly reselected to participate in oral interviews about their motivation towards psychoactive drug/alcohol use. High rates of cannabis, tobacco (nicotine), rophynol, codeine, and alcohol misuse appear to exist among this group, in addition to other improvised local drugs. The choice of certain types of drugs or intoxicants among the group could be affected by their cost implication (i.e., affordability), availability and commonality. A thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews suggests “strategic intoxication” to get the job done, the need to maintain cohesion and/or increase solidarity, and relationships with politicians as the probable risk factors to explain substance misuse among this group.

KEY WORDS: street life, substance misuse, alcohol and drug use, yandaba, youth gangs

INTRODUCTION

The extent of “yandaba” involvement in various antisocial activities and health compromising behaviours (notably, excessive psychoactive substance use) has been an enduring social problem that requires adequate attention and control. Although there is no standard definition of yandaba, those belonging to the group can be described as young male urban gang members in the Northern parts of Nigeria (mainly Kano) who take to street crime because educational and employment opportunities are unavailable to them (Matusitz & Repass,

2009). The members of this group come mainly from the lower socioeconomic class and from polygamous families that are characterized by many siblings (Dan-Asabe, 1991; Salaam, 2011; Ya’u, 2000). Due to their socioeconomic condition, in addition to religious and cultural orientation; some parents may decide to enroll their children in Islamic education, called *almajiri* (Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida, & Adedokun, 2009; Salaam, 2011). *Almajiri* is a corrupt spelling of the Arabic word, *al-muhajirin*, which describes someone who leaves home in search of knowledge or for the sake of advocating Islamic knowledge.

This tradition (i.e., *almajiri*) is common in northern Nigeria, where young boys--some as young as four or five-- are sent far from home to study the Quran, Hadith and other branches of Islamic knowledge in an informal setting (mostly in makeshift tents, under trees or on mosque verandas) without financial support from their wards or parents (Awofeso et al., 2003; Usman, 2008). The schoolteachers (Mallams), who may have between 50 and 100 children under their care, are expected to take care of these children, and might be compelled to send them onto the streets to beg because there are few resources at the teachers' disposal (Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida, & Adedokun, 2009; Awofeso et al., 2003). It is plausible, therefore, that when such children grow up they are vulnerable to "graduating" to the yandaba and subsequently becoming involved in other antisocial activities.

Prominent among the activities of the group include hanging out together to harass innocent commuters, acting as unofficial security guards for wealthy individuals or politicians, engaging in turf wars with rival gangs or amongst themselves, pimping for prostitutes, pocket picking and or petty thievery, and fomenting and participating in ethno religious violence (Dan-Asabe, 1999; Kush-ee, 2008; Matusitz & Repass, 2009; Salaam, 2011; Ya'u, 2000). During their involvement in these activities, majority of the gang members also engage in excessive drug and alcohol use.

Although alcohol intake and any substance of abuse may be regarded as an abomination among the Hausa tribe (predominantly the Muslim faithful in northern Nigeria) due to the perceived Islamic injunctions against the use and sale of alcohol and all forms of intoxicants among its adherents, many members of yandaba are addicted to alcohol consumption. The efforts of "*Hisbah*" (Task Force on Islamic Law Implementation) in enforcing alcohol proscription in Kano and the control of illicit drugs by the National Drug Law Enforcements Agent (NDLEA) in Nigeria cannot persuade the members of the group to cease their alcohol and drug use habits.

While it is appreciated that cannabis and other illicit drugs was not originally observed in the Moslem North of Nigeria (Ebie & Pela, 1981), at present, contrary to the religious and cultural taboos, the use of alcohol and other illicit drugs is not limited to a particular group or section of Nigeria, partly due to urbanisation and acculturation. In fact, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme's (UNDCP, 2001) report on Nigeria, and findings from other studies (e.g., Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida & Adedokun, 2009; Ekpo et al. 1995; Gureje, et al. 2007; Morakinyo & Odejide, 2003; Salaam & Brown, 2010) confirm that street children and youth gangs in the country do abuse illicit drugs and other locally improvised substances, which may be one of the major causes of delinquent behaviour and crime.

Although the phenomenon of substance misuse amongst street children and youth gang members is well established in academic literature, there is a complete lack of empirical information about the yandaba's alcohol and drug use experience. Much of what is known about yandaba substance misuse has been based on media reports that are neither scholarly nor scientific, coupled with the use of strong emotive language that may presents a distorted view of this group. It is in response to this, and to fill the isolated research gap, that the current study adopted mixed methods of data collection (i.e., self report anonymous questionnaire and in-person qualitative interviews) to explore the patterns of alcohol and other substances abuse among the yandaba, and by extension determine the probable risk factors for initiation into this behaviour among the gang members. It is hoped that the findings from the present study will establish the need to fashion public policies aimed at targeting those risk factors. To achieve this objective, the following research questions were raised and answered in the current study:

- What are the patterns of alcohol and other psychoactive substance abuse (i.e., conventional and non-conventional) among the gang members?

- Is there any significant difference between the patterns of drug use across various demographic characteristics (e.g., duration of gang membership and age group)?
- What are the probable risk factors for drug and alcohol use by the participants?

METHOD

Study area

The city (Kano) is one of the ancient cities in Nigeria located in the North Western part of the country. Although the city is chiefly inhabited by the Hausa tribe, it has a good number of Yoruba and Igbo communities who are considered immigrants or settlers. Out of the major Hausa States in Nigeria, Kano State has the largest population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008) and the city of Kano is the capital of Kano State.

Ethics Considerations and Data Collection Procedures

Serious considerations were given to the ethical issues involved in the current study. These include the rights of the respondents to refuse to participate, the protection of confidentiality, and the participants' right to be fully informed about the nature of the study before giving their consent. Despite the assurance that the participants' responses would remain confidential and that their anonymity would be respected, only 173 (i.e., 81.6%) of the 212 potential participants approached for the interviews agreed to participate in the study. For those who gave their consent to partake, the local vernacular (i.e., Hausa) through backward translation was mainly used to conduct the interviews.

Research Instrument

The self-report questionnaire used for data collection was generated from a pilot study of a convenient sample of ten gang members who agreed to participate in a semi structured interview designed to assess their psychoactive substance use experience. A list of all of the participants' responses was drawn up and

these responses were reworded concisely to design a close-ended questionnaire on demographic profiles, different types of drug and alcohol used by the gang members. The respondents were asked to indicate which from a list of illegal drugs (e.g., cannabis, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines): (a) they had ever used in their life; (b) they had used during the past twelve months. Further to the list of illegal drugs, the participants were asked to indicate whether they had used any alcoholic beverages (e.g., dry gin, kokino), solvents (e.g., glue, petrol, rubber solution), legal drugs other than alcoholic beverages (tobacco, over the counter/patent medication), and non conventional intoxicants (madaran sukudie, gadagi, dan kamaru, kokino, etc.) during the past twelve months.

Structured Oral Interviews

Qualitative oral interviews was adopted as an additional data collection technique in order to allow the participants to describe their drug use experience in ways that are meaningful to them, rather than asking them to use the categories and dimensions established by the researcher. A semi structured interview protocol with select members of the yandaba included the following questions:

1. Can you narrate your first experience of taking drugs and/or alcohol?
2. What do you think are the gains derived from drug/alcohol use as a member of the yandaba?

Sampling

Given the violent nature of and difficulties associated with contacting the yandaba gang, the sampling technique employed for the current study was opportunistic. The system of opportunistic sampling (i.e., the non-probability technique) is justified in this type of research because the often chaotic nature of street life among youth gangs in Nigeria does not lend itself to systematic random sampling (e.g., see Aderinto, 2000; Morakinyo & Odejide, 2003; Olley, 2006; Salaam, 2011; Salaam & Brown, 2010). A total number of 173

members of the gang participated in the present study, with the age range from 13 to 29 ($M= 19.32$, $SD=3.81$) recruited from Doraye (35 or 20.3%), Tundun Wada (26 or 15.03%), Sabon geri market (31 or 17.91%), Kabuga (18 or 10.04%), Warure (16 or 09.25%), Wambai (14 or 08.9%), Panshekara (12 or 6.93%), Faggae (11 or 6.36%), and Dan Agundi (10 or 5.78) areas of Kano metropolis. For the qualitative interview, 9 members of the gang (one from each of the above named locations) were randomly reselected to participate in the oral interviews on motivation towards psychoactive drug/alcohol use.

Analytical Strategies

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the quantitative analysis. This includes the use of univariate (i.e., descriptive statistics) to determine the patterns of drug and alcohol use among the participants. Patterns of polydrug use were described by means of cross tabulation. Crude associations between the patterns of multiple drug use and various demographic characteristics (e.g., duration of gang membership and age group) were tested using chi square tests at the alpha level of 0.05 by outcome status. For the qualitative analysis, the content of the participants' responses was transcribed using thematic content analysis.

RESULTS

Personal Demographic Characteristics

The participants recruited for the present study were all male with a mean age of 19.3 years. None of the participants had progressed beyond secondary education and the overwhelming majority (72.3%) had previously enrolled through the process of *almajiri* (i.e., sending the children for Arabic education without providing the means to accomplish such a mission). Regarding the duration of their gang membership, almost half of the sample (48.5%) had belonged to the gang for up to 3 years; 30.0% for 4-6 years; and 29.5% for more than 6 years. On

the participants' perceptions of the motivating factors for street life involvement, the majority of them blamed it on their family/guardian difficulties (43.7%); followed by the perceived benefits of street life (32.2%), parental death (7.0%) and a combination of other factors (17.1%).

Psychoactive substance use prevalence and patterns

The descriptive analysis suggests that a substantial majority of the participants had ever used and currently using cannabis, codeine and rohypnol. Only a few admitted to having taken cocaine, amphetamines and diazepam in the past, or being a current user of these drugs. The same pattern was observed for heroin use. However, an overwhelming majority of the participants admitted to the current use of alcohol, tobacco, quick patch solution, petrol, glue solvents, and methylated spirits. Other local substances that were stated to be in current use were *gadegi*, *madaran sukudie*, *dan kamaru*, kola nut and *kokino* (see Tables 1 & 2).

Table 2 summarises the self reported patterns of alcohol use, smoking and other improvised local intoxicants use by the sample.

Patterns of Multiple Drug Use

The majority of the participants were poly-drug users with almost half (44.5%) of them taking at least two drugs; 18.5% admitted taking three drugs; 16.2% admitted taking only one drug; and the remaining 20.8% admitted taking more than three drugs (see, Table 3 & Figure 1). Regarding the perceived associations between the patterns of multiple drug use and various demographic characteristics, the computed outcomes from the chi square analysis suggest that there was a statistically significant relationship between patterns of multiple drug use and their duration of membership ($X^2=17.2$, $df=2$, $p<.0001$), but no statistically significant relationship was observed between the patterns of multiple drug use and the age group of the participants ($X^2=2.84$, $df=2$, $p>.0092$ (see table 3).

Table 1: Self report illegal drug use, prevalence and patterns among Yandaba gang (N=173)

Drugs	FLU	Percentage	(95% CI)	FCU	Percentage	(95% CI)
Cannabis	151	87.2	(81.7, 92.8)	141	81.5	(77.3, 85.7)
Codeine*	138	79.8	(75.3, 84.3)	151	87.3	(85.2, 89.4)
Amphetamine	92	53.2	(51.9, 54.4)	31	17.9	(9.7, 26.1)
Heroin	61	35.3	(31.04, 39.5)	20	11.6	(4.41, 18.79)
Cocaine	57	32.9	(29.8, 36.2)	26	15.0	(7.29, 21.7)
Rohypnol*	112	64.7	(60.4, 63.7)	133	76.9	(73.7, 80.1)
Diazepam*	40	23.1	(19.5, 26.7)	26	15.0	(9.4, 20.6)

Note: FLU= Frequency of Life Users; FCU= Frequency of Current Users; CI =95% confidence intervals

* Drugs bought over the counter or from street hawkers of pharmaceutical products.

Table 2: Self report patterns of alcohol use, smoking and other substance (conventional and unconventional) use by the sample (N=173)

Drugs	Frequency	Percentage	(95% CI)
Alcohol	159	91.8	(90.7,93.03)
Tobacco	162	93.6	(92.53,94.67)
Rubber Solution	148	85.5	(82.8, 88.2)
Petrol	86	49.7	(43.5, 55.9)
Glue Solvent	126	72.8	(68.7, 76.9)
Menthylated Spirit	78	45.1	(39.9, 50.3)
Gadagi*	162	93.6	(92.43, 94.8)
Kolanut*	134	77.2	(74.9, 79.52)
Madaran Sukudie (Formalin)	133	76.9	(74.9, 78.8)
Dan Kamaru*	62	35.8	(32.07, 39.53)
Kokino*	28	16.2	(12.05, 20.35)

Note:

CI =95% confidence intervals

* These are locally improvised intoxicants/drugs

Gadagi is a stimulant tea of highland brand boiled in water with some plants such as African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*), lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citrates*), mint plant (*Mentha palustris*), and garlic (*Allium sativum*); Kola nut is a caffeine-containing nut chewed in many West African cultures; *Madran sukudie* is a chemical used in preserving biological specimens, and embalming corpses; *Dan kamaru* is a stimulant root of a bitter plant imported from Cameroun; *Kokino* is an indigenous distilled spirit.

Qualitative Results

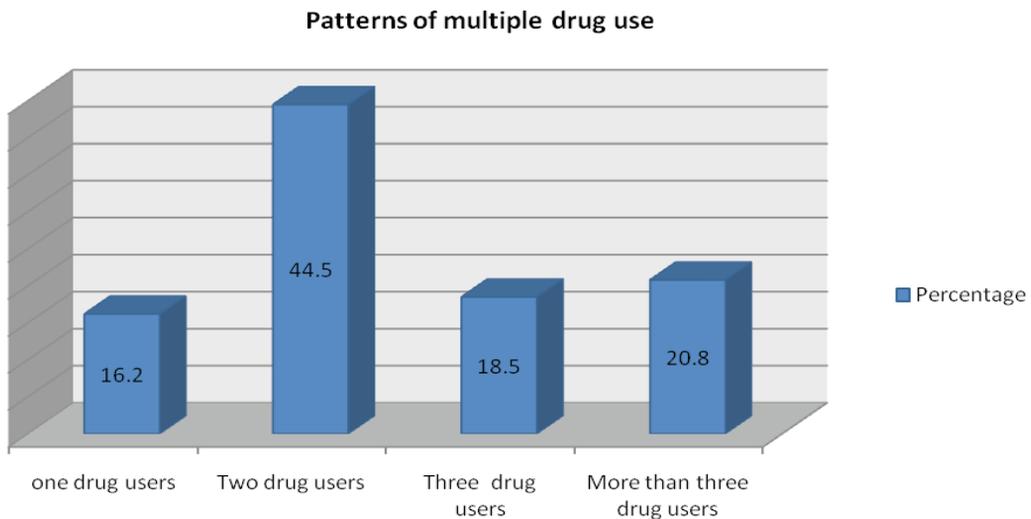
The responses of the members of the gang who participated in the oral interview were tape-recorded on a digital voice recorder for easy transcription. The transcripts were later read through and three

major themes were identified (i.e., zeal for identity formation, peer pressure, and relationships with politicians) to explain the probable risk factors related to alcohol and other substances of abuse by the participants.

Table 3: Chi square analysis of patterns of multiple drug use across demographic characteristics of the participants

Age Group	One Drug User	Two Drug User	Three Drug User	More than three Drug User	χ^2	<i>p</i>
15-20	08	19	12	11	2.84	0.092 ^{ns}
21-26	09	32	09	13		
27- above	11	26	11	12		
Duration of Gang membership						
0-3years	28	31	23	02	17.12	0.001*
4-6years	07	10	12	09		
More than 6years	13	21	10	07		

Ns=not significant < 0.05; * significant >0.05

**Figure 1:** Multiple drug use among Yandaba gang members

DISCUSSION

The computed outcomes from the current study suggest that the members of yandaba do engage with a high prevalence in the cheap, widely available psychoactive substances; notably, cannabis, tobacco (nicotine), rophynol, codeine, alcohol, volatiles solvents and other unconventional intoxicants. This finding is partly in line with other studies, in which street children and youth gangs admitted to taking

cheap, readily available drugs that can induce a sense of intoxication and euphoria in them (for a review, see Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida & Adedokun, 2009; Aidan, 1997; Ayaya & Esamai, 2001; Forster, Tannhauser, & Barros 1996; Inciardi & Surrat, 1998; Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008; Morakinyo & Odejide, 2003; Olley, 2006; Salaam & Brown, 2010; Srivastava, 1995; UNODC, 2006; WHO, 1993). Nonetheless, the use of cheap and readily available drugs by participants in

Table 4: Qualitative Responses for Category Formation

Theme	Sample Quote
1. Strategic intoxication	<p><i>“Drugs and alcohol use facilitates our membership and help us to operate as a successful member of yandaba”</i></p> <p><i>“While on drugs, we can do anything. Taking drugs and alcohol do make us tough and fearless!”</i></p> <p><i>“Taking drugs or alcohol is part of our lives. It calms you down and makes you strong.”</i></p> <p><i>“If you don’t take these things, people will not respect you…….”</i></p> <p><i>“Taking drugs and alcohol embolden us to do anything”</i></p> <p><i>“It is only through “wannan harkar” (drugs and alcohol use) that certain things are done!”</i></p> <p><i>“It makes you bold and be ready to take on anyone…….”</i></p>
2. Sense of belonging	<p><i>“We do enjoy hanging out together and having fun. It’s like a second family, the boys are always there for you. If you need any help, they will be there. If you need something to make you high (drug), they are always there for you.”</i></p> <p><i>“My initial benefit was sharing cigarettes and hard drinks with other boys at the petrol station. I also enjoyed their jokes. Somewhere along the line, I realised that my friends do it, why not me? ……”</i></p> <p><i>“I used to join other boys at junction where they take drugs. One day, I was told by the group that I would not be allowed to go if I didn’t take drugs with them. I agreed so as to save my neck. “Da sun hallaka ni” (they could have killed me). I took it in excess.”</i></p>
3. Relationships with politicians	<p><i>“During political campaigns, politicians do use us. They do recruit boys at various junctions to foment trouble. Some of them (the politicians) don’t always provide drugs but we know where and how to get them after paying for the service. We need to take drugs to get charged!”</i></p> <p><i>“During elections, they do call on us; they do give us campaign vests, money and wee wee (cannabis). The moment you take the drug, your brain will turn off. They do put us on their campaign bus as part of the convoy. We do serve as guards or provide security for them. We go with weapons to protect them and to defend ourselves”</i></p> <p><i>“I was not enrolled in school due to financial difficulties and had nothing to do. There was a time when some politicians approached us with a job, I was left out because I didn’t take drugs. My friends got the money. Before the next job, I got myself into the sytem!”</i></p> <p><i>“My initial involvement with “kwayoyi” (drugs) has to do with politicians. I was given the substance by a politician before a political rally. It influenced me to be reckless and to do certain things without second thought”.</i></p>

the current study is not to suggest that a few members of the yandaba may not struggle to finance access to other expensive drugs. In fact, the descriptive analysis of the patterns of illicit drug use by the participants suggests that few members of the yandaba had ever used or

were currently using expensive illicit drugs, such as cocaine and heroin. What is unclear is how they manage to finance their expensive drug use, given that the majority of the yandaba are from an economically disadvantaged background.

The findings on the high levels of alcohol and other illicit drug use by the participants, despite their Muslim background (being previously enrolled through the process of *almajiri* education), should be highlighted. This finding is at variance with other studies on Northern Nigeria, where an extremely low rate of alcohol use among the participants was reported (e.g., see Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida & Adedokun, 2009; Obot & Olaniyi, 1991). For instance, reports of street children in Maiduguri (Nigeria) by Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida and Adedokun, (2009) revealed that this group contained extremely low alcohol users. The strong Islamic religious teaching on the prohibition of alcohol may have resulted in the low prevalence of alcohol use among Abdulmalik and colleague groups because the samples were still at Quranic School when they participated in the study. Another probable reason for the disparity between the results of this study and previous studies might be due to the fact that large numbers of yandaba who participated in the present study operated in culturally mixed (e.g., Doraye, Tudun Wada, and Sabon Gari) whose populations are with mainly southern non Muslims, and thus the activities of the Task Force on Islamic Law Implementation (*Hisbah*) are rarely felt among the non Muslim residents.

On the patterns of relationships between drug use and the participants' duration as a gang member, the chi square analysis suggests that there was a statistically significant relationship. This finding is unsurprising because extended group membership could expose them to a street reputation for illicit drug use. Substance abuse or illicit drug use among youth gangs often entails congregations and is often viewed as a common type of activity that is integrated into their subculture. It therefore follows that engagement in illicit drug and alcohol misuse could be escalated through group solidarity in "supporting a normalised environment".

Regarding the relationships that exist between the patterns of drug use and the age group of the participants, no statistically significant relationship was observed. The reason

for the lack of a significant relationship between age group and patterns of multiple drug use is not immediately clear, but it may be anticipated that the age of the participants may not necessarily affect their patterns of psychoactive substance misuse, since gang members operate in groups (whether young or old), irrespective of age differences or age gaps.

Now, considering the probable risk factors for the initiation into alcohol and other psychoactive substance use among yandaba, three prominent risk factors emerged from the qualitative data. These are: strategic intoxication to demonstrate their toughness, sense of belonging, and relationships with politicians. The participants maintained that the use of drugs and alcohol gives them the necessary courage to engage in violent behaviour and to instil fear in people. According to them, engaging in violent or other criminal behaviour may not be easy without being influenced by alcohol or drug intake. In particular, one of the respondents mentioned that the use of drugs and alcohol facilitates their membership and gives them the courage to operate as successful members of the yandaba. The question that is raised by this response is what makes an average gang member a successful member of the yandaba. While there was no specific answer to this, becoming a yandaba member epitomises masculinity and excessive drug and alcohol use may enhance this.

The other frequent route to drug and alcohol use among the yandaba, as revealed in the current study, was to demonstrate a sense of belonging and/or to function as a family. Although the use of illicit drugs and alcohol is not necessarily a condition for street children or youth gang membership, the respondents in the current study admitted that they had tried drugs for the first time in order to demonstrate a sense of feeling bound to conform, and thus "fit in" with their peers. While various explanations may be given to buttress this, it is plausible to presume that their peers often spend time doing common activities together, and, through interactions with their peers, they tend to acquire values and beliefs that relate to what is accepted as normalised activity within the

gang, in which substance misuse is prominent. As reiterated earlier, drug and alcohol use appears to be a normalised activity within the gang in order to establish a street reputation and as a symbolic statement of belonging.

The participants also rationalised their initial drug and alcohol use by blaming it on their relationships with politicians. While their responses are treated with extreme caution, it is common knowledge that the majority of yandaba earnings come from politically motivated thuggery (Dan-Asabe, 1991; Dawah, 1996; International Crisis Africa Report, 2007; Kush-ee, 2008; Matusitz & Repass, 2009). Besides monetary compensation for engaging in political thuggery, the yandaba members are mostly introduced to drugs and alcohol by their benefactors. While under the influence of drugs/alcohol, they freely wield and scrape weapons along the road, frightening or intimidating innocent victims who might be perceived as the 'political enemy' of their benefactor. Although an ordinary member of the gang is perceived as being violent and aggressive, the use of drug could escalate their aggressive and violent tendencies.

While the identified risk factors may be treated independently, it should be highlighted that young people who engage in one form of health-compromising behaviour are often engaged in other problem behaviours (Mackenzie, Hunt, & Joe-Laidler, 2006). In fact, some of the probable risk factors for yandaba gang membership and subsequent drug use are interrelated and additive. For instance, relationships with politicians predate illicit drug and other substance abuse by the gang members. Whether they are being approached by politicians or not, an average member of the yandaba is engaged in excessive drug and alcohol use, either to show solidarity for identity formation or to demonstrate toughness. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that drug and alcohol use by prospective members of the yandaba is a shared group activity which constitutes an integral part of their everyday life, primarily to demonstrate their masculinity and toughness, and could be further enhanced by other risk factors, such as the perceived need

to "fit in" with peers, and relationships with politicians necessitated by economic hardship.

As a last word, it is recognised that the study reported in the current paper is constrained by some major limitations that need to be addressed because of their implications for the interpretation of the data presented. These include the difficulty in estimating the exact universe of the street gang, the uncorroborated self report method of data collection and its attendant social biases, the adoption of descriptive and cross-sectional design and its effect on actual cause and effects connection, the simplicity of the instrument used for data collection, the relatively small number of participants recruited for the qualitative interviews and its effect on the generalising the findings. Based on the aforementioned weaknesses, it is clear that future research should seek to utilise a more sophisticated instrument for data collection, with large, randomly selected members of the yandaba, and that experimental designs or the use of more complex statistics such as structural equations would help to present a more detailed useful picture of yandaba substance misuse behaviour.

Policy Implications

Notwithstanding some of the major limitations highlighted above, several important implications are suggested by the results of the present study. Firstly, the use of yandaba gang members as political thugs and their consequent involvement in alcohol and drug intake, that was highlighted in the present study, has important implications with regard to the need for Nigerian politicians to collaborate and support those in government to address the problem of the excruciating poverty arising from unemployment, and the increasing decay of our educational system, which is the potential motivation for gang membership and consequent involvement in antisocial activities in Nigeria. It is also important that the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) should forge a meaningful partnership with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Nigeria to manage and control the problem of substance

misuse among vulnerable and other addicts in the country. The continuing availability of prescription drugs on the street (through street hawking) and hypnotics, such as diazepam, nitrazepam, and rohypnol, requires urgent, serious attention from both agencies. On the last note, the adoption of an outreach service could serve as a necessary intervention by bringing information, education and reformatory services to the members of the group in their milieu, as they are unlikely to seek help unprompted. Such an outreach programme will play a significant role in identifying and referring most at-risk young people to static services where professionals will be available to manage their substance misuse behaviour and the risks associated with their gang membership.

REFERENCES

- Abdulmalik, J., Omigbodun, O., Beida, O. & Adedokun, B. (2009). Psychoactive substance use among children in informal religious schools (Almajiris) in Northern Nigeria. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 12 (6), 527-542.
- Aderinto, A.A. (2000). Social correlates and coping measures of street children: A comparative study of street and non street children in south-western Nigeria. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24, 1199-1213.
- Aidan, M. (1997). Stress and coping strategies among street children in Lusaka. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 2(1), 24- 33.
- Awofeso, N., Ritchie, J., & Degeling, P. (2003). The almajiri heritage and the threat of non state terrorism in northern Nigeria – lessons from central Asia and Pakistan. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 26, 311-325.
- Ayaya, S.O. & Esamai, F.O. (2001). Health Problems of street children in Eldoret, Kenya. *East African Medical Journal*, 78 (12), 624-629.
- Dan Asabe, A. (1991). ‘Yan Daba: The “terrorists” of Kano Metropolitan? Kano Studies, Special Issue: *Youth & Health in Kano Today*, 3, 85-112.
- Dawha, E. (1996). *Yan Daba, Yan Banga and Yan Daukar Amarya: A study of criminal gangs in Northern Nigeria*, IFRA: Ibadan.
- Ebie, J.C. & Pela, O.A. (1981). Some socio cultural aspects of the problem of drug abuse in Nigeria. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 8 (4), 301-306.
- Ekpo, M., Adelekan, M. L., Inem, A. V., Agomoh, A., Agboh, S., & Doherty, A. (1995). Lagos area boys and girls in rehabilitation: their substance use and psychosocial profiles. *East African Medical Journal*, 72(5), 311-316.
- Esbensen, F.A., Winfree, L.T., He, N., & Taylor, T.J. (2001). Youth gangs and definitional issues: when is a gang a gang, and why does it matter? *Crime and Delinquency*, 47, 105-130.
- Forster, L.M., Tannhauser, M., & Barros, H.M. (1996). Drug use among street in southern Brazil. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 43 (1-2), 57-62.
- Gureje, O., Degenhardt, L., Olley, B., Uwakwe, R., Udofia, O., Wakil, A., Adeyemi, O., Bohnert, K.M., & Anthony, J.C. (2007). A descriptive epidemiology of substance use and substance use disorders in Nigeria during the Early 21st Century. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 91, 1-9.
- Inciardi, J.A. & Surratt, H.L. (1998). Children in the streets of Brazil. Drug use, Crime, Violence, and HIV Risks, *Substance Use and Misuse*, 33 (7), 1461-1480.
- International Crisis Africa Report. (2007). *Nigeria’s election: Avoiding a political crisis*. Africa Report no. 123, 28 March 2007.
- Kaime-Atterhog, W. & Ahlberg, B.M. (2008). Are street children beyond rehabilitation? Understanding the life situation of street boys through ethnographic methods in Nakuru, Kenya. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 1345-1354.
- Kushee, J.D. (2008). *Political thuggery in the North East and North West geo political zones of Nigeria: Implications for electoral democracy: an invited paper for the SPSP annual conference June 15-18 2008*.

- Mackenzie, K., Hunt, G., & Joe-Laidler, K. (2006). The cultural/sub cultural contexts of marijuana use at the turn of the twenty-first century. In Golub Andrew, *Youth Gangs and Drugs: The case of marijuana*. Rutledge, United States of America, pp. 99-135.
- Matusitz, J. & Repass, M. (2009). Gangs in Nigeria: an updated examination. *Crime, Law, and Social Change*, 52, 495-511.
- Morakinyo, J. & Odejide, A.O. (2003). A community based study of patterns of psychoactive substance use among street children in a local government area of Nigeria. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 71 (2), 109-116.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2008). *Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006 Population Census*. Official Gazette on National and State Provisional Totals 2006 Census (FGP 71/52007/2, 500(0L24).
- Obot, I.S. & Olaniyi, A.A. (1991). Drug related psychotic disorders in four Nigerian Hospitals (1984-1988). *Nigerian Journal of Psychology*, 8 (1), 13-16.
- Olley, B.O. (2006). Social and health behaviours in youth of the streets of Ibadan, Nigeria. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 271-282.
- Salaam, A.O. (2011). *Yandaba on the streets of Kano: Social conditions and criminality*. Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies, 6 (1), 68-77.
- Salaam, A.O., & Brown, J. (2010). Lagos "Area Boys", substance usage and potential risk factors. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, doi: 10.1007/s11469-010-9299-9.
- Srivastava, M. (1995). Drug abuse among street children. *Perspectives in Social Work*, 10 (1), 11 -17.
- UNDCP (2001). *Report of the rapid situation of drug abuse in Nigeria*. UNDCP Publications.
- UNODC (2006). Drug demand reduction among street children in Egypt. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Street Children Report*, Vienna.
- Usman, L.M. (2008). Assessing the universal basic education primary and Koranic schools' synergy for Almajiri street boys in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22, 62-73.
- World Health Organisation (1993). *A one way street? Report on Phase 1 of the street children project*. WHO, Geneva.
- Ya'u, Y. Z. (2000). The youth, economic crisis and identity transformation: the case of yandaba in Kano. In Attahiru Jega (ed.), *Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria*. Uppsala Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.