Review

The Role of the Media and Self-Compassion in Enhancing Mental Health and Preventing Suicide among Nigerian Youth: A Literature Review

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Abstract: In this review, we examine the impact of media and self-compassion on the mental well-being of Nigerian youth, particularly in suicide prevention and promoting positive mental health outcomes. Nigeria faces socioeconomic challenges contributing to poor mental health and high suicide rates among young people. Despite this, the influence of media and self-compassion interventions on mental health remains largely unexplored. The research questions centred on how media exposure enhances mental health awareness and resilience building, as well as the role of self-compassion in preventing suicide. Seven studies employing various methodologies such as interviews, surveys, and experimental designs were identified from the Scopus and Google Scholar databases and were analysed. The results indicated the significant role of media in health communication and education, while self-compassion interventions show promise in enhancing mental health resilience. Recommendations include utilising media for mental health education and support services, particularly targeting youth. This synthesis offers insights for policymakers, stakeholders, and educational institutions to integrate media-based mental health interventions into their strategies.

Keywords: socio-political and socioeconomic; crisis and insecurity; corruption; resource mismanagement; unemployment; poverty; mental health; suicide prevention; mass media; self-compassion

1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in every eight people in the world lives with a mental disorder [1]. Although there are effective preventive measures and treatment options, most people do not have access to effective treatment and care [1]. Around 20% of children and adolescents have a mental health condition and suicide is the second leading cause of death among those between 15 and 30 years old [2]. Globally, there is a lack of access to high-quality mental healthcare services [3]. Although developed countries around the world provide adequate and accessible mental health services to those who require them, developing countries struggle with problems ranging from political instability, economic and security crises, poverty, and heightened mental health challenges.

Mental disorders are among the noncommunicable diseases targeted to be reduced by 2030 through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) [4]. These

aim to confront global challenges to improve the planet and human well-being through treatment and prevention [4]. Mental health is not just an important component within United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, which focuses on health and well-being for all, it is also intricately connected with several other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [5,6]. There is a strong interconnectedness of SDG 3 with SDG 1, which addresses poverty, and SDG 10, which emphasises the reduction in inequalities [5,6]. Beyond SDG 3, mental health plays a key role in achieving the broader scope of the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the complexity of the impact that mental health has on societal progress [5,6].

There is sufficient evidence that individuals who are diagnosed with mental disorders are more likely to die by suicide compared with those without mental disorders [7,8]. The link between mental disorders and suicide is especially strong among people struggling with severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, stress, anxiety, substance use disorder, and depression [7,9,10]. The disparity between the demand for mental health care and the availability of services is substantial in many countries, with a pronounced emphasis on challenges in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) [11,12].

Mental healthcare in Nigeria, as in many other African countries, is not given much attention, and to date, there are limited mental health education and awareness in Nigeria [13]. Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world, with a population estimated at over 226 million as of December 2023 [14], has only around 250 psychiatrists [15], compared with other countries in the developed world where there is an adequate number of psychiatrists to provide mental health services. For example, in the United Kingdom, there are 13,000 psychiatrists for around 68 million people [16], in Italy, there are more than 12,000 psychiatrists for around 59 million people [17], and Denmark has around 1200 psychiatrists for a population of around 5.8 million people [18].

The current economic situation has exacerbated the mental health of individuals in Nigeria. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a serious economic crisis across the world [19–21], and Nigeria continues to face a serious and worsening economic crisis, as in many other countries in Africa [22]. The inflation rate continues to deteriorate, resulting in a high rate of youth unemployment and consequent negative impacts on the mental health of many individuals [23,24]. In addition, there is a high level of shame and stigma associated with mental illness [25,26], resulting in incidents of suicide [27], and adequate mental healthcare is not easily accessible and affordable for those who need it in the country [13].

As Nigeria grapples with improving its health sector, mental health is not receiving as much attention as other aspects of the health sector. While many nations across the world are paying more attention to the mental health of their citizens and committing significant amounts of money to improving the state of mind of their populations, African nations are still behind in this critical area. Sankoh et al. (2018) reported that only 24% of African countries participating in the WHO mental health survey had mental health policies separate from their general health policies. To further underline this undesirable situation, Sankoh et al. revealed that only 14 in every 100,000 people in Africa visit a mental health facility and that this is dwarfed by the average of 1051 persons per 100,000 population reported globally.

Mental health, especially among young people in Africa, continues to pose a challenge. In the face of existing economic struggles and the difficulty in living up to potential, which leads to social exclusion [28,29] and interpersonal relationship struggles [30], more African young people are resorting to suicide [31]. According to the WHO (2022), 85% of Africans living in low-income countries do not have access to mental health treatments. This paints a sordid picture of the current situation and partly explains why young people in Africa, who make up a considerable part of the continent's population, die by suicide [1,2]. The evidence shows that 11 Africans in every 100,000 die by suicide, more than the global average of 9 in every 100,000 [32].

Mental health conditions have risen in Africa by more than 100% in the last 30 years, and there are currently no solutions to the problem. Alabi (2022) reported that more than

14,000 young people aged between 15 and 29 die by suicide in South Africa every year. This mirrors the situation in densely populated countries such as Nigeria [31], where drug misuse and inadequate education about overcoming mental health challenges and the use of social media are leading young people to their early graves. As long as economic instability continues to be a challenge, the unavailability of infrastructural and social requirements and dwindling self-belief and confidence have inclined African youths to extreme solutions, including suicide [33,34].

Nigeria has several derogatory slang terms to describe people experiencing mental illnesses, such as 'Kolo', 'Mad', and 'Crase'. These derogatory terms are closely related to terms such as 'unsound mind', 'asylum', 'idiot', and 'lunatic' [35,36] and are seriously discriminatory, shaming, and stigmatising [37,38]. Other derogatory terms refer to mental healthcare facilities in the country or to centres or hospitals that care for people. 'Aro' is named after the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital in Aro, Ogun State, in South-West Nigeria, and 'Uselu' is named after the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Benin City, Edo State, Southern Nigeria [13,39,40].

The intention of our review was to integrate the application of the media to disseminate information about mental health promotion to protect young people in the face of the negative impacts of the adverse economic challenges in Nigeria. With a substantial body of studies in the literature outlining the benefits of self-compassion on several mental health problems, we proposed using the media to disseminate information about the benefits of self-compassion interventions on mental health. We conducted a mini realist review following a context mechanism outcomes (CMOs) configuration [41–44]. However, we applied sub-context–mechanism–outcome (S-CMO) suggesting how a context–mechanism–outcome approach would enable us to understand the complex relationship between some of the mechanisms and outcomes and how the media are used to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the effects of self-compassion on the mental health and well-being of individuals who are vulnerable and likely to be suicidal. The context is the impact of harsh economic hardships on the mental health and well-being of youth. Mechanisms include how these hardships may lead to poor mental health. Additionally, the mechanisms of media literacy, media impacts, and effectiveness of self-compassion are being channelled to policymakers and stakeholders as well as to youth who will benefit from improved mental health outcomes.

Through misinformation and fake news, the media, for example, social media, play key roles in sensitising mental health issues among young adults, such as stress, anxiety, depression, mental health shame, stigma, and suicide [45–47]. Although social media has been linked to poor mental health among young adults in Nigeria [48,49], it can serve as a means for promoting mental health and well-being through health-promotion campaigns [50,51].

1.1. Context–Mechanism–Outcome

In the context of younger adults undergoing adverse economic challenges in Nigeria, there is a relationship between the media and self-compassion interventions to support the mental health and well-being of younger adults undergoing economic hardship. Younger adults experience significant economic hardship in Nigeria. The media plays key roles in health communications, health education, and health promotion by promoting self-compassion interventions such as psychoeducational programmes [52,53]. This suggests that the media can be used to support the mental health and well-being of Nigerian youth by enhancing their knowledge of mental health through awareness campaigns [54,55]. Furthermore, young people will be able to learn about the benefit of self-compassion on mental health outcomes [56]. Consequently, those who are vulnerable and likely to be suicidal will be protected.

1.2. Mechanisms

1.2.1. Education and Awareness

A wide spectrum of media, including print, electronic/digital, audio-visual, the Internet, and social media were used [57,58]. Through these media, Nigerian youth will be informed and educated about self-compassion, interventions, exercises, and benefits in helping them develop healthy coping strategies [59,60].

1.2.2. Destigmatisation

The media plays a key role in featuring expert opinions, stories, and testimonials on issues related to mental illness, mental health, mental resilience, and self-compassion, as well as the benefits of self-compassion. This will help to reduce shame, stigma, and discrimination by promoting open dialogue among younger adults [61,62]. Additionally, youth will feel more comfortable seeking mental health support and engage in self-compassion interventions without fear of discrimination [61,63].

1.2.3. Enhancing Access to Resources

The media can facilitate access to help and provide platforms for the dissemination of useful information about available support services, hotlines, and resources for mental health and self-compassion interventions such as counselling services [64,65].

1.2.4. Behavioural Modelling

Individuals practising self-compassion and seeking support for mental health challenges portrayed by the media can have positive impacts as they can serve as role models for younger adults [66,67]. For example, depicting resilience exercises, self-care, and help-seeking can be showcased [68,69]. This will enable young adults to adopt similar behaviours to prioritise their mental health [70].

1.2.5. Outcomes

Through media channels, awareness and access to self-compassion interventions increase and enhance mental health outcomes [71,72]. Consequently, coping strategies among young adults experiencing economic hardship are improved due to the reduction in symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression [73,74].

The current economic climate has exacerbated the mental health of individuals in Nigeria [13,75,76]. Most unemployed young people struggle to find meaning in life as a result of hopelessness due to serious existential challenges [77]. The inflation rate continues to deteriorate and there is a high rate of youth unemployment in the country [78,79]. In Nigeria, as in many other countries across the world [38], there is a high level of shame and stigma associated with mental illness [35,36]. Adequate mental healthcare is not easily accessible and affordable for most citizens in the country [37,40]. Because the country's mental health facilities are not able to care adequately for those who require standard, accessible, and affordable mental healthcare services, it is important to support the mental health of individuals who are prone to becoming suicidal.

Mass media and social media have been proven to be effective in enhancing health promotion and health education [80,81]. Therefore, we propose communicating the benefits of self-compassion widely to support those who have poor or no access to affordable mental health services. Mass media and social media play important roles in enhancing health literacy [80], health education, and health promotion [81]. Self-compassion training interventions [82] can be delivered as integrative positive psychological interventions (PPIs) [83,84] and can be provided as psychoeducational programmes [85,86]. This can offer accessible and affordable mental health first-aid to protect those who are vulnerable and suicidal to become mentally resilient through self-compassion training interventions.

Financial and material hardships are linked to poor mental health [87,88]. Life challenges resulting from economic and security crises have resulted in food shortages in Africa, including Nigeria, and this has also been cited as a contributory factor to youth unem-

ployment [89,90]. Due to cultural factors in many cultures, there is a strong association of success with manliness and, as a result, men who are not able to fulfil this role can suffer from serious mental health problems. Furthermore, in many cultures and societies, men who seek help for their mental health problems are considered weak [91,92].

Across various cultures, there are consistent reports of elevated levels of mental health stigma among male employees [92]. A study showed that male gender, marital status, and residing in semi-urban areas were correlated with suicide in Nigeria [34]; this also suggested that there is a high-level mental health shame-based problem in Nigeria. Globally, shame is associated with mental disorders, and this further exacerbates the mental health conditions of those already struggling with mental disorders [93]. Kotera and Ting (2019) conducted a study involving a sample of 153 Malaysian university students. Self-compassion was found to be the strongest independent predictor of mental health when compared with all the positive psychological constructs [94].

Online mental health classes are effective in enhancing mental resilience to curb the problem of mental health stigma. For example, a meta-analysis showed that Internet-based psychoeducational interventions had a significant effect on decreasing mental illnesses such as depression [95]. Additionally, the evidence shows that psychoeducational interventions provided through an online multimedia approach are effective in promoting resilience and reducing stress arising from life events [96], and research has shown that there is temporal effectiveness of mental health classes on mental health stigma [97,98].

The knowledge to enhance the development of a resilient mindset can be incorporated into psychoeducational programmes delivered through media to promote and enhance resilience and mental well-being [99]. Resilience is the capacity for humans to adapt swiftly and successfully to any stressful/traumatic event and return to a positive state [100,101]. Consequently, resilience offers a potential preventative measure for mental illness and has a critical effect on the health and well-being of individuals [100,101]. Mental health literacy promotion and wellness activities such as self-compassion training are effective in reducing mental health shame and stigma, and this can be integrated into psychoeducational programmes to enhance fostering connectedness and a sense of safety [92].

Self-compassion is effective in enhancing a healthy lifestyle such as engaging in regular self-care [102], regular physical activities, and healthy coping strategies [93,103–105]. This can be achieved by providing self-compassion interventions [82] such as psychoeducational programmes [86] via mass media to reach many individuals who would benefit from this kind of programme [106]. The media plays a major role in health communications, health education, and health promotion through mass media and social media which can easily be accessible on several types of devices connected to the Internet [80,81,107,108].

There is sufficient evidence that suggests self-compassion interventions to be effective for several mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression [85,109–112], post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) [113,114], and suicidal ideation [115]. To date, no review specifically focusing on the role of the media and self-compassion in enhancing mental health and suicide prevention among Nigerian youth has been conducted. Therefore, we conducted this review of the literature on the impacts of self-compassion on mental health among Nigerian youth.

1.2.6. Research Questions

To what extent does media exposure enhance the mental health resilience-building process in young adults in Nigeria? What roles do the media and self-compassion play in the prevention of suicide among young adults in Nigeria, and how can this be enhanced through media-related interventions?

2. Materials and Methods

We aimed to explore the literature to investigate possible roles that the media plays in health promotion and how this can be used to prevent suicide among Nigerian youth. We also aimed to investigate the impact of self-compassion training in the enhancement

of mental health and suicide prevention. We conducted our literature review using the Scopus database to identify the literature about the application of self-compassion in the enhancement of mental health and well-being. Accordingly, following the PRISMA framework as described in Figure 1 [116], we conducted a literature review on the impact of self-compassion interventions and mass media on mental health outcomes and suicide prevention.

Identification of studies
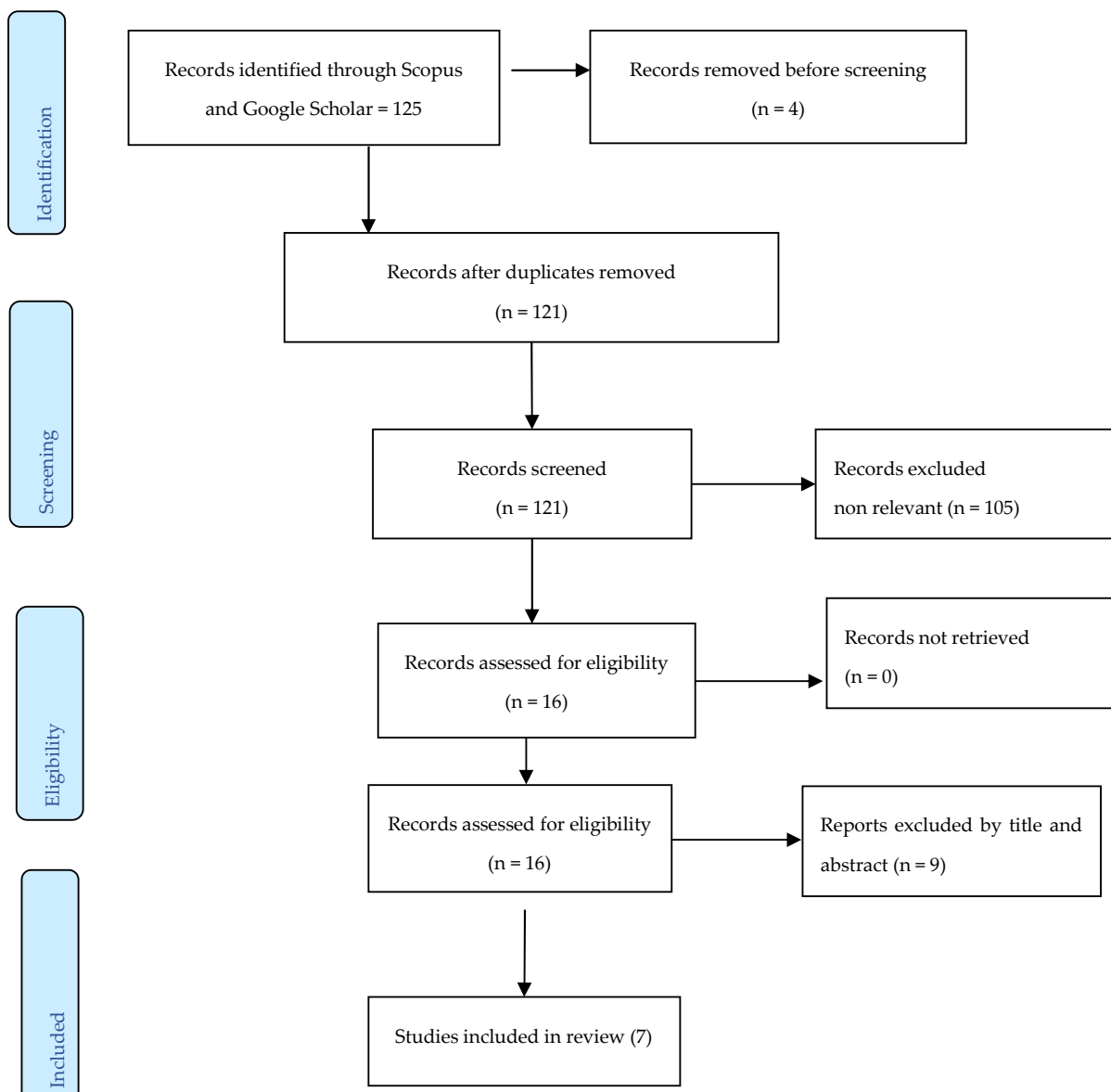
Figure 1. The PRISMA Flowchart [116].

2.1. Literature Search

To eliminate duplicate items in the literature search, we conducted our search mainly using Scopus and Google Scholar databases. Scopus has a wider coverage of relevant journals than Web of Science and PubMed, for example, and it provides faster, more detailed,

and comprehensive citation analysis [117]. Google Scholar is free to use, and it offers an attractive resource for researchers, having a vast number of both the grey and academic literature [118]. We searched the Scopus database in four stages. We selected articles focusing only on those that were published in the English language during the 12 years from the start of January 2012 until January 2024. This search yielded 252 articles. We further limited our search by considering only open-access articles that were published in English between 2012 to date. This search yielded 125 articles. Our first search was conducted using the search terms mass media AND media AND suicide AND prevention. In the second search, we used the search terms suicide prevention AND self-compassion. That search yielded 17 articles and we exported all 17 articles in both RIS and CSV format. In our third round of searches, we used the search terms mental health AND self-compassion. In our fourth search, we used the search terms mass media OR media AND health promotion AND suicide prevention, and the retrieved results were exported for further selection processes. Finally, we selected seven articles, none of which were older than 7 years. Only one article was published 7 years ago, and the remaining six articles had been published within the last 5 years. The selected articles can be seen in Table 1.

2.2. Eligibility Criteria
2.2.1. Inclusion Criteria

To be eligible for selection and further analysis, the articles needed to have been published in a peer-reviewed academic journal in English between 2013 and 2023. The articles needed to be about self-compassion interventions or mass media campaigns and their impacts on suicide prevention. Articles that reported measures to prevent suicide among young adults through media-related interventions were considered for inclusion. Articles reporting self-compassion interventions to enhance mental resilience and prevent suicide among young adults were also included.

2.2.2. Exclusion Criteria

Articles not reporting any of the aforementioned were excluded.

3. Results

The studies suggesting easily accessible and affordable solutions were lacking. In this review, we report on seven studies providing evidence of the roles media and self-compassion interventions play in mitigating the negative impacts of mental disorders and preventing suicide among young adults in Nigeria.

In a study by Ge [119], a sample of 1143 college students were surveyed using a self-report method and the Chinese Self-Compassion Scale (CSCS), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 Chinese Version (DASS-21), the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and the Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R). The influence of self-compassion on negative emotions, resilience, and suicide risk were examined. Self-compassion was found to have a significant positive effect on college students' suicide risk. Negative emotions played a mediating role, which was also moderated by resilience in the model of negative self-compassion affecting suicide risk [119].

Hirsch et al. [120] investigated the results of 338 undergraduates (89% white; 67% female) who completed the Life Events Checklist for College Students, the Beck Hopelessness Inventory, the Self-Compassion Scale, and the Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R). They applied a self-compassion intervention to reduce the effects of negative life events (NLEs) and hopelessness and found that negative life events were related to greater levels of hopelessness, resulting in increased suicidal behaviour. However, these negative effects were reduced by self-compassion suggesting that self-compassion interventions can be effective in supporting Nigerian youth who are suicidal due to negative life events.

Media Roles and Suicide Prevention

Buddies for Suicide Prevention: this was an online campaign to create awareness about suicide prevention [50]. The campaign included script writing, slogan writing, poster making, and short filmmaking, and was organised for the general public who were interested in taking part [50]. Latha et al. (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of social media platforms for mental health promotion by conducting three campaigns targeting different audiences using popular social media platforms [50]. Their findings suggested evidence of significant reach and engagement with the campaigns [50]. Although they identified some limitations such as a lack of feedback collection and follow-up to assess any behavioural change, they found that there was an increasing trend in mental health awareness through the effective use of digital media [50]. The analysis of the three online campaigns on mental health education showed that there was the potential for social media to be effective for mental health promotion [50] The use of social media platforms for mental health campaigns is effective and it allows many people to be reached within a short time frame [50].

Robinson et al. (2017) examined a group of student participants (89) from two schools engaged in an 8-to-10-week psychoeducational program on mental health and suicide. They found that young people can be safely engaged in developing suicide prevention messages that can be disseminated via social media [121]. They observed that engaging young people in this process may improve the traction that such campaigns will have [121]. It is not uncommon for young people to prefer to seek help from their friends and peers [122] rather than seeking professional support due to mental health shame and stigma [123,124]. Therefore, young adults need to be supported by educating them about how to safely engage with their peers to develop suicide prevention measures that can be delivered via social media [121].

Saei et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional and comparative study in Tehran, Iran in 2019 to determine the average hours that audiences watch the country's health channel. The survey employed in the research demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with an overall internal consistency measured by Cronbach's alpha at 0.827 [125]. Their findings showed that on average, the audience watched almost 3 h (2.64 h) daily of the country's health channel, and over 75% of the participants claimed they were satisfied with the programmes [125]. Although they did not mention any specific impact on health literacy or health outcomes from watching health channels [125], this approach can be used to broadcast useful information about health-related issues and can be used to provide health education and health promotion content to enhance mental health and suicide prevention.

The analysis of their data through the questionnaire showed that the health literacy level of those who watched the health channel was higher than the health literacy of those who did not watch the health channel [125]. There was a significant difference observed between participants/audiences and non-audiences ($p = 0.013$, $p = 0.001$, respectively) [125]. This suggests the important role that the media can play in health literacy. This can empower a community to actively engage in improving their health [125].

Till et al. [126] recruited 545 adults from the general population who were randomly assigned to read different newspaper articles while using online questionnaires to collect data before and after exposure to information about suicide. It was shown that newspaper articles about suicide education were effective in reducing suicidal ideation. The participants in the intervention groups reported a decrease in suicidal ideation and they reported an increase in suicide-prevention-related knowledge [126]. The findings showed that suicide education through newspaper articles yields comparable suicide-protective outcomes, regardless of whether the articles feature experts with or without personal experience [126].

Wu and Shen (2022), in an online questionnaire with 3000 Chinese adults using a quota sampling method used for participant selection, investigated the effects of traditional media, social media, and media trust on people's compliance with health behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic in China [127]. While the results showed that the use of central government media and WeChat positively correlated with compliance with health

behaviours, the use of local media and Weibo was negatively correlated with compliance with health behaviours [127]. Additionally, trust in the media amplified the effects of media use on compliance regarding health behaviours [127].

Reporting the results of the selected literature.

Table 1. Study details of selected papers exploring the impacts of media and self-compassion on suicide prevention.

Author(s), Year. Country	Sample and Setting	Method	Intervention	Measures	Findings
Ge [119]. China	1143 college students surveyed using the Chinese Self-Compassion Scale (CSCS), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 Chinese Version (DASS-21), Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)	Self-report inventory	Impacts of self-compassion on negative emotions, resilience, and suicide risk were examined in this sample.	Chinese Self-Compassion Scale (CSCS), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 Chinese Version (DASS-21), Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)	Negative self-compassion was found to have a significant positive predictive effect on college students' suicide risk. In contrast, negative emotions played a mediating role, and the mediating role was moderated by resilience in the model of negative self-compassion affecting suicide risk
Hirsch et al. [120]. USA	338 undergraduates (89% white; 67% female) completed the Life Events Checklist for College Students, Beck Hopelessness Inventory, Self-Compassion Scale, and Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised	Self-report inventory	Self-compassion intervention to reduce effects of negative life events (NLEs) and hopelessness	Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)	Negative life events were found to be related to greater levels of hopelessness resulting in increased suicidal behaviour. However, these were reduced by self-compassion
Latha et al. [50]. India	Participants were drawn from two famous social media platforms commonly used by young adults	A qualitative study to evaluate the effectiveness of social media platforms in hosting health promotion campaigns in the field of mental health	The Buddies for Suicide Prevention: an online campaign to create awareness about suicide prevention	The campaign included script writing, slogan writing, poster making, and short filmmaking, organised for the public who were interested in taking part	The Facebook and Instagram posts concerning all the campaigns brought about a considerable amount of reach to the targeted population

Table 1. *Cont.*

Author(s), Year. Country	Sample and Setting	Method	Intervention	Measures	Findings
Robinson et al. [121]. Australia	89 participants from two schools were assigned into two groups	A survey; a questionnaire	An 8-to-10-week psychoeducational program on mental health and suicide	Suicidal ideation/feeling	Young people can be safely engaged in developing suicide prevention messages which can be disseminated via social media
Saei et al. [125]. Iran	500 participants throughout 6 urban areas in Tehran, the capital of Iran in 2019	A cross-sectional and comparative study.	The levels of health literacy and public health in the 2 groups	Participants watched health channels for an average of 2.64 h per day	Participants/audiences reported better physical and psychological health compared to non-audiences
Till et al. [126]. N/A	A total of 545 adults recruited from the general population were randomly assigned to read a news article featuring an interview with a suicide expert	A web-based, double-blinded, randomised controlled trial	Randomised controlled trial with 527 adults to read different newspaper articles	Reduction in suicidal ideation and suicide prevention	Exposure to newspaper articles results in a reduction in suicidal ideation and an increase in knowledge related to suicide prevention
Wu et al. [127]. China	An online questionnaire with 3000 Chinese adults—Quota sampling method used for participant selection	Quota sampling method used for participant selection	To investigate the effects of traditional media, social media, and media trust on people's compliance with health behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic in China	Health behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic	Trust in the media amplifies the effects of media use on compliance with health behaviours

4. Discussion

We conducted a literature review on the impacts of the media and self-compassion on the mental health and well-being of youth undergoing economic hardship. Although we expected to report findings of studies conducted in Nigeria alone, we reported findings of studies in the literature related to our research questions as identified by our literature search. We adopted a realist review approach considering context–mechanisms–outcomes (CMO) configurations to present our findings.

Ge [119] has suggested that Nigerian youth could be supported through self-compassion interventions to reduce negative emotions caused by the economic situation in the country. Self-compassion will help affected youth develop healthy coping strategies to manage self-judgement and over-identification to mitigate suicide risk [119]. Accordingly, policy-makers and stakeholders responsible for schools, colleges, universities, youth health, and youth development including employers to focus on ensuring enhancing resilience among Nigerian youth to improve their ability to cope with risks and reduce suicide risks [119].

Hirsch et al. (2021) explored the impacts of self-compassion on a sample of college students in their studies. Their studies showed that self-compassion can mitigate the emergence of hopelessness, especially after experiencing harsh life conditions [120]. They

stressed the importance of self-compassion in buffering the impact of negative life events on mental health outcomes among younger adults [120]. The findings of their studies will arguably be relevant in developing interventions involving self-compassion exercises to support Nigerian youth faced with adverse economic challenges. A possible explanation for the results of Hirsch et al.'s (2021) studies is that Nigerian youth suffering from the effects of adverse economic conditions would benefit from self-compassion exercises such as reflecting on core components of self-compassion such as self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity [104,128]. Consequently, youth will benefit from self-compassion to enhance their mental resilience protecting them from suicide risks. It is therefore recommended that interventions involving self-compassion exercises be integrated into psychoeducational programmes for Nigerian youth to enable them to support themselves. Furthermore, self-compassion should also be incorporated into psychotherapeutic interventions to support these young adults.

Latha et al. (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of social platforms in promoting mental health awareness. They emphasised the importance of using digital media for the dissemination of information on mental health [50]. They found the use of social media to conduct mental health campaigns to be an effective initiative as this enables health campaigners to reach out to many people over a short time period [50]. Their study involved campaigns on suicide prevention, tobacco cessation, and migraine awareness to reach a large audience [50]. Despite the limitations in obtaining feedback and assessing behavioural changes, the campaigns engaged the public in mental health promotion activities [50]. Their results show that mental health awareness programs positively impacted help-seeking behaviours and enhanced well-being among individuals [50]. Additionally, social media effectively promotes a mentally healthy lifestyle [50]. Social media is recognised as a cost-effective alternative for delivering health information such as psychoeducational programmes involving mental health awareness and mental health promotion [50].

Robinson et al. (2017) explored the use of the media in educating young individuals. The study engaged young people in developing suicide prevention programmes where social media was used to disseminate messages to inform the participants about the support available [121]. The study showed that the participants can learn new skills and feel more able to provide emotional support for themselves [121]. The exercises reported by Robinson et al. (2017) included eight media messages, static images, and short films that were rated safe and acceptable by the participants. The programme was found to be useful as participants reported feeling better equipped to communicate about suicide safely and provide support to others [121].

Saei et al. [125] highlighted the role of television. They reported on the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran Health Channel (IRIB HC) [125]. Nigerian youth can benefit from this study as it suggested the positive effects of increasing health literacy levels to improve public health in communities [125]. The results showed that the IRIB HC programme exhibited better psychological and physical behaviours [125].

In their study, Till et al. [126] investigated if effects differed depending on the delivery of interviews with or without personal experience of suicidality. Their findings showed that after reading the articles about suicide and suicide prevention, participants in both intervention groups showed a decrease in suicidal ideation with an increase in suicide-prevention-related knowledge [126]. Additionally, there were no significant differences between the two groups [126]. Their study suggests that the media, i.e., newspaper articles, have similar suicide-proactive effects [126]. Consequently, print media can be used to educate individuals about healthy coping strategies against suicidality irrespective of whether delivered by experts with or without personal experience of suicidality [126].

Wu and Shen (2022) reported varying impacts of media outlets on individual's compliance with health behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. The pandemic represented extremely difficult life events that resulted in adverse conditions including poor mental health and suicidal ideation. Wu and Shen (2022) reported that the media played key roles in enhancing people's compliance with health behaviours through public

health communication. Therefore, customising communication strategies for different media platforms based on their effects on health behaviour compliance should be considered [127].

4.1. Lessons for Nigerian Youth

4.1.1. Awareness Campaigns and Promoting Mental Resilience and Recovery

The media and self-compassion interventions can be integrated into health promotion, health education, and psychoeducational programmes to support young Nigerian adults affected by the harsh economic crises. Media campaigns targeting young adults can raise awareness about mental illnesses utilising various media platforms such as online advertisements, social media, radio, and television to reach a wide audience (e.g., Saei et al. [125]. This will go a long way to help in combating mental health-related shame and stigma, and consequently prevent them from suicide by promoting help-seeking behaviours (e.g., Wu and Shen [127]). In addition, media campaigns can be used to encourage youth to seek professional support. By portraying mental health problems in a positive and empathetic manner, showcasing stories of hope, resilience, and recovery will enhance youth mental resilience and recovery journey.

4.1.2. Self-Compassion Education

The media can disseminate information about self-compassion interventions such as mindfulness practices, self-compassionate mind training [129], compassionate letter-writing [130], and self-care strategies. In addition, storytelling can be used to humanise mental illnesses, challenge stereotypes, and reduce shame and stigma. Education on mental health disorders, mental health-related discrimination, stigma, and shame among Nigerian youth can be reduced through the provision of health education and health promotion information such as psychoeducational interventions via the media (e.g., Till et al. [126]. Similarly, information about self-compassion can also be disseminated through the media. Consequently, youth, policymakers, and stakeholders will benefit from the integration of the media and self-compassion interventions. Integrating the media and self-compassion interventions into psychoeducational programmes will have bidirectional effects on the negative impacts of economic hardship. This will not only protect Nigerian youth from the adverse effects of harsh economic hardship, but stakeholders and policymakers will also benefit from media exposure and core components of self-compassion, i.e., mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness [104,128]. While considering suggesting that Nigerian youth could benefit from self-compassion training, there is also the possibility for stakeholders and policymakers to benefit from self-compassion training. Within the core components of self-compassion, those who practice self-compassion would be able to consider mindfully and humanely reflect on some of the factors that have led to economic hardship in the country—mainly the issue of corruption.

4.2. Limitations

Although we report studies relevant to our research questions, most of the studies involved samples from cultural settings other than Nigeria. However, the studies are helpful in conceptualising interventions that are effective in supporting young people in Nigeria.

5. Conclusions

The seven studies included in this literature review showed that the media is effective in promoting healthy behaviours through health education and health promotion. The evidence in the selected literature shows that the media and self-compassion intervention training is effective in supporting youth who are suicidal. The media plays a significant role in health communication, health literacy, health education, and health promotion. Youth who are suicidal will be able to learn to become resilient through self-compassion training intervention. The evidence from this review can be used to inform policymakers and stake-

holders as well as managers of schools, colleges, and universities to consider integrating the use of media to educate youth about mental illnesses, where to obtain professional help, and how to support themselves when going through stressful life events. This review was intended to capture the Nigerian context. However, the literature specifically relating to Nigeria is scant. Therefore, we provided evidence that is related to protecting mental health and preventing suicide among youth. Further, although we provided a comprehensive search procedure reporting search criteria including inclusion and exclusion criteria, a quality assessment report was not provided. Therefore, future research specifically targeting Nigerian youth is warranted.

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