



# **THE EFFECT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE ON THE EFFICIENCY OF SOME SELECTED PROFESSIONS WITHIN YOLA METROPOLIS, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Drug and alcohol abuse over time has been one of the major challenges confronting the workforce of our society today and a lot of researches had been done to investigate this menace in most countries. But not much has been done in Nigeria to ascertain the effect of drug and alcohol abuse on the efficiency of workers in both the private and public sectors. This work, therefore, assesses the effect of drugs and alcohol abuse on the efficiency of some selected professions within Yola Metropolis. The research employed primary data sourced from the administering of 386 questionnaires across seven professions who had been reported to have a high prevalence of substance abuse using a multi-stage sampling technique. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Graded Items Response Theory (GIRT). The findings revealed that The result shows that the majority of these personnel extensively consume and belief in the power of drugs for energy, leisure, and productivity. Such drugs taken in greater quantities include caffeine, marijuana, tramadol, codeine, nicotine, alcohol, and other improvised substance. It was further established that the effect of drug and alcohol abuse has a serious negative consequences on their efficiency as evident in the aspect of too high absenteeism rates of workers, fatal occupational injuries/accidents, substance disorders, depression and trauma, lower job productivity and performance, poor work quality and poor interactions with clients/customers. There is an urgent need for the introduction of rehabilitation and counseling programs that will ensure that employees at risk of abusing drugs are rehabilitated to ensure their transformation to positive lifestyle, it is crucial to introduce drugs and substance policy through which employees and management/government should conform to with immediate effect, there is a need for the organizations to institute alcohol and drug testing as part of the organizations recruitment and selection policies, among others.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Effect, Drugs Abuse, Professional, Efficiency, Rehabilitation*

## INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that the use of excessive alcohol and other drugs can harm the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals, either within or outside a work environment which directly or indirectly affects the efficiency. In a workplace, this harmful effect potentially extends to the health and safety of colleagues, co-workers, customers/clients and the entire workplace in general.

The issue of drug abuse is a major challenge to societies and authorities in Nigeria and globally. The menace of drugs has strangled the working population reducing them to be grossly unproductive and exposing them to the high level of criminality at against investing their energy in worthy Economic activities (the sun newspaper, July 4th, 2016). World Drug Report 2010 report indicate that Cannabis remains the world's most widely produced and used illicit substance: it is grown in almost all countries of the world and is smoked by 130-190 million people at least once a year, The World Drug Report 2010 also contains a chapter on the destabilizing influence of drug trafficking on transit countries, focusing in particular on the case of cocaine. It shows how underdevelopment and weak governance attract crime, while crime deepens instability. It shows how the wealth, violence and power of drug trafficking can undermine the security, even the sovereignty, of states. The threat to security posed by drug trafficking has been on the agenda of the Security Council several times during the past year.

Empirical evidence shows that drug abuse negatively impacts workplace performance. For example, in Costa Rica, 30 percent of absenteeism and accidents were caused by alcohol dependency (Ames, Grube and Moore, 2000). Whereas drug abuse in France, is considered to cause 10 percent to 20 percent of accidents, in Australia, drug abusers were 2.7 times more likely to have injury-related absences than non-drug users (WHO, 2004). In Britain, 90 percent of personnel directors blamed drug abuse for loss of productivity, health problems, absenteeism, unsafe employee relations, poor behavior, and negative company image. In the same country drug abuse contributes up to 25 percent of accidents and around 60 percent of fatal accidents (Hughes and Bellis, 2000). Rohman and Blum (2002) and Trapencieire (2000) estimated that alcohol reduces productivity by 10 percent. On the overall, the largest economic direct and indirect costs often focus on four major issues: premature death/fatal accidents, injuries/accident rates, absenteeism/extra sick leave, and loss of production (Anderson and Larimer, 2002; Canada Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2005; Reinert and Allen, 2002 and Ringman and Gmel, 2001).

The negative effects of drug abuse at the workplace have been documented elsewhere. There is very little empirical and documented information in developing countries on drug abuse and work performance (ILO and OSHA, 2001; WHO, 2004; NACADAA, 2007). Given the strategic roles of some professions- the Nigerian Police Force, Medical personnel, construction workers, transportation and hospitality industries- in the society and the level of participation in substance abuse, it is therefore imperative to assess the effects of drugs and alcohol abuse on workers efficiency in the selected professions within Yola Metropolis, Adamawa State Nigeria. The illicit use of drugs is corrupt, dangerous, weakening and eating deep into the fabric of the polity and at the same time claiming hundreds of lives each year and these mostly affected are young people. The problem is unbearably alarming that it has extended beyond the usual characteristic profile of drug abusers being male adults and urban base but now includes females, young stars and those who live in rural areas. In Nigeria in particular, the menace was not confined to a particular sex or age, it is found among top professionals, high work executives, musicians, truck drivers as well as sportsmen and women.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

While referring to relevant studies by Frone (2009), NACADA (2006 and 2007) and WHO (2004), a drug can be conceptualized as any chemical substance which when taken into the body can affect one or more of the body's functions. This includes those substances that are useful to the body and those that harm the body system. Some are licit drugs, that is, the processing of selling them does not violate the law, while others are illicit-their possession, sale, use or purchase are generally prohibited by law. Moore *et al.*, (2009), and Sanjay (2001) further distinguish drug abuse from substance abuse and conclude that; whereas drug abuse refers to the use of illegal drugs or the inappropriate use of legal drugs, substance abuse includes a wider range of abused chemicals.

Abdulahi (2009) viewed drug abuse as the use of drugs to the extent that interferes with the health and economic function of an individual. In other words, drug abuse may be defined as the arbitrary over-dependence or misuse of one particular drug with or without a prior diagnosis/prescription from qualified health practitioners. Odejide (2000) warned that drug abusers who exhibit symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, behavior changes, fatigue, and loss or increase in appetite should be treated by medical experts and counselors to save them from deadly diseases. On the other hand, one could on the broad sense, define a drug as any man-made, natural or endogenous molecule which excretes a biochemical

and physiological effect on the cell, tissue, organ or the whole organism. It is very important to note here that drugs are capable of being toxic and all drugs can produce unwanted effects in a high dose or if taken incorrectly. Therefore, the difference between poison and medicine is merely a matter of concentration.

The history of drug usage is as old as man himself and there is hardly any culture earth-wide that does not rely on one drug or the other to facilitate interaction, celebrate festivals or to enhance religious rituals. Some of the drugs used then were kola nut, bitter kola, alcohol, and tobacco. In the time past, our forefathers mostly use available substances such as kola nut, tobacco, herbs, etc. for medicinal purposes but today in our society, the youths use and abuse various types of drugs especially pressure producing a substance or that which relaxes anxiety and tension. This unhealthy practice has spread through factories, offices, markets, and business environment. The illicit use of drugs is corrupt, dangerous, weakening and eating deep into the fabric of the polity and at the same time claiming hundreds of lives each year and these mostly affected are young people. The problem is unbearably alarming that it has extended beyond the usual characteristic profile of drug abusers being female adults and urban base but now includes females, young stars and those who

Drug abuse negatively influences the efficiency of workers in any industry or sector. The effects can be felt in terms of real monetary costs from tardiness, sick days, turnover, insurance claims, and the hidden time costs associated with diverted managerial time, co-worker friction and most importantly, the reputation in the public eye (Bayer and Waverly, 2005; Frone, 2006 a). Operations at the workplace require alertness, accurate and quick reflexes. Frone (2006 b) and Ovunga and Madrama (2006) reiterates that any impairment adversely affects performance or safety at work and can cause serious accidents and interferences with accuracy and efficiency. Other effects include after-effects of drug use (hangover or withdrawal) affecting job performance; absenteeism, illness or reduced productivity; preoccupation with obtaining and using drugs, interfering with attention and concentration; illegal activities at work like peddling illicit drugs; and negative psychological effects (CCHOS, 2005; Frone, 2008; Institute Of Alcohol Studies, 2009 and Lehman and Bennet , 2002).

Several factors contribute to the increased use of drugs, alcohol, and substances at the workplace (Frone, 2009 and Goodwin, 2004).

### **Prevalence Rate of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Some Selected Professions under Consideration**

Currently, drug and alcohol abuse at work affects all countries, regardless of their development, costing enterprises and companies" money and time

and endangering workers, their colleagues, and clients (Valencia and Gomez, 2005). Furthermore, the menace is a very widespread problem in society and addictive substance use rates are higher in the labor force than in society as a whole. In fact studies by ILO (2003) and IAS (2009) affirm these statistics and reveal that generally in the world over 40 percent - 70 percent of the workforce abuse drugs and alcohol. Recent data show drug and alcohol use in the workforce in various countries as follows: USA 30 percent (SAMSHA, 2007), UK (Smith et al., 2004) and Australia 50 percent (ASCC, 2007).

National Safety Council of America (2019) while investigating the implications of drug and alcohol use for employers identified long work hours professions such as nursing or midwifery have been associated with harmful levels of daily alcohol consumption. Other occupations at increased risk according to the council include hospitality, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and retail industries, armed forces, emergency workers such as police and fire personnel and healthcare workers.

In related research, Ashley (2019) affirmed that restaurant and hospitality workers, doctor and health care professionals, arts and entertainment professionals, lawyers and legal professionals, construction workers, management, sales professionals, police officers, firefighters and members of the military.

CCOHS (2005) observes that the impacts of drug abuse in any workplace especially have been difficult to measure. Many costs are hidden by general absenteeism or illnesses, "unnoticed" lack of productivity, or inability to link drug abuse directly with causes of accidents. Silva *et al.*, (2003) in their study amongst 550 industrial workers in Goa, India revealed that drug abuse in the workplace not only affects work performance in general but also results in higher rates of absenteeism, accidents, illness, and mortality, with all their related. Front, 2004 argued that abusers are less productive than non-abusers, miss work more often and are much more likely to file worker's compensation claims. According to studies by Bennet, Patterson, Reynolds, Wiitala, and Lehman (2004) and WHO (2004) on drug abuse and health promotion, abusers are likely to have health problems that affect their performance, and also lead to 27 personal problems, distracting them from their jobs. It is, therefore, an important health and safety issue. CCOHS (2005) observes that over recent years, studies have shown that:

- (i) Absenteeism is two to three times higher for drug and alcohol users than for other employees;
- (ii) Employees with chemical dependency problems may claim three times as many

- sickness benefits and file five times as many workers' compensation claims;
- (iii) In many workplaces, 20 to 25 percent of accidents at work involve intoxicated people injuring themselves and innocent victims;
- (iv) On-the-job supplies of drugs and alcohol account for 15 to 30 percent of all accidents at work.

**THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted through the use of structured questionnaires and unstructured oral interviews (primary sources) as instruments in the collection of data. Both questionnaires and oral interviews were employed in data collection and targeted to construction workers, police force, military,

transportation workers, abattoir workers, medical personnel and hospitality workers. The selection of these professions was informed by available literature and the high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse among the employees of those professions within the study area.

A total number of three hundred and eighty-six (386) questionnaires were distributed, and all were successfully filled and retrieved because they were administered electronically (the use of smart and android phones and tablets) using the Owner's Data Kid ODK. The breakdown details of total numbers of questionnaires distributed across the selected professions were based on a multi-stage sampling technique but priority to stratified sampling approach and is presented in table one below:

**Table 3: Distribution of Questionnaire across the Various Professions**

Department	Target employees	population	Sample Selected (%)
Construction Workers	76		19.69
Police Force	60		15.54
Military	55		14.25
Transportation Workers	60		15.54
Abattoir	62		16.06
Medical Workers	40		10.36
Hospitality	33		8.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>		<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher, 2019

Both descriptive statistics (the use of simple percentage tables, and charts) and inferential statistics using Graded Items Response Rate were employed in analyzing the data that was collected. These approaches were adopted with the ultimate aim of analyzing data or treating the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytical conclusions and to rule out alternative interpretations. STATA version 15 was used for the estimation

**DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

The data collection or instruments administration was carefully implemented by the research assistant whereby every respondent was asked a one-on-one question to avoid a high non-response rate, consequently a 100% response rate was recorded in the procession of data collection with all questionnaire successfully administered and used for analysis.

The data collected from the field were analyzed (see appendix A) as follows: 85% (328 numbers) of respondents agreed that workers depend on

psychotropic drugs or substance abuse for productivity in the selected professions. While the remaining 15% (58 numbers) of respondents had no idea or shared a contrary opinion. 73% (282 numbers) of respondents agreed that a lot of works or services provided by these professions are poorly executed or done due the influence of substance abuse thereby causing more injuries or harm to clients such as high level of accidents on the roads, wrong diagnosis or treatment of patients, excessive human right abuse by uniform personnel, and high level of bridge of contracts or customer dissatisfaction.

In other words, one can be deduced that substance abuse by employees of the selected professions could degenerate to poor productivities and ill health and some other issues such as disobedient, quarrellings and abnormal behaviors in their place of respective duties.

**Table 4.1: Common Drugs Abused by Workers and their Likely Effect**

Psychotropic drug types	Results or Findings	Effects or Implications
Caffeine	93% take it for alertness and for hyperactive.	Irritability lethargy, headache, toxicity, excess daytime sleepiness, etc.
Marijuana	93% take it to acquire energy.	Mental ill-health, excess daytime sleepiness, etc.
Tramadol	85% to acquire energy and field high.	Lead to peptic ulcer etc.
Codeine	73% take it for leisure and rest.	Constipation where use for long time and convulsion may occur, mental functions, acute pancreases, acute intoxication, etc.
Alcohol	57% take it for leisure.	Diabetic and hypertension etc.
Others substance	45% take for leisure and hyperactive	Unnecessary tiredness and excessive daytime sleepiness.

Source: Field Survey, June 2019

Table 4 above revealed that the four major psychotropic drug types commonly abused within the study area include caffeine, marijuana, tramadol, codeine, alcohol, and other improvised substances. Most of them affirmed that the drug and substance commonly abused assisted them in be alert, hyperactive, more energetic and achieve leisure. But this, however, had negative consequences on their

health with symptoms such as irritability lethargy, headache, toxicity, excess day time sleepiness, mental ill-health, excess daytime, stomach constipation, diabetic and hypertension. This by implication suggests the negative consequences of substance abuse by the workers from the selected professions far outweigh the alleged benefits stated by the respondents of the study.

**Table 4.2: Indicators of Inefficiency of Employees who Abused Drugs**

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
High absenteeism and turnover rates	312(80.83%)	10(2.59%)	64(16.58%)	386(100%)
Fatal occupational injuries	327(84.72%)	15(3.88%)	44(11.40%)	386(100%)
Substance disorders, depression and trauma	286(74.09%)	25(6.48%)	75(19.43%)	386(100%)
Lower job productivity and performance	370(96%)	4(1.04%)	12(3.06%)	386(100%)
Poor work quantity	256(66.32)	83(21.50%)	47(12.18%)	386(100%)
Poor interactions with clients	351(91.9%)	8(2.07%)	27(6.03%)	386(100%)

Source: Field Survey, June 2019.

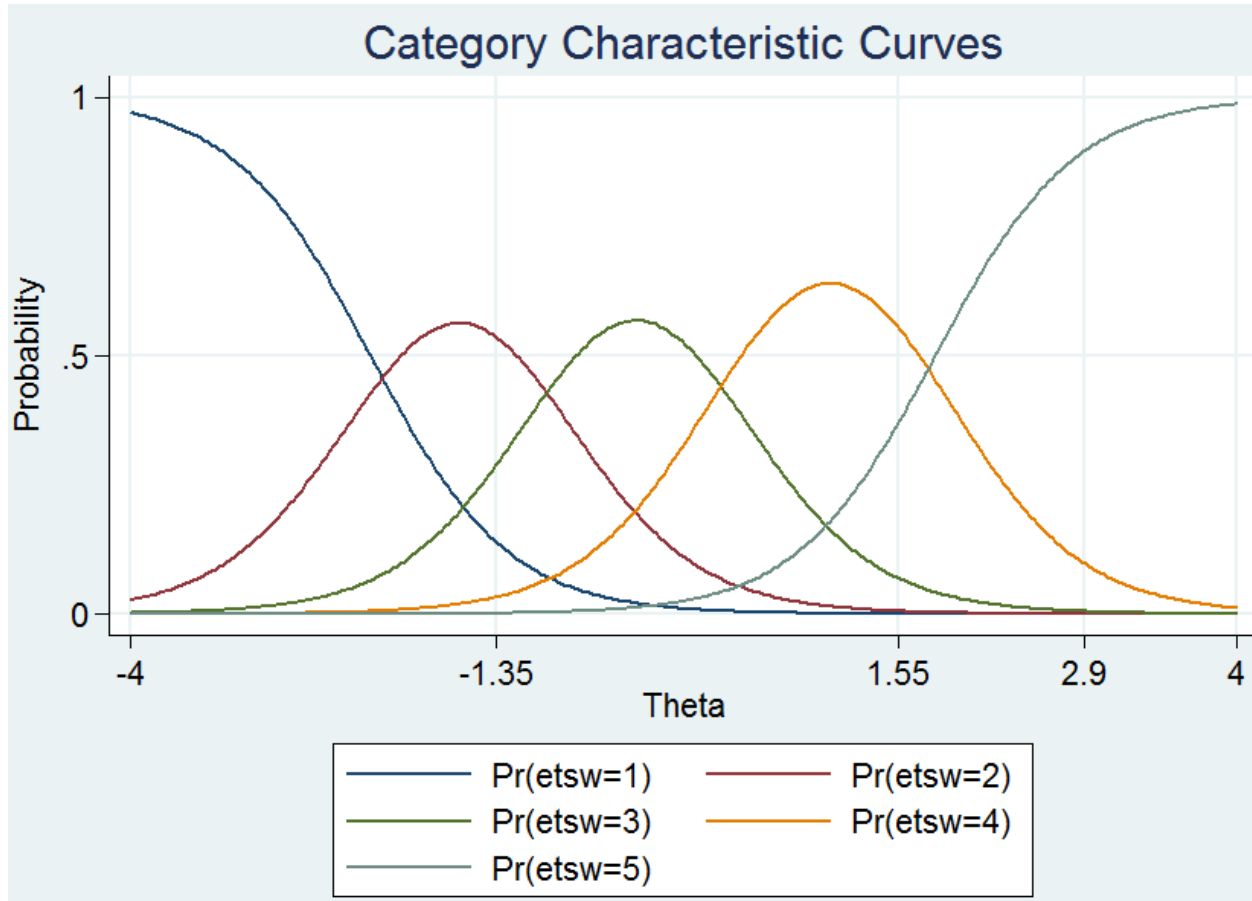
A critical examination of table 4.2 reveals that significant percentages (80.83%, 84.72%, 74.09%, 96%, 66.32% and 91.9%) of the respondents affirmed

that substances (drugs and alcohol) abuse translates to high absenteeism rates of workers, fatal occupational injuries/accidents, substance disorders, depression and

trauma, lower job productivity and performance, poor work quality and poor interactions with

clients/customers within the selected profession been considered for this research..

**Figure 1: Extent of Perceptions of Respondents on How Substance Abuse Affect efficiency of the Selected Profession**



Source: Plotted by the Researcher from Outcome of Field Survey, June 2019 Using STATA 15

Figure 1 above presents the outcome of respondents' perceptions which was ranked the scale of 1-5 to ascertain the extent of drug and other substance abuse on the efficiency of some selected professions within Yola Metropolis. It is evident that most of the respondents ranked

3-4 suggesting that substance abuse had both moderate and high negative effect on the efficiency of the population under investigation. The 3 and 4 are showing the normal distribution across the sampled respondents attesting to the fact the most of them choose within that range. In other words, the likelihood that most of the respondents selected 3-4 was very high and that confirmed the assertion that substance abuse had adverse consequences on the efficiencies of employees of the selected profession.

**CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Substance abuse and its consequences among some selected professions cannot be ignored therefore, there is an urgent need to minimize or eradicate this

ugly menace in our places of noble professions. This study appraised the effect of drugs and alcohol usage on the efficiency of some selected professions within Yola Metropolis, Adamawa State-Nigeria. The result shows that the majority of this personnel extensively consume and believe in the power of drugs for energy, leisure, and productivity. Such drugs taken in greater quantities are caffeine, marijuana, tramadol, codeine, nicotine, alcohol, and other improvised substances. Further investigation shows that the majority of them are addicted and suffered serious consequences from the effects of the drugs being abused. It was further established that the effect of drug and alcohol abuse has serious negative consequences on their efficiency as evident in the aspect of too high absenteeism rates of workers, fatal occupational injuries/accidents, substance disorders, depression and trauma, lower job productivity and performance, poor work quality and poor interactions with clients/customers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations have been made:

- i) There is an urgent need for the introduction of rehabilitation and counseling programs that will ensure that employees at risk of abusing drugs are rehabilitated to ensure their transformation to a positive lifestyle;
- ii) It is crucial to introduce drugs and substance policy through which employees and management/government should conform to with immediate effect.
- iii) Drugs and substance abuse awareness should be increased, amplify knowledge of drug abuse problems and effective interventions.
- iv) There is a need for organizations to institute alcohol and drug testing as part of the organization's recruitment and selection policies. This will aid to minimize the problems of low productivity, high absenteeism, and turnover.
- v) There is a need to introduce strict disciplinary measures on staff found guilty of drug abuse to serve as a deterrent for others.

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