



NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG COMMERCIAL MOTOR DRIVERS: A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY IN BAUCHI STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Drug impaired a very serious health hazard on our roads today. This study looks at the knowledge, prevalence, types and pattern of drug abuse among commercial drivers. There is a fair knowledge of drug abuse among commercial drivers in Bauchi, However the prevalence of psychoactive substance use is unacceptably high among the commercial drivers. Majority of the drivers studied were Hausas by tribe, Muslims and with low education level. Across-sectional descriptive study was carried out. A total of 210 respondents were selected at random from clusters (motor parks) of commercial drivers by employing structured questionnaire. A bivariate analysis was done using chi-square test to evaluate relationship between socio-demographic variables and substance use with statistical significance taken at $p < 0.05$. All of them were males, majority 74.8% were Hausas, 94.3% were Muslims, and more than half of them have no formal education. 92.2% knows about drug abuse. There is no significant relationship between substance and socio-demographic characteristic. Common reason for taking drugs include working for long hours, to keep awake and to cope with stress. Religion and side effect are the major deterrent of drug abuse. The important sources of acquisition of drugs are markets and hideouts. There is a high prevalence of drug abuse in spite of the knowledge of drug abuse among commercial drivers. This calls for massive campaign against drug abuse especially among commercial drivers, religious body, Traditional leaders have a vital role to play in this regard.

Key Words: Drug abuse, Commercial motor drivers, Sociological inquiry.

I INTRODUCTION

In recent year's attention have increasingly turned to the rising prevalence and consequences of substance abuse in the community and society. In general, a radical change appears to have taken place about three decades ago when drug abuse crept into the main stream of the society. The world view of drug abuse culture includes expectations and misconceptions of the effect of drug. Drug abuse is the used of drug usually for non- medicinal



purpose that cause physical, psychological, legal and social harm to the user or to others affected by the user's behaviour. Psychoactive substance (drug) is connoting those drugs that primarily act on the central nervous system, affecting mood, thinking, and behaviour. Psychoactive drugs can impair person's ability to function safely in the society. According to expert, the factors that contribute to the influence of drugs abuse or drug addiction problem among the Nigerian youth include, peer group influence, availability of psychoactive drugs, curiosity and experimentation. The need to enhance performance, economic pressure, emotional and psycho-social stress, such as anxiety, frustration is few in central thought. Others include get-rich quick syndrome and the influence of advertisement. Commercial motor drivers use drugs to contract fatigue and also add more stamina to work for a long hour.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (NODC) shows that "the age between 10 - 29 years are the most vulnerable group in drug abuse in Nigeria, with an increase in cocaine, heroin and cannabis found among commercial drivers, commercial sex workers, self-confessed users, unemployed, motor parks touts popularly called "Yan Tasha" and even law enforcement agents. A number of commercial drivers reported daily intake of one form of 'booster' or the other for the required stamina for long hours of operations and also to manage fatigue."

The impact of drug abuse especially among the youth is glaring, a morally decadent and wasted generation. The consequences of drug abuse are many and varied. The high cost paid by the society due to substance use cut across social, economic, physical and psychological aspects. In some countries (Nigeria inclusive), the foremost problems of drugs abuse seem to be fatal road baffle accidents, occupational injuries and long-lasting disabilities resulting from non-fatal accidents, that lay even a heavier burden on the community. The health consequences of drug abuse include drug-related psychotic disorders and mental health problem such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, suicidal tendencies, depression and anger.

One very peculiar feature about psychoactive drugs is that all of them are that their abuse has physical and social effects which sometimes more often lead to death or permanent disability.

Globally, drug impaired is known to be a major threat to the public. Every day, about 3000 lives are being lost to road traffic accidents worldwide, 30 are drug related ^[1]. There has been a radical acceleration in the trend of psychoactive substance use in recent time, with an alarming high prevalence of abuse of hard drug like heroin and cocaine.

There is unacceptably high prevalence of psychoactive substance use among drivers in Nigeria. As mentioned in the report of United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) "the age between 10-29 years are the most vulnerable group in drug abuse in Nigeria, with an increase in cocaine, heroin and cannabis found among commercial drivers, commercial sex workers, motor park tout and even law enforcement agents." The present study is an attempt to determine the knowledge, prevalence, consequences, types and the pattern of drug abuse among commercial motor drivers in Bauchi local government of Bauchi State.



1.1 PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

The prevalence of drug abuse among commercial drivers in Nigeria is very high, and constitutes a very serious threat to the public^[2]. As stated by Demehin^[3], “drug and alcohol abuse is a major occupational hazard among Nigerian professional drivers, which contribute to making Nigerian roads particularly murderous.” According to Aniebu, and Okonkwo^[2], “the high prevalence of drug abuse among taxi drivers is nearly 86 per cent”. Mura et al.^[4] mentioned that “the prevalence of drug was high in drivers who were of young age, single and low literacy level, it was found that 50 per cent of the long-distance drivers, studied non-had ever attended health talk on drug abuse in Ilorin of Nigeria. It was noted in the same study that about 50 per cent of the drivers were aware that it was harmful to take hard drugs. About 98 per cent of the driver who used drugs have been involved in road traffic accident at one point or the other. The drugs commonly used by drivers in south (Lagos) include alcohol 49 per cent, followed by tobacco 23 per cent and to lesser once^[2]. In Australia, the incidence of alcohol and drugs among drivers indicates that alcohol at 0.05g/100ml is present in 29 per cent of all drivers. The highest prevalence was in car drivers with 30.3% and lowest in truck drivers. Almost 10 per cent of all the drivers use alcohol and drugs^[5]. In America about 33 per cent of automobile drivers involved in crash were found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both at the time of crash^[6]. Aniebu, and Okonkwo^[2] reported that (USA) and it was found that 54 per cent of the drivers tested positive for illicit drugs or alcohol in Chicago and similarly high prevalence of alcohol use among commercial drivers in Canada. In Ghana, a study carried out on 43 bus and mini bus drivers in the capital city, Accra, it was noted that majority of them expressed an understanding of the risk associated with drunk driving^[7].

1.2 AETIOLOGY OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE USE

The reasons for drug use are complex and the incidence can be linked to precipitating or maintaining factors. In a study carried out among the commercial motor vehicle drivers in the south-western Nigeria, it was found out that most drivers resort to use of one form of “booster” or the other in order to get the required stamina for long hours of operations^[8]. Over 90 per cent of the commercial drivers have reported taking painkillers such as Panadol extra, Tramadol on regular basis. There are many other reasons to use psychoactive substances.

II METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the nature and consequences of drug abuse among commercial motor drivers in Bauchi State of Nigeria, the sample size of the study has been fixed by using Krejcie and Morgan, 1970 table for determining size of known population of 460, a total of 210 is selected as a sample size of the study. Similarly, simple random sampling technique is used in selecting the sample size of the study. The commercial drivers were grouped into clusters all together in Bauchi metropolis viz. Yankari Motor Park, Muda Lawal Motor Park, Wunti Motor Park, Jos road Motor Park, Kofar Gombe Motor Park and Central Market Motor Park. Three (3)



out of these 6 clusters are selected at random using simple random sampling through balloting. A predesigned questionnaire has been administered in the selected motor parks in Bauchi Local Government of Bauchi State.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the use of research instruments are hereby presented in tables and charts in five sections as socio-demographic data; occupational history; knowledge of drug abuse; drugs or substances use and circumstances of use; and the patterns of drug abuse, in line with the objectives of the study.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Table.1: Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age in years (N=210)		
15-29	87	41.4
30-44	93	44.3
45-59	26	12.4
60 and above	4	1.9
Sex (N=210)		
Male	210	100
Ethnic Group (N=210)		
Hausa	157	74.8
Fulani	36	17.1
Gerawa	13	6.2
Igbo,	1	0.48
Yoruba	1	0.48
Idoma	1	0.48
Kanuri	1	0.48
Religion (N=210)		
Islam	198	94.3
Christianity	12	5.7
Level of Education (N=210)		
Qur'anic	88	41.9
Primary	44	21.0
Secondary	45	21.4
Tertiary	7	3.3
Illiterates	26	12.4



Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age in years (N=210)		
15-29	87	41.4
30-44	93	44.3
45-59	26	12.4
60 and above	4	1.9
Marital status (N=210)		
Single	56	26.7
Married	154	73.3

A majority (44 per cent) of the respondents who are commercial drivers are in the age group of 30-44 years. Mean age is 33.16 years and standard deviation is 9.385. All the respondents are males. 94 per cent of the respondents are Muslims and the remaining 6 per cent are Christians. About 46 per cent of the respondents have completed primary, secondary and tertiary education. 42 per cent reported the Qur’anic schooling and the remaining 12 per cent of the respondents are Illiterates. With regard to marital status of the respondents, majority (73 per cent) of the respondents are married and the remaining 27 per cent are unmarried.

Fig.1 shows that majority (71 per cent) of the drivers drive long distance followed by town drivers by 20 per cent and the remaining 9 per cent reported that they drive both long and town services.

Nature of driving by respondents

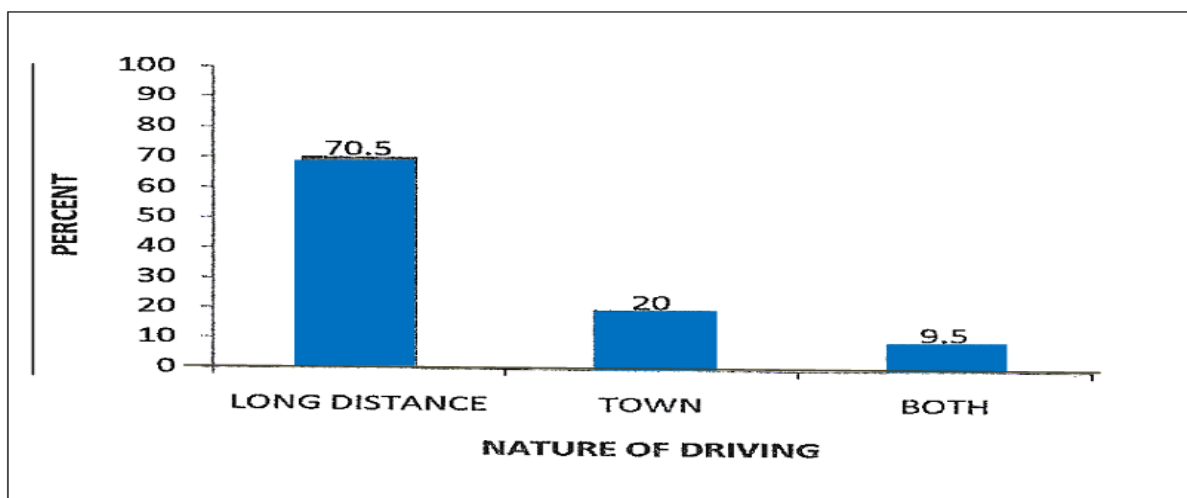


Figure 1: Nature of driving by respondents



AWARENESS ABOUT DRUG ABUSE

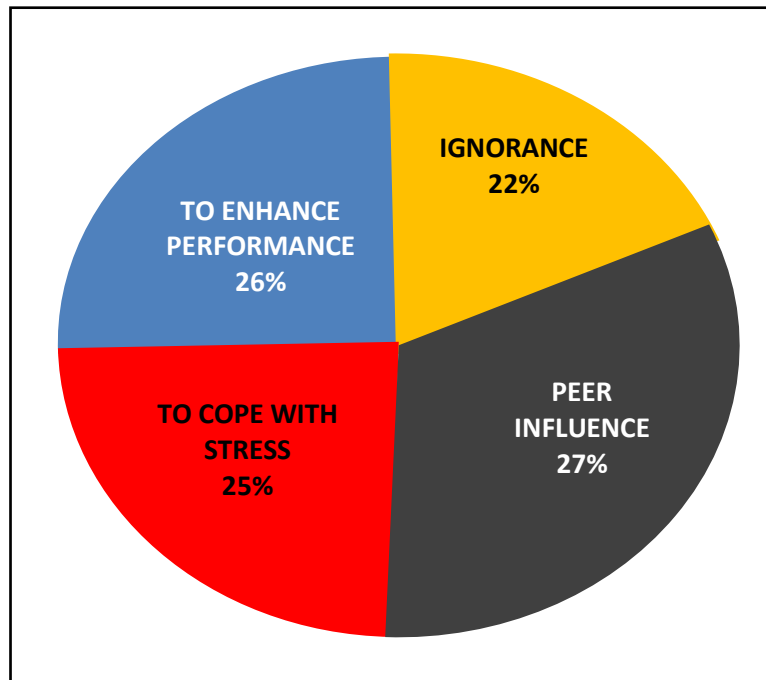


Figure 2: Factors that Influence Drug Abuse

Fig. 2 shows that 27 per cent of the respondents mentioned peer influence was the reason for drug abuse, 26 per cent mentioned the reason for drug abuse was to enhance performance, 25 per cent mentioned the reason for drug abuse was to cope with stress and the remaining 22 per cent of the respondents reported the reason for drug abuse was due to ignorance.

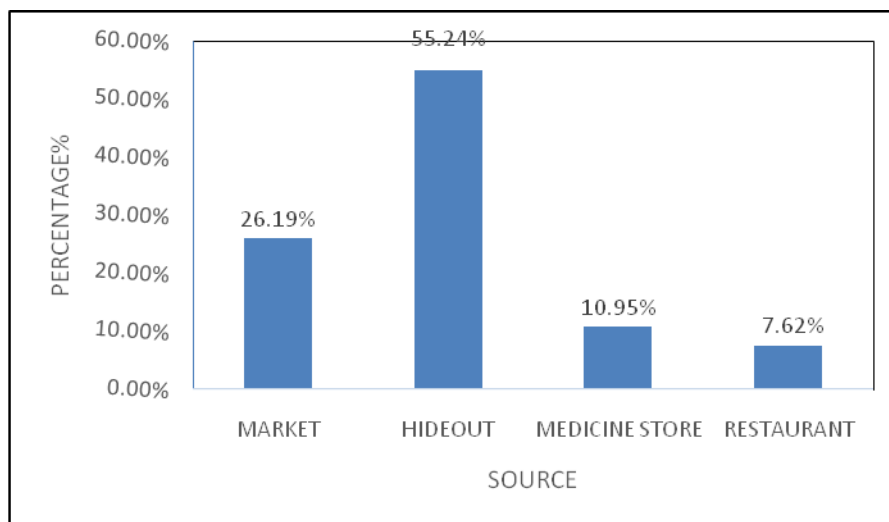


Figure3: Source of Drugs



Figure.3 shows the major source of drugs or substance is hideout (55 per cent), 25 per cent of the respondents reported market as a source of drugs whereas only 11 per cent reported Medicine Store and 8 per cent reported restaurant.

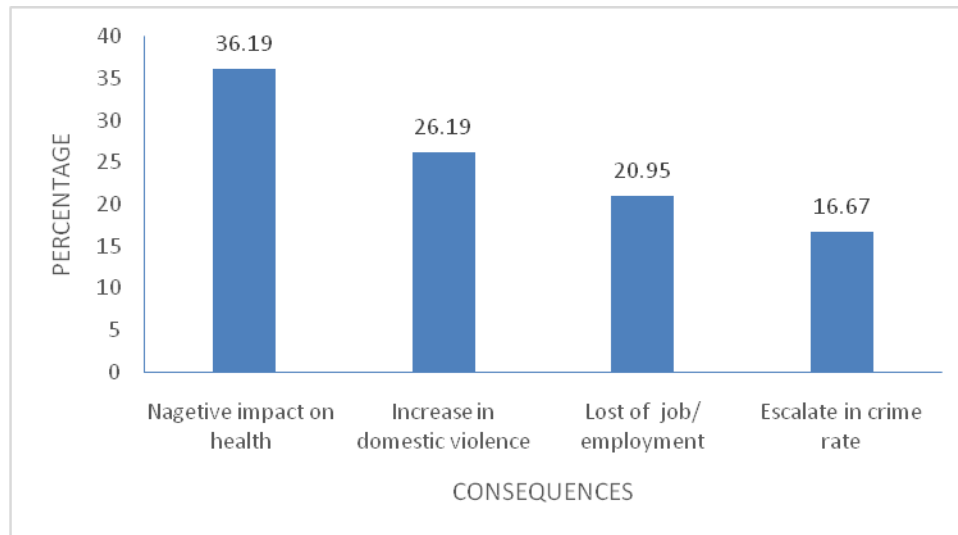


Figure.4 Adverse effects of drug abuse

Figure.4 indicates that the adverse effects of drug abuse reported by the respondents. A majority (36 per cent) of the respondents reported that drug abuse would affect their health badly, 26 per cent reported that it would lead to domestic violence, 21 per cent reported loss of jobs or employment and the remaining 17 per cent reported increase in crime rate due to drug abuse.

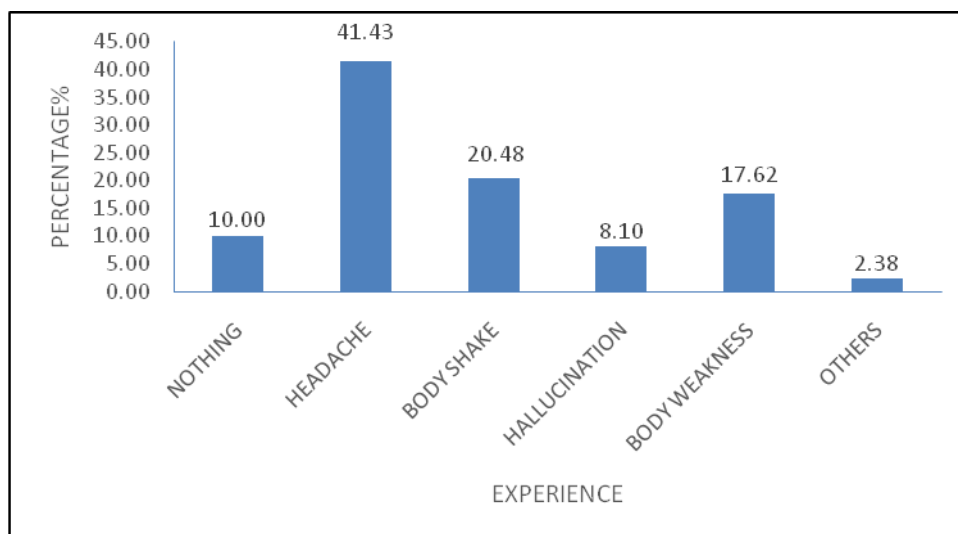


Figure 5: Experience of attempting to stop drugs

With regard to experience after stopping usage of drugs, Figure 5 shows that 41 per cent of the respondents reported headache, nearly 21 per cent reported body shivering, 18 per cent reported weakness in body, 11 per cent reported hallucination and etc. and the remaining 10 per cent reported normal.



Table.5: Willingness to quit drugs usage by respondents (N=210)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	163	77.6
No	47	22.4
TOTAL	210	100

Table. 5 shows the willingness to quit the habit of taking drugs by the respondents. Majority (78 per cent) of the respondents are willing to give up the habit of drug abuse and the remaining 22 per cent reported that they would continue it.

Table.6 Reasonsto quit drugs by respondents (N=210)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial burden	53	25.2
Social problems	25	11.9
Health disorders	116	55.2
Others	16	7.6
TOTAL	210	100

With regard to reasons to give up the drug abuse, majority (55 per cent) of the respondents reported health disorders, 25 per cent reported financial burden, 12 per cent reported social problems such as personal identity and social disorder and the remaining 8 per cent reported other reasons such as disturbance at working place and family.

IV CONCLUSION

Despite the considerably high knowledge of drug abuse, there is a relatively high prevalence of drug abuse among commercial drivers, and the common reasons for psychoactive substance abuse are social and psychological stress. Majority of the drug users are young, single and with low literacy level. One most outstanding reason for not using substance among drivers is religious conviction. The most common source of acquisition of the substance is the markets, hide outs, patent medicine stores and restaurants. It is recommended that the campaigns on drug abuse should be embarked upon by the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to educate drivers on the adverse effects of drug abuse. This Union should organize periodic seminars for the drivers on the dangers of drugs impaired driving. The union should stipulate the minimum age of a person for registration with its office. The union can also devise a means of improving the educational level of its



membersthrough adult literacy program.The religious bodies should play a vital role to fight against the drug abuse by enlightening their followers on theadverse effects of drug abuse.The government should intensify campaign programs against drug abuse in the society. The government should also strengthen the drug policy bystrict restriction of sales of “controlled” drugs and impose severe sanction on drug abuse through the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).Thegovernment should enact a regulation on maximum 12 hours of driving per day. The community should be sensitized by the concerned government agencies about the adverse effects of drug abuse through Information, Education and Communication (IEC). The commercial drivers should be examined through breath analyzer on the roads by the personnel of NDLEA to prevent drug addiction activities in the society.

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