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Faith-Based Interventions in Addressing Drug and Substance abuse among the Youth Aged 13 - 35 Years in Zimbabwe: A Case of Glen Norah Islamic Community Center, Harare

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ABSTRACT

Background: Drug and substance abuse among youth is a growing concern in Zimbabwe, particularly in urban areas like Glen Norah, Harare. Various socio-economic and psychological factors contribute to this issue, posing challenges for families, communities, and policy-makers. **Objective:** This study aims to explore the role of faith-based interventions in addressing drug and substance abuse among youth aged 13 to 35 within the Glen Norah Islamic Community Centre. **Method:** A qualitative research design was employed, using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews to collect data from affected youth, religious leaders, and community stakeholders. **Result:** The findings reveal multiple contributing factors to youth drug abuse, including economic deprivation, family dysfunction, peer pressure, media influence, mental health challenges, and insufficient awareness. The study presents a faith-based model that promotes multidisciplinary collaboration involving religious institutions, healthcare professionals, and community organizations. **Conclusion:** Faith-based approaches, when integrated with other sectors, offer promising avenues for addressing youth substance abuse. Tailoring interventions to cultural and religious contexts enhances their relevance and impact. **Contribution:** This study provides actionable insights for developing context-specific, faith-informed policy and intervention strategies, contributing to a holistic and culturally appropriate response to drug abuse in Zimbabwe.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, and regionally, this has been a key subject area of interest with our local researchers having fewer reports on the area. Predominantly, religion often plays a significant role in the lives of individuals, providing them with a sense of purpose, meaning, and guidance. In the context of drug and substance abuse among youths, religion has been globally and regionally explored as a potential source of support and recovery for individuals struggling with addiction. Therefore, this suggests that religious involvement and beliefs can have a positive impact on substance abuse treatment outcomes, including reduced substance use, increased abstinence rates, as well as improved psychological well-being (Walton-Moss et al, 2013).

African countries have also responded to the increase in drug and substance abuse. For instance, South Africa managed to develop a National Drug Master Plan (2019-2024) which outlines that to effectively address drug and substance abuse among youths, there has been collaboration between various key players such as the government, religious institutions, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers. Through recognizing and harnessing the potential of religion, there has been notable success through the establishment of comprehensive strategies that

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have been supporting the well-being and resilience of youths, fostering drug-free communities in countries such as South Africa. Kabugi (2019) suggests that religious involvement, such as attending religious services, praying, and engaging in religious activities, is associated with lower rates of substance abuse among adolescents.

Additionally, it has also been playing a vital role in ensuring moral and ethical guidance that has been guiding youths in countries such as Nigeria as their local mosques and sheikhs are guiding them in making healthier decisions regarding drug use. It is reported that Islamic teachings in countries such as Kenya often emphasize the importance of leading a virtuous life, avoiding harmful substances, and promoting personal well-being. Therefore, religious youth are relying on their religious beliefs and values to resist peer pressure and make choices aligned with their faith, thereby reducing the likelihood of drug and substance abuse. Locally, there is a dearth of information given that a few researchers have reported on the interventions which are being done by religious organisations, predominantly the Islamic Organisations, in dealing with the menace of drug and substance abuse. Alemu et al (2020) report that the issue of drug and substance abuse among youths is a growing concern in Zimbabwe, as it poses significant risks to their health, social well-being, and overall development. Religion has long been recognized as a potential pathway for addressing drug and substance abuse and promoting positive behavioural changes in individuals. Numerous studies have highlighted the role of religion in drug and substance abuse prevention. Al-Modallal et al. (2019) found that frequent attendance at religious services was associated with lower levels of drug and substance abuse among Zimbabwean adolescents in that the religious teachings and moral values instilled in them tend to promote abstinence from drug and substance use. It is in this regard that this scholar views religion as being imperative in the provision of guidance and a sense of purpose to youths.

Furthermore, Amin & Osman (20201) elucidate that the use of illicit drugs and substances in Zimbabwe has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic era and to label it, this is an impending public health disaster. McCrady et al. (2018) also highlight that there has been a steep rise in the number of hospital admissions due to the use of illicit drugs such as methamphetamine by adolescents and youth. It is in the face of this growing concern that the researcher seeks to explore the role religious organisations can play in reducing and addressing this growing concern because places, where drug and substance abuse victims are to be placed, are becoming full as every day goes by hence the need to explore alternative innovative ways in which individuals can be assisted.

In the context of exploring the role played by religious faiths in addressing drug and substance abuse, the researcher finds it feasible to utilise the Social Control Theory to provide a foundation for analysis and interpretation. Developed by Travis Hirschi, this theory focuses on the social bonds and mechanisms that influence individuals' conformity to societal norms and rules (Hirschi, 1969). It suggests that religion can act as a form of social control which influences an individual's behaviour through the promotion of acceptable moral values, norms, and beliefs. It asserts that adherence to religious principles and involvement of religion in people's lives can serve as protective factors against deviant activities such as drug and substance abuse through the provision of key tenets such as a social support network, promoting self-control, as well as fostering a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Costello and Laub (2020) assert that the social control theory plays a key role in explaining deviance in society owing to the deeper examination it brings about through postulating the underlying assumptions of human nature and social order.

Thus, the researcher used this theory for this research to effectively understand the role played by religion in addressing the menace of drug and substance abuse in communities among youths. According to Hirschi, (Bukstein et al., 2012), there is a presentation of strain or anomie theories under the social control theory where there is a major assumption that "man is a moral animal who desires to obey the rules. According to Chikwanha et al (2020), this means that to enable people to behave in ways which are consistent with the desires of others and inconsistent with their own internalised norms, there must be a great deal of pressure and influence to ensure that they behave in those ways.

Drug and substance abuse among the youth is a pressing issue in many communities, including those in Zimbabwe. The detrimental effects of this vice on individuals, families, and communities call for urgent intervention strategies (Maraire and Jasni, 2020). Recently, religious organisations have emerged as key players in addressing this complex problem. This research study, therefore, aims to explore the intervention strategies demonstrated by religious organisations specifically targeting drug use among the youth in Zimbabwean communities and develop a model to enhance ways of addressing drug and substance abuse. According to Kabugi (2019), Religious organisations have a unique position in society, often holding significant influence and moral authority. They have a deep-rooted commitment to the well-being of their congregants and the broader community, making them potential agents of change in addressing the vice of drug and substance abuse which has bedevilled the globe, with Zimbabwe not being

an exception. Through their spiritual, social, and educational platforms, religious organisations can provide essential guidance and support to young people struggling with substance abuse.

The vice of drug and substance abuse by young people globally is reported to have increased during the Covid 19 lockdowns and Zimbabwe is not an exception. For instance, illicit drugs and substances such as methamphetamine (colloquially called crystal meth, mutoriro or dombo), marijuana, as well as cough syrups like bronclee, and others with local names such as mukozodo and musombodhiya among others have been on increased use by youths. To elucidate the nature of the negative effects of drug use amongst youths, Mukwenha et al, label it as "an impending public health disaster" owing to the side effects they cause in young people which have short, and long-term effects which include addiction, stress, depression, engaging in deviant activities such as theft and unprotected sex or early sexual debut as was stated by Chikoko et al (2019). With this background in mind, the researcher, therefore, sought to assess and evaluate the strategies being employed by religious organisations in addressing drug and substance abuse by youths and its side effects.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate various intervention strategies employed by Islamic organizations in Zimbabwe in dealing with the menace of drug and substance abuse among youths from the ages of 13 to 35 years. It will examine the role of faith-based initiatives, counseling programs, and awareness campaigns, as well as the impact it is having in the community to assisting young persons who are falling prey to drugs and illicit substances in the community. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these strategies will be critically evaluated, considering cultural, social, and economic factors that influence drug use among the youth.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

An interpretivist research philosophy was applied for this qualitative research study on faith-based strategies in addressing drug and substance misuse among youth in Zimbabwe. For this research, one used the Case study research design given how it ensures an in-depth exploration of the practices of the research participants over a certain period through certain or various contexts. Yin (2018) outlines the Case study research design as a valuable approach for exploring, analysing, and understanding the intricacies of specific cases or situations. With the research design, the researcher was assisted in the generation of rich and detailed data on faith-based intervention in addressing drug and substance abuse among the youth in Zimbabwe, providing him with a comprehensive understandding of the subject matter under investigation.

2.2 Participant

The target population for the research study on strategies being used by the Islamic faith in dealing with drug and substance abuse among their youth were Muslim youth who were actively engaged with and in the Islamic faith living in the Glen Norah Community. The researcher targeted a population of young people from the ages of 13 to 35 and this was a component of individual young people who identified themselves as Muslims and participated in religious activities, such as attending the mosque, Islamic seminars, or youth groups. Key informants such as 2 Sheikhs from the local Mosque partook in the study and were also part of the target population.

The research study employed a non-probability sampling method which is the snowballing sampling method. The sample size was drawn from the target population of youths from a Mosque in the Glen Norah high-density Suburb. From the target population, the researcher interviewed 16 youths from the Islamic faith and 2 key informants. The latter comprised of 2 individuals who have Bachelor's degrees in Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence studies. Amongst the two sheikhs, 1 is a full-time sheikh who resides at the Glen Norah Islamic Center and the other one assists him but does not reside at the centre as he is a full-time Ustaz (Teacher) at Al Falah College in Harare. In the community, these two individuals are highly esteemed personnel as the community members from the Islamic faith consult them on any matters. Since qualitative research as a method reaches a saturation point, the sample size of the research was determined by a saturation point.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

In-Depth Interviews

In the research, the researcher utilised open-ended questions to untie information pertaining to this specific research and this allowed one to fully acquaint himself with information from the participants.

Key Informant Interviews

For this research, the researcher utilised open-ended key informant guide questions to obtain information which was valuable for the study. In this research study, the researcher utilised the 2 Sheikhs from the Islamic faith to ascertain the strategies being employed in dealing with drug and substance abuse in their respective faith and the effectiveness of those strategies. Thus, 2 Key Informants were interviewed in the research study to ascertain the extent to which the faith is addressing the challenge of drug and substance abuse.

Focus Group Discussions

The researcher complemented bias as a weakness of in-depth interviews through the utility of Focus group discussions with the participants. One of the advantages of this method is that it places much emphasis on interaction during the discussions and through the interactions which took place. In this vein, there was stimulation of the development of ideas hence the rationale behind the researcher using it for this research study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

1) Mental health issues

Anxiety, despair, and stress are among the mental health conditions that young people in densely populated areas are more likely to experience. When people turn to drugs or alcohol for solace or self-medication, mental health issues increase their susceptibility to substance dependence. Furthermore, the participants emphasized that individuals, even young people, can experience trauma, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of force major events like natural catastrophes and pandemics like the Covid 19. In this context, there is typically psychological anguish resulting from the associated events, which can heighten susceptibility to drug and substance misuse by the youth as a means of self-medication or easing emotional suffering.

When asked about the role mental health plays in drug and substance abuse among young people in high-density communities, the key informant participant in the form of the local sheikh highlighted that it is one of the leading areas which, when not considered, inevitably results in the abuse of drugs and substances by young people in the community as they will be in need of social support, which they may not find in the community. He further highlighted that this then results in them developing mental health challenges such as depression due to anxiety and the feeling of isolation in the face of the vicissitudes of life. This therefore then leads to many of them seeking solace in drugs and substances such as alcohol in lighter cases and more dangerous drugs and substances such as Mutoriro and Marijuana in extreme cases, to cope.

The researcher then further asked the key informant interviewee about the effects of drug and substance abuse on young people's mental health and he outlined that"

"In most cases, those who continuously use hard drugs and substances such as mutoriro and guka, (Crystal meth) tend to exhibit signs of mental illnesses which, at times we address through continuous prayer and mentoring and we cannot address given that rehabilitation is a two-way process, if the victim is not willing to cooperate, it is hard to effect positive change on him or her as he or she may not be willing. Therefore, all I can say is that the major effect of drug and substance abuse on young people's mental health is mental illnesses".

The above finding exhibits an intersection of mental health issues and substance abuse among young people. This also demonstrates a nuanced and intricate interaction that shapes the susceptibilities and paths to substance abuse in communities. The coexistence of mental health disorders and inadequate support, as well as restricted access to suitable interventions, greatly augments the likelihood of substance addiction as a coping mechanism, self-medication, or an ill-advised attempt to mitigate the effects of mental health issues.

The results above also indicate that young people may experience emotions of discomfort, estrangement, and emotional upheaval as a result of untreated or stigmatized mental health concerns. Young people may struggle with anxiety, despair, trauma, and other emotional issues in the lack of appropriate support and understanding, which can foster an environment where the appeal of substance misuse as a coping strategy may grow stronger.

Furthermore, the research participants also outlined that the existence of undiagnosed or untreated mental health disorders may contribute to a feeling of helplessness and vulnerability in them. Therefore, the adoption of substance misuse as a perceived means of self-management and relief from feelings of powerlessness is further influenced by the lack of relevant interventions and restricted access to mental health resources. This finding goes a step further than the finding by Cotton (2016) whose finding was only limited to mental health issues leading to drug and substance abuse by the youth whereas this study identified that untreated mental issues as well as lack of relevant interventions and restricted access to mental health resources is a leading cause towards the vice by the

young people. These conditions support the normalization of substance misuse as a coping mechanism for emotional discomfort, fostering a culture in which substance addiction is seen as a haven for untreated mental health issues.

In conclusion, the information above also highlights the fact that social isolation, alienation, and a lack of support systems are frequently associated with mental health concerns. These factors foster an atmosphere in which substance abuse is accepted as a way to cope with and connect with mental health concerns. The interaction between social dynamics and mental health issues further shapes young people's potential vulnerability to substance abuse in the community, especially when comprehensive support and mental health resources are lacking.

2) Family Dynamics

The results of the study also demonstrated the significant influence that family dynamics and environment have on how young people behave when it comes to drug and substance misuse. Accordingly, studies have shown that a higher likelihood of drug and substance misuse is associated with variables such as parental substance abuse, dysfunctional family dynamics, a lack of parental support or involvement, and uneven discipline methods.

When asked about his personal opinion on how high-density communities contribute to drug and substance abuse among young people, one participant had this to say:

“you know what brother, the environment shapes an individual and one becomes what he is continuously associated with on a daily basis. Moreover, what one is exposed to may also lead to him engaging in activities which may not be favourable to others but favourable to one since it will be an opium which may be bringing euphoria. All I am trying to say is that the ghettos, by being ghettos, lead to the abuse of drugs and substances because various factors such as socialisation to a parent or guardian who uses or abuses drugs, leads to the use and sudden abuse of drugs by young people.”

To further corroborate the above assertion, the Glen Norah Community Sheikh gave his insights on how family dynamics impact young individuals' susceptibility to drug and substance abuse:

"The family unit has a significant impact on the growth and wellbeing of young people. Family conflict, inadequate support, and intergenerational trauma are examples of dysfunctional family dynamics that can have a substantial impact on a young person's propensity to consume drugs."

It can be noted from the above that key issues like familial conflict result in young people using and abusing drugs and substances. This is so because, from the interviews, the young people expressed on how family conflict and tension tend to contribute to their emotional distress, which ultimately creates an environment where drug and substance abuse is perceived as a means of escape from their familial challenges. Moreover, the lack of emotionally supportive surroundings at home is cited by the participants, highlighting the effect that inadequate familial direction and support has on their vulnerability to substance misuse.

These results highlight how important familial dynamics are in determining a child's propensity to take drugs. Emphasis is placed on the necessity of trauma-informed interventions, comprehensive family support programs, and safe, nurturing environments. It is acknowledged that family dynamics have a significant impact on the well-being of young people and their vulnerability to substance abuse. The results underscore the significant influence of family dynamics on the drug misuse experiences of young individuals, underscoring the necessity of focused support, trauma-informed care, and interventions that tackle the interdependent dynamics of substance addiction and family well-being.

Similar to Currier (2020) finding, this research study also ascertained that family dynamics have a significant impact on how young people behave and make decisions, including how likely they are to abuse drugs or other substances. Therefore, it has been noted from the findings that family relationships have the potential to prevent or exacerbate drug and substance misuse problems among young people.

Additionally, it has also been found that a key component of family dynamics that can contribute to young people abusing drugs and other substances is ineffective communication. It becomes difficult for family members to freely communicate their feelings, ideas, and concerns when there is inadequate or strained communication. Young people may become frustrated and feel alone as a result, turning to drugs or other substances as a way to cope. Substance misuse in these situations could be an attempt to manage unresolved issues or emotional distress (Davis et al., 2016). The existence of parental substance misuse or addiction in the family is also another factor identified. When children and young people see their parents doing drugs, according to the participants, they could think it's normal behaviour or a way for them to deal with the difficulties in life. As they get older, these kids are more likely to continue with the same substance addiction behaviours. Adolescent substance misuse can also be exacerbated by dysfunctional family dynamics linked to parental substance abuse, such as role reversal, inconsistency in discipline, and neglect.

Another important factor is supervision and family structure. Young people may have easier access to drugs and other substances in homes where there is poor monitoring, absentee parenting, or lack of parental involvement. It can therefore be concluded that in the absence of appropriate direction and assistance, young people are more prone to participate in dangerous activities, such as drug and substance misuse.

3.2. Discussion

1) The Perceived Factors for Drugs and Substance abuse by Young People in High-Density Communities

a. Peer Pressure and Social Influence:

The researcher managed to interview the participants and the key informants to ascertain the rationale behind the use of drugs and substances in high-density communities, also known as ghettos. Through the key informant and in-depth interviews conducted, one significant factor that consensus emerged was that the youths in the high-density communities tend to engage in drug and substance usage due to social and peer influence. To exemplify this theme, most participants outlined that the pressure to fit in, seek acceptance, and conform to social norms within their immediate social circles led them to experiment with drugs and substances, and one of them had this to say:

"ah my brother, I began abusing drugs in 2019 during my Ordinary levels wherein my friends, who used drugs, kept on insisting that I should try cigarettes. Due to the need to fit in, I conformed to their demands and I still remember the first time I smoked, I had a serious cough and thought I would die. Fast forward, it then transitioned from cigarettes to marijuana and that is how I then began to abuse drugs to the extent that I even failed my ordinary level as I could not pay attention or focus on anything. The drug is the only one in my mind."

In addition to the above, the local sheikh of the Glen Norah Mosque also highlighted similar sentiments when he was asked about how young people, he has assisted and mentored, are suddenly engaging in drugs and substances. He postulated that:

"I can safely say that 80 percent of those I have mentored to address the vice of drug and substance abuse have reported to me during our initial contact that they first engaged in the use and abuse of drugs as a result of influence from their peers. One student of mine, who comes to weekend classes "Maddressah" has since stopped associating with his former friends, which I advised him, and he has changed for good and is now back into being a good Muslim youth I am proud of the change he has since made."

It is clear from the preceding findings that peer pressure and social influence play a major role in young people's drug and substance usage just like in the research study which was conducted by Ekeke (2022) where 94.2% of his participants reported having engaged in drug and substance abuse as a result of peer influence. In this research, the young people's social environments, especially their peers and the towns they live in, have a significant impact on their decisions and behaviours. The beginning, maintenance, and intensification of substance misuse behaviours can all be significantly impacted by these factors. In order to effectively prevent and treat the problems associated with drug and substance misuse among young people, it is crucial to comprehend the complex interplay between peer pressure and social influence.

Similar to El-Sayed & Soliman (2016) opinion, on young people having their behaviour shaped by those whom they associate with, the current research participants also brought attention to the powerful influence of peer pressure, which can push people to take drugs in an attempt to fit in and be accepted by their social circles. Youths frequently have a great desire to blend in and be accepted by their friends. As a result, they may follow social norms and engage in risky activities, such as substance misuse. The fear of rejection for abstaining from substance-related activities or peer pressure might be subtle or overt manifestations of this drive to conform.

In addition, social networks and community settings have a significant impact on how young people think about and behave when it comes to drug and substance misuse. The latter two facets may be more common or accepted in high-density neighbourhoods, for example, which might have a greater impact on people's actions. As stated by Ahmed (2019), young people's decisions about substance use can be greatly influenced by a variety of factors, including exposure to drug and substance misuse in the home or neighbourhood, the existence of drug-related or gang-related activities, and the accessibility of substances in the local community.

b. Lack of Education and Awareness

Based on the research findings, it was possible to determine that another major contributing factor to teenage drug and substance misuse in high-density areas is a lack of education and knowledge about the repercussions of drug and substance abuse in the community. The researcher was able to discern from the research findings another theme that surfaced, which was confirmed by numerous participants in high-density communities was that the lack

of access to comprehensive drug education programs and awareness campaigns has been a major factor in raising the risks of drug and substance abuse among young people. To demonstrate and support this assertion, the community sheikh gave his:

"There has been a noticeable lack of thorough education, especially with regard to the dangers and repercussions of drug and substance misuse. Many young people in this community have been left exposed by this lack of awareness, which frequently results in drug experimentation without the requisite comprehension of the accompanying dangers."

The above highlights that the community sheikh recognises that there is a concerning gap in education and awareness regarding the topic of drug and substance abuse, noting its impact on young individuals within the Glen Norah community.

The research participants also gave their testimonials regarding how the lack of education and awareness on drug and substance abuse drove and drives them into using and abusing drugs and substances. When asked how he perceives the factors that drive other young people into abusing drugs and substances, one participant highlighted the lack of accessible educational resources as being a leading cause. He therefore shed light on the challenges of limited access to educational materials by highlighting the below:

"Our community centres and schools haven't provided enough resources or information regarding the dangers of drug abuse. It seems as though we are left to our own devices, which might result in poor choices, particularly when peer pressure is present."

To corroborate this view, another participant also highlighted the impact of misconceptions and external influence in driving young people to become addicted to drugs and substances. After being asked by the researcher, the participant elucidated:

"*We still don't fully grasp the effects of illicit drugs and substances. I've witnessed friends participate in things without fully realizing the risks or believing them to be innocuous. Misconceptions and peer pressure have an easier time leading to experimentation when there is a lack of awareness. Also, some of my peers tend to abuse drugs and do not even have knowledge of information on where to get support and assistance."*

In this regard, it should be noted that young people tend to experiment more and take drugs longer due to being unaware of the possible risks and repercussions of drug misuse. These results highlight the urgent need for thorough education and awareness campaigns catered to the special requirements of young people. The creation of easily accessible, age-appropriate educational materials, partnerships with educational establishments, and the promotion of preventive initiatives are among the suggestions that centre on raising awareness and lowering the stigma attached to young people seeking help for substance abuse.

It has also been highlighted and can be noted from the findings that an increased risk of experimenting, misuse, and addiction can be directly attributed to young people's lack of knowledge and understanding surrounding drugs and substance abuse. This is a new finding which was not identified in the literature review section and it makes the finding peculiar to this research study alone. It can be noted from the above that lack of knowledge has implications for the youth in that they are more vulnerable to possible harm when they are not properly informed about the dangers, repercussions, and effects of substance addiction, especially when they are young. Drug and substance addiction has therefore become more common in a setting, such as high-density areas like Glen Norah, where there is a lack of knowledge and awareness, which can take many forms.

The participants also emphasized how a lack of preventive information and educational tools causes a knowledge gap in young people. Similarly, it may be the same with the study which was conducted by El-Sayed & Soliman (2016) on the reasons why children living and working in the streets engage in drug and substance abuse given that they are not exposed to any information whatsoever regarding the effects of drug and substance abuse. Without access to thorough educational materials and resources for prevention, young people might not be aware of the particular risks connected to different substances. A lack of understanding of this kind can cause one to underestimate the possible harm and give rise to false notions about the safety of drug and substance experimentation. Insufficient knowledge of the subject can also make young people ill-equipped to spot drug and substance abuse symptoms in others as well as in themselves, delaying treatment and intervention.

c. Media influence

The researcher also discerned from the study that media is greatly influencing the use and abuse of drugs and substances by young people in the communities. This is so because some participants reported that exposure to various social media handles and content which supports drug abuse has been another factor that has led many of them to engage in drug and substance abuse. Additionally, many young people reported that exposure to songs and videos, especially from the genre of Zimdancehall, have led many of them into engaging in drug and substance abuse

and many songs which they are listening to are further negatively conditioning them into the abuse of drugs and substances. When the researcher asked one of the participants about the factors which led and are leading youths into the use and abuse of drugs, she highlighted that graphic and audio media, in the form of videos and songs are leading youths into drug and substance abuse. The participant highlighted that:

"*Munoziva mkoma, amwe masongs atikuteerera ndoakuita tirambe tichishandisa zvinodhaka. For example, pane song iya ya Seh Calaz na Silent Killer inonzi "it's a badman party". Mukanyatsoitereresa iya munonyatsoona kuti yes, kana tasangana vanodhakwa todhakwa nechero chatadhakwa nacho and hatina anotibvunza. Izvi manje ndozvikuita tibamure drug not zveimbichana. Shot reipapo mkoma"*

*"*You know what my brother, some songs we are listening to are the ones which are making us drug addicts more. For instance, there is this song by She Calaz and Silent Killer which is called "It's a Badman Party". If you attentively listen to it, you will affirmatively agree that when drug addicts meet, they get high on whatever drug or substance that is available and they are not accountable to anyone. This is making us get more and more addicted to drugs and substances"

From the above, one can therefore conclude that young people in high-density neighbourhoods may also be influenced to abuse drugs and other substances by cultural influences and media portrayals of drug use. Exposure to media glamorizing substance abuse and cultural acceptability or normalcy of drug use can have an impact on an individual's viewpoint and heighten curiosity or interest in experimenting.

The community sheikh also highlighted the impact of media on young people's perceptions of substance use:

"*We have seen firsthand how the media permeates society and frequently glamorizes or normalizes the representation of substance use. Young people's perceptions are greatly impacted by this, which shapes their understanding and contributes to the normalization of substance misuse. This worrying trend has been exacerbated by media messaging's deficiency of impartial, instructive material."*

Another participant also highlighted misrepresentation and misconceptions as being a major influence on drug and substance abuse by young people. In this regard, she therefore highlighted the impact of media misrepresenttation:

"One gets a misleading impression of what drug usage actually entails when they witness drugs being glamorized or even normalized in the media on a regular basis. People who have misguided perceptions may experiment and misuse drugs because they don't realize the true risks involved with substance abuse."

From the above findings, it can be deduced that through media, there has been the normalization of drug and substance use. This is the case because the participants argued that media representations of substance misuse normalise it and foster a culture in which drug usage is seen as a common occurrence rather than a serious issue. It has also been discovered from the findings that there are misconceptions and peer Influence which are a result of the influence of media, which is ultimately leading to drug and substance abuse among the youth. In this sense, media messaging shapes young people's perceptions and decisions by feeding myths and peer pressure, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to substance abuse.

The Social Control Theory validates this finding in that it elucidates that for individuals to engage in any behaviour, there has to be a tool which is involved (El-Sayed et al., 2020). According to El-Sayed et al (2016), this means that in order for people to behave in certain ways which are consistent with the desires of others, there may be an involvement of some form of internalized norms which are a great deal of pressure to force them to behave in those ways. Therefore, through the lens of the Social Control Theory, the role of media cannot be downplayed as being a major cause of drug and substance abuse by young people.

It was also observed, from the findings, that lyrics and images associated with music, as a kind of artistic expression, frequently glamorize and normalize drug usage. The study's conclusions suggest that popular music and music videos tend to sensationalise and romanticise drug and alcohol use, typically depicting it as glamorous, liberating, and without repercussions. Young audiences may therefore get desensitized to such stories as a result of frequent exposure, which could normalize substance addiction as a common or acceptable aspect of daily life. Because of this, young people can internalize these messages and the culture of substance use that is connected with them, which would lead to a mistaken feeling of normalcy and a desensitization to the risks. This is similar to Gouglas et al (2017) study where there is mention of media and peer influence being the major drivers of drug and substance addiction by the youth. Furthermore, visual imagery in other media, such as music videos, may be quite effective in supporting these kinds of narratives. The visuals and storytelling in music and videos can create an aspirational appeal surrounding drug and substance misuse, whether it's through the celebration of substance use, the association of drugs with status symbols, or the representation of musicians using drugs. Because such imagery shapes

perceptions and desires, it may influence young people to see drug and substance abuse as a desirable and alluring way of life.

d. Economic stagnation by the youths due to poverty and lack of access to opportunities

From the findings obtained, the researcher also managed to identify that most youths are resultingly engaging in the use and abuse of drugs and substances as a result of the lack of engagement and access to developmental activities which economically sustain them or make them participate in the economic market. In this regard, this therefore has led many of them to develop mental health issues which are then leading many of them to engage in the use and abuse of drugs and substances. The researcher managed to assess and analyse this theme and concluded that the increased poverty rates which are taking place in most high-density areas, ghettos, are leading to personal economic instability amongst young people and they are therefore resorting to drug and substance abuse as a means to escape the harsh reality and boredom resulting from unemployment and lack of economic opportunities.

When asked to share any personal experiences or stories they have heard about young people in high-density communities and their involvement with drugs and substances, the local Imam of the Glen Norah Community outlined that lack of employment has a significant impact on drug and substance abuse by young people and he had this to say:

"*Young people typically experience frustration and hopelessness when they are unable to find employment and this is the case here in the high-density suburb of Glen Norah. Their dissatisfaction is then heightened when they witness their classmates finding work or making money illegally. This will therefore lead those who are unemployed to engage in deviant activities to find money and in order to gain the confidence to do so, they resort to drugs and substances which are illicit."*

Another key informant in the form of the local sheikh also elucidated similar sentiments and highlighted the following:

"For our young people, unemployment results in unstable financial standing. They frequently encounter difficulties providing for their fundamental requirements as well as difficulties sustaining themselves and their families. Their desperate attempts to find other sources of revenue, such as drug-related activities, are prompted by this."

The above views highlight that unemployment breeds frustration, financial instability and desperation which ultimately results in the utility of drugs and substances which are illegal in order to engage in activities which are unacceptable and illegal in the community. Additionally, it can be construed from the above findings that drug and substance use among young people can be greatly increased in a community where there is economic stagnation and restricted prospects for them. According to Greenwood (2016), the trajectory of drug and substance misuse among young people is significantly shaped by limited access to resources and a dearth of economic prospects. Thus, relating to the above findings, young people are frequently placed in vulnerable positions due to economic hardship, financial uncertainty, and a lack of possibilities. This can lead to a perception that substance misuse is a coping technique, an escape, or a way to get comfort from difficult circumstances.

It can also be noted from the findings above, that the incidence of drug and substance misuse in society can be greatly influenced by economic stagnation and young people's limited access to possibilities similar to the findings by Hassan et al (2019) on the study he conducted in the states of United States of America on how socio-economic factors lead to the usage and addiction to drugs and substances by young people. One of the main factors influencing the trajectory of substance misuse among young people is the absence of economic opportunities coupled with restricted access to resources. Young people frequently find themselves in precarious situations where they need to cope with economic hardship, financial uncertainty, and a lack of opportunities. This can lead to an environment where substance abuse is seen as an escape, a coping mechanism, or a way to find comfort from difficult circumstances.

In this sense, it can be concluded that young people's emotions of marginalization, disempowerment, and lack of agency can be made worse by economic stagnation. A widespread sense of inadequacy and low self-esteem can result from limited access to possibilities for professional and personal advancement, which increases one's vulnerability to substance abuse. Substances can be a misguided haven for people who are trying to escape their problems and mental suffering when there are no other avenues for them to pursue personal and professional fulfilment (Jembere & Mhute, 2015). Furthermore, a lack of employment opportunities may encourage a culture in which youth are not engaged in worthwhile endeavours or constructive hobbies. Young people who are faced with idleness, restricted opportunities, and a sense of alienation from society's larger goals could turn to substance misuse as a short-term escape. This disengagement may raise vulnerability to the harmful effects of substance misuse by limiting opportunities for personal development and well-being in addition to maintaining the cycle of economic stagnation.

2) Available Programs used by Islamic Faith in addressing Drug and Substance abuse among Young People

Several recurring themes about the existing programs and their efficacy emerged through the use of qualitative data collection methods and tools, such as focus groups, key informant interviews, and in-depth interviews with people who participated in the research project.

a. Education and Prevention Programs

During the research study, the participants emphasised the effectiveness and significance of the education and prevention programs which are being employed at the Glen Norah Mosque and community in tackling drug and substance abuse among young people within the Islamic Faith context and the community. The researcher managed to decipher that the programs are being employed by the local imams in the community through visiting every Muslim household are creating a psycho-social support group and effecting knowledge to their congregants on the effects of drug and substance abuse. From the information acquired, the researcher was able to conclude that awareness campaigns are essential because they provide young Muslims with precise and current information about the negative consequences of drug and substance misuse. They also teach them about the dangers to their physical and emotional well-being, the emergence of addictions, and the effects these have on relationships, learning, and employment. Furthermore, the youth are receiving early intervention and prevention in regard to refraining from drug and substance use through the use of education and awareness programs. These programs are helping young people recognise the early warning symptoms of drug and substance misuse in themselves or others by increasing awareness. The harmful effects of addiction are being prevented and lessened by this early intervention.

When asked about the programs or initiatives being implemented by the Islamic Faith in addressing drug and substance abuse, the local sheikh had this to say:

"Islamic educational and social programs are playing a crucial role in preventing drug abuse among our youth. We place much emphasis on the teachings of Islam, uphold moral principles, and inform people about the negative effects of drug and substance usage on one's body and soul through our awareness campaigns, which we do in the mosque or in the community by visiting Muslim homes and families."

Another participant spoke regarding the influence of drug and substance abuse prevention initiatives at the Mosque. He highlighted that they have assisted him through fostering resilience and positive coping skills. In this regard, he highlighted:

"We now have resilience and coping mechanisms thanks to these programs. We are more capable of overcoming obstacles and understanding the need to preserve our health and links to our faith as a defence against the weaknesses caused by substance misuse."

To validate the above assertion, another participant also postulated that the educational programs and awareness initiatives being held at the Mosque are of great importance. In this regard, she illustrated the transformative impact which the education and drug prevention programs are having in her life:

"The educational initiatives have opened my eyes. They have equipped us with the information and resources that help us avoid abusing drugs. It's about comprehending our religion, our society, and the possible outcomes in a way that motivates us to make better decisions…. These activities foster a sense of collective duty and understanding. It's about helping one another out, admitting when you're weak, and creating a community firmly based on common beliefs and expertise."

From the above, three major themes were acknowledged and these were empowerment through education and awareness as well as resilience and coping and community support and shared values. In gaining the knowledge and abilities needed to refrain from drug and substance misuse and make resilient decisions, the participants cherish the empowering effects of education and prevention programs. This corroborates the view by Kanoyangwa (2019) who elucidates that factors such as lack of awareness of the dangers of drug and substance abuse exacerbate the vice and the only way this can be curbed is to ensure that the communities are conscientized regarding the effects of addiction. Also, the themes emphasize how these programs help develop coping mechanisms, emotional resilience, and inner strength, all of which make young people less likely to take drugs and substances. The programmes' focus on developing a culture of well-being, mutual understanding, and communal responsibility serves to counteract young people's propensity for drug and substance addiction. Its conclusion emphasizes the influence these initiatives have on the neighbourhood.

In light of this, through the socialisation aspect of the Social Control theory, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of education and drug addiction prevention initiatives within the Islamic religion in addressing young people's vulnerabilities to substance abuse and fostering an environment of well-informed decision-making, resilience, and well-being. In line with the Social Control theory, it can be noted that the Islamic Faith serves as a signi-

ficant agent of socialization, by offering young people education and drug awareness as, according to the findings, the participants are acquainted with these issues during the sermons and lectures held by the sheikhs at the Mosque. Thus, as was stated earlier in the literature review section by Machando et al (2018), in the setting of drug and substance abuse prevention, the religious institution is acclimatising its congregants about the risks and conse-quences of this vice and it is also promoting alternative lifestyles and activities that align with conscious religious values. Therefore, Islamic teachings and values, which are the foundation of education and preventive interventions, provide a comprehensive support system that can successfully lessen the effects of substance misuse by fostering a community that is guided by empathy, understanding, and shared responsibility.

Moreover, these programs function as a means of encouraging overall wellness and fostering positive goals among the populace. Young people are guided toward personal, ethical, and spiritual growth through the integration of spiritual reflection, mental well-being, and emotional resilience within educational contexts and preventive interventions. In order to reduce the likelihood of substance abuse and to promote a community based on strong values, bolstered well-being, and common goals, it is helpful to cultivate an environment of emotional well-being and ethical foundation. Furthermore, Islamic education and prevention initiatives provide a means of fostering a feeling of shared accountability, societal cohesiveness, and collective responsibility as is asserted by the social control theory's Attachment facet. The latter, according to Mason & Windsong, (2018) states that attachment to a regulating stimulus is key for an individual to have his recovery effective and this is evidenced by the support and acceptance being received from the Islamic religious community which is being key in the establishment of a strong attachment that encourages pro-social behaviour and discourages deviant activities such as drug and substance abuse among their youth, via the education and awareness programs they are hosting. They are contributing to the development of a community culture that prioritizes assistance to one another, unity, and advice-giving, establishing a shared goal of preventing substance abuse. Preventive programs facilitate the development of supportive networks and collaborative projects that aim to promote a culture of well-being, resilience, and compassionate participation by bringing together efforts under the shared aspirational values of the Islamic faith.

b. Integration of Faith-Based Approaches

Research participants emphasized the integration of faith-based approaches within the programs used by the Islamic Faith to address drug and substance abuse. They highlighted the role of spirituality and religious guidance in supporting individuals struggling with addiction. After being asked about the specific approaches and methods being employed at the local mosque to deal with drugs and substances, the Key Informant, who is the local sheikh shared the insight below:

"Our initiatives are centred on incorporating Islamic religious perspectives such as advocating for a life of purity. We offer Islamically-based counselling and support services to assist young people in deepening their faith and finding comfort in their spiritual connection. This strategy aids us in overcoming the difficulties caused by drug and substance usage in the community."

Additionally, another local Mawlana had a similar view and he highlighted that most of their approaches are inclusive of encouraging young people to be God Conscious (Ittaqullah) as this fosters their transformation. In this regard, he highlighted that:

"Young people are more inclined to give up their destructive behaviours when they understand the concepts of tawba or repentance and a new beginning made possible by the mercy of Allah. Islamic faith-based methods which we are therefore instilling in them include, but are not limited to encouraging them to ask for forgiveness, make amends, and work toward leading healthier, drug-free lives via our periodic awareness campaigns and weekend Qur'anic lessons."

Another sub-theme which was identified under this major theme is Faith as a Source of Strength. In this regard, the majority of the young participants highlighted the significant role which their faith or imam plays in providing them with the strength and resilience they need during their recovery journey. In this vein, one specific participant noted,

"My will to kick my addiction came from my faith in Allah. I found inner strength via praying, reading the Quran aloud, and pursuing spirituality to help me resist my desires."

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Islamic faith-based strategies and tactics being used to combat the problem of drug and substance abuse are characterised by a holistic approach to healing. This is due to the fact that the primary informant and the other participants emphasized how Islamic faith-based therapies, like, provide a thorough comprehension of well-being by emphasizing the psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of addiction

in addition to its physiological components. These methods provide a more comprehensive and successful resolution by addressing the root causes of substance misuse and offering a holistic approach to recovery.

From the theme of integrating Islamic faith-based approaches towards addressing drug and substance abuse, several subthemes also emerged and the majority of the participants highlighted them and these include Faith-Based Counseling and Support. In this regard, the participants expressed the value of faith-based counselling and support systems. They valued being able to consult with religious mentors or counsellors, such as their sheikhs, who were aware of the connections between their religious convictions and drug misuse problems. A participant shared:

"It was beneficial to speak with an informed religious leader who integrates faith into their approach, such as our sheikh. He, along with other elders, were aware of the particular difficulties we young people experienced and are experiencing in attempting to reconcile our recovery with our faith."

To support the above, another participant also gave a similar view by recognising the significance of his faith community in providing him with a safe space for support and connection. He therefore mentioned:

"I found refuge in the nearby mosque. Participating in community events and attending Jumu'ah (Friday) prayers gave me a sense of belonging and support. I was able to create a solid support system of people who helped me become well. These include our sheikh, elders and colleagues..."

The aforementioned emphasizes the importance of combining faith-based strategies to manage drug and substance abuse among young Muslims, such as through Islamically faith-based counseling and support. These types of support and counseling are founded in Islamic beliefs and values, which provide a special viewpoint and method for dealing with addiction in a religious setting. These are some of the main arguments in favour of Islamically faith-based counseling when it comes to addressing drug and substance abuse among young Muslims.

It can also be noted from the above that integrating religious-based solutions with conventional methods can be effective in addressing vices such as drug and substance abuse. Combining spiritual and psychological healing: Counseling based on the Islamic faith acknowledges the connection between a person's spiritual and psychological needs. It highlights the Belief component of the Social Control Theory which states that as a social control mechanism, religious beliefs can instil a sense of personal accountability and responsibility hence reinforcing the importance of making healthy choices in one's life (Mir & Ahmad, 2017). This is tantamount to the assistance which is being obtained from the sheikhs by the youths through the amalgamation which is taking place between the religious ways of problem-solving such as prayer and the conventional way of addressing life's challenges such as counselling. This is therefore outlining how critical it is to treat addiction's spiritual and emotional dimensions in addition to its physiccal ones. Islamic counseling emphasizes prayer, repentance, and asking for forgiveness as ways to promote healing and spiritual development. It also helps people build stronger relationships with Allah (God).

Moreover, it can be deduced from the above findings that regular participation in the Friday prayer also fosters a feeling of empowerment and belonging among Muslims. This feeling of community gives the young people access to a network of support, minimizing feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can be triggers for drug and substance misuse. Furthermore, in line with the Social Control Theory, having a sense of belonging to a community instils in people a sense of purpose and accountability, which inspires them to make moral decisions and favourably impact society. This is in line with the assertion by Mudimu et al (2020) who stated that this brings about spiritual guidance and connection. As per the perspectives of the participants, the Friday prayer presents a chance for people to establish a close relationship with Allah and connect with their spiritual side (Allah). You can ask for direction, pardon, and protection from temptations through prayer. It gives young people a feeling of direction and significance in life and supports them in growing in their religion. The ability to connect spiritually during prayer can be a source of strength in the face of drug and substance abuse temptations.

c. Seeking Guidance from the Quran and Sunnah

The research aimed to explore the role of Islamic approaches towards addressing drug and substance abuse in the community by young people and in doing so, a major theme emerged as the participants highlighted that seeking guidance from the Quran and Sunnah has been and is key in addressing drug and substance abuse among young people in the communities. Based on the input of a community sheikh and insights gathered from research participants after being asked about the various approaches and techniques which are being employed to address the vice of drug and substance abuse, the following key findings emerged from the point of view of the local sheikh on the significance of the guidance from the Quran and the Sunnah:

"Important guidelines for preventing and addressing drug usage among youth are found in the Quran and Sunnah. Muslims are able to overcome their problems, including addiction, by following the precepts of the religion. In addition to providing wisdom and direction, the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Sunnah both provide

useful examples of how to live a moral life. With these tools in place, I am making strides to assist young people using and abusing drugs and substances in the community and the success rate is higher, since most of them can relate and fully acknowledge the significance of the Quran and sunnah in their lives as Muslims."

With similar assertions to the above, most research participants from the focus group discussions postulated the sub-thematic area of the identification of addictive behaviours through Islamic teachings. In this regard, they highlighted that the Quran and Sunnah can help and have been useful in identifying the characteristics and behaviours associated with addiction. One of the participants further corroborated this view by outlining that these teachings emphasize key principles which include, but are not limited to moderation, self-control, and abstaining from intoxicants, which serve as warning signs for potential substance abuse. By being considerate of these teachings, individuals can therefore recognise the dangers and risks associated with drug and substance use.

The above validates the relevance of the Social Control theory by Hirschi (1969) which states that through Belief, religion instils a sense of personal accountability and responsibility in an individual which reinforces the importance of making healthy choices in one's life. It is in this case that one can therefore note that with the research findings, the Islamic faith is exerting a positive influence on individuals' decision-making processes and is discouraging unwanted behaviours such as drug and substance abuse through seeking guidance from the Quran and Sunnah.

It can be noted that when addressing drug and substance abuse among young Muslims, it is crucial to seek direction by adhering to the Sunnah and performing recitations of the Quran, as well as ruqyah. According to the research findings, the fundamental ideas and solutions found in the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) can be used to effectively address this problem. First off, those who are battling drug and substance abuse have the ideal role model in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to the Key Informants, his teachings encourage a healthy lifestyle and place a strong emphasis on abstention from dangerous substances. Young people might gain an awareness of the importance of preserving a pure and healthy body and mind by studying their lives and teachings. This knowledge may therefore discourage young people, who are strict in their religion, from abusing illicit drugs and substances.

Furthermore, it was also noted from the findings that activities such as ruqyah (warding off evil influences) and Quranic recitations are effective means of obtaining direction and healing. During ruqyah sessions, people's spiritual and emotional well-being is said to be greatly impacted by the recital of particular Quranic verses. According to the Key Informant, Mawlana Rasheed Makunganya, Ayatul Kursi, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas are major popular Quranic verses that are chanted to shield oneself from bad influences, including addiction. When faced with temptation or weakness, the power contained in these verses can give one courage and power if they are properly recited with the individual having full belief that he or she will be healed. This finding validates the assertion by Ndetei et al (2014) which highlights that through Belief, under the Social Control Theory, key tenets such as religious rituals, prayers, and spiritual experiences may provide a sense of inner peace, purpose, and fulfilment, which ultimately reduces the likelihood of individuals turning to drugs as a means of escape or coping.

d. Spiritual guidance and support as well as connection to The Creator

In connection with the above theme, the research participants also consensusly highlighted that spiritual guidance and support from a well-knowledgeable individual or individuals such as the sheikhs have been imperative in addressing their drug and substance use habits. From the in-depth interviews which were conducted, the majority of the participants highlighted that the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are significant in their recovery and rehabilitation because they provide guidance on how to lead a healthy and balanced life. In support of this, the local sheikh corroborated this assertion by highlighting that:

"it does not matter what you may have done. As a Muslim, it is obligatory for you to always turn to the Quaran and Sunnah because these are the sources for guidance on avoiding intoxicants and maintaining a healthy lifestyle"

Taking all of this into consideration, it is evident that youths who are struggling with addiction can benefit spiritually from consulting the Quran and Sunnah. As per the participants' declarations, reestablishing a connection with their faith and fortifying their bond with Allah fosters a feeling of direction and inner satisfaction. This relationship helps individuals to feel less inclined to abuse drugs and substances as it encourages them to lead healthier lives, and provides comfort during trying times.

This result supports the claim made by Costello and Laub (2020) that, according to the Social Control Theory, important practices like religious rituals, prayers, and spiritual experiences can foster a sense of inner peace, fulfilment, and purpose through belief. This, in turn, lessens the possibility that people will turn to drugs as a coping mechanism or escape.

e. Mosque Support Groups

From the findings, the researcher also ascertained that the support groups at the mosque, in the form of weekend Quran classes have been key in addressing the vice of drug and substance abuse among the youths. The research participants, predominantly those who were once victims of drug and substance abuse, highlighted the significance of these Qur'anic weekend classes as they have been a safe space for them as they struggled with addiction. In these groups, the young people highlighted that they were able to share their experiences, seek guidance, and receive emotional support from their peers and the Local sheikhs who offered them counselling from an Islamic point of view. From the latter, the participants highlighted that the services, from the sheikhs, were beneficial and are beneficial when facing drug and substance abuse challenges given that they are key in addressing the underlying psychological and emotional issues that contribute to addiction. From the interviews which were conducted with the local sheikh, he emphasized the crucial role of Mosque support groups and counseling in combating drug and substance abuse. In this regard, he stated,

"Our Weekend Quran or Halqa sessions provide a safe space for our young people to discuss their concerns openly whilst being acclimatised to the good word of the Holy Quran. Our goal, in this regard, is to ensure that we empower and guide them towards a straight, prosperous and righteous path, free from the temptations of drugs and intoxicating substances."

This evidences that the weekend Quran lessons sessions are imperative in ensuring that the youths stay abreast with positive behaviours which are functional to the society owing to the psycho-social support they obtain from the sheikh and their peers. In this vein, similarly, a participant who was a former drug user in the community, from the in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher highlighted:

"Attending the Mosque support group sessions in the form of weekend Quran Classes changed my life. I was struggling with marijuana and felt so lost and hopeless but through the counselling and Quran teachings I got from the sheikh and my peers, I gained a newfound sense of purpose and strength to overcome my addiction and I am grateful to Allah for saving me."

After being asked to highlight the specific approaches being used by the Islamic faith in Glen Norah to address drug and substance abuse, another participant shared the view below.

"The weekend Quran lessons and sessions are a form of support group, at our Mosque, which creates a sense of belonging to the hopeless and social rejects like those who abuse drugs and substances. It's a supportive setting that encourages recovery and keeps kids away from narcotics. In the sessions, we get to share experiences and support each other without judgment and this has enabled a lot of us to change the way we behave apart from using and abusing drugs and substances. "

To further corroborate this view, another former drug addict also shared similar sentiments by highlighting that:

"My healing process was greatly aided by the counseling sessions I attended at the mosque. The elders and sheikhs offered support, coping mechanisms, and a sympathetic ear. I am now on a healthy path because they assisted me in understanding the underlying issues that drove my substance misuse. This is because the lessons of the Quran combined with therapy have great potency. It's about more than just stopping drugs; it's about discovering spirituality and inner tranquillity. The support groups at the mosque have improved many people's lives, including mine."

It is evident from these key informant and research participant interviews that mosque support groups like weekend Quran Halqa lessons and sessions work well alongside counseling to treat drug and substance misuse among youth. These programs offer a secure and encouraging setting where people may talk about their issues, get advice, and deepen their spiritual ties all of which contribute to a successful recovery and drug-free way of life.

The above findings are also in line with the social control theory's Belief System. In line with the research findings and the theory's stipulations, as asserted by Omondi et al (2021), the youth acquire a strong belief system through weekend classes on the Quran and support groups within mosques. Islam's teachings place a strong emphasis on living a morally upright life. The youth also are gaining a moral compass that directs their decision-making by internalizing these ideas. This way of thinking is therefore serving as a barrier against drug and substance abuse by acting as a control mechanism.

The results of the study show that Quran weekend programs and mosque support groups are imperative in helping young people who abuse drugs or other substances. It can be noted that these programs offer a caring and encouraging atmosphere for young people to overcome addiction and adopt healthy lifestyle decisions. At the sessions and workshops being held at the mosque, the youths are provided with psycho-social support in the form of socialising with colleagues and through Islam's teachings and sermons they are offered. The latter places a strong emphasis on maintaining a balanced, healthful lifestyle, abstaining from drugs, and taking care of one's bodily and

mental health. Religious teachings, according to the findings, therefore help young people remain away from drugs and narcotics by motivating them to do so throughout their recovery process.

f. Family Involvement and Communication

Participants in the study stressed the value of family involvement in preventing drug and substance usage in their children. Based on the results, the key important informants and participants emphasized the importance of cultivating strong family ties, encouraging candid communication, and creating a supportive home environment. In this sense, family-based treatments were thought to be successful in identifying at-risk youth early on and providing intervention.

When asked about specific elements or approaches within the Islamic Faith-Based programs that he believed make them effective in addressing drug and substance abuse among young people, one key informant in the form of the local sheikh had this to say:

"Effective communication and strong family ties are essential for preventing and rehabilitating young peoples' drug and substance abuse because psycho-socially, the victim, in the form of the drug abuser, will be getting moral support to recover from the menace which ultimately leads him or her into full rehabilitation."

Another participant, who is a former drug and substance user, further corroborated this view by highlighting that the involvement of his family and communication with them led to his recovery and ultimate rehabilitation. He postulated that:

"I was a heavy drug user and marijuana was something I could not live without because I was so addicted to it. Nevertheless, when my parents told the imam that I was abusing the drug, Alhamdulillah (Glory be to God), I was given mentorship and my parents were heavily involved in my rehabilitation as they regularly sat with me acquainting me to information relating to the effects of abusing drugs and substances and collaboratively, this enabled me to recover and become an individual who does not use any drug now."

Another participant who stopped using drugs at an early stage also outlined to the interviewer that the reason why he stopped was that his parents had noticed his behavioural changes and did robust investigations on him which led them to find out that he had begun using illicit drugs and substances. This then made them refer him to the local sheikh who then offered the young person counselling and robust Islamic teachings every weekend. This then led him to refrain from using drugs and substances.

From the above, one can note that the involvement of family is an Islamic initiative which is imperative and bringing about positive results in addressing the vice of drug and substance abuse among youths in the community. As can be seen from the above, this effort is important since it provides emotional support, which is essential for the young people's healing. Family members' compassion, love, and understanding help people feel important, accepted, and inspired to change for the better and become the best versions of themselves. This is in line with the findings by Oshodi et al (2014) whose study on the influence of family in the recovery of an individual is acknowledged for effective results.

g. Use of Religious Teachings and Practices, Such as Quran Recitation

To point out the methods unique to the Islamic faith in addressing drug and substance abuse, the participants highlighted the role of spirituality. They emphasised the significance of religious teaching and practices as a central pillar in proactively and reactively combating drug and substance abuse. Since the majority of the participants were Muslims, they highlighted the importance of Quran recitation whenever the urge to use drugs and substances came into their minds. For those who were recovering and who had recovered from the menace, they also emphasised the huge role the Quran has played in their lives and prevented them from using drugs and substances.

After asking the participants in the focus group discussion about their familiarity with the programs or initiatives developed by the Islamic Faith in addressing drug and substance abuse among the youth and the effectiveness of those programs, one participant had this to say:

"Islamic teachings place a strong focus on the value of self-control and discipline, which can act as a strong deterrent to vices such as drug use. "

In addition to the above an in-depth interview was conducted with a former drug user who is a female Muslim sister and she had this to say:

"Honestly speaking, the guidance I got from our sheikh and the Appahs of our community led me to accept the Holy Quran as an antidote to my drug addiction. I acknowledged that reciting the Quran is very important while dealing with life's problems as it provides solace, direction, comfort, and fortitude when struggling. I came to realise that family feuds led me to abuse drugs but after the guidance I got from the Mawlana, reciting the Quran allowed me to find solace in

Allah's verses, which provided me with guidance, support, and answers to all the life's challenges I was facing. Reciting the verses from the Quran also gave me spiritual sustenance, fostered patience, and aided me in keeping an optimistic outlook in the face of adversity."

Furthermore, the key informant, the Local sheikh also elucidated:

"To all the youths at our Mosque, we make sure that during the weekends, we hold Quranic classes where we acquaint and connect them with The Creator. This is true because we know that having a spiritual relationship with Allah gives one a sense of inner power and purpose, which lessens the allure of narcotics. Thus, through the Quranic recitations, we reunite the youngsters with their Creator, serving as a constant reminder of their mission and the ultimate source of strength. The Quran's transforming power is in its capacity to offer inner serenity, direction, and hope in the face of life's obstacles which makes our young people either refrain or rehabilitate from the use and addiction to drugs."

It is therefore imperative to note that the utility of religious teachings and practices, such as Quran recitation is imperative in proactively and reactively reducing the use and abuse of drugs and substances among the adherents and congregants of the Islamic faith. From the above, an assessment outlines that this reinforces the moral values of individuals which is key in ensuring that they operate in the confines of their religious edicts which deter them from engaging in vices such as consuming intoxicants. Additionally, the participants highlighted that the teachings of the Quran uphold the values of moderation, self-control, and discipline. They also further elaborated that Quranic verses can be recited and pondered upon to instil these moral principles in young people, giving them a strong basis for making wise decisions and avoiding the allure of drug and substance misuse. By internalizing these lessons, they therefore strengthen their feeling of responsibility to both their community and themselves, which will discourage them from participating in risky activities such as drug and substance abuse as was reiterated by the key informant above.

This finding supports the claim made by Oyebode (2014) that, in accordance with the Social Control Theory, faith-based practices like religious rituals, prayers, and spiritual experiences can foster a sense of inner peace, fulfilment, and purpose that, in turn, lessens the likelihood that people will turn to drugs as a coping mechanism or escape. Besides, the participants also highlighted that reciting the Quran and engaging in religious activities gives them a sense of inner strength and empowerment since the Quranic verses underscore the importance of seeking guidance and help from The Creator in trying circumstances. One can therefore deduce from this that this spiritual connection can fortify a young person's determination to resist social pressure and refrain from any form of addiction. In this regard, one can therefore note that engagement in religious teachings and practices instils a belief in the individual's capacity to turn to their faith instead of drugs or alcohol in order to discover inner peace, fulfilment, and strength.

3) Opportunities which can be utilised by the Islamic Faith to Address Drug and Substance abuse among Young People in High-Density Communities

a. Collaboration and Networking to address the shortage of resources

The local sheikh stressed the importance of their partnerships with other Islamic organisations, mosques, and local leaders after being asked for their thoughts on what more the Islamic Faith can do to combat drug and substance abuse among young people in high-density communities to address the issue of scarce resources. Together, they are pooling funds, resources, and experience to develop comprehensive and long-lasting programs that deal with drug and substance misuse.

"By encouraging cooperation and networking among various Islamic groups and community stakeholders, the problem of scarce resources can be solved. Together, we can combine our resources to produce a program that has a greater impact."

Another sheikh supported the viewpoint by pointing out how current community mechanisms may be used to prevent drug and substance misuse in the community. He emphasized that it is possible to turn madrasas and mosques into secure settings where young people can get direction, treatment, and education about the risks associated with substance usage. By utilizing these existing structures, the burden on resources can be minimized. In this vein, he therefore elucidated that:

"To solve the issue of scarce resources, we should make use of the mosques and madrasas that are already in place in our Islamic faith-based programs. These establishments can function as forums for instruction, guidance, and assistance."

The information above makes clear that by working together and establishing connections with other important figures and stakeholders, the Islamic faith may make a greater contribution to combating drug and substance misuse

in the community. This is because key informants have emphasized that cooperation and networking are essential in tackling the lack of resources and successfully battling drug and substance abuse in the Islamic community. A multifaceted strategy including several stakeholders cooperating towards a shared objective is necessary to address complicated issues like substance abuse in a society where connections are growing daily. The following are the main justifications for why networking and cooperation are crucial to solving this issue.

Furthermore, working together with other groups both inside and beyond the Islamic faith community allows for the sharing of resources, skills, and information. Organisations that collaborate can better handle resource constraints by utilizing their combined strengths and talents. This can entail pooling resources for infrastructure, research, data, finance, and human resources. Thus, networking and collaboration can open doors for the Islamic religious community to exchange best practices and benefit from one another's experiences. By working together, various groups that have successfully tackled substance misuse through programs or initiatives can share their lessons learned and improve results. This makes it possible to implement evidence-based strategies that have worked well in the past. Padela et al (2012) states that since substance misuse is a complicated problem, it calls for all-encompassing remedies. Many stakeholders, including Islamic scholars, medical professionals, educators, social workers, law enforcement, and families, can be involved through collaboration. Combining these many viewpoints enables a thorough strategy that considers education, rehabilitation, treatment, recovery, and prevention.

b. Utilising Islamic Platforms

From the previous theme on the challenges being encountered by the Islamic faith in dealing with drug and substance abuse, it was noted that lack of awareness regarding the effects of drug and substance abuse as well as a stigma upon those who may fall prey to drugs and substances were found to be major challenges. Therefore, the researcher sought to ascertain more ways in which the Faith can be engaged in addressing the challenges associated with dealing with the menace of drug and substance abuse. In one of the key informant interviews which were conducted, the local community sheikh emphasised the utility of Islamic platforms to address the challenge of limited awareness and stigma. He had this to say:

"Using Islamic venues to spread information about substance misuse might be beneficial, including sermons, Friday prayers, and religious assemblies. A constructive Islamic viewpoint on prevention and assistance can be created by incorporating pertinent lessons and advice from the Quran and Hadiths."

The aforementioned highlights how crucial it is to use Islamic venues to address the issue of the stigma and lack of knowledge around drug and substance misuse in Islamic communities. The reason for this is that Islamic places of worship, like mosques, madrasas, and religious assemblies, are major centres of religious authority and influence for the Islamic community. Making use of these platforms guarantees that a wide range of people will hear the message regarding substance usage and how to prevent it. Religious leaders are effective change agents because they have the capacity to influence the attitudes and actions of the community.

c. Empowering Volunteers

It has also been noted that the lack of volunteers and experts in addressing the vice of drug and substance abuse at the community mosque is a major challenge being encountered. In this regard, the researcher engaged with the key informants on the opportunities and ways in which the faith can ensure that drug and substance abuse has been addressed in the communities. In this regard, the community Sheikh underlined how crucial it is to empower and train community volunteers. He further elucidated that volunteers can actively participate in peer support programs, awareness campaigns, and prevention efforts if they are equipped with the requisite information and abilities. This strategy minimises the requirement for significant financial resources while maximizing the program's impact. The key informant highlighted the importance of volunteers in addressing the vice of drug and substance abuse and therefore said:

"Volunteers are essential in making up for scarce resources. By enabling and preparing members of the community to serve as volunteers, we can increase our influence and reach without exclusively depending on donations. Moreover, having volunteers is important because it fosters support networks in the community."

Additionally, another sheikh also highlighted that volunteers, in addressing issues such as drug and substance abuse are the backbone of any community-based program. This is so because they bring their passion, dedication, and unique perspectives to the table. He highlighted:

"Empowering young volunteers in our faith also helps to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards addressing drug and substance misuse concerns. These young people, if groomed very well, along with expert volunteers,

such as social workers, elders, and other professionals, can serve as role models for our youth by demonstrating the advantages of a drug-free lifestyle based on Islamic teachings."

It can therefore be noted that as per the finding, involving volunteers can allow the faith to tap into a diverse range of skills and expertise. This is imperative because it enables them to provide comprehensive support to those struggling young people with drug and substance addiction in the community. Volunteers can embody the compassionate and empathetic principles emphasized within the Islamic faith, offering a supportive presence that extends beyond conventional programs. Their involvement can provide individuals with a sense of understanding, reducing stigma and fostering effective pathways to seeking help and recovery. Furthermore, encouraging young people to serve in the community improves outreach and education about drug and substance abuse. The results showed that volunteers are essential to the community's dissemination of educational materials, awareness campaigns, and preventive measures (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Volunteers can participate in outreach initiatives that support mental health, prevention of substance misuse, and healthy habits, all of which are based on the teachings of the Islamic faith.

d. Community Engagement and Awareness

The participants also highlighted that several efforts to engage the community and raise awareness can also be adopted to address the drug and substance abuse menace and this is a key component which is being partially utilised. The key informants from the Mosque highlighted that their initiatives in addressing drug and substance abuse should extend beyond treatment to community engagement for more effectiveness. To enlighten the researcher more about this topic, the Sheikh also highlighted that:

"To advance our awareness, lessen stigma, and support early intervention, we can widen and enhance our participation in key activities such as awareness campaigns and work with the local authorities, educational institutions, and community organisations."

The key informants also highlighted the effectiveness that can be brought about by the initiatives in addressing drug and substance abuse through the utility of community engagement and awareness by highlighting that they create a sense of collective responsibility and ownership towards addressing the drug and substance abuse pandemic. The sheikh validated this view by highlighting that:

"*We should refrain from seeing ourselves as outsiders in society but we should engage more with other stakeholders from the community. Key stakeholders and people of the community who can actively participate in the preventative initiatives become change agents and enhance the general well-being of their community. Thus, by conducting our community awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops at an enhanced level, people get informed on the risks of drug usage, its effects on individuals and families, and the tools available for prevention and treatment by arranging community events, forums, and workshops."*

In light of the above, it can be therefore noted that the Islamic faith has an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of its measures in addressing drug and substance abuse. This is so because as was highlighted above, when community members are engaged, they are entitled and are more likely to act, support the affected individuals, as well as promote a drug-free environment. All this is necessitated by the awareness campaigns, programs and workshops which can be conducted by the faith along with other key players and entities from the Government of Zimbabwe and the Non-Governmental Organisations in the communities. Given that even children are also engaging in drug and substance abuse, it can also be noted that collaboration between various stakeholders, is also encouraged as the different parties and players may create all-encompassing plans and initiatives that enhance child protection, top drug and substance usage in the communities, spot those who are at-risk, and offer prompt assistance as was stated by Smith & Johnson (2017).

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Implications. This research can raise awareness among youth, families and the general public in Zimbabwe about the negative impact of drug and substance abuse. Youth involved in substance abuse can gain a deeper understanding of the dangers and potential faith-based solutions that can guide them out of this problem. Faith-based interventions, such as those implemented at the Islamic Community Center, can help individuals struggling with drug dependence to find inner peace, hope, and purpose in life. A spiritual approach can provide a sense of meaning lost due to addiction, which is important in the psychological recovery process.

Contribution. This research contributes to the development of social intervention theory in the context of religion. It can add insight into how religious practices, such as prayer, faith-based counseling, and spiritual approaches, can be utilized in social interventions to address addiction problems. This research opens up opportunities

for further study on the successes or challenges faced in implementing faith-based interventions in different communities, both in Zimbabwe and in other countries with similar addiction problems. Further research could explore the variables that influence the success or failure of such programs.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Limitations. Research conducted in one specific community center such as Glen Norah may not reflect the dynamics prevailing in other communities in Zimbabwe. The local context may limit the applicability of the study results to the wider population. Data Collection: Limitations in data collection often result from the stigma attached to drug abuse, which may have discouraged some respondents from providing honest information.

Future researchers can develop an integrated intervention model with the aim to design an intervention model that combines faith-based approaches with modern psychological approaches such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) counseling or mindfulness. With a field trial with a control group to measure the effectiveness of the integrated model. The expected result is a practical guide for the implementation of a more comprehensive intervention program. And integrating religiously relevant strategies and fostering collaborative, holistic approaches to combat substance abuse, offering insights for policy and intervention tailored to Zimbabwe's cultural and religious context.

6. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant influence of the Glen Norah Islamic Community Centre's efforts in addressing youth drug and substance misuse. From the research findings, a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and community-focused strategy to address substance misuse issues is fostered by the convergence of faith, community, and holistic support systems. In line with the findings of the study and the discussions, the researcher makes the following conclusions. Drug abuse is a social problem associated with and common among young people. It has also been identified in the research that young people are being driven into using and abusing drugs by various social, economic, mental, and societal issues. Additionally, it can therefore be concluded that through the Islamic faith, various methods are being proactively and reactively implemented at a small scale to address drug and substance abuse among the youth in the community. In pursuit of addressing drug and substance abuse among the youth, the Gen Norah Islamic Community Centre is facing various challenges which stem from financial, and human as well as resistance from the community and society in addressing drug and substance abuse. Not only did the study identify the challenges being encountered by the Islamic faith as well as ways in which they are addressing drug and substance abuse but the research also made strides to identify opportunities and ways in which the faith can increase and enhance their catchment and effectiveness in addressing the drug and substance abuse issue. The results of this study also highlight the potential of Islamic faith-based approaches to combat drug and substance misuse among young people in Zimbabwe. The study found that addressing this issue requires cooperation with stakeholders, Islamic teachings, religious education, the role of religious leaders, a supportive faith community, and alternative activities. Based on Islamic beliefs and values, these findings offer insightful information that policymakers, religious leaders, and community organisations can use to create and carry out successful initiatives that encourage drug-free living among young people in Zimbabwe.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that this article's entire research and writing process was carried out independently. The author is fully responsible for all data related to this research. No other party has participated as an author or made a significant contribution to the content of this work..

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