

## **The Prevalence of Alcohol Consumption among Commercial Drivers in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of the study was to assess the prevalence of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Uyo metropolis. Five research questions and three null hypothesis design was adopted, and the instrument for the study was mainly interview schedules.*

*Due to the transitory nature of drivers in Uyo motor parks, convenient sampling was used to draw 160 drivers who use Uyo motor parks.*

*The descriptive statistics percentage was used to answer the research questions, while chi – square statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All the drivers interviewed drink alcohol for several reasons. The sale of alcohol in the park and its environs has significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) influence on their use. There is no statistically significant difference ( $P > 0.05$ ) in the perceived influence of the use of alcohol on health with respect to years of experience and age of drivers. The study was concluded with appropriate recommendation to help the situation.*

**Key words:** *alcohol, drivers, prevalence and Uyo.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Alcohol is the most widely consumed and abused drug of our time. Among other substances of abuse, alcohol in particular has been used by man even before recorded history.

The use of alcohol is so wide spread that few cultures, if any, in the world do not use alcohol regularly. The reason for this popularity is its ready availability and the perceived good feeling associated with its use.

The presence of distilled alcohol in Nigeria dates back to the period of slave trade when the Whites introduced and exchanged spirits and liquor, among other items, for slaves that were taken to Europe and America (Egbuchalam, 2000). Today alcohol and alcoholic beverages are common in every shape and form. Nigerians, now distil and consume all kinds of wholesome and unwholesome spirits, and this has attracted psychiatric attention (Gottfrid, 1978)

Many people have discovered that alcohol help them to suppress overwhelming inhibitions, shyness, anxiety, tension and stage fright that interfere with the need to function effectively. As Plato in 1981 once said ‘When a man drinks wine, he begins to feel pleased within himself and the more he drinks the more he is filled; full of brave hopes and conceit of his powers, and at last the strings of his tongue is loosened and faring himself wise, he is brimming over with lawlessness and has no fear or respect and is ready to do or say anything. (Jowett, 1981).

Commercial Vehicle Drivers believe that the use of substances such as alcohol, cigarette, kola nut, marijuana, and other central nervous system (CNS) agents such as amphetamines will significantly improve their performance and keep sleep at bay for as long as possible. These substances are also frequently taken for social reasons. Ability of these substances to affect the CNS will impair driving performance, and a high possibility of contributing to the occurrence of motor vehicle accidents (MVAs).

Worldwide, the number of people killed in MVAs each year is estimated at almost 1.2 million, while the number injured could be as high as 50 million. Causes of MVAs are varied and multi-factorial and it is likely that use of psychoactive substances is likely to play a major role. Studies in Nigeria and other countries have shown a high prevalence of use of psychoactive substances, among various categories of drivers (Adekoya et al., 2011).

While the relationship between alcohol use and driving has been studied in different parts of Nigeria, there is no documented literature on the prevalence of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom. This study was therefore aimed at investigating the use of alcohol among commercial drivers in Uyo Metropolis and to correlate it with their years of driving experience, health status, and accident records.

## **II. Methodology**

This cross sectional study was carried out in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. The participants were the commercial vehicle drivers in the four major motor parks in the city.

The study was cleared by the Ethical Committee of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH) and permission was also obtained from the transport unions (National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) of each motor park. Informed Consent was also obtained from each of the drivers. Structured questionnaire was administered by face-to-face interview at the motor parks to obtain information on biodata as well as alcohol use. Details about self reported MVAs in the previous 10 years were also obtained. The data collected on the questionnaire were checked manually for possible errors and then entered and analyzed on a microcomputer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17 software package. Frequency counts were generated for variables and statistical tests of significance was performed with chi square test. A p - value of <0.05 was accepted as indicative of statistical significance.

## **III. Research Methods**

### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. This design was considered appropriate because of its suitability in providing information on the natural status of a given phenomena as Udoh (2000) attested. The design was successfully used in a similar study by Ikorok (1999) to survey alcohol consumption behaviour among youths in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu..

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

Interview schedule was used to gather information for the study. The interview schedule was divided into 2 sections. Section A was designed to elicit information on the personal data, while section B was to elicit information on the prevalence of alcohol use.

### **Validation of the instrument**

The fact and content validity of the instrument was established by the judgement of the supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Physical and Health Education, University of Uyo .Modifications were done as advised.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The internal consistency of the instrument was determined on a pretest on 20 drivers who were not included in the sample of the study. Using the split half and Spearman Brown correlation methods, reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

Instrument was personally administered by the researcher with the help of three trained research assistants in the interview.

## **IV. Results and Discussion**

Out of a total of 200 drivers, 180 were interviewed. 160 consecutive and consenting drivers participated in the study eventually (Response rate = 80 %). All were males. Fifty (50 %) of the drivers were 30 years and below, while fifty (50%) were over 30 years of age.

The purpose of the study was to assess the prevalence of alcohol use among commercial drivers in Uyo Urban. One hundred and eighty (180) drivers were interviewed and one hundred and sixty (160) drivers were willing to give correct information. The data were organized in tables and percentages were used to answer the research questions, while chi square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

**Table1**

Respondents	Number interview	Number respondents
Uyo Motor Parks	180	160

### **Determination of the extent of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Uyo Metropolis.**

The Data answering this research question are presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Pattern of Alcohol Consumption among commercial drivers in Uyo Metropolis. (N = 160)

Pattern of use	F	%
Often	150	93.75
Rarely	10	6.25
Not at all	-	0
Total	160	100

In the analysis of the extent of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Uyo Metropolis, data are shown in the table 2. 93.75% drink often while only 6.25% drink rarely. The table shows that most of the drivers in Uyo Urban indulge in drinking alcohol.

**Table 3:** Reason for the use of Alcohol among commercial drivers in Uyo metropolis. (N = 160).

Reasons	F	%
Stay awake	90	56.25
Feel good	15	9.375
Enhance driving	55	34.375
Others	-	-
Total	160	100

Drivers have many reasons for drinking and some of the reasons are presented in table 3. 56.25%) of the drivers drink to stay awake while 9.375%) of the drivers drink to enhance driving. The table showed that drinking accounts for most of the accident.

**Table 4:** The influence of alcohol based on years of experience as a driver in Uyo Metropolis. (N = 160).

Years	F	%
0 – 5	1	0.625
6 – 10	4	2.50
11 and above	155	96.875
Total	160	100

Table 4 shows that 96.875% of drivers had 11 and above years of experience, 2.50% of drivers had 6 – 10 years of experience, 0.625% had five years of experience. The data shows that years of experience has significant influence on driver’s involvement in drinking alcohol.

**Table 5**

Source of the Alcohol (N = 160)

Source	F	%
The park	100	62.50
Park neighborhood	50	31.25
At home	9	5.625
In bars	1	0.625
Total	160	100

Most of the drivers get their drinks from the motor park; table 5 shows that (62.50%) get their drinks from the park neighborhood. (5.625%) drink at home and (0.625%) drink in bars. This shows that alcoholic beverages are sold in the parks just within the reach of the drivers.

**Table 6:** Effects of alcohol consumption on health.

Response	F	%
True	120	75
False	40	25
Total	160	100

The data shows that 120 (75%) of the drivers agreed to the fact that alcohol consumption cause adverse effect on health while 40 (25%) disagreed. This implies that alcohol consumption is detrimental to health.

**Determination Of The Prevalence Of Accident Among Drinkers Drivers.**

The data answering the research question are presented in table 7 below.

No. of times	F	%
1 – 3	20	12.5
4 – 6	50	31.25
7 and above	90	56.25
Total	160	100

Table 7 shows that (56.25%) of the drivers had been involved in motor accident more than seven times, (31.25%) in 4 – 6 times while (12.5%) in 1 – 3 times.

The table shows that accidents are more prevalence in drinker drivers.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no statistically significant influence of the source of alcohol of its use by commercial drivers in Uyo Urban with respect to their ages. Data testing this hypothesis are presented in table 8 below.

**Sources Of Alcohol**

Age category	In Motor Park	outside Park	Total
Below 30 years	100	60	160
30 years and above	110	50	160
Total	210	110	320

A = Agreed  
D = Disagreed

**Table 8:** Chi square Analysis of the influence of the source of Alcohol on its use by commercial drivers

Age category	Source of Alcohol		Total
	In Motor Park	Outside Park	
Below 30 years	100 (105)	60 (55)	160
30 years and above	110 (105)	50 (55)	160
Total	210	110	320

The data in Table 8, shows that the expected value for drivers below 30 years who get their alcoholic drinks from the motor park was 100 with an observed value of 105, while 60 was the expected value for those that obtain theirs from outside the park (neighborhood) bars with an observed value of 55, for those 30 years and above expected value for motor park as source was 110 with an observed value of 105. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 1.38 was obtained against the table value 3.84 at 1 df and .05 level of significance.

Since the X table (1.38) was less than the X<sup>2</sup> tab (3.84) the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the sale of alcohol in the dark has no influence on the drinking habit of commercial drivers in Uyo metropolis.

**Hypothesis**

There is no statistically significant difference in the extent of use of alcohol among commercial drivers in Uyo urban with respect to years of experience.

**Table 9:** Chi – square Analysis of the influence of years of experience on Alcohol use.

Years of Experience	Use of Alcohol		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
10 years and above	150 (130)	10 (30)	160
Less than 10 years	110 (130)	50 (30)	160
Total	260	60	320

Notes:  $X^2_{cal} = 32.82 \times 2_{tab} = 3.84$   
 $df = 1, p > .50$

## V. Discussions

The study was to assess the prevalence of alcohol use among commercial drivers in Uyo Local Government Areas. The survey method was adopted to assess a purpose sample of commercial drivers from a ballot sample of motor parks in Uyo Urban. A structural number of items interview schedule was the only construct utilized for obtaining data for the study.

Data analysis was by the use of descriptive statistic using percentages for the purpose of interpretation and answering the research question while Chi-square statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.5 level of significance and 1df.

Findings revealed that drivers in Uyo drink for various reasons and this attributed to most of the accident in Uyo Urban as alcohol impairs driving ability. And that most of the drivers are indulged in drinking alcohol because it is prevalent in the park and park neighborhood. Alcohol consumption also causes adverse effect on health.

## VI. Conclusion

Based on the findings recorded in the study, the following conclusions can be made: most of the respondents (93.75%) drink alcohol. Sale of alcohol in the park and the environs contribute a great deal to the drinking habit indulged by commercial drivers in Uyo metropolis. There is significant influence in the extent of use of alcohol among commercial drivers with respect to years of experience. Alcohol also contributes to the adverse health condition of most drivers.

This study found that a significant proportion of commercial intercity vehicle drivers in Uyo, Nigeria, were involved in regular consumption of alcohol. This is similar to findings in other parts of Nigeria. These drinks in the form of beer, gin, palm-wine, are often freely available during most social occasions, and personal observations have shown that it is also available in some motor parks, where it is frequently prepared as a herbal concoction to cure a wide variety of ailments. Alcohol is a CNS depressant and is capable of causing impairment of mental and motor functions, both of which are critical to the performance of a driver. It affects judgment of speed, distance, and risk. It can also cause diplopia and blurring of vision. The final pathway of all these effects may be a road traffic accident (RTA), which is often very serious. Trading in alcohol near the vicinity of motor packs is banned, but this needs better vigilance and enforcement to limit the availability of alcohol near on-duty drivers. An Australian study found that the risk of crash involvement is about two times greater at a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.05g/dl than a BAC of zero, and legal limits of BAC has been set at 0.05g/dl in most countries. However, a survey of blood alcohol

levels of drivers involved in RTA revealed that a high percentage of drivers in Nigeria are driving under the influence of alcohol. Similarly, from an investigation conducted in low-income countries, it emerged that alcohol was present in between 33% and 69% of fatally injured drivers, and in between 8% and 29% of drivers involved in crashes who were not fatally injured. Consequently, driving under the influence of alcohol is a punishable off offence in most countries, Nigeria inclusive.

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