



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG LONG-DISTANCE DRIVERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES AND SOCIETY IN IWO, OSUN STATE

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Abstract: The Psychosocial implications of substance abuse on long distance drivers, families and society in Iwo Local Government garages of Osun state were studied to identify various substances of abuse, where they were often procured, how they were abuse and the common routes of administration.

Interviews and questionnaire were used to elicit detail information from the respondents. The result of the study showed that larger percentage of the respondents were growing adults of age range 25-35 years. Poor parenting and broken homes are largely responsible for early exposure of most respondents to substance use and abuse.

Among the legal drugs, alcohol and cigarette were the most commonly abuse while marijuana (Indian hemp) tops the category of illegal substance that is often abused due to the cost and non-availability of others like cocaine and heroin. The study also discovered multiple drug use in most drivers. Psychosocial implications of substance abuse were also discovered.

These ranges from neglect of personal hygiene, family disruption, broken homes avoidable accidents and problems with the law enforcement agents. It was also discovered that, there is no enabling law or edict prohibiting hawking, sales and consumption of substance of abuse in motor garages and if such law ever exists, it is not enforced as substance of abuse were seen freely exchanging hands in these garages. And that is why peer group influence was so strong in the ways by which they are introduced to these drugs. Other reason according to the study is frustration due to bad economy in the country.

Lastly, there is dearth need of information on the relationship of substance abuse and driving, further study is therefore needed in other local government areas and states to help government formulate definite pronouncement that will prohibit hawking, sales and consumption of substance use in garages nationwide.

Keywords: Substance abusers' psychosocial implication long distance drivers, society and families.

INTRODUCTION

People in almost all cultures have used psychoactive substances since prehistoric times. Drug abuse is generally common in Nigeria and other developing countries but commoner among long distance commercial and truck drivers. These substances/drugs have been seen as enhancers of individual and social functioning. People continue to use them for relief of negative emotional states, such as depression, fear, anxiety, relief from fatigue or boredom and as a break from daily routines through altered states of performance. Alcohol and as major drug raw materials

like kola also contribute in various religious ceremonies. Ethical and Legal considerations aside, moderate use for any of these purposes would probably not result in major social or individual harm. However, all cultures have recognized the negative effects of alcohol and drug use. Excessive use of these substances has contributed to profound individual psychological and social

problems. Any drug/substance that can produce pleasurable changes in mental or emotional states has potential for abuse. Drug that causes the most marked and immediate desirable effects have the greatest abuse potential.

Alcohol and cocaine are very popular because they produce effects on the brain within minutes.

Drugs of abuse include legal drugs such as alcohol and illegal drugs like heroin, cocaine and marijuana and household products such as inhalants. Long distance drivers often use these drugs initially to keep them awake and alert to cope with the stress of long distant driving, but gradually the use turns to abuse and finally to dependence. The substances commonly abused by these drivers are majorly alcohol and marijuana and, in some cases, multiple substance use is not uncommon. Simultaneous or sequential use of more than one substance is very common. Drivers do this to enhance, lessen, or otherwise change the nature of their intoxication or to relieve withdrawal symptoms. Use of alcohol with marijuana is especially common among these drivers and their own use is commoner nowadays than any other group in the society. It is on daily basis as corroborated by Aguwi in 1998 that there is no single day that passes without any prescription from the physician, doctors or pharmacologist, it is abuse or misuse of drugs that is causing harm and concern.

Users of intravenous drugs and their sexual partners are at high risk of infections with blood borne pathogens particularly hepatitis B (HBV) and the Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV), which causes the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). It is common for addicts to share needles when they are using drugs in a group. Because the needles are not cleaned, blood is transferred from one person to the others. This is an ideal situation for the transmission of HIV and HBV.

It is the recent increase in number of long distance drivers acquiring HIV/AIDS, being involved in fatal accidents, resulting from over excitement or speeding and dosing off, and many derailments from roads and bridges with their attendant consequences of injuring, maiming and killing of innocent individuals and infecting their innocent spouses with debilitating and deadly diseases that prompted me to choose this topic and it is hoped that the work will go. It is the recent increase in number of long distance drivers acquiring HIV/AIDS, being involved in fatal accidents, resulting from over excitement or speeding and dosing off, and many derailments from roads and bridges with their attendant consequences of injuring, maiming and killing of innocent individuals and infecting their innocent spouses with debilitating and deadly diseases that prompted me to choose this topic and it is hoped that the work will go a long way in creating desire awareness among drivers in general and particularly the long distance ones, and also sensitize the government on ways to reduce untimely deaths emanating from the wholesome acts.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Between 1982 and 1996, the Federal Road Safety Corps reported that over four hundred and thirty-nine thousand, one hundred and eighty-two (439,182) were casualty in road traffic accidents. Of this figure, one hundred and sixteen thousand, five hundred and sixty-one (116,561) were killed while the remaining three hundred and twenty-two thousand, six hundred and twenty-one (322,621) sustained one form of injury or the other ranging from

minors like bruises and abrasions to major ones like crushed injuries, at times to 2, 3 or the four limbs necessitating amputations, and spinal cord injuries.

Most studies on psychoactive substance use have been hospital based and may not be representative of the population. There is a need therefore for more community-based studies, particularly among commuter drivers and among people who would otherwise not present to the clinics. Moreover, it has been reported that those who take up menial jobs in the community, in market places and at motor parks are vulnerable to psychoactive substance use (Nevadomsky, 1982; Obot, 1993; NDLEA Publication, 1993).

Psychoactive substances use has been found to be on the rise and this has been blamed on inconsistent legal policies (Odejide, 199 and 1998) and there are too few community-based studies that can be used to guide policy makers.

It is evident from personal observation that there is no control on the use and sale of alcohol and some other psychoactive drugs in our motor parks. Furthermore, there is a dearth of information on psychoactive substance use and road traffic accidents in Nigeria.

These therefore give an impetus for this study to determine the psychosocial implication of substance abuse on long distance drivers, their families and the society, and to advise relevant agencies accordingly.

SUB-PROBLEM

- To identify factors responsible for substance abuse amongst long distance drivers.
- To determine the substance that is commonly abused by long distance drivers.
- To determine the relationship between substance abuse by the drivers and accidents on our roads.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. What are the factors responsible for high incidence of substance abuse among long distance drivers?
2. What psychosocial implications have substance abuse on long distance drivers, their families and the society?

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the study will serve as an important tool for the road safety personnel, government, health and social workers to map out strategies to:

- Formulate policies that will eradicate hawking of substance that would be abused in our garages.
- Determine health hazards inherent in substance abuse and long-distance driving.
- Affords law enforcement agents, drivers and social workers opportunity to prevent prospective drivers from substance abuse
- Providing strategies in public relations to create awareness in communities to pretest drivers before embarking on their journey.

3. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The frame work to be used for this study are psychological and socio-cultural theories.

PSYCHOLOGICAL; Many psychological theories have attempted to explain the factors that predispose people to substance abuse. Psychological theories are alcoholic as fixated at the oral stage of development, thus seeking need satisfaction through oral behaviour such as drinking. Behaviour or learning theories view addictive behaviours as over learned, mal adaptive habits that can be examined and changed in the same way as other habits. Family system theory emphasizes the pattern of relationships between family members through the generations as an explanation for substance abuse.

SOCIOCULTURAL

Several sociocultural factors influence a person choice whether to use the drugs, which drug to use, and how to use. The attribute, values, norms and sanctions differ according to nationality, religion, gender, family background, and social environment.

Assessment of these factors is necessary to understand the whole person. Combination of factors may make a person more susceptible to drug abuse.

Formal religious belief can also affect drinking behaviours. Members of religious that discourage the use of alcohol use and alcoholism than members of those that accept or encourage its use.

STUDY OF DESIGN AND SCOPE

This study is a descriptive, cross-sectional study. The nature of the research is exploratory and the variables of interest are socio-demographic correlates of drug users, pattern use in terms of single or multiple use, associated psychosocial effect like family disruption, drug use and work, drug use and road accidents, and attendant consequences, problems with law enforcement agency.

STUDY OF POPULATION

The target population was long distance commercial drivers working in all motor parks in Iwo. Two hundred [200] of these drivers were picked.

SAMPLE SIZE ESTIMATION

The sample size n was obtained from the formula.

$n = Z^2qr/d^2$ by Kish and Leslie (1965) where n = minimum sample size

$Z = 1.96$ (2S.D) at 95% confidence interval $P =$

probability that a driver will use a drug (0.5) $q = 1 - p$

d = precision expected at 95% confidence limit (0.05) $n = n$

$= 1.96^2 (0.5) (1 - 0.5) / (0.05)^2$

$= 384$

Rounded up to 400

Because of time lack of fund, 1/2 of this no. which is 200 will be used distribution to garages will be through the use of this sample calculation. $200n = 520$ $n = 520/200$ $n = 2.5$

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instrument used for data collection was a set of pre-coded open and closed ended question prepared in English. The question was divided into four sections, they are;

SECTION A; PATTERN OF DRUG ABUSE

SECTION B; SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC SECTION

SECTION C; PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

SECTION D; PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPLICATION OF DRUG USE.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The instrument was pretested for use in this study after it had been pretested among a sample of 20 commercial drivers from phoenix garage in Iwo. The garage is not to be used for the real study.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

A letter of identification was taken from the department, copies of these were given to chairmen of these garages to solicit for their support. Two weeks' notice was given to meet all the participants for administration and collection of questionnaires (A Vernacular of questionnaire was used for the purpose).

By this method, all the questionnaire administered were returned to the researcher.

4. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was serialized and information yielded by each questionnaire was entered directly into the computer using EPI-INFO 6 data programme [Dean et. al., 1991]

5. RESULT

5.1 Table 1: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to age

Age groups	Frequency	Percent
15-19years	11	5.5
20-24years	27	13.5
25-29years	58	29
30-34years	25	12.5
35-39years	26	13
40-44years	42	21
45-49years	9	4.5
50years and above	2	1
Total	200	100

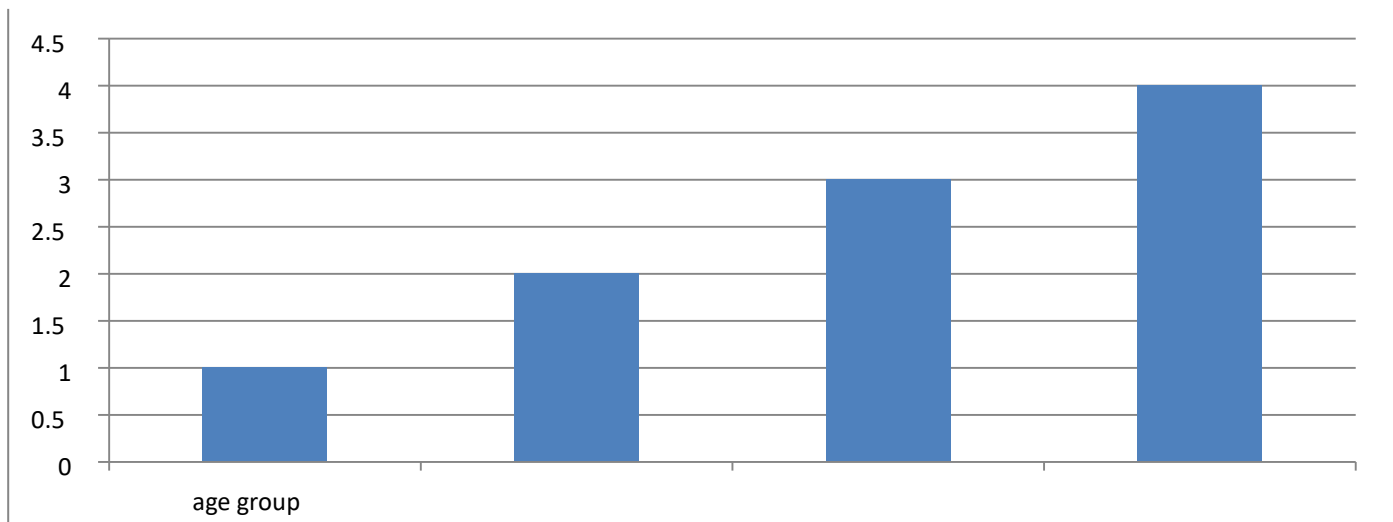


Table 1 reveals the distribution of the respondents by age. The result shows that 5.5% of the respondents are in age group

15-19years, 13.5% of the respondents are in age group 20-24years, 29% of the respondents are in age group 25-29years, 12.5% of the respondents are in age group 30-34years, 13% of the respondents are in age group 35-39years, 21% of the respondents are in age group 40-44years, 4.5% of the respondents are in age group 45-49years while 1% of the respondents are in age group 50years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents fell in age group 25-29years.

5.2 Table 2: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to Educational Status

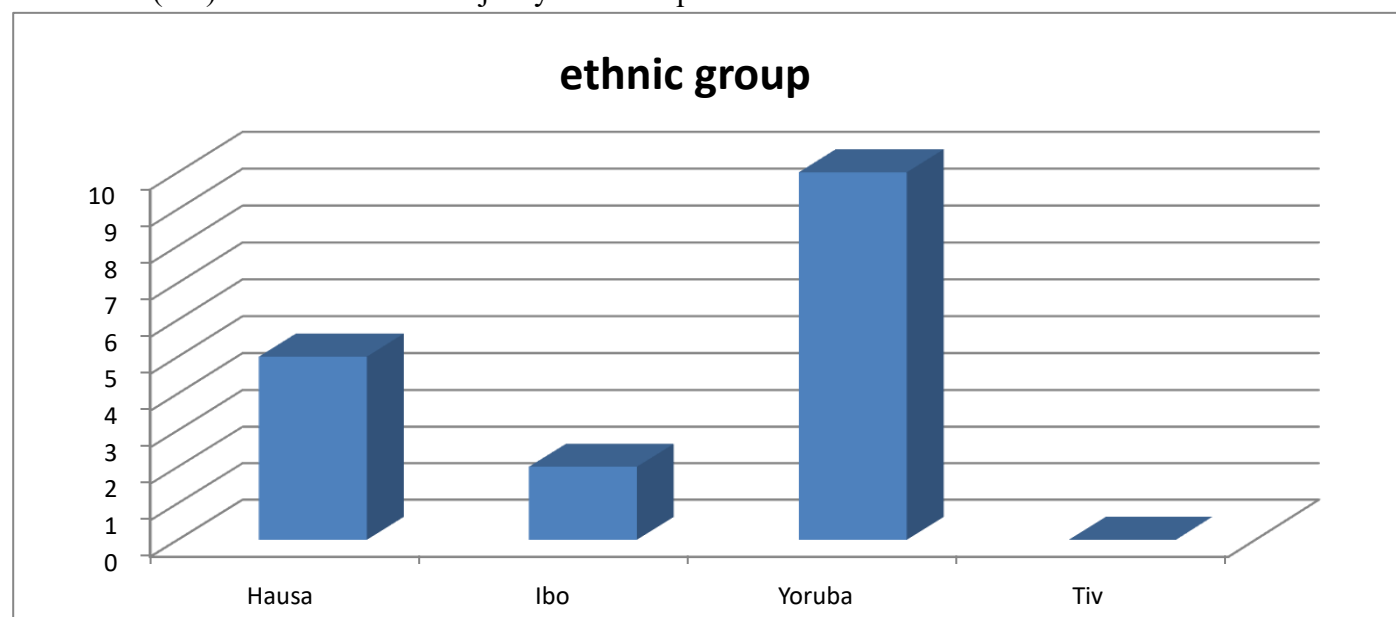
<u>Educational Level</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No formal education	37	18.5
Primary incomplete	37	18.5
Primary complete	31	15.5
Secondary incomplete	2	1
Secondary complete	77	38.5
Arabic	10	5
Post		
Secondary/University	6	3
Total	200	100

Table 2 reveals the distribution of the respondents by educational status. The result shows that 18.5% of the respondents have no formal education, 15.5% of the respondents are had their elementary school completed, 18.5% of the respondents are had their elementary school uncompleted, 38.5% of the respondents are had their secondary school uncompleted, 5% of the respondents are had Arabic education, while 3% of the respondents had post-secondary school certificate. This shows that majority of the respondents completed their secondary education.

5.3 Table 3: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to ethnicity

<u>Ethnic group</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Hausa	21	10.5
Ibo	15	7.5
Yoruba	162	81
Others(Tiv)	2	1
Total	200	100

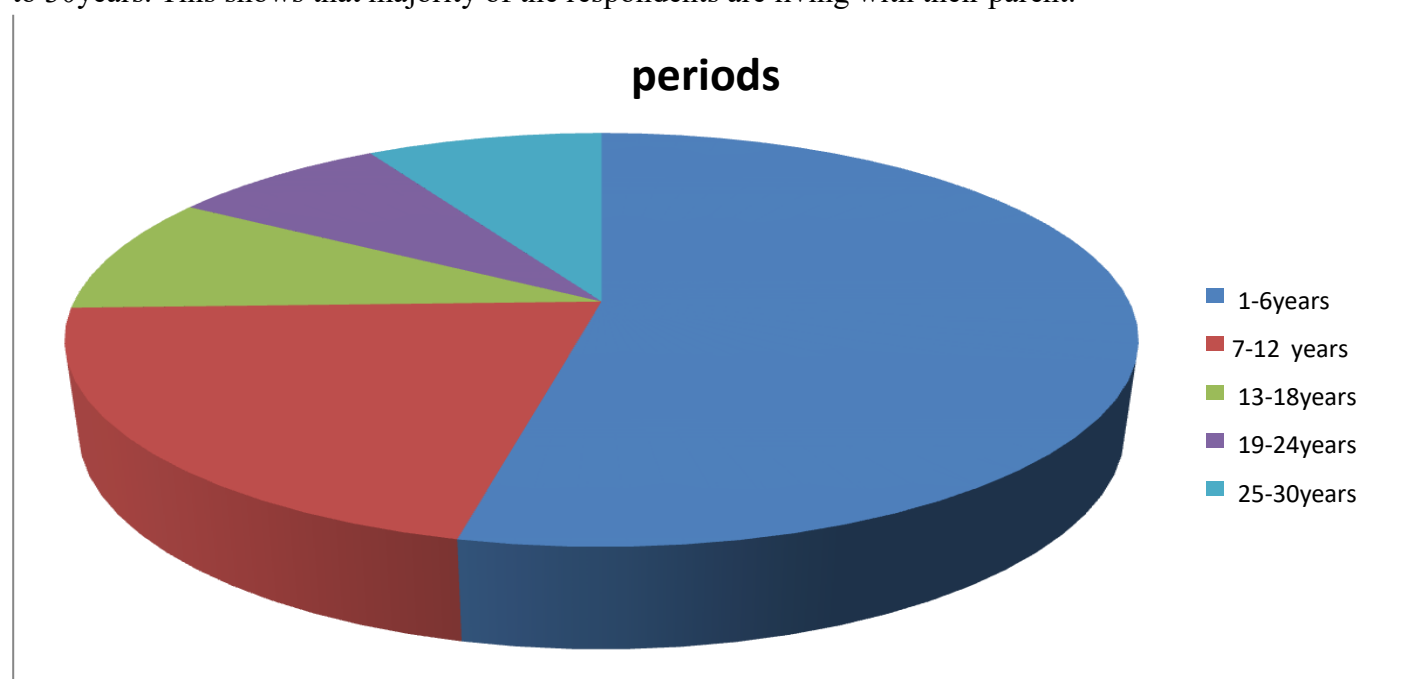
Table 3 reveals the distribution of the respondents by ethnic. The result shows that 10.5% of the respondents are Hausa, 7.5% of the respondents are Ibo, 81% of the respondents are Yoruba while 1% of the respondents are from other tribe (Tiv). This shows that majority of the respondents are Yoruba.



5.4 Table 4: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to the time they have been in the garage.

Period	Frequency	Percent
1-6years	87	43.5
7-12years	65	32.5
13-18years	31	15.5
19-24years	15	7.5
25-30years	2	1
Total	200	100

Table 4 reveals the distribution of the respondents by their living arrangement. The result shows that 43% of the respondents had been in the garage between 1 to 6years, 32.5 of the respondents had being in the garage between 7 to 12years, 15.5% of the respondents had being in the garage between 13 to 18years, 7.5 of the respondents had being in the garage between 19 to 24years, while only 1% of the respondents had being in the garage between 25 to 30years. This shows that majority of the respondents are living with their parent.

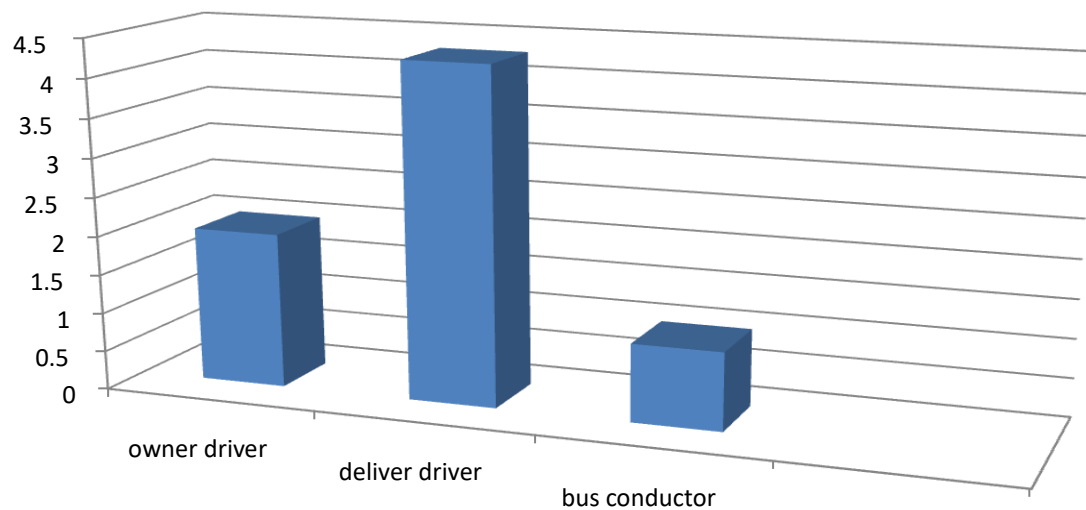


5.5 Tables 5: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to the type of driver

Type of driver	Frequency	Percent
Owner driver	36	18
Deliver driver	140	70
Bus conductor	24	12
Total	200	100

Table 5 reveals the distribution of the respondents by the type of driver. The result shows that 18% of the respondents are owner driver, 70% of the respondents are deliver driver, 24% of the respondents are bus conductor.

type of driver

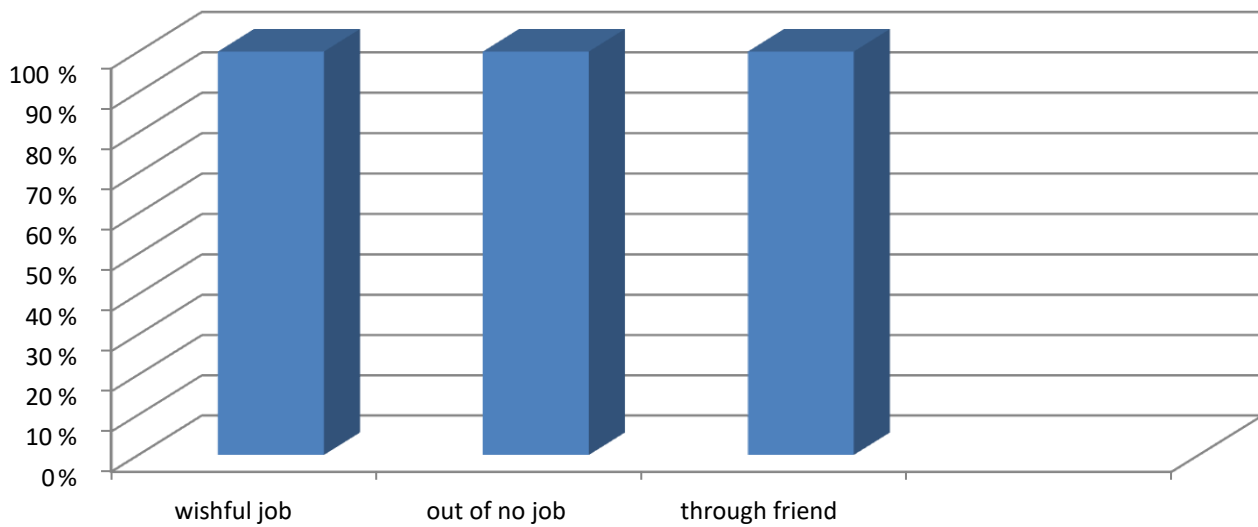


5.6 Table 6: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to how they find themselves in the job

	Frequency	Percent
Wishful job	73	36.5
Out of no job	81	40.5
Through Friend	46	23
Total	200	100

Table 6 reveals the distribution of the respondents by how they find themselves in the job. The result shows that 36.5% of the respondents involved in the job wishfully, 40.57% of the respondents are involved due to no job, 23% of the respondents are involved through friends.

getting themselves in the job

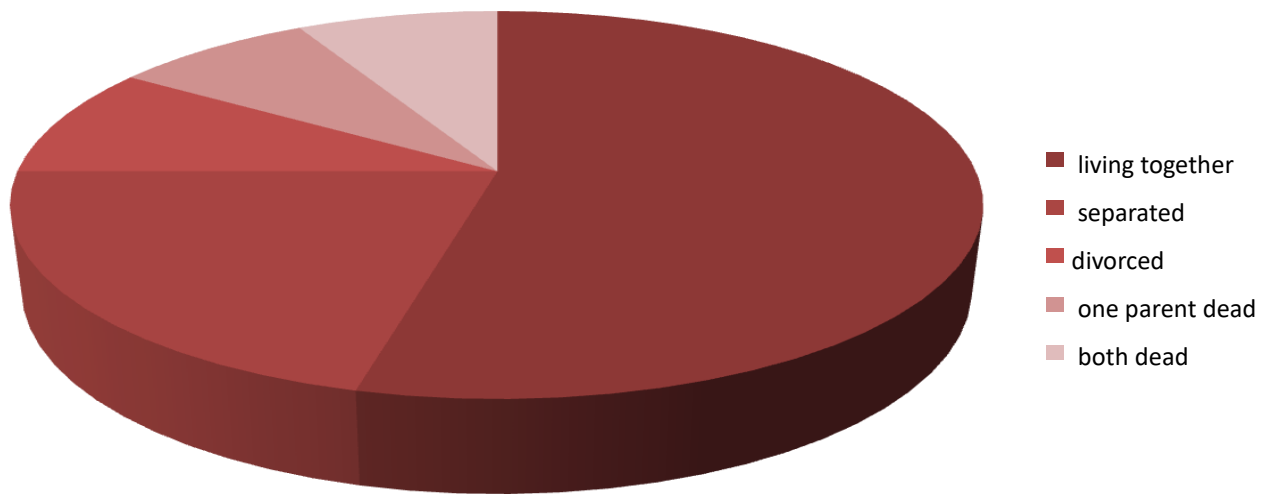


5.7 TABLE 7: Frequency counts and percentages of the respondents according to the situation in their homes during their early life.

	Frequency	Percent
Living together	110	55
Separated	33	16.5
Divorced	25	12.5
One parent dead	18	9
Both dead	14	7
Total	200	100

Table 7 reveals the distribution of the respondents by the situation in their homes during their early life. The result shows that 55% of the respondents were living together with their parents, 16.5% of the respondents were having their parents separated, 12.5% of the respondents were having their parents divorced, 9% of the respondents had one parent dead, while 7% of the respondents had their parents dead.

situation at home



DRUG BEING COMMONLY ABUSED AND ITS EFFECTS

Drugs normally taken regularly

Drugs	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
cigarette alcohol	32	16.0	28.5	16.0 44.5
marijuana kolanut	57	28.5	28.5	73.0 82.0
snuff	57	9.0	28.5	88.5
coffee	18	6.5	9.0	92.5
albukun Total	13	4.0	6.5	
	8	7.5	4.0	100.0
	15	100.0	7.5	
	200		100.0	

The study has shown that the most widely used socially acceptance substance is alcohol, while the most widely used illegal substance is marijuana. Similar findings were reported by Kaplan et al. (1994) in the United States of America, Hawk (1978) and Plant et al. (1982) in Europe. The study findings confirm what was reported by Adelekan et al. (1992 and earlier by Abiodun (1991)) both in Nigeria. Alcohol is widely available in this community and there are no prohibitive laws limiting sales to certain times of the day as to minimize consumption as they have in the United Kingdom.

That significantly more drug users gave a history of drug use in their family compared with non-users in this study is not surprising. Nevadomsky (1982) had reported that individuals who use drugs provide poor role modeling their children. Similar reports were made in ICAA Publication in 1988, in the NDLEA publications (1992), Adelekan (1993), and by Obot (1993). These children may actually help their parents purchase some of the widely available drugs.

The present study has also shown that significant more drivers got introduced to these substances through peers and fathers. Authors like Obot (1993) in Nigeria had made similar reports before, and attention needs to be paid to these areas developing a drug awareness and rehabilitation programme for long distance drivers and their families.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study assessed the Psychosocial implication of substance abuse on long distance drivers in selected motor parks in Iwo Local Government area of Osun State. The study has demonstrated that the majority of these drivers are young adults whose ages were between 25 and 35.

Most of the respondents who use drugs got introduced to it through peer effect and frustration. Also, the study has shown that physical disorders were significantly common in these drug users compared with nonusers.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Commercial drivers need to have educational programme to improve their awareness and knowledge of psychoactive substances.
2. Commercial drivers need to be screened for drug use as most commuters are ignorant of the fact that commercial drivers use "drugs" and most commuters still depend on them to move around.
3. The law enforcement agencies need to be aware that commercial drivers need continuous scrutiny as most of their dangerous driving habit may be as a result of drug use.
4. The government need to ban the sale of psychoactive substances in and around the motor parks and enforce such action.
5. The Government needs to discourage the advertisement of alcohol and other "drugs" of abuse.
6. There needs to be public enlightenment programmes in order to educate people on the health hazards of these drugs.
7. Government needs to build primary health centers inside these motor parks to facilitate regular medical checkup by the commercial drivers to rule out substances abuse before driving.
8. Law Enforcement agents should mount check points at intervals on roads to examine drivers for substances abuse.
9. There is a need for future studies in this area. There is a dearth of information on drugs use among commercial drivers and this has posed a lot of limitations on this study. Studies in this area will help in future health planning and management.

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