

# **Substance Use and the Myth of Musical Inspiration: A Study of Creative Arousal Among Emerging Artists in Nigeria.**

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## **Abstract**

In Nigeria's dynamic music industry, a persistent belief exists among emerging musicians that psychoactive substances such as alcohol, cannabis, and stimulant pills, enhance creativity and performance. This study investigates the validity of this belief, examining how substance use is perceived and practiced within Lagos's vibrant music industry. Drawing on the Arousal Theory of Motivation and Social Learning Theory, the research explores whether substances are truly seen as creative catalysts or if such views are socially reinforced myths. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines survey data from 80 emerging musicians, a focus group discussion, and observational analysis of live performances. Results reveal that while 75% of participants believe substances aid inspiration or stage confidence, observational evidence shows that sober performers consistently demonstrate better focus, coordination, and crowd engagement. Focus group narratives further suggest that peer pressure, anxiety, and cultural norms, rather than genuine creative need, drive substance use. These findings highlight a disconnect between belief and performance reality. Substance use appears to push arousal levels beyond the optimal creative zone, impairing rather than enhancing artistic output. The study concludes that the myth of "chemical creativity" use of substance to aid creativity and performance, persists more as a cultural construct than a creative necessity. It calls for wellness education, mentorship, and policy reform within Nigeria's creative industry to support healthier, sustainable artistic practices.

**Keywords:** Psychoactive substances use in Nigeria music industry, Emerging artists Lagos, Nigeria Music Industry, Arousal Theory of Motivation, Artist wellness, Performance Anxiety

## 1.0 Introduction

In Nigeria's vibrant music scene, creativity and performance excellence are often surrounded by myths and cultural narratives. One persistent belief, especially common in informal music circles, is that using substances, such as cannabis, alcohol, or stimulant pills, is necessary for artistic creativity and energetic stage performances. From late-night studio sessions to live concerts, sayings like "you have to be high to create a hit" or "you can't hold the crowd if you're not turned up" are still widely heard.

Substance use has long been connected to music and artistic expression around the world, shaping both lifestyles and creative identities. For instance, (Iszaj et al., 2017) found that for many artists, substance use is not only part of the creative process but also woven into their daily routines. In several creative communities, psychoactive substances are seen as tools for finding inspiration, emotional depth, and performance energy. Yet, history also shows that this link can be destructive. Studies of jazz musicians from the 1940s and 1950s reveal that while drug use was common, it often derailed or ended promising careers rather than enhancing creativity (Tolson & Cuyjet, 2007). One might expect that with modern awareness and anti-drug campaigns, today's creatives would avoid such habits, but this is not always the case. In Nigeria, global narratives about drugs and creativity have taken root in the country's rapidly evolving music industry. Lagos, now one of Africa's most dynamic creative hubs, is home to numerous informal studios and performance spaces where emerging musicians develop their craft. Within this setting, many artists still believe that substances help them write better songs, sustain energy during long studio hours, or deliver more exciting performances on stage. Despite its cultural influence, this belief has received little academic attention in Nigerian music research.

While international studies have explored the link between creativity and substance use, the Nigerian context, with its mix of cultural pressures, limited training opportunities, and fast-

paced industry growth, remains underexplored. Sunday (2024) noted that symbolic elements like “red cups” in Nigerian hip-hop videos promote imitation and even addiction among young artists. Other research has identified curiosity, peer pressure, performance anxiety, self-esteem issues, emotional stress, and the search for euphoria as major reasons young people turn to substances (Agberotimi, 2018). This study examines; how emerging Nigerian musicians perceive and use substances in relation to creativity and performance. It explores whether these substances are truly viewed as creative aids or if such beliefs are cultural myths driven by social influence and industry expectations. Using both surveys, focus group and observatory method, the study investigates key questions, such as whether musicians believe substances help them find inspiration, stay confident during studio sessions, or perform better on stage, and whether creativity can thrive naturally without them.

## **1.1 Definition of Studies**

For clarity, this study defines substance use as the consumption of psychoactive substances, specifically alcohol, cannabis, and pills, that are commonly reported among musicians as tools for inspiration, stress relief, or energy enhancement. In performance research, such substances are seen as having both stimulating and inhibiting effects, depending on the user and context. By combining psychological insights with real-world industry perspectives, this study examines how substance use relates to creative arousal among emerging Nigerian musicians. Ultimately, it seeks to clarify whether this practice reflects genuine creative need or a powerful cultural myth. While contributing to ongoing discussions about artist well-being, creativity, and the realities of making music in Lagos.

## 2.0 Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by two complementary theories: the Arousal Theory of Motivation and Social Learning Theory. Together, these frameworks help explain not only why some emerging musicians may turn to substances in the pursuit of creativity, but also how such practices spread and become normalized within the music industry.

#### 2.1.1 Arousal Theory of Motivation

Arousal theory of motivation suggests that people seek to maintain an optimal level of arousal, neither too low nor too high in order to function and perform effectively (Din Bandhu et al., 2024). In creative contexts like music, this search for balance can be particularly visible. Too little arousal may lead to sluggishness or lack of inspiration, while too much may cause anxiety, loss of focus, or performance errors (Yancey et al., 1992). However, earlier research shows that the relationship between arousal and performance is not straightforward. Apter (1976) had argued that pleasurable experiences can occur at very different levels of arousal: for some, peak excitement feels creative, while for others, calmness creates the space for expression. Toates (2009) expanded this idea by linking arousal to other motivational factors such as perceived rewards and self-confidence, suggesting that arousal interacts with multiple psychological elements in shaping performance outcomes. Applied to this study, arousal theory sheds light on why some artists may feel compelled to use substances, seeking stimulation to feel "ready" for performance, or sedation to calm nerves and to investigate if the use of substance can disrupt the delicate balance between energy, control, and creativity, leading to outcomes opposite to what they intended.

### 2.1.2 Social Learning Theory

While arousal theory explains the internal drive, Social Learning Theory provides insight into the social spread of substance use among musicians. First developed by Albert Bandura in 1971, this theory proposes that people learn behaviors by observing and imitating others, (Bandura, 1971, as cited in Davis, 2002; Proctor & Niemeyer, 2019). Through attention, retention, and motivation, individuals adopt practices not only because of direct reinforcement but also by modeling the actions of peers, mentors, or cultural icons (Akers & Sellers, 2011). In the creative music industry, especially among emerging artists, this plays out in subtle but powerful ways. Emerging music artist often looks up to established stars, in most cases, imaged how establish Artist known as A-list artist, prepare for the stage or cope with anxiety. Social learning theory guided us to establish, if substance use is perceived as part of the ritual of belonging, whether in recording studios, backstage, or social circles for early industry professionals. artists may imitate these behaviors without questioning their necessity. Over time, what begins as observation turns into practice, and eventually becomes normalized as "part of the culture." Social learning theory also highlights that reinforcement does not always come from the substance itself, but from the social rewards it provides: acceptance, inclusion, or the perception of being "authentic" within the creative community. This helps explain why some artists in the focus groups admitted not knowing why they first started using substances, many did so simply because it was modeled and reinforced in their environment.

By combining these two theories, this study captures both the psychological and social dynamics at play. The arousal theory of motivation explains the individual search for stimulation or calmness in the creative process, while social learning theory explains how cultural myths about substances and creativity spread and take root among emerging musicians. Together, they frame the central question of this research: why do artists adopt and sustain the

belief that psychoactive substances enhance creativity, even when evidence and lived performance outcomes often contradict this myth?

### **2.1.3 Creative Arousal and Creative Performance**

Arousal levels and creative performance have a complex relationship, according to research on creative arousal. High arousal circumstances were found to hinder creative performance on the Remote Associates Test by Martindale & Greenough (1973), indicating that elevated arousal restricts attention and diminishes access to remote associations that are essential for creativity. Farley (1976) found that creativity tends to climax at moderate levels of stimulation. In his study, people who sought a balanced amount of excitement showed the highest creative fluency, supporting the idea of an inverted-U link between arousal and creativity. Building on this, He et al. (2017) discovered that both upbeat and tense music can boost creative thinking. Their findings suggest that the level of arousal itself, rather than whether the emotion is positive or negative, is what drives creativity. Similarly, Gustafsson (2022) argued that the optimal level of arousal model can help explain why creativity results vary across studies, noting that factors like environment and mood can shape how arousal influences individual creative performance.

### **2.1.4 Music Performance Anxiety**

Music performance anxiety (MPA) is common among musicians and can vary depending on the situation. Studies show that performing alone often causes the most anxiety, while playing in groups or during practice feels less stressful. A major source of this anxiety is the fear of being judged negatively by others (Nicholson et al., 2015). Interestingly, a little bit of anxiety can sometimes help, it can motivate musicians to focus and perform better (Hamann & Sobaje, 1983). Musicians also deal with many physical and emotional pressures that must

be managed to maintain a healthy and lasting career (Kenny & Ackermann, 2016). Anxiety disorders are especially concerning; for example, some musicians with movement-related problems like dystonia often show signs of social or specific phobias that started even before their condition developed (Jabusch & Altenmüller, 2004). Traits such as perfectionism and chronic anxiety can make these problems worse, sometimes leading to career-threatening issues like focal dystonia. Understanding these psychological and social factors is vital to creating better support systems and improving musicians' wellbeing.

### **2.1.5 Lagos as an Art Hub**

Lagos has become one of Africa's most vibrant creative cities, with a fast-growing art and music scene that attracts both local and international attention. The city now has a strong creative ecosystem made up of young collectors, art fairs, galleries, museums, and cultural centers that support artists at different stages of their careers (Castellote & Okwuosa, 2019). Events like ART X Lagos and the Lagos Biennial show how homegrown initiatives are helping to reshape the global art space while promoting African creativity and perspectives (Kennedy, 2021).

For emerging artists and musicians, Lagos offers opportunities to grow and connect with audiences through social media. Many use platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to share their work, join viral trends, collaborate with influencers, and reach fans beyond Nigeria (Nwagwu & Akintoye, 2023). The creative energy in Lagos goes beyond borders, its artists and musicians are building a global image of the city through their art, often reflecting on everyday urban life, social issues, and identity (Magee, 2018). This rich and dynamic environment makes Lagos an ideal space for studying how young artists navigate challenges such as substance use, competition, and the pressure to stay relevant while pursuing creativity and success.

### **2.1.6 Substance Use in Nigeria**

Research shows that substance use among young people in Nigeria has become a growing concern, especially within creative and vulnerable groups. Studies show that alcohol is the most commonly used substance, with more than half of young people having tried it at some point, and about 14% using it recently. Cannabis use is lower but still present (Gureje et al., 2007). Among street children, substance use is even more widespread, reaching as high as 38% (Okwaraji et al., 1996) A recent study found that about 77% of Afrobeat songs, videos, and artist lifestyles display some link to drug use or substance culture (Tosin Emmanuel et al., 2024). Qualitative research shows that young people often turn to drugs for different reasons such as curiosity, peer pressure, the desire to perform better, boost confidence, cope with stress or frustration, or simply to escape reality for a while (Agberotimi, 2018). These findings reveal complex relationship between substance use, social and cultural influence among youths, particularly in the Music Industry shaped by music, environment, and emotional struggles, especially in creative spaces like Lagos, where many young musicians are trying to find success and identity.

### **2.2 Gap in the Literature**

Many studies have looked at substance use among young people in Nigeria, focusing on its social and psychological causes. However, very little is known about how these behaviors connect to creativity and artistic identity, especially among emerging musicians in Lagos. Most of the existing research examines general youth groups or university students, leaving out the specific pressures, competition, and performance demands that shape life in Lagos's fast-growing music industry.

In addition, while past research has explained how arousal can influence creativity and how people learn behaviors through observation or social influence, very few studies combine these ideas to understand how the belief that “drugs make you more creative” develops and spreads in the Nigerian music industry. This long-held belief, or myth, has not been properly studied in the African context, even though Lagos is now one of the most vibrant centers of music and art on the continent. This study, therefore, aims to close this gap by examining how creative drive, social influence, and performance pressure come together to shape substance use among emerging artists in Lagos. It offers both a theoretical and practical understanding of how the idea of “creativity through substance use” plays out in real artistic experiences.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the relationship between substance use and creativity among emerging musicians in Lagos, Nigeria. By integrating surveys, focus group discussions, and direct observational techniques, the research aimed to capture both measurable patterns and deeper personal insights into how artists perceive the role of psychoactive substances in their creative and performance processes.

### **3.1 Study Population and Sampling**

Lagos was selected as the study location because it is widely recognized as Nigeria's creative capital, with a high concentration of emerging musicians, studios, performance venues, and cultural events. Its vibrant music ecosystem makes it an ideal setting to explore the intersections between creativity, performance, and substance use.

The study focused on emerging musicians actively engaged in Lagos's creative ecosystem, including performers, songwriters, and producers who regularly participate in live shows, recording sessions, or open mic events. A purposive sampling approach was used to select participants based on their availability and relevance to the study. In total, 80 musicians participated in the survey, while seven artists took part in a focused group discussion. Additionally, two sets of five artists each (Group A and Group B) were observed during pre-performance and live event sessions.

### **3.2 Data Collection Procedures**

#### **3.2.1 Survey**

A structured questionnaire was distributed at music-related gatherings such as workshops, concerts, and creative networking sessions. The survey assessed musicians'

attitudes toward substance use as a tool for creativity, stage confidence, and energy enhancement. Out of all distributed copies, 80 valid responses were completed and analyzed.

### **3.2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

A single focus group discussion was held with seven emerging musicians to gain deeper insights into the social and emotional factors influencing substance use. Participants were encouraged to share personal experiences and industry perspectives related to creativity, peer influence, and performance motivation. The discussion guide included open-ended questions exploring why artists use substances, their perceptions of its creative impact, and how such behaviors are normalized within the music industry.

### **3.2.3 Observational Study**

To complement self-reported data, the researcher conducted participant observations of two performance groups (Group A and Group B), each comprising five emerging artists preparing for live performances. The observations were carried out in backstage and onstage contexts. The observation protocol focused on identifying differences in stage behavior, coordination, audience engagement, and performance flow between artists who reported using psychoactive substances and those who did not. Detailed field notes were recorded to capture behavioral patterns, energy levels, and crowd interaction during performances.

## **3.3 Research Tools and Protocols**

The research employed a structured questionnaire for the quantitative component and an open-ended interview guide for the qualitative discussions. Observation notes were recorded during performances using a simple behavior checklist that captured indicators such as stage

presence, coordination, and audience interaction. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided verbal consent before participating.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage distributions) to identify key trends and attitudes. Qualitative data from focus groups and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing recurring themes, such as peer influence, creative motivation, and performance anxiety, to emerge naturally from participants' responses. The results from both methods were later compared and discussed to highlight convergences and contrasts between perception and actual performance behavior.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Participants' identities were kept confidential, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed. The study maintained ethical standards by ensuring voluntary participation and minimizing any potential harm or discomfort during discussions or observations.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

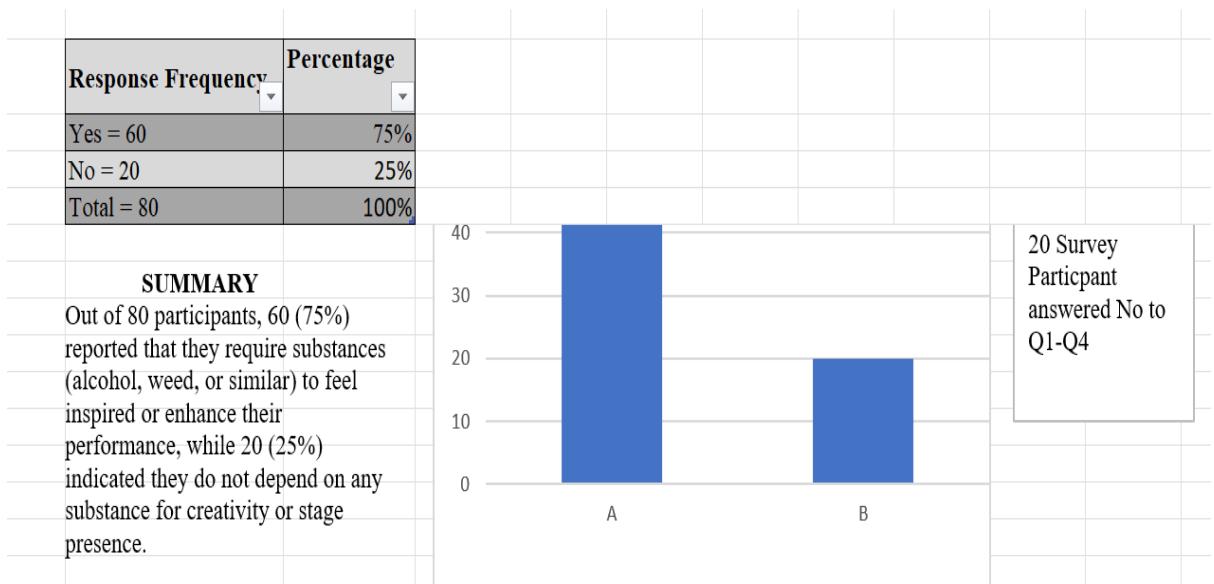
This section presents the results derived from the mixed-methods approach, integrating data from surveys, focus group discussions, and observational studies. The aim was to examine how substance use influences creativity, confidence, and performance among emerging Nigerian musicians, as well as to explore the persistence of the myth that drugs enhance artistic inspiration.

### 4.1 Survey Findings

An anonymous survey was distributed among emerging musicians across various events and music spaces in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria. Out of all distributed questionnaires, 80 valid responses were received. The results provided a clear picture of how artists perceive the link between substance use and creative inspiration:

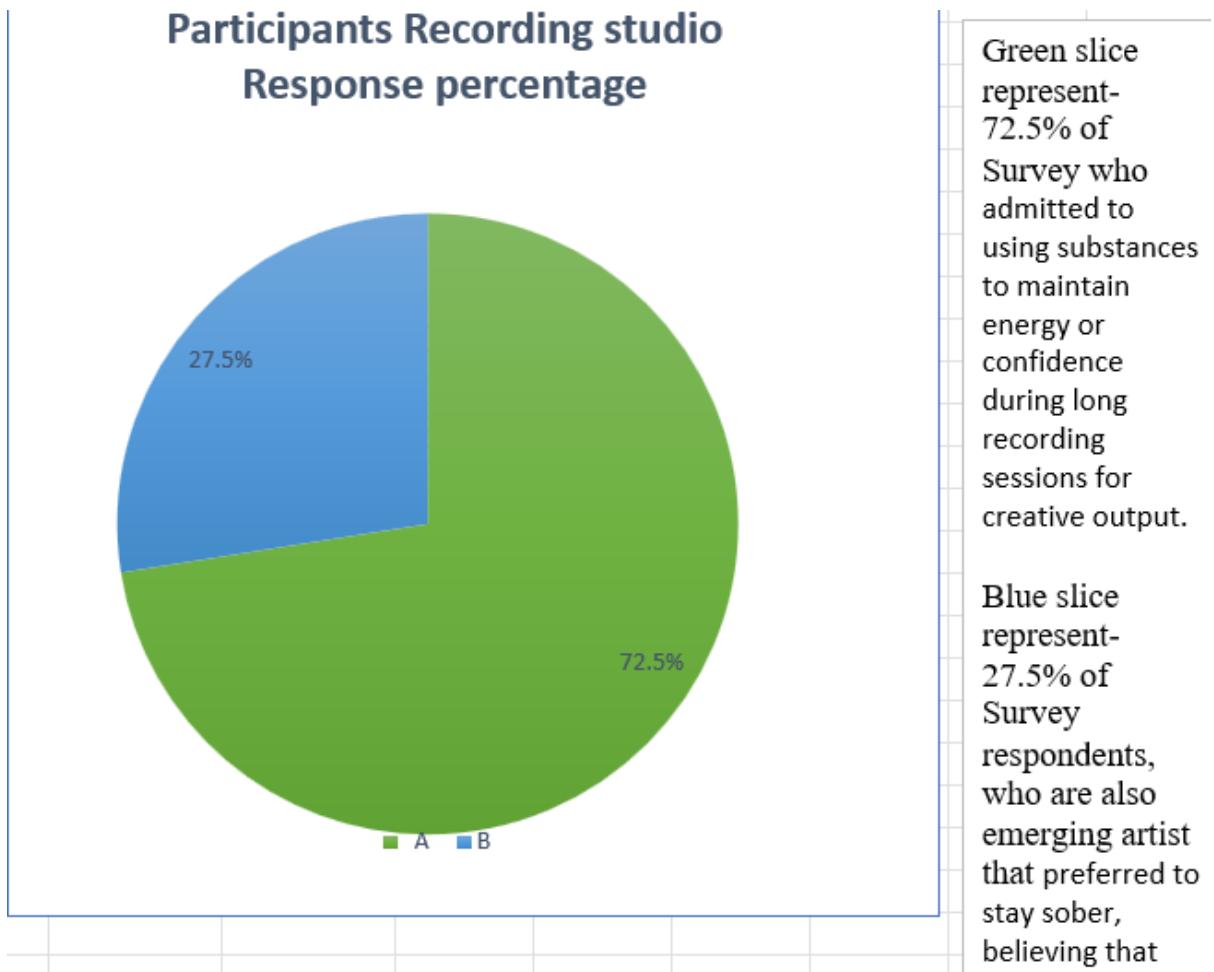
#### 4.1.1 Need for substances to get inspired:

60 out of 80 respondents (75%) indicated that they rely on substances such as alcohol, cannabis, or pills to feel inspired or to enter a “creative mood.” The remaining 20 (25%) stated that they do not depend on any form of substance for musical creativity.



#### 4.1.2 Substances during studio sessions:

58 respondents (72.5%) admitted to using substances to maintain energy or confidence during long recording sessions, while 22 (27.5%) said they preferred to stay sober, believing that focus and clarity improve their creative output.



#### 4.1.3 Perceived performance enhancement:

A majority (75%) of participants reported that they believe substances enhance their stage performance, helping them overcome nervousness and connect with the crowd. However, 25% disagreed, emphasizing that genuine connection comes from talent, rehearsal, and natural excitement.

#### **4.1.4 Belief in natural creativity:**

Interestingly, despite high substance use, 25% of respondents still agreed that creativity can occur naturally without external stimulation, suggesting a cognitive dissonance between belief and practice. These results highlight a strong cultural perception that substances are linked to creativity and performance energy. However, the data also indicate that many artists internally recognize that authentic creativity does not necessarily depend on drug use.

#### **4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

A single focus group discussion was conducted with seven emerging musicians to explore deeper social and psychological motivations behind substance use. Their responses revealed nuanced and often contradictory attitudes. Several participants admitted that peer influence and social conformity drive substance use in creative environments. They described how studio culture and peer gatherings normalize drug or alcohol consumption as part of the “creative process.” One participant mentioned that avoiding substance use could make an artist appear “rigid or uninspired” among peers. Others explained that performance anxiety, emotional stress, and the desire for belonging often trigger reliance on psychoactive substances. These narratives provide critical context to the quantitative findings: while many artists perceive drugs as creativity enhancers, their motivations are more social and psychological than artistic. Substance use becomes a symbolic badge of belonging, not necessarily a proven pathway to inspiration.

#### **4.3 Observational Findings**

To complement self-reported data, participant observation was conducted with ten emerging musicians preparing for live performances. They were grouped into two categories, Group A (substance users) and Group B (non-users).

### **Group A:**

The five artists who consumed substances (alcohol, cannabis, or stimulants) before performing appeared outwardly excited and expressive. However, during live sets, they displayed noticeable lapses in coordination, timing, stage control, and vocal stability. Their perceived energy often translated into disorganization, suggesting a mismatch between self-perceived performance enhancement and actual stage outcomes.

### **Group B:**

In contrast, the five artists who performed without any substance intake, demonstrated greater composure, audience engagement, and performance consistency. Their energy seemed to originate from natural arousal—the excitement of live performance and crowd interaction, rather than chemical stimulation. These observations aligned with the views of respondents who believed that genuine creativity and stage energy come from self-motivation, rehearsal, and emotional connection.

## **4.4 Integrated Insights**

The triangulation of survey data, focus group narratives, and observational evidence reveals a clear contradiction between belief and reality. Many emerging musicians associate substance use with creativity and confidence, yet practical observation and lived experiences suggest otherwise.

While three out of every four artists reported that they need substances to feel inspired, the focus group and observational data suggest that such reliance is often socially conditioned rather than creatively necessary. In practice, artists who abstained from substances demonstrated stronger artistic control, focus, and genuine emotional engagement with their audience. These findings highlight that the myth of substance-induced creativity persists more as a cultural construct than an empirical truth. The study underscores the importance of

education, mentorship, and wellness programs in the Nigerian music industry to debunk such myths and promote healthier creative practices.

#### **4.5 Summary of Key Findings**

75% of emerging musicians believe substances aid creativity or performance.

62% also believe creativity can come naturally, showing internal contradiction.

Focus group narratives link substance use more to peer pressure and anxiety than true inspiration. Observational data show that sober performers exhibit better coordination and audience connection. The myth of “chemical creativity” remains strong but is socially driven, not scientifically supported.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal a clear tension between belief and reality in the relationship between substance use and creativity among emerging Nigerian musicians. Although most participants believed that drugs or alcohol enhance inspiration and performance, the actual evidence from focus group narratives and observations suggests otherwise. This contradiction highlights that the myth of “chemical creativity” is more cultural than scientific.

### 5.1 Connection to Arousal Theory of Motivation

The findings align partly with the Arousal Theory of Motivation, which proposes that individuals seek an optimal level of arousal to perform effectively. Many artists in this study reported using substances to “get in the mood,” feel relaxed, or boost energy before performing. This behavior reflects their attempt to regulate arousal — either to overcome anxiety or to stimulate excitement. However, the observational results reveal that those who used substances often showed poor coordination, inconsistent focus, and reduced control on stage. This supports the “inverted-U” principle proposed by Farley (1976), which suggests that both too little and too much arousal harm creative performance. In this case, substance use appears to push arousal levels beyond the optimal point, impairing rather than enhancing creativity.

### 5.2 Connection to Social Learning Theory

The study also strongly supports Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that behaviors are learned through observation and imitation. Participants described how studio culture and peer influence normalize drug or alcohol use, creating a sense that substances are part of the artistic process. This mirrors Bandura’s (1971) idea that social reinforcement, not just direct rewards, drives behavioral learning. In Lagos’s vibrant creative ecosystem, emerging

musicians often imitate established stars who appear to use substances for inspiration or stage confidence. Over time, this imitation becomes a social norm, reinforcing the false belief that drug use is essential for creativity. The study therefore extends Social Learning Theory by showing how artistic identity and social belonging reinforce substance-related behaviors in creative communities.

### **5.3 Comparison with Previous Research**

These results align with earlier studies suggesting that while artists believe substances enhance performance, the evidence often shows the opposite. He et al. (2017) found that arousal, rather than emotional state or drug influence, is what actually drives creativity. Similarly, this study found that sober performers displayed higher enthusiasm and focus derived from natural excitement and connection with the audience. On the other hand, the strong peer influence and normalization of substance use found in this study expand on prior Nigerian research (Agberotimi, 2018; Tosin Emmanuel et al., 2024), adding a new dimension: substance use among artists is not merely a social habit, but a performance ritual shaped by both anxiety and cultural expectation.

### **5.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this study bridges psychological motivation (arousal) and social influence (learning) to explain why the myth of substance-enhanced creativity persists. It shows that the drive to feel creative and the pressure to “fit in” operate together, reinforcing substance reliance even when results contradict belief. Practically, this has important implications for music training, industry policy, and health education. There is a need for:

Awareness programs that educate emerging artists about the real effects of substances on performance and health. Mentorship systems that model healthy, creative practices free

from drug use. Performance wellness initiatives that teach natural ways to manage stage anxiety and creative blocks through rehearsal, mindfulness, and confidence-building.

### **5.5 Policy Implications**

Policy-makers and cultural institutions in Nigeria's creative sector can use these findings to develop more supportive environments for young artists. This could include: Integrating mental health support into artist development programs. Promoting anti-drug campaigns that target creative spaces such as studios and performance venues. Encouraging industry-wide codes of practice that discourage glorification of substance use in music content and public events. Such measures would not only protect artists' health but also contribute to building a more sustainable and professional creative industry in Lagos and beyond.

### **5.6 Limitation and Implications for Future Research and Practice**

This study's sample was limited to emerging artists within Lagos, which may not represent all Nigerian musicians. For researchers, future studies should look deeper into how mental health, anxiety, and cultural expectations shape creativity in African music contexts. Long-term and cross-regional studies could reveal whether these patterns change as artists gain fame or move into new markets. For industry practitioners, there is an urgent need to create safe spaces in studios, concerts, and creative hubs that support sober, confident, and emotionally balanced performance. For policymakers, investing in artist wellness programs, anti-drug awareness campaigns, and mentorship initiatives can help reshape the next generation of Nigerian musicians into healthy, creative professionals.

### **5.7 Recommendations**

#### **Promote Wellness and Mental Health Education**

Music organizations, record labels, and talent managers should integrate mental health education and performance anxiety management into artist training programs.

### **Mentorship and Positive Role Modeling**

Established artists and producers should act as mentors, modeling creative discipline and success without reliance on substances.

### **Policy and Institutional Support**

Cultural agencies and music unions should develop clear policies discouraging drug use in performance spaces and promoting awareness campaigns about its long-term impact. Universities, health agencies, and creative industry bodies should collaborate on deeper research exploring links between creativity, wellbeing, and substance culture in African contexts.

### **Public Awareness and Industry Campaigns**

Launch nationwide campaigns within the music industry to debunk the myth of substance-enhanced creativity and celebrate stories of artists thriving through natural inspiration.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This study explored the belief that psychoactive substances enhance creativity and performance among emerging musicians in Lagos. The findings revealed a clear contradiction between perception and reality; while most artists believe substances boost creativity, observation and discussion show that true artistic control, focus, and connection come from natural excitement and preparation, not from chemical stimulation.

In real-world terms, this study shows that what many artists see as a creative “boost” is often a social habit reinforced by peer influence, anxiety, and industry culture. Substance use does not strengthen creativity; it disrupts balance, coordination, and long-term artistic growth.

By exposing this myth, the research encourages musicians and creative leaders to promote wellness, self-awareness, and sustainable creative practices. This insight also has policy significance. Nigeria's fast-growing music economy must integrate mental health, wellness, and education programs into creative industry development plans. Encouraging healthy performance habits and debunking the myth of "chemical creativity" can improve both artistic output and the wellbeing of the country's young talent.

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## Appendix A

### **Survey Questionnaire**

The following questionnaire was designed to gather information on the relationship between substance use and musical creativity, energy, and performance among emerging artists in Nigeria. Please tick (✓) the option that best reflects your view for each question.

1. Do you feel you need alcohol or any substance to get inspired for music creation?

Yes       No

2. Do you use substances (e.g., alcohol, cannabis, pills) to maintain energy or confidence during studio sessions?

Yes       No

3. Do you feel substances help you perform better on stage (e.g., confidence, energy, creativity)?

Yes       No

4. Can creativity and inspiration come naturally to you without substances?

Yes       No