

# How Youth Crime is Affected by Drug Abuse and Mental Health – A Case Study of Kawale Policing Area

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**Abstract:** Drug abuse also known as substance abuse is referred to as the use of certain chemicals with the purpose of creating pleasurable effects in the brain, there are a number of reasons why youths indulge drug abuse such as, coming from families where members use drugs, this makes it possible for the drugs to be found easily, availability of cheap alcohol in small amounts that is found in selling points within people's residents, fuels drug abuse in youths. This study uses random sampling technique to examine the correlation between youth crimes and drug abuse and mental health. The study sample comprised 40 samples (20 men and women, and, 20 youths). Questionnaire was used for collection data. Data shows that 24 percent of youths abuse drugs, it is learnt that 18 percent of male youths' abuse drug while 6 percent of female youths' abuse drugs. Data shows that alcohol is the most abused drug with 12 percent, seconded by Tobacco with 9 percent, then Cannabis with 5 percent and 1 percent for other drugs. The research reveals that 80 percent of cases that are committed by youths are triggered by drug abuse and some of the crimes that are committed are vandalism, shoplifting, theft, robbery, common assault, sexual assault, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. It is suggested that parents and guardians should always know what their youths are doing, and know their friends to monitor them well. Parents should always set good examples to their children and encourage them in education. Schools should have anti-drug abuse clubs to make awareness on evils of drugs to children, the youths themselves should avoid bad company, and places where drugs are found to avoid temptations.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, Mental health, Youths, Crime, Policing area.

## 1. Introduction

### A. Drug Abuse and Mental Health Implications

Drug abuse also known as substance abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects in the brain.

Drug abuse may be referred to as the use of illegal drugs, or the use of prescription for the purposes other than those for which they are meant for, or in excessive amounts, which, when consumed, they enter the brain, where they interrupt the work of the brain and change how the brain performs its jobs, later may lead to different problems relating to social, physical or emotional. Many people mistakenly think that those who use drugs lack moral principles or willpower and that they could

stop their drug use simply by choosing to, but in reality, drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting that, needs a strong will (Publications, 2022).

In this research we will investigate how drug abuse and mental health in youths do influence crime, this is shown through a compared crime records of cases that are reported at Kawale police station. Here cases are compared according to offenders, where selected cases are spotted to be committed by youths, and when screened properly it is noticed that there is influence of drug and mental health to the committing of the crimes. (Backman, 2014).

There is evidence that using some drugs may cause mental illness, for example, cannabis or alcohol may increase chances of developing psychosis or a psychotic disorder which makes the user to be violent and, in the end, committing crime. (TREATMENT ADVOCACY CENTER, 2016).

## 2. Background of the Study

Most youths nowadays indulge in drug abuse which leads to mental health. In this study will be investigating why youths indulge in drug abuse and mental health, the effects of drugs, ways of preventing youths from indulging into drug abuse, the assistance that the government, schools and parents can render to youths that are addicted to drugs.

There are over 190 million drug users around the world and the problem has been increasing at alarming rates, especially among young adults under the age of 30. Apart from the long-term damage that the drugs cause to the body, drug abuse also causes, drug addicts who use needles are at risk of contracting HIV and hepatitis B and C infections. (Dr. Ananya Mandal, 2021).

Drug abuse is seen in various different age groups and in individuals from all walks of life and in different socio-economic sections. And studies shows that men are more likely to abuse drugs than women, single people are more likely to abuse drugs than married individuals and urban dwellers more likely than rural dwellers. Prisoners, street children and younger individuals are also more likely to abuse drugs.

According to (H Chabrol, D.J Mabila, E. Chauchard, R. Mauntoulan, A. Rousseau, 2007) reports has showed that poor

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parental control, environmental and living condition, and contact with siblings and peers who use drugs, employment status, and drug availability and or ease of getting drug, contribute much to drug abuse.

#### A. *Reasons why Teens Start using Drugs & Alcohol*

##### 1) *Peer Pressure*

A lot of youths are reported to be given drugs or alcohol by a peer, so these youths want to be accepted and to fit in. When their best friend offers them drugs or alcohol, it is unlikely that they will say no, but rather they do accept the offer.

##### 2) *Self-Medication & Escape*

It is not uncommon for mental health symptoms to begin to make an appearance during the teen years. In order to cope with symptoms of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders, teens usually begin using drugs or alcohol to minimize their symptoms.

##### 3) *Performance Improvement*

With huge amounts of pressure relating to academics and extra-curricular activities, youths begin using performance enhancing drugs or stimulants in order to meet the expectations of their parents, teachers, or coaches.

##### 4) *Experimentation*

Kids are naturally inquisitive, and kids grow into teenagers. It is not uncommon for youths to seek out drugs or alcohol just to know what the sensations of being drunk are like.

##### 5) *To Feel Grown Up*

Youths want to feel grown-up. As it is, becoming an adult is somehow exciting, and being able to do most things freely such as drinking, smoking cigarettes, or use of illicit and harmful drugs seems to be exciting for many youths. (Sahar Wahed, 2019)

Lack of informed choices among youths as most of them do not know the real dangers of use of drugs.

At an adult stage many young people stop being offending, but those that highly use drugs delay this development. Several explanations have been given for the causes of drug abuse by youths in the urban areas. For families in which parents are so preoccupied and fatigued by their struggles to make ends meet they have little or no time and patience to take care of the children's problem. In some families, children may be asked to sell different types of goods on the streets to contribute to the family's income and are therefore exposed to amoral habits and all evils associated with street lives. Therefore, this is also the other reason that expos youths to gang initiation and drug use is common in city slums. (SB Coleman & DI Davis, 1978).

The following are examples of drugs that are commonly used by the youths:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Cocaine from coca
- Hashish or marijuana from cannabis
- Synthetic drugs such as heroin, ecstasy and LSD.

#### B. *Consequences of Drug Abuse and Mental Health*

There are a number of crimes with the highest incidences among drug users. Offences that are committed by these youths

include; drug possession and drug use (just being found with drugs and using them without license or authority is a crime) Some of the offences that are committed are vandalism, shoplifting, theft, robbery, assault, rape, murder, arson, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Drug abuse can limit individuals' ability to participate in society and may lead to social exclusion, which may also lead to mental health problems. Social exclusion includes different dimensions such as education, economy, housing, social relations, norms and values, also not forgetting societal interventions and legal sanctions that in themselves can be stigmatizing. There is also strong evidence that a childhood having conflict with parents or siblings often end-up with drug abuse and criminality.

### 3. **Statement of the Problem**

Abuse of drugs by youths and its detrimental effects on security in some areas attracts public attention. It is important to understand the factors that influence youths to take drugs and the extent to which involvement of drugs have affected security in the areas, and explore effective ways toward curbing it.

Kawale police station and its policing areas are in urban, being in the urban it has been observed that most school dropout youths are found in the streets begging and doing uninteresting jobs. In addition to begging and doing uninterested jobs, taking drug becomes an attraction. These youths are found loitering in the streets and in liquor shops taking cheap alcohol and other drugs. This is another pathetic condition which is contributing much to drug abuse among youths in the areas.

The peer influence is exerted through two major means in the drug abuse culture. These include initiations and supply. Peers provide models for drug usage by teaching its members when, where, and how to use the drugs. This is in addition to providing information on how drugs can be acquired (Kaplan, 1975). Having a large number of drug-using friends, enables youths in the Kawale policing area to have access to drugs and such access, leads to the high rate of initial drug use.

Availability may also refer to social aspects because drugs are more available in some social groups than in others. For example, frequent use of drugs in other families where more than one member use drugs make it possible for the drugs to be found easily, cannabis use is highly available and many young men tend to use them, and a good number may actually become addicts.

Factors including attitudes, beliefs, and expectations function to sustain drug abuse. observed that alcohol, in small amounts, is widely perceived to promote and enhance the pleasure of social interaction. Cannabis is perceived to produce euphoria and enhance the enjoyment of food, sex, art, music, and hobbies for many users. On the contrary, amphetamines and cocaine are said to produce mood elevation and perceived enhancement of performance. These beliefs and expectations generate net effects that motivate both drug use and abuse.

According to research by (Zakeyu, 2022) of Drug Fight Malawi's, it is clearly indicating that there is an increase of use of drugs especially marijuana among school-going youth where a random survey showed that almost half of Secondary School

Students and those in colleges are using marijuana in Malawi.

In most cases, the youth use drugs to be 'high', thereby increasing cases of misbehavior and committing crimes. (Chauluka S. , 2022). Therefore, a danger that many youths in Malawi will grow with disturbed minds due to marijuana use which may result in mental health problems among the youth and the coming generation.

Although drug abuse is becoming a serious issue among youths, there are some ways and activities that parents, community and the government out there can do to assist the youths that are trapped in drug abuse. But before the assistance or any mechanism are done, those coming up with plans need to address some of the challenges that are there and these challenges can be observed through the following

- Missing school
- A significant drop in grades or performance at school
- Pulling back from activities they you enjoy
- Disinterest in spending time with family
- Drastic changes in behavior including isolation
- Being aggressive

The above issues can firstly be addressed by hearing from the youth, conduct counselling and advising the youths on drug abuse and mental health issues. Some of the recommendations that can be there are;

- a. Create awareness of the implications of drug use by youths.
- b. Create awareness among parents on the drug abuse and the need to restrain children from using the substance.
- c. For parents there is need to know friends of their youths because if the friend use drugs its often that their wards would want to try.
- d. Strengthen the institutions of government that are concerned with drug control to curb drug production and supply.
- e. Provide effective check on drug use in the areas where people live.
- f. Put measures on roaming of youths in the street such as giving them technical skills
- g. Know the youths' activities.
- h. Establish rules and consequences and explain well to them.
- i. Provide support to the youths and encourage them for success.
- j. Set good examples so to be role model to them. (Mayo Clinic staff, 2022)

#### 4. Study Objectives

The objectives for this research are to study why youths indulge in drug abuse, know the consequences of drug abuse among youths and the society, and find strategies to prevent drug abuse among our youths as many youths indulge in drug abuse and mental health due to many different factors such as, peer pressure, lack of parental or family involvements in issues that bother the youths.

#### A. *Understanding why youths indulge in drug abuse*

This study aims to find out why that a lot of youths are engaged in drug abuse, we will investigate to have more knowledge on why youths engage in drug abuse.

#### B. *Measuring crime cases associated with drug abuse and mental health*

On the measuring of crime cases associated with drug abuse and mental health, we will investigate through statistics on cases that are committed by youths with the influence of drug abuse.

#### C. *Preventing drug abuse and mental health in youths*

After investigating the reasons why youths indulge in drug abuse and investigating the consequences like crime that the malpractice produces, we will bring in mechanisms on how best we can prevent and stop the malpractice.

### 5. Research Question

In this study we are investigating on a research question, "Does drug abuse and mental health among youths' influence crime?" Where we are expected to see the correlation between drug abuse and crimes committed by youths

### 6. Significance of the Study

In this study we are expected to know why youths indulge in drug abuse, and find ways on how these youths can be assisted to stop drug abuse. We will also see the benefit outcome of the study

### 7. Scope of the Study

Kawale police station is geographically located in the capital city of Lilongwe which is in the Central Region of Malawi. Its policing areas are, Kawale township itself, Mchesi, Biwi, Chipasula, Kaliyeka, Chilinde, areas 17, 23 and 24

These areas are in the urban sector where more youths indulge in drug abuse due to different reasons such as early school dropout, unemployment and peer pressure.

This study will focus on the youths themselves and parents, where a research questionnaire will be used to collect data from participants.

### 8. Reviews

This study focuses on how youth crime is affected by drug use and mental health, thus investigating the relationship between drug use and mental health among youths and crimes committed by youths, this is a case study of Kawale Policing area. This section will look at the literature reviews so as to understand how drug use and mental health among youths' influence crime. Drug use and mental health conditions are often closely related as one may cause the other and bring mental disorder that affects a person's brain, leading to a person's inability to control their use of substances whether legal or illegal, alcohol or medications, thereby committing crimes. (Banjari Bansal, 2005)

Therefore, we will look at both international literature and

national literature reviews of the research study, on how youth crime is affected by drug abuse and mental health.

We will also look into research gap identification, conceptual framework and theoretical frame work.

#### A. *International Reviews*

In Uganda, Drug abuse is mostly described as a problem among youths who are unemployed, the following are some of the drugs are; Cannabis which is mainly abused by street and school youth, as well as soldiers, heroin is consumed by urban and street youth, cocaine abuse tend to be done by high income groups. According to the 2009, Uganda Police annual crime report, there were 2,034 reported and investigated narcotics cases, which led to 2,274 arrests compared to 2,542 in 2008. The trend has been attributed to inadequate laws and weak border controls. Some of the factors that led to increase in the abuse of cannabis, hard drugs and volatile solvents are; unemployment, social disorders, family disruptions as well as high rates of drop-outs from school. Increased production and trafficking of cannabis has led to increased availability of the drug. Multiple drug abuse like volatile solvents mixed with alcohol, and combinations of cannabis and volatile solvents with alcohol have been reported by NGOs as an occurrence in Uganda. Cannabis is smoked and dissolved in water for consumption. Khat is sold openly and chewed by youth in urban centres. Petrol is sniffed either from small bottles or from soaked cloth, mostly by urban and street youths. Uganda is now known as a producer, consumer and transit country for drug trafficking. Traffickers of whom some are Ugandans, are arrested as far as in China. In 2008-9 over 54 Ugandans had been arrested on drug related offences and 38 had been convicted to death. Other traffickers from various countries from India Nigerian, Pakistanis and of recent Tanzanians have been arrested at border points trying to traffic drugs where they obtain heroin, mandrax, cocaine and other drugs which they then transit through Uganda to Kenya, Southern Africa and Europe. In terms of responses to drug use, Uganda does not have an effective law, though one has been on the shelves since 2005. The National Drug Authority Act 2000 is weak and comprehensive. Uganda does not have a master Plan and Policy on drug abuse, all documents have remained drafts and cannot provide the commitment to addressing drug abuse. The Uganda, Police operate a narcotic police unit very vigilant at airports and destroys cannabis. Drug education is incorporated in curricula at primary, secondary schools and higher education students, and there are programs of drug awareness talks and seminars on issues relating to drugs in which students' participation is encouraged. Joint fight against drug trafficking in the east African region is affected by different levels of facilitation, border porous and unmanned, and manpower who fight drug abuse. (Twaibu)

Around 275 million people used drugs worldwide in the year 2020, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders, according to the 2021 World Drug Report, released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). According to the Report, the use of cannabis, has risen from around 6 per cent to more than 11 per cent in Europe between

2002-2019, and around 4 per cent to 16 per cent in the United States between 1995-2019, while the percentage of adolescents that perceived cannabis as harmful was reduced by 40 per cent in the United States and by 25 per cent in Europe. Based on demographic changes, projections suggest an 11 per cent rise in the number of people who use drugs globally by 2030, and a marked increase of 40 per cent in Africa, due to its rapidly growing and young population. According to the global estimates, about 5.5 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 64 years have used drugs at least once in 2020, while 36.3 million people, or 13 per cent of the total number of persons who use drugs, suffer from drug use disorders. The Report further noted that in the last 24 years cannabis potency had increased by as much as four times in parts of the world, even as the percentage of youths who perceived the drug as harmful fell by as much as 40 per cent, despite evidence that cannabis use is associated with a variety of health and other harms, especially among regular long-term users. (Hansford, 2021).

According to National Institute on Drug Abuse, the WHO estimated that about 90% of India's street children misuse some substance, The national capital of India, Delhi, with a population of over 16 million has approximately 100,000 street children, and substance use is reported as a major health problem in this segment of population, but there are no reliable data associating substance use and criminality among the juveniles in Delhi. However, substance use by Indian children has been documented for more than a decade.

There is a close relationship between drug abuse and crime. Drug abusers commit crimes to pay for their drugs and this imposes damages to the society, and many criminal acts are under the influence of drugs. Drug trafficking is another outcome of drug abuse. According to research in the United States in 2010, 70% of male prisoners were drug abusers which is significant compared to the 11.2% rate of drug abuse in the entire male population. Alcohol has the highest relationship with aggressive crimes. According to reports, criminals who had abused drugs and alcohol simultaneously committed 21.4% of violent crimes. Among individuals who were arrested in Australia during 2004, 82% had a history of drug abuse, 69% had abused drugs at least 6 months before their arrest and 62% frequently abused drugs. The abused substances were Iranian crack, opium syrup, methamphetamine, heroin, psychotropic pills and cannabis. The crimes of opiate drug abusers (opium syrup, opium, heroin and Iranian crack) in order of priority included: drug related crimes (crack 63.7%, heroin 52.4%, opium 43.8%, opium syrup 40.5%), robbery (crack 63.3%, heroin 52.4%, opium syrup 22%, opium 21.6%), murder (opium 21.6%, crack 18.30%, opium syrup 14.5%, heroin 9.7%), armed robbery (heroin 25%, opium syrup 22%, crack 21.1%, opium 12.4%) and kidnapping (opium 4.3%, opium syrup 4.2%, crack 2.6%, heroin 2.4%). The crimes of hallucinogenic drugs (hashish, psychotropic pills, glass or methamphetamine) included: robbery (glass 53.2%, pills 36.6%), drug-related crimes (hashish 33.3%, glass 21.6%, pills 9.1%), armed robbery (hashish 33.3%, pills 9.1%, glass 5.4%) and murder (pills 18.2%, hashish 16.7%, glass 8.8%). There is a direct relationship between the level of drug abuse and the

type of drug and committed crimes. With increased drug abuse, delinquency rate and its intensity increased. Addicts are forced to commit crime to acquire drugs, they are not hired. As a result, they don't have an income to fulfill their needs. That is why they turn to illegal activities such as smuggling, drug dealing, theft and prostitution. Hence, the cycle of poverty, addiction, and crime is repeated. (Raheleh Rafeiee, 2013 ).

The relationship between drug abuse and crime can be bad, drugs can have both direct and indirect effects on violence and criminal behaviors. The drug–violence relationship is further complicated by intoxicating doses and/or withdrawal effects of specific drugs. According to the UNICEF estimates of 2002, at least 100 million children live in the streets all over the world, India indicates the largest number of street children in the world. The WHO estimates that about 90% of these street children misuse some kind of substance. Globally, the problem emerges as a significant public health threat to world's 30–100 million street children. These children are visible everywhere—selling trinkets, picking rags, polishing shoes, working in vehicle repair shops, or serving food in roadside restaurants. The national capital of India, Delhi, with a population of over 16 million has approximately 100,000 street children, and substance use is reported as a major health problem in this segment of population. There are no reliable data associating substance use and criminality among the juveniles in Delhi. This relationship is important for both healthcare workers and policy makers. However, substance use by Indian children has been documented for more than a decade. Benegal *et al.* assessed 281 children, and reported 197 children as users of illicit substances out of which 76% were smoking tobacco, 45.9% were chewing it, 48% were using inhalants, 42% were using alcohol, 15.7% were into cannabis addiction, and 2% opioids. In the National Household survey of drug use, Ray surveyed 40,697 males comprising 8,587 children in the age group of 12–18 years, and found that 3.8% were using alcohol, 0.6% were using cannabis, and 0.2% were using opioids as drugs of choice. A study in 2007 conducted by Saluja *et al.* reported that opioids were the most common substances (76.2%) and heroin the most common opioid (36.5%). More than half (54.2%) were dependent on nicotine. A study on 163 street boys of Mumbai city in India reported substance use among 132 of the sample studied.[11] In the single largest study on inhalant use in India, Ray *et al.* studied this phenomenon in 100 inhalant users with purposive sampling and found that although Inhalants were the primary drug use, most of the users of the substance were also using other substances such as tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, raw opium, heroin, sleeping tablets, cough syrups, and injections in decreasing order of frequency, respectively, where 76% reported tolerance and 56% had experienced withdrawal symptoms in the study. There are limited studies regarding substance use among juveniles; the linking of drug use and criminality among the juveniles—under-enquiry with the Juvenile Justice System in the national capital has not been clearly estimated. (Shridhar Sharma, 2016)

According to the Canadian Addictions Survey 2005, youths aged 15–17 engaged in early use of alcohol and cannabis. Early drug and alcohol use are known to be risk factors for future

delinquency among youth. Subsequent problematic substance abuse can lead to individuals engaging in criminal activity in order to support their addiction. Individuals mostly engage in shoplifting, prostitution and breaking and entering, as a method to obtain alcohol and illicit drugs. The Alberta Youth Experience Survey by (TAYES, 2005) measured alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use among Alberta students in grades 7. The survey stated that 26.7% of students self-reported cannabis use, and 25.4% reported using any illicit drug (including cannabis). The most commonly used illicit drugs were hallucinogens such as magic mushrooms followed by ecstasy, cocaine, solvents, stimulants, glue and crystal methamphetamine, in descending order. TAYES and other regional surveys on young drug use. Research indicates that the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut have a large number of isolated Aboriginal communities, which have disproportionately high rates of illicit drug consumption when compared to the national average. In general, Aboriginal offenders in Canada report more serious substance abuse problems than non-Aboriginal offenders. 38% of male Aboriginal offenders having serious problems with alcohol versus 16% of non-Indigenous males. The 2002–2003 First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey, indicates that the highest risk group for both drinking and drug use among Indigenous people was young males aged 18–29. Regarding youth in custody, Justice of Canada, found that 57% of Indigenous youth in custody had a confirmed substance abuse problem. Using data from the Canadian Addiction Survey, it was estimated that 26.7% of youth were using tobacco. The health risks of cigarette smoking are well known, what is not common knowledge is the finding that the use of tobacco by youth is associated with more frequent use of alcohol, cannabis and other illicit drugs, relative to youth who do not smoke. Among those under age 20, smokers were 14 times more likely to consume alcohol than were their non-smoking peers and were also more likely to engage in binge drinking (five or more drinks on one occasion). Davis claims that tobacco smoking in youth is a good indication that youth may be engaging in other risky behaviour. The exact nature of the link between drugs and crime remains unclear but can be examined among different types of populations. Some common risk factors between drugs and crime and also how crime and substance abuse can precipitate each other are the strongest known links. Pernanen and colleagues, documented the proportions of crimes associated with alcohol and other drugs in Canada, and confirmed the close association between the use of psychoactive substances and criminal behaviour. Research suggests that substance abuse and involvement in crime, including drug, gun, and gang violence, have similar risk factors. These risk factors create different degrees of pressure on the individual and may give rise to high-risk behavior, which, in turn, lead to levels of substance abuse and crime that can be categorized according to a range of severity. As these actions progress along the range, substance abuse and antisocial manner become more firmly entrenched, with one problem reinforcing the other, and vice versa. Substance abuse, particularly alcohol, may be a causing factor in the commission

of an offence by either weakening an individual's ability to respond appropriately to difficult situations or by rendering individuals more vulnerable to victimization. The 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization, it was reported that in roughly 52% of violent incidents, the victim believed that the incident was related to the offender's use of alcohol or drugs. Multiple studies have documented the strong link between consumption and sexual assault. In fact, more than half of offenders have consumed alcohol or drugs before committing a sexual assault. Factors that may explain both drug use and criminal activity include poverty, lack of social values, personality disorders, association with drug users and/or delinquents, and loss of contact with agents of socialization. The social influences' approach; based on the belief that young people begin to use drugs because of their self-image and/or social pressures, is promising. This approach suggests that, in order to resist substances, young people need to be able to use counter arguments effectively. Skara & Sussman, in their summary of the effectiveness of program evaluation studies, found long-term empirical evidence of effectiveness of social influences programs in preventing or reducing substance use. (Canada, 2022).

Youths are characterized by high psychosocial vulnerability (Hatano *et al.*, 2018). It is a specific moment of the development of young people engaging in a great deal of personal and interpersonal exploration to understand themselves, their significant, and their social world. Concurrently, many physical, behavioral, and cognitive changes occur in the teenage years, and risk-taking behavior is common as it is often associated with the engagement in unlawful acts and conducts (Gonzales *et al.*, 2017).

In the drug abuse field, a common conceptual structure is provided by international drug treaties, several of the treaties have obligations which require penal provisions in national law for illicit traffic offences. Crime and drugs may be related in several ways, none of them is simple. Firstly, illicit production, manufacture, distribution or possession of drugs may constitute a crime. Secondly, drugs may increase the likelihood of other, non-drug crimes occurring. Thirdly, drugs may be used to make money, with subsequent money-laundering. And fourthly, drugs may be closely linked to other major problems, such as the illegal use of guns, various forms of violence and terrorism. Whether illicit drug use should be considered a crime, a disease, a social disorder or some mixture of these is debated in many countries. Often, public policy is uncertain about the nature of addiction, with social attitudes towards drug abuse reflecting uncertainty about what causes abuse and who is ultimately responsible. Many youths who use drugs become criminals. The United Nations conducts and publishes a series of surveys of crime trends, operations of criminal justice systems and crime prevention strategies in Member States. Reports on crime-related matters, including the impact of organized criminal activities on society at large and control of the proceeds of crime, are presented to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The rate of increase in drug crimes is greater than for all other types of crime, except kidnapping, the complex connection between drug use,

delinquency and crime has been discussed by experts for decades. Substance use and delinquent behaviour are often related, especially as either drug use or delinquency become more serious. Early sexual activity is strongly related to delinquency and drug abuse. Girls who have been pregnant report increased prior use of alcohol and other drugs. Youth who do not feel a strong attachment to their parents are more likely than others to use drugs and become delinquent, consistent with the findings cited earlier in the section on the family. Whether causality is involved in these relationships is not clear. Illicit drug use, delinquency and crime are best seen as closely interrelated behaviours, especially when they occur in contact with the supply of illicit drugs. Drugs and crime cannot be considered separately, in isolation from each other, especially if they emerge from a common set of circumstances. The close connection between drug use and criminal behaviour is supported by many studies. A national survey in the United States examined the relationship between drug use and criminal behaviour. Results show that "drug use is a strong correlate of being booked for a criminal offence, but age is the more important correlate of criminal involvement. There were few differences in models predicting violent as opposed to property crime, although minority status was a more important predictor of violent crime, and poverty was a more important predictor of property crime. (Copenhagen, 1995).

Adolescence is a developmental stage often characterised by various kinds of risk-taking, such as experimentation with alcohol, drugs, sexuality and criminal activities. Most people commit minor offences at one time or another in their youth (Bäckman, Estrada, Nilsson, & Shannon, 2014). Half of Swedish pupils in year nine report having committed some kind of crime at some point (National Council for Crime Prevention 2020), while an equal percentage has also been victims of crime. The 15–20-year-old group accounts for one-fifth of all criminal charges, even though this age range constitutes only 8% of the total population (National Board of Health and Welfare 2020). Most commit isolated offences while a small group tends to commit numerous illegal acts. Youth crime in Sweden has generally declined in the past decade, especially among young people aged 15–17 years (National Council for Crime Prevention 2019; Bäckman *et al.* 2014), but narcotics offences have more than doubled during the same period (National Council for Crime Prevention 2019). Most cannabis-related offences in the Nordic countries are linked to use or possession for personal use (Egnell, Villman, & Obstbaum, 2019). However, the percentage of young people convicted for personal use is higher in Sweden than in the other Nordic countries. Several sanctions for drug-related crime also risk reinforcing social exclusion. Binge drinking and use of alcohol has declined among Swedish youth in recent decades and is at "continued and historically low levels" (Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, 2019, p. 8). The proportion of secondary school pupils who report that they have used drugs (primarily cannabis) in the past 12 months is 13%. A small group of young people use cannabis more regularly, and 3–4% of secondary school pupils reported in 2019 that they had used drugs in the past 30 days or more than 20 times. (Mats

Anderberg M. D., 2022).

Family and peer factors are associated with a high risk of substance use among justice-involved youths. It is hypothesized that this risk process operates through pro-drug attitudes. However, limited research has been conducted on the mechanisms through which family and peer factors increase risk for substance use among juvenile justice involved youth. The other study examined both the direct and indirect effects of family and peer substance use on youth's substance use (alcohol and illicit drug use). The study also examined whether the relationship differs by race. A direct effect of family/peer risk on illicit drug use was found for all youth, though the effect was stronger among White youth. The findings suggest that interventions should focus on targeting both family/peer risk and pro-drug attitudes to reduce substance use. Given the racial difference in the direct effect of family/peer risk on illicit drug use, there may be other factors that influence risk more strongly for White youth, which warrants further investigation.

Substance use is a prevalent concern among high school senior adolescents' population. Which states that by 8<sup>th</sup> grade over a quarter of youth in the United States have tried alcohol, with 15 percent of youth reporting marijuana use, 13 percent reporting cigarette use, and 10 percent reporting illicit drug use other than marijuana (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, Schulenberg, & Miech, 2016). These rates tend to double by 10<sup>th</sup> grade and triple by 12<sup>th</sup> grade with lifetime rates of use at 64 percent for alcohol, 44 percent for marijuana, 31 percent for cigarette use, and 21 percent for illicit drug use other than marijuana among high school seniors (Johnston et al., 2016). The use of substances during this developmental period is concerning due to the wide range of health and functional deficits associated with use (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Aarons et.al, 1999; Moss, Chen, & Yi, 2014). A subset of youth who are at particularly high risk for using substances are youth involved within the juvenile justice system (e.g., Chassin, 2008). It has been estimated that approximately one-quarter of youth (age 12 to 17) who had been in jail or a detention center report using alcohol, tobacco, or any other substance within the past year (Office of Applied Studies, 2003). This prevalence rate is nearly three times greater than that of their same-age peers who had never been in a jail or detention center, among which 8% reported using any substance within the last year (Office of Applied Studies, 2003). Substance use among juvenile offenders poses similar risk for negative health consequences that have been observed among general population youth (Chassin, 2008; Rowe, Wang, Greenbaum, & Liddle, 2008); however, unique to this subgroup of youth is the increased risk for reoffending and continued contact with the justice system (Chassin, 2008; Wiesner, Kim, & Capaldi, 2005). For example, van der Put, Creemers, and Hoeve (2014) found that substance use predicted risk for recidivism above and beyond other well-established risk and protective factors, such as school, free time, relationships, family, and aggression. Thus, understanding factors that may precipitate substance use among this at-risk group of youth is critical. (Tamika C. B. Zapolski, 2018)

A substantial percentage of youth crime is related to

substance use (Egnell et al. 2019; Pedersen & Skardhamar 2010) and there is a well-known and strong correlation between these sets of problems (Chassin 2008; D'Amico, Edelen, Miles, & Morral, 2008; Tripodi & Bender 2011). A large percentage of young people who begin treatment for problematic drug use have committed crimes (Dennis et al. 2004; Kinlock, Battjes, & Gordon, 2004; Mitchell, Kutin, Daley, Best, & Bruun, 2016). Equally, justice-involved youth often have a substance use disorder (Dembo, Wareham, & Schmeidler, 2007; Hammersley, Marsland, & Reid, 2003).

The connection between criminality and drug use is obvious by virtue of the fact that drug use is illegal in many countries, but the relationship can be complex and manifested in various ways. As well, it is often difficult to determine which of the two problems came first (Bennett & Holloway 2005; Mulvey 2010). The connection may also manifest in different ways in different phases of the course of a substance use problem. Crimes and drugs are rarely related to each other in occasional or experimental drug users, while long-term drug use promotes criminality (Bennett & Holloway 2005; Simpson 2003). The linking between cannabis use and crime mainly constitutes drug-related criminality (Green, Doherty, Stuart, & Ensminger, 2010) and is weaker for offences such as assault and theft (Pedersen & Skardhamar 2010). The connection with non-drug-related crime, however, becomes stronger in relation to more serious cannabis use (Grigorenko, Edwards, & Chapman, 2015) or use of drugs such as amphetamines and opiates (Ford 2005; Kinlock, Battjes, & Gordon, 2004). The connection between drunkenness and violent crime is clearer (Brunelle, Tremblay, Blanchette-Martin, Gendron, & Tessier, 2013). Many young people cease offending when they become adults, but lingering high drug use can delay this development (Mulvey 2010; Sullivan & Hamilton 2007).

The crimes with the highest incidences among drug users are drug offences, shoplifting and theft (Bennett & Holloway 2005). An American study showed that 83% of the included young people had committed offences apart from drug possession or drug use (Dennis et al. 2004). The types of offences were distributed as follows: property crimes (for example, vandalism, forgery, shoplifting, theft, robbery and auto theft) 55%, crimes against persons (for example, assault, rape, murder and arson) 45% and drug-related offences (for example, driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs and manufacturing or dealing drugs) 65%. Boys and young men offend more often than do girls and young women (McAra & McVie 2010). This pattern also applies to young people receiving substance abuse treatment (Hsieh & Hollister 2004; Mitchell et al. 2016). A variety of substances are used across the African, such as alcohol, tobacco, methamphetamine, glue, cigarettes, miraa, marijuana, petrol as well as other injecting drugs. Findings have shown that Southern African region, particularly from South Africa, Methamphetamine and its related products are predominantly used (Meade et al., 2015)

Drug use and crime are factors that limit individuals' ability to participate in society and may lead to social exclusion (EMCDDA 2003; March, Oviedo-Joekes, & Romero, 2006; Millar 2007). The concept of social exclusion includes various

dimensions such as education, economy, housing, social relations, norms and values, but also societal interventions and legal sanctions that in themselves can be stigmatising. It is dynamic and cumulative, that is, deficiencies in one area can negatively affect other life domains and the exclusion process is increased by accumulating several problems (Kronauer 1998). African youths are more vulnerable to drug abuse which result into indulging in crime and different violence (Dorcac Oyebisi Ettang).

The disadvantageous use of alcohol and other substances has been reported to cause devastating consequences on individuals, families, and societies (Medina-Mora, 2005). Drug use cause effects like psychological, social, and economic burden in societies, and many other physical harms like road traffic accidents (Hall et al., 2016). The World Health Organization estimated that alcohol, tobacco, and drug use contributed to 12.4% of deaths globally in 2000 (WHO, 2018). In Southern Africa, drug use prevention interventions reportedly varied from use of Primary Health Care Settings targeting general practitioners like, Community-based intervention which prevent drug use in youths (Cubbins et al. 2012). There is need for improvement on levels of information disseminated to target groups and addressing misinformation (Schneider et al., 2016; Watt et al., 2016). Countries are urged to interrupt the growing trend of alcohol and substance use (Renstrom et al., 2017).

Crime and drug use are known to be closely associated, and substance use disorders are common in criminal justice settings; in a systematic review of studies in prison populations, alcohol abuse and dependence were reported in 18%–30% of males and 10%–24% of females, whereas drug abuse and dependence were reported in 10%–48% and 30%–60% of male and female clients, respectively. Substance use disorders are known to be associated with violent crimes. Violent crime, including violent assault, homicide, manslaughter, or serious threats, all of these causes great suffering and harm to the society, and among causes of deaths in populations of illicit drug users with criminal behavior, physical assault from others represents a significant minority of deaths. In data from the present setting, violent crime has been shown to be associated with a high degree of drug use disorders. Many crimes committed by substance users are categorized as drug crimes, as they involve either the use or handling of illicit drugs, or as acquisitive crimes such as stealing, shoplifting, or burglary, related to the need to finance drug use. In further studies, alcohol is described as a risk factor of violence. (Jesionowska, 2018).

Aggressive criminal behaviors in youth often aim to achieve independence (Piquero et al., 2013) and to build one's identity. The primary theoretical frameworks in criminology and developmental psychology suggests a multifactorial approach which states that risk-taking behavior in youth needs to consider individual, family, and environmental factors (Losel and Farrington, 2012). According to these theories, risky behaviors can contribute to building adolescent's self-image; therefore, if adolescents receive positive reinforcements about delinquency, antisocial behavior, or drug abuse, they are more likely to maintain these attitudes in adulthood (Jolliffe et al., 2017).

These behaviors, in most cases, describe a form of uneasiness, and youth can communicate the feelings of anger, fear, and loneliness and may show internalizing conducts, such as substance abuse, or externalizing conducts, like, illicit and aggressive actions against people or property (Moylan et al., 2010). With this perspective, the family system assumes the role of protective or risk factors, especially referred to the family climate, communication, and parental support. According to this perspective, it is important to consider the meaning that risky behaviors could have for youths, especially in the study of delinquency and substance abuse conduct, which often involve young people (Johnston et al., 2017, 2018). Another factor influencing criminality is the socio-economic status (SES) (Hollingshead, 1975). In childhood and adolescence, low-SES neighborhoods could have an adverse influence on children's and youths' mental health and on externalized behaviors, such as acting out, violence, drug use, and delinquent behaviors (Saladino et al., 2020b). According to the evaluation of the Yonkers Project, youths who remained in low- socio-economic status (SES) neighborhoods were more likely to become drug users, especially alcohol and marijuana users (Briggs, 1997).

Another evidence shows a strong connection between low-Social Economic Status, drug use, and criminality in youth, Tobler et al. (2011). and Tucker et al. (2013) examined the correlation between neighborhoods' disorganization and the onset of drug use, based on the hypothesis that the onset for both alcohol and marijuana may be more likely among youths who come from a poor neighborhood, with greater residential instability and a poor perception of organization and safety. The result shows that residing in a neighborhood characterized by a high rate of unemployment is the most influential factor on youth's onset marijuana use. (Keyes et al., 2011).

African Union's current Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the African Union Commission has strengthened its cooperation in the areas of drug control and crime prevention with relevant international organizations, such as INTERPOL, the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and UNODC, and with the European Commission within the framework of the Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership. The regional economic communities in Africa are to play a key role in the implementation of the African Union Plan of Action. In that regard, particular progress has been made by the member States of East Africa has adopted a sub-regional action plan on drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse. It also launched a joint program to build national and regional law enforcement capacity including in the areas of drug interdiction, forensics, intelligence, border management, money-laundering and criminal justice.

## *B. Local Review*

According to Thomas Bisika, Sidon Konyani, Immaculate Cimangwa, and George Khanyizira in a journal "African journal of drug and alcohol studies" there are three common drugs in Malawi, namely; Cannabis, alcohol and tobacco cigarettes and the most common drug of abuse in Malawi is



cannabis. Its consumption is growing and production had increased from 170,000 hectares in 1999 to 175,000 in 2000. Cannabis use in Malawi is still encouraged by traditional beliefs, such as women's belief; that cannabis can cure measles, some students believe that it can make them intelligent and some men think that cannabis can improve their sexual potency. There has been an increase in drug abuse cases in Malawi, from 15% in 1995 to 21% in 1999. It has also been observed that the problem of drug abuse, especially cannabis is increasing among the youth resulting in an annual average of 20% of registered mental illness cases. (Thomas Bisika S. K., 2008)

According to Diana L. Jere, (2013) in the market, alcohol and marijuana are readily available in both large and small quantities 24 hours a day, nearly all the young men share the belief that lifters of heavy market goods require alcohol or marijuana as an energizer these young men agreed that most casual labourers use drugs at the market, (as casual laborer involves loading and offloading heavy goods and receiving payments daily). With the daily earning of money, they have easy access to alcohol and marijuana sold within the market in any quantity that they afford. Many young men go to this market without their families or spouses so they have little guidance and few alternative entertainments, leading them to drink and use marijuana with peers most of them have little understanding of the physical and mental negative health effects of daily intake of these substances. Even though the government of Malawi recognizes substance use to be risky, especially to younger people, substance use prevention programs have not been extended to the market places. Although these markets are well organized in their economic activities, there is little support, supervision or non-risky social activities that could substitute for drug and alcohol use. Therefore, substance risk reduction programs, as well as crime activities. Therefore, there is need to target these environmental issues as well as individual risky behaviors. (Jere, 2013)

Lack of informed choices among youths promote drug use as most of them do not know the real dangers of use of drugs, and Malawi government does not have clear national drug policy and this hinders monitoring and prevention of drug use among youths. Therefore, absence of the drug policy makes organizations like drug fight Malawi, fail to complement government efforts in dealing with drug and substance abuse, it was also noted that old laws provide loop holes whereby ill-minded foreigners play their dirty games freely and willingly and that these foreigners deal with hard staff such as cocaine and heroin, that locally cannabis is highly abused. (Murontho, 2019)

The Malawi Police Service through their spokesperson Augustus Nkhwazi said that Blantyre district (one of the districts in the southern region) registered an increased number of drug and substance abuse in 2018 compared to 2017, they said 72 cases were reported in 2018 against 50 cases reported in 2017, representing 30.5% increase. Among other cases that were dealt with by the police were cultivation and found in possession of Cannabis, (Chamba), found in possession of medical drugs without license and selling liquor without license, among others. Lack of punitive measures and sentences

by courts has led to the increase in drug use by youths as those that are found on the wrong are given minimal punishment which are not deterrent. Nkhwazi also said that they intensified sensitization meetings with stakeholders such as young achievers for Development who works assisting youths to stop in indulging in drug and substance abuse (Augustus Nkhwazi, 2007).

Malawi has not been spared from the negative consequences of drug use by youths, the relationship between drugs and youths continues to rattle policymakers. Adviser of the Drug Policy and Harm Reduction Platform, Undule Mwakasungula, said in a meeting that a platform for enhancing advocacy for drug policy reforms and harm reduction programs aimed at those that depend on drugs in Malawi. He said that Malawi has not been spared from the negative consequences of drug use including severe human rights violations directly related to criminalization and stigmatization of people who use drugs, which is attributed to punitive laws. Mwakasungula said Malawi could not afford to remain silent on the matter as it was one of the countries in Southern African faced with cases of drug trafficking and abuse. (Chauluka S. , 2019).

Drug Fight Malawi's survey revealed an increase of use of drugs especially marijuana among school-going youth. A random survey shows that almost half of Secondary School Students and those in colleges are using marijuana in Malawi. There are a number of reasons connected to the increase, lack of informed choices among youths as most of them do not know the real dangers of use of drugs. Trials by Government of Malawi on industrial hemp has made youths to think that use of marijuana is something that the Government is welcoming. There is, therefore, a danger that many youths in Malawi will grow with disturbed minds due to marijuana use and hence ending up having a dull population. Therefore, drug Fight Malawi asks well-wishers to hold hands in helping the organization to give evidence-based information on the dangers of use of marijuana and other drugs of abuse. (Zakeyo, 2017)

Substance use among the youth continues to be a major public health and socioeconomic problem worldwide. More youths in secondary schools use drugs due to peer pressure, substance use is harmful for the youths and it leads to crime related issues. Substance use among the students is rampant, and there is need for collaborative initiatives in developing intervention strategies that will reduce drug use among youths. Laws and policies that facilitate and reinforce parents and educators in controlling substance use among adolescents should be clearly be put in place and be implementable. (Mzumara, 2018).

Despite known for production of Cannabis (Malawi Gold) Malawi is also used as a transit point of drugs. Malawi, with its high volumes of migrant is a popular trans-shipment point for heroin moving from East Africa to Southern and West Africa. Lilongwe Airport is a key node for heroin flows facilitated by compromised airport agents and border guards. It is alleged that large quantities of heroin brought into Lilongwe by air are then transported by vehicle through the Dedza border crossing into Mozambique. Domestic use of the drug is growing, especially in Lilongwe. Malawi is also a significant waypoint for cocaine

smuggled from West and East Africa into Europe and the Middle East. West African organized-crime groups have a strong presence in Malawi's cocaine-trafficking market. Cocaine use is growing rapidly in the country and has become the second-most-consumed drug after cannabis.

Malawi is a source country for cannabis – in particular, Malawi Gold, one of the most popular strains of cannabis in Africa. Despite strictly enforced laws (which make the growing of cannabis illegal except for medicinal and industrial purposes), cannabis production is centered in the Kasungu, Mzimba and Nkhotakota districts. Cannabis produced in Malawi is smuggled across Africa and into European markets. Malawi has a small domestic market for synthetic drugs, with methamphetamine and MDMA arriving overland from Mozambique. There is no significant production of synthetic drugs in Malawi. (Africa organized crime index, 2021).

Kvam and Braathen (2008) conducted a study on violence and abuse against women with disabilities in Malawi, and found that the most common type of abuse experienced by that group of women was referred to as sexual abuse; men seduced them and told them that they were going to marry them, but when the women fell pregnant, the men left, then the women ended up being single mothers. Some of the women said that more people in Malawi including youths use drugs and alcohol, and when they do this, they become aggressive and violent. The women stressed the importance of being self-sufficient (education and job) in the attempt to empower and bring more respect to women. This included men respecting women, as well as women learning to respect themselves and each other (Kvam & Braathen 2008).

Focus groups were facilitated in 4 countries, thus, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, as a Technical Support agency specializing in work with people who use drugs, Aids Rights Alliance for Southern Africa works with policy-makers, program implementers, service providers and drug user groups, supporting the adoption of models of community mobilization, harm reduction and drug treatment with people who use drugs. There are reports of injecting drug use being identified in the North of Malawi on the border with Tanzania and the Global State of Harm Reduction also mentioned the injecting drug use in Malawi. There were proposals of using community consultation to assess the needs of cannabis users and to mobilize them as members to provide a development process that can be applied with different groups. A proposal for a bill allowing for the cultivation, production and possession of industrial hemp and marijuana for medical use was approved by Malawi Parliament in December 2018. The bill was supported both by Government and opposition. While Parliament was still discussing the bill, it gave the go-ahead for industrial hemp trials, in order to give voice to people who use drugs and to ensure that their experiences of policies and harm reduction services are included. The Rastafarian church and community members are involved in the use and sale of cannabis. They use it as part of the religious practices. Traditional healers also use and recommend cannabis as a medicine. There was substantial confusion about the risks and benefits of using cannabis. The

risks of cannabis are relatively low and needed clarification. It was clear that here is a body of knowledge about the risks and safer use of cannabis that is not widely known among People who use drugs in Malawi. The challenge will be introducing a peer education program that challenges established beliefs. Asserting the rights of people who use cannabis and challenging myths that inflate or falsify the risks of cannabis brings with it challenges for the peer educators and the supporting NGO partners. (Africa, 2019)

Parents who are often absent from home are more likely to perceive lower cohesion and support to the family, thereby having poor family communication and this, promote the involvement of youths in drug abuse and criminal acts. (J D. Behl, K. Gueta, S F. Agberotimi). In research by Chimwemwe Ngoma shows that 35.6% of youths in colleges use drugs to manage stress and life pressures. And youths drug abuse may have long-term cognitive and behavioral effects as their brains still develops (Tafadzwa Khechi, 2020). In SADC region, Malawi has increased numbers of cannabis abuse (Parry & Pluddemann, 2003). Cheap alcohol promotes drug abuse by youths (S. Salimu & A.L. Nyondo, 2017).

Malawi and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) prevention on embarked on a programme to train educators on how to stop drug abuse in Malawi's public primary and secondary schools. The aim of the programme was to reduce drug abuse and related HIV/Aids among young people in the country. The then Home Affairs and Internal Security Minister Ernest Malenga said in Lilongwe that the drug problems need to be addressed by the programme, that high incidents of drug abuse among the youth are reported and that the programme was one of the critical elements to the successful delivery of quality education and said that drugs should not undermine the standards of quality education in Malawi. According to other studies, primary and secondary students, as young as 11 years old, were abusing drugs, with marijuana being the most popular substance of abuse, followed by alcohol. The minister said the ultimate goal is for the local schools to operate in a drug-free environment so that no smoking and drinking is permitted within the school premises. UNODC representative Sophia van Rensburg said the programme would help to curb drug abuse in Malawi's schools. Van Rensburg therefore urged government to roll-out the programme to private schools of the country as well. (Chikoko, 2017).

The Dangerous Drugs Unit acknowledges the high risk of drugs in Malawi (The Dangerous Drugs Unit investigates drug-related offences). It confirmed that most Malawians are not drug dealers but are used by foreign nationals to transport drugs. The authorities mentioned a case where a Malawian girl was arrested in Ghana and had confessed that her trip had been funded by one Nigerian national in Malawi. The Ghanaian authorities informed the Malawian authorities about the arrest and tried to locate the Nigerian but could not find him as he had disappeared by then. Given the frequency of serious drug cases as reported by the Authorities, including the Dangerous Drugs Unit, the assessors found the lack of investigation of any drug-related case inconsistent with the risk posed by drug trafficking offenses which are rated as medium-high. The interview with

the Dangerous Drugs Unit did not only reveal that Malawi was used as a transit point for drugs at times but it also had a home-grown marijuana which was being smuggled to neighboring countries to be sold. Under the 2018 National Risk Assessment, it was also established that from 2013 to 2016, 775 cases of drug trafficking were reported, of which 737 were prosecuted, resulting in 520 convicted cases involving 570 persons. Both Malawians and foreigners have been arrested and convicted for drug trafficking which suggest that a transnational network may be involved and annually about 70,000 kilograms is seized. The lack of adequate resources could be contributing to the poor detection of drug related cases, making Malawi vulnerable to such activities. (ESAAMLG, 2019)

It is learned that the vast majority of the drug abusers are youth and youthful grown-ups. Most adolescents start to explore different avenues regarding substances at an early age which prompt substance reliance. This happens through the movement from experimentation with drugs/substances to their periodic utilize and they lead to the improvement of resilience and physical reliance (Malunda and Mpinganjira, 2009). The most widely recognized drug in Malawi is cannabis, likewise called hemp or chamba and the smoking of hemp expands quickly, especially among youth. Relatively every school has some young men and young ladies who smoke chamba showing that the drug is anything but difficult to get (Fabiano and Maganga, 2002). As indicated by Arterburn and Burns (1989), peer weight, parental dispositions and child rearing style are additionally a portion of the components which lead young people to enjoy such misbehaviors. The EAM (1998), says absence of recreational offices for the adolescent makes them to discover different types of entertainment, for example, drugs and beverages. Drugs and substance manhandle among the adolescent is related with a wide scope of high hazard practices. This kind of conduct have significant wellbeing, financial and social outcomes such degenerate practices, unprotected sex, relational brutality, demolition of property and perform inadequately in the investigations (Malunda and Mpinganjira). Kabwila (2000, p.19) indicated that Numerous instances of indiscipline in schools, homes, games and amusement places are because of drugs abuse, liquor, and different substances. As per Malunda and Mpinganjira (2009, p.148), drug and substance abuse are compounded by complex financial difficulties, for example, joblessness, neediness and wrongdoing by and large. The vast majority of the adolescent that are engaged with drug abuse are driven into an existence of wrongdoing. Police records uncover that 90% of the lawbreakers captured in the nation are between the ages of 17 and 30 years old (Dzonzi, EAM, 1998, p.88). Some adolescent take part in unprotected sex, relational viciousness, obliteration of property and others. Optional schools are confronting a considerable measure of issues due to understudies who are engaged with substance abuse, accordingly there are numerous indiscipline cases occurring at school. A portion of the understudies who abuse drugs and substances do not perform well in their academics or sometimes they just drop out of school, enlarging the number of unskilled individuals. Family issues are another factor for drug abuse for adolescents.

"Youths who originate from homes where there is separate, divider, a truant parent, dissension, conjugal clash, ridiculous desires, poor communication, abuse or liquor addiction will probably abuse drug and liquor. (Samaroo, 2017).

### C. *Observation*

As mentioned by other authors above, many youths are falling in the trap of drug abuse and mental health because of different reasons, ranging from poor parental guide to peer pressure. Some youths are found in this bad behavior of taking drugs because their parents do not have time to interact with them, they do not have time to advise their children about good manners, warn their children about what to do and what not to do. Poor parental guide may also include bad morals displayed by the parents to their children which prompt the children the buy those bad morals. For example, parents that are drug addicts, cannot be so strong to control their children against the use of drugs. This can happen in any part of the world, whether in Africa, Europe, Asia and elsewhere. With reference to what these other writers wrote, and the statistics of Kawale Police station, I am of the view that drug use among youths' really influence crime.

### D. *Conceptual Frame*

A good number of youth crime is related to substance use and there is a well-known and strong correlation between these sets of problems. A large percentage of young people who consume these drugs do commit crimes. Early drug use seems to be significantly related to continued criminality and is a well-known risk factor in the negative progression towards a problematic future life situation That depression (mental health problem) in boys could be a protective factor against continued criminality. A reported history of depression may indicate a lesser extent of externalized behavior. (Mats Anderberg M. D., 2022).

Many peer groups follow their peer cultural values and conduct norms. Group members are expected to engage in various forms of unconventional behavior, of which drug abuse is one of them. As the number of theses peer group that use drugs increase, the probability of gang formation may emerge (Kandel, 1983). When this happened, R. B. Smith and Stephens (1976) observed that antisocial environment may bring up opportunities for involvement in deviant behaviors such as crime, especially in urban areas where a number of additional "disorganizing" factors including family disruption relative poverty and ethnic exist. (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

Parents are recognized as important agents of socialization, and deviance behavior is attributed to failures in conventional bonding by the family, school, religious organizations, and other institutions whose functions are to socialize youths to norms, moral order, and societally acceptable behaviors (Kandel, 1980). In the social control theory propounded by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), parents are the sole motivators that determine both internal and external factors that influence the child moral upbringing. During the formative years of the child, the parents remained the alter ego that influenced socialization and the development of social bond. Such

socialization and bonds determine what the child grows up to be, including behavior that has to do with obedience to the laws (Simms, 1978). In their analysis, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1969) theorized that the behavior of youths can be influenced greatly by “attachment and commitment, commitment and involvement, and attachment and belief”.

While attachment involves the relation of the youth to parents, peers, and school, commitment represents the youth’s occupational and/or educational aspirations and/or prestige. Youths with close parental attachment are rewarded for conformity by the approval and esteemed admiration of their parents. Involvement is operationalized to include participation in conventional activities, which leads toward socially valued success and status objectives, while belief is seen as acceptance of the moral validity of the central social value system, good parental control results in the parental attachments that influence the development of the child conscience and the feeling of guilt. In the context of this theory, youths who lack parental control are likely to abuse drugs because they have no sense of guilt (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

#### *E. Theoretical Framework*

The connection between criminality and drug use is obvious by virtue of the fact that drug use is illegal in many countries. It may seem that crimes and drugs are rarely related to each other in occasional or experimental drug users, but research shows that long-term drug use promotes criminality, meaning that drug use and crime shares a common causal although there is no direct causal relationship but rather drug use and crime co-occur because of a common causal or causes. (T. Seddon, 2006) The linking between drug use and crime mostly constitutes drug-related criminality and is weaker for offences such as assault and theft. The connection with non-drug-related crime, however, becomes stronger in relation to more serious cannabis use. The connection between drunkenness and violent crime is clearer and this in some youths cause mental health problems, the youths believe that they can reduce or end these mental health problems with the drugs or alcohol which they consume but instead they just worsen the situation.

Drug abuse and Criminality share common risk factors. Studies that follow young people from an early age to adulthood have identified several risk factors related to the community, family, school and peers as well as to the individuals, factors that in turn increase the probability of future criminality and substance use problems and the impact is wide-ranging, for instance a greater amount of substance abuse and mental health related crimes means police has to be funded enough, courts can become overwhelmed with drug abuse and mental health cases, causing bad reputation to the community where these acts happen, just to mention a few (Casa Palmera Staff, 2019).

Individual factors such as poor self-control and externalizing behaviors pose a risk for later criminality and drug abuse. Although the risk factors for drug abuse and mental health are similar for both genders, the genders may be affected by these risk factors in different ways. Both criminality and drug use are higher in communities and neighborhoods characterized by mood of anxiety in youths, learning or behavior dis-order,

poverty, segregation and social exclusion. (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).

Catton and Shain’s (1976) analyses, drug abuse is not merely an escapist activity (from depression and/or alienation) but also offers a chance at a life which is well paid, prestigious, and exciting in comparison with legitimate opportunities. Many drug addicts, perhaps in addition to an escapist motivation, seek a lifestyle with a sense of purpose, group belonging, and excitement (Glaser, Lander, & Abbott, 1991). In their work on substance abuse, R. B. Smith and Stephens (1976) explained the benefits of drug abuse from the accounts of the addicts to include self-satisfaction, security, and self-enhancement. In such circumstances, the user’s perception of costs does not count but the benefits do (Zinberg, Jacobson, & Harding, 1975), as the users are ready to sacrifice anything to buy the drugs.

Implicit in drug abuse, therefore, is the perpetuation of the crime of violence and other illegal activities to acquire money to sustain drug habits. While these activities exert a negative impact on the livelihoods of ordinary citizens, they also cause havoc to their families as well as the public at large. Armed robbery, burglary, pickpocketing, and rape enhanced by drugs have been reported in Nigeria (UNODC, 2014). Drug abuse fuels both terrorism and insurgency (UNODC, 2011). Analysis by the Institute of Security Studies (ISS, 2015) suggested that “except members of the criminal justice system identify and deal with youths involved in illicit activities at an early stage, and by so doing disrupt illicit markets,” youths who use drug may resort to forming criminal gangs, which can create and sustain organized crime (p. 14). In Lafia Metropolis, gang-sponsored illegal activities thrive especially during electioneering campaigns and elections (Obioma, 2012).

In Metropolis, drug abuse was significantly practiced due to lack of parental control, easy access to drugs and emerging street culture of gangsterism. The implications of these on urban security were noted on continuous fracas and street fighting, increased confrontation with the police, accidents and injuries, and robbery and theft.

The drug-subculture theory hypothesized that the predisposing factors to drug abuse include the influence of the parent culture upon youths; parent culture values on the choice of friends and patterns of friendship (Johnson, 1973). The theory draws inspiration from the effectiveness of socialization, where youths develop the emotional attachment to parental figures, and/or “the significant others,” and a belief in the moral order underlying conventional bonds (Kaplan, 1975) This theory received significant support in the social learning perspective of Akers (1977) and differential association theory of Sutherland and Cressey (2004). In other way we would say that peers’ social approval of drug use and anticipated rewards for engaging in drug abuse are especially likely to enhance drug addiction when there is weak bonding to the family.

The result of the study supported some of the major findings from other studies on drug abuse and mental health. For instance, cannabis was not only being widely used but was the most abused drugs among the youths in Lafia. The findings showed three possible explanations for increasing drug use among the youths in the Metropolis. These included poor

parental control, availability of drugs in the Metropolis, and easy access to drugs. Each of these factors tends to assist the other. One of the theories that were looked into is the Social theory, which tells us about behaviors that are influenced by many factors because of the complex world we are living in. These can be individuals, families, peers or the community. The Learning theory focuses on how nature shapes youth's behaviors in a way they are raised, and it identifies several processes which youth's drug abuse and criminality behaviors are influenced by their environment.

Sub-cultural theories of crimes that describes learned behaviors that people display, other than the normal process of learning. The drug-subcultural theory also hypothesized that the prompting factors of drug abuse comes from parents and peers. Weak bonding between parents and their children enhances the drug abuse by many youths as they lack parental supervision and end up in peer groups of drug addicts and criminality. These theories relate to the research where it is shown that most youths indulge in drug abuse and mental health and then commit crimes with the influence of peers or families.

Life and pattern of living in the urban area have been implicated in the emerging drug culture. Scholars have argued that parents are prodrug socialization agents. Where parents use drugs, the children are likely going to copy same (Peterson *et al.*, 2010; Smart, 1997). In the urban areas where parents struggle daily for the family's upkeep, it may become difficult to monitor what goes on with the child, especially where both parents are working class. In such instances, peers become the socializing agents. When differential association sets in (Sutherland & Cressey, 2004), the child remains at the mercy of street gangs.

## 9. Methodology

In this section, we are going to look into the approach of the research study, the research design, the population of the study, the sample size, the sampling technic, the data collection, data analysis, the ethical consideration, the limitations of the study and the summary of the chapter.

The research methodology performs as a summary that demonstrates the validity and reliability of the methods. It is the part that allows readers to evaluate the validity and reliability of the study and gives important insight into key elements of the research, the data collection and analysis processes.

The methodology is the planned procedures that broadens the steps from the broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection in addressing the relationship between drug abuse among youths' influence crime. It is always important to select a research approach when doing a research study as it provides the basis for critical consideration of how each of the various approaches may contribute to the study. (Team, 2022). All in all, the research methodology aims at emphasizing what needs to be achieved within the scope of the research and to provide answers to the research question. (Dudovskiy, 2022)

### A. Research Design

The research design for this study will be an inductive as it is associated with qualitative research and it is easily used. The

research will involve the researcher visiting the respondents and getting much data from them. A survey questionnaire will be developed to assist in primary data collection for the research, this questionnaire will be distributed to the earmarked group of people from the Kawale policing area, who will fill the questionnaires and return them. After that the results will be analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis methods to find out the correlation between youths' crimes and drug abuse by youths.

### B. Population

A population is a distinguishable group targeted to be analyzed. In statistics, specific population numbers and data depends on the topic of the study or investigation, and the data the study aims to collect. Populations include only those members affected by the results of the study or those that meet that study's restrictions. Population data helps to define an overall idea of a certain research topic and the data may give general representations when divide into samples for in-depth analysis. (Team, indeed, 2022). In this research, the population of this study will be drawn from areas that get services from Kawale Police station and will consist of matured men and women and the youth themselves, where a sample of 40 individuals will be investigated to find out the relationship between drug abuse & mental health and crime among youths. Questionnaires will be issued to the selected samples that provided with answers that assisted in having the proper results. This is an economical method of surveying large samples as it does not cost much.

### C. Sampling Procedure

A sample is part of a population that researchers use to collect data. Samples represent populations in which research is being conducted and can be useful for making an expressive conclusion about a population.

When conducting research about a group of people, it's hard to collect data from every person in that group. Therefore, a sample is selected, and this is the group of individuals who participate in the research.

To draw valid conclusions from the results, it is necessary to carefully decide how a sample will be or has to be selected to representative the whole group.

There are two types of sampling methods:

#### a) Probability sampling

This involves random selection, giving chance to the researcher to make strong statistical interpretations about the whole group.

#### b) Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling involves non-random selection based on suitability or other criteria, allowing the researcher to easily collect data.

Systematic sampling is the same as simple random sampling, but it is somehow easier to conduct. Every member of the population is listed with a number, instead of randomly generating numbers, individuals are chosen at regular intervals. Stratified sampling divides the population into sub-populations that may differ in important ways. It allows the researcher to

draw more precise conclusions by ensuring that every subgroup is properly represented in the sample. Using this sampling method, the population is divided into subgroups, also called strata, based on the applicable characteristic for example gender, age range, income bracket, job role. Based on the total sizes of the population, researcher calculates how many people should be sampled from each sub-group. Then random or systematic sampling is used to select a sample from each sub-group. (McCombes, 2022) In this research the population will be divided into sub-groups of men and women, and, boys and girls of the ages of 10 to 17. Questionnaires will be distributed to a number of 40 people from these groups for the investigations.

#### *D. Sample Size*

Sample size measures the number of individual samples, or number of observations used in a research, survey or experiment. To come up with a sample size it depends on many considerations for example, statistical consideration and non-statistical consideration where statistical consideration include; the desired precision of the estimates and non-statistical consideration includes; availability of resources, manpower, budget, ethics and sampling frame, therefore the statistical and non-statistical consideration becomes so important they help in planning, designing, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting and reporting the findings. Therefore, a sample of about 40 people (20 youths and 20 men and women) will be selected from the target population of 70 people.

#### *E. Sample Area*

Sample area is the area or surrounding geographical place where the research is scheduled to take place. Our research will take place in the locations of Kawale, Mchesi, Biwi Kaliyeka, Chilinde Areas 17, 22, 23 and 24.

#### *F. Source of Data collection*

Data collection is one of the important stages in carrying on research. Data collection is an extremely challenging work which needs much planning, hard work, understanding, determination and many other things to have the capacity to complete the investigation effectively. Data collection begins with figuring out what sort of data is needed, followed by the collection of a sample from a certain section of the population. Then the researcher has to utilize a certain tool to gather the data from the chosen sample. Whereby in this research, questionnaire will be used.

Data can be gathered from two sources such as primary and secondary. Data gathered through observation, face to face interview, telephone interview, group discussion or questionnaire review are some of the primary data. Secondary data is the data acquired from optional sources like books, reports, magazines, journals, documents, the web and many more. (boson, 2021). Primary data, will be obtained from the sample through questionnaire in this particular research.

#### *G. Data Collection*

Data collection is a systematic method of finding, observing, measuring, and analyzing exact information to support

individuals or groups of people that are doing an investigation in particular research. Data collection methods used in the process are mostly the same. Therefore, we can say that there are specific standards that need to be followed and employed to make sure that data is collected correctly.

Stratified random sampling method, will be used, in which the population will be divided into groups based on age, where there is no limit age on men and women, but on boys and girls to be involved, age limit will be there, where youths of the ages of 10 to 17 will participate.

Questionnaires will be issued to the selected samples who will in turn provide with responses that will help the researcher to have proper results. This data collection tool is one of the economical tools used in surveying large samples, because it does not cost much.

#### *H. Data Analysis*

There are several types of data analysis tools that are used to analyze data, depending on the type of data that is being worked on. There is also many computer-aided software that are used for either qualitative or quantitative data analysis. In this research, content data analysis method will be used to analyze the data because it is an accurate method and easy to use.

Both Qualitative and Quantitative research methods will be applied, questionnaires will be used to obtain the data required for the study.

Microsoft word and Excel sheet will also be used in analyzing the data. These are easy to be used by the researcher and also well understandable by any individual who may read the research content. The researcher will as well use tables and graphs in the analysis of the of the data for better clarification of other information.

#### *I. Limitations of the Study*

Some individual may not be open to share information that is crime related. Most people in the societies do not feel comfortable to share information concerning crime, whether they know a person involved or just because they do not want to give that information to a person conducting a study on the topic. Finance is another limitation, since the researcher is not funded that means it will involve personal finances to finance every aspect that will need finance in this research such as transport and food during data collection.

#### *J. Ethical Issues*

Results from the Research will be used only for academic purposes and will not be shared to any person or groups of people.

In addition to that there shall be confidentiality in terms of the participants identity and any personal information they might provide, the participants of the study shall remain anonymous during and after the research.

#### *K. Findings*

Primary data was collected through questionnaires which were distributed to individuals who were found in the policing area of Kawale police station. The questionnaires were focused on the impact of drug abuse and mental health among youths on

crime committed by the youths. The survey questionnaire was developed to collect data from targeted people, so the primary data was collected through this form of questionnaire which was distributed to a number of individuals.

Deductive method of research was done. This is a way of research that occurs after having the preferred topic, the researcher narrows it down into specific hypotheses that can be tested, then observations are collected to address the hypotheses, this leads the researcher being able to test the hypotheses with specific data, thus to confirm or not to confirm the past theories. This is according to “conjointly survey research platform”.

Content data analysis tools was used to analyze the data because it is an accurate method and easy to use, data was analyzed by determining the presence of some words, meanings and relationship of such words and meanings. This data collection tool is one of the economical tools used in surveys because it does not cost much and Simple random sampling was applied to the population and selected the samples, questionnaire was the tool that was used to collect data from the samples.

**10. Findings and Interpretation**

The figures and table below illustrate the finding of the research.

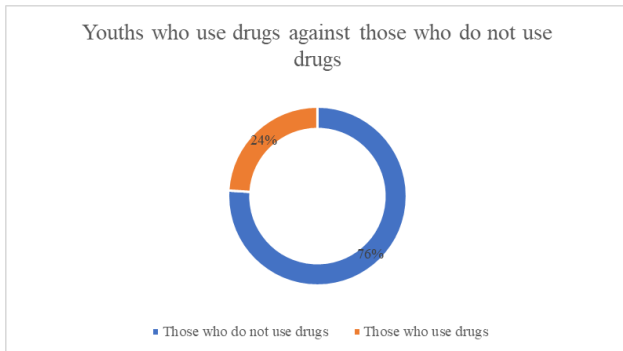


Fig. 1. Percentages showing youths who do not use drugs against those who use drugs

Table 1  
Male and Female youths who abuse drugs

Youths	Males	Females
Number of youths who use drugs	18%	6%

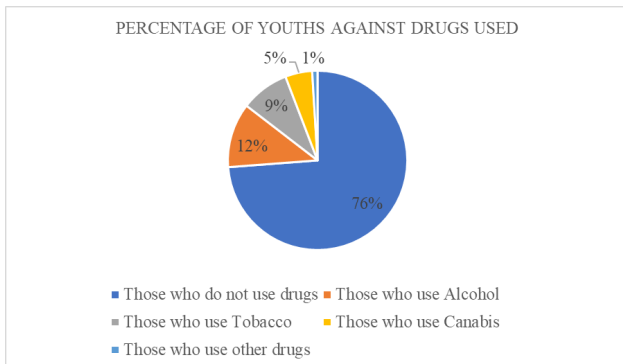


Fig. 2. Youths’ percentage against drugs used

Research revealed that 24 percent of the youths do abuse drugs while 76 percent do not. And there are a number of reasons why they abuse drugs, ranging from peer pressure, associating themselves with bad teams, school drop-outs, lack of parental guidance and involvement when raising the children, and, availability of many places where drugs are found. This is shown in figure 1.

This research shows that many male youths, abuse drugs than female youths, where only 6 percent female youths do abuse the drugs and 18 percent of male youths’ abuse drugs and, and 80 percent of youths who abuse drugs commit crimes, this is regardless of gender. This is illustrated by table 1 above.

Figure 2, shows the numbers in percentage of drugs that are mostly abused in the area, research has shown that alcohol is the most abused drug with 12 percent, seconded by Tobacco with 9 percent, thirdly Cannabis with 5 percent and 1 percent for other drugs. These other drugs include Hashish, Mandrax, Heroin, Cocaine, glue among others.

**11. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Drug abuse may be referred to as the use of illegal drugs, or the use of prescription for the purposes other than those for which they are meant for, or in excessive amounts, which, when consumed, they enter the brain, where they interrupt the work of the brain and change how the brain performs its jobs, later may lead to different problems relating to social, physical or emotional. Many people mistakenly think that those who use drugs lack moral principles or willpower and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to, but in reality, drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting that needs a strong will. (Publications, 2022). Some youths start drug abuse at an early age, which prompt them to school drop-out and become drug addicts, they start misconducting at their homes, then they flood out into the community.

In this research, the researcher investigated how drug abuse and mental health in youths influence crime, this is shown through a compared crime records of cases that are reported at Kawale police station. Here cases are compared according to offenders, where selected cases are spotted to be committed by youths, and when screened properly it is noticed that there is influence of drug and mental health to the committing of the crimes. (Backman, 2014). This research was conducted in an urban setting area of Kawale Police Station policing area within Lilongwe City, in Malawi where I believe none did research concerning the topic, this is the area where many crimes that are committed are committed by youths and there are a lot of school going sizes of youths (from primary, secondary up to university level) but does not go to school. Some youths who supposed to be employed or self-employed or doing business does not do neither business nor having employment.

With simple random sampling the researcher managed to get results from the population agreeing with other writers who did their research in other cities and countries that indeed there is correlation between drug abuse and mental health, and crimes committed by youth.

There is evidence that using some drugs may cause mental illness, for example, cannabis or alcohol may increase chances

of developing psychosis or a psychotic disorder which makes the user to be violent, and in the end, committing crime. (TREATMENT ADVOCACY CENTER, 2016).

It is suggested that parents and guardians have to always know what their youths are doing, they should know their children's friends to monitor them well. Parents should always set good examples to their children and encourage their youths in education. Schools should have anti-drug abuse clubs to make awareness on evils of drugs to children, the youths themselves should avoid bad company, and places where drugs are found to avoid temptations. There is need for action to be taken in this situation. Community leaders and government need to address the problem, as the country is breeding a questionable generation.

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