Influence of Social Factor on Drugs Usage Among Intra-and Inter-Commercial Drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The use of drugs by commercial drivers is still a big social and occupational problem because it affects the health, decision-making and road safety of drivers. The study examined the influence of social factors on drug use among intra- and inter- commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, with emphasis on drug availability and accessibility, environmental factors, friends' influence and group pressure. The research design was mixed-methods. The population was approximately 3500 commercial drivers. The target sample was 300 drivers using Slovin formula. Four motor parks were purposely selected namely Ojoo, Iwo Road, Gate and Bodija and 260 valid questionnaires were analyzed. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis using SPSS version 25. Qualitative data collected through interviews were thematically analyzed. Results indicated that availability of drugs was a significant predictor of drug use, accounting for 25.3% of the variance (R^2 =.253, β =.503, p < .001). Accessibility explained 31.5% (R2 = .315, β = .561, p < .001), while environmental factors explained 22.4% (R2 = .224, β = .473, p < .001). The strongest predictor was friends' influence accounting for 64.7% (R 2 =.647, β =.804, p <.001), while group pressure accounted for 44.9% (R 2 =.449, β =.670, p <.001). Qualitative findings suggested that peer influence, informal availability of drugs, motor-park norms and occupational pressures may strengthen drug use behavior. The study concludes that integrated interventions involving enforcement, peer education, counseling, rehabilitation and better working conditions are needed to reduce drug use among commercial drivers.

Keywords: Drug Use, Commercial Drivers, Social Factors, Drug Availability, Accessibility, Friends' Influence, Group Pressure, Ibadan

INTRODUCTION

The use of drugs by commercial drivers is an important social and occupational concern because the consequences extend beyond the individual drivers to passengers, other road users, families and the wider community. Commercial driving is a tough job that involves long hours, traffic congestion, pressure to meet income targets, fatigue and, particularly for inter-city drivers, long periods away from home. Such conditions can create situations in which some drivers resort to using psychoactive substances to cope with occupational stress. Drug use among commercial drivers should thus be viewed not only as an individual behavioral problem, but also as a problem influenced by social and environmental conditions surrounding their occupation. Drugs are still a major public health and social problem around the world. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2025) estimates that some 316 million people used drugs in 2023. In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics and UNODC (2019) estimated that around 14.3 million people aged 15–64 years used psychoactive substances in the past year. The issue is especially critical for commercial drivers, as substance use can affect judgment, concentration and driving ability. Studies have shown that Nigerian commercial drivers have a high prevalence of psychoactive substance use and related road safety risks (Akinnawo et al., 2020; Egwuatu et al., 2020; Akande et al., 2023).

Commercial driving may be related to occupational conditions that promote substance use behavior. Drivers are often tired, physically uncomfortable, work irregular hours and are under economic pressure. In Ibadan, Osamika et al. (2022) reported that substance use among commercial drivers was associated with socio-demographic and social support factors, while the demands of driving could expose drivers to stress and other occupational challenges. Recent evidence from Ile-Ife, Southwestern Nigeria also shows that stress reduction, pleasure and

improvement of work performance are some of the motives for use of substances among commercial road transport workers (Jegede et al., 2026). These findings suggest that when studying drug use among commercial drivers, environmental and occupational conditions should be taken into account. Finally, the social milieu in which drivers operate may also influence drug-use behavior. Commercial drivers come into contact with friends, colleagues, transport union members and other motor park workers on a regular basis. These relationships can affect attitudes about drugs and offer opportunities for peer encouragement or peer pressure. Social networks may thus serve to inhibit or promote substance use. Social support was found to be an important factor in relation to substance use among commercial drivers in Ibadan by Osamika et al. (2022), while Jegede et al. (2026) found social motivations and worries about social participation to be correlates of substance use among commercial transport workers.

Availability and accessibility of drugs may increase the likelihood of use further. In or around motor-park environments, where psychoactive substances are readily available, drivers may be afforded greater opportunities to use them. Studies from Nigeria have documented the use of psychoactive substances among drivers working in motor parks and the relationship between the availability of substances, the work environment and the pattern of use has been explored (Iroanya et al., 2020; Akande et al., 2023). Thus, drug use among commercial drivers may be a consequence of the availability and accessibility converging with occupational stress, friendship networks and group expectations. Previous studies have reported substance use among commercial drivers in various parts of Nigeria, however, there are still important gaps. Previous studies have mostly focused on prevalence, types of substances, road safety consequences, socio-demographic characteristics or social support. Less attention has been paid to the combined effects of drug availability, accessibility, environmental and occupational factors, friends' influence and group pressure on the intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan. Furthermore, working conditions and social environments may be different for intra-city and inter-city drivers, so a location-specific study is needed.

Therefore, this study examined the influence of social factors on use of drugs among intra and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. It emphasizes drug availability and accessibility, environmental and occupational factors, influence of friends and group pressure. The study aims at providing empirical evidence that can support more context-specific interventions by transport unions, drug-control agencies, health practitioners and other stakeholders concerned with drug-use prevention and road safety among commercial drivers.

Statement of the Problem

The possible consequences of drug use by commercial drivers are a continuing concern for drivers, passengers and other road users. Commercial drivers are often exposed to adverse working conditions such as long hours, fatigue, work-related stress, traffic congestion and the pressure to meet daily income targets. In these circumstances, the use of psychoactive substances may be a way of coping with fatigue, stress or other occupational pressures. The continued use of drugs in the commercial transport environment has implications for individual wellbeing, effective job performance and road safety.

The problem persists despite ongoing efforts by government agencies, transport unions and other stakeholders to discourage drug use among commercial drivers. This persistence can be explained by the social environment in which drivers operate, including the availability and accessibility of drugs, environmental and occupational conditions, influence from friends and pressure from groups within the transport setting. However, there is little attention on the influence of these social factors on intra and inter commercial drivers' drug use in Ibadan. Hence, the study seeks to investigate the influence of social factors on drug use among intra- and inter- commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. It is concerned with the availability and accessibility of drugs, environmental and occupational factors, influence of friends and group pressure so as to provide a better understanding on the social conditions associated with drug use amongst commercial drivers.

Objectives of the Study

The study was designed to investigate the effect of social factors on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

The study specifically aims to:

1. to examine the effect of drug availability and accessibility on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan
2. to determine the effect of environmental and occupational factors on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan;
3. to assess the effect of friends' influence and group pressure on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan.

Research Question

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. Drug availability and accessibility impact on drug use among intra and inter commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria.
2. What is the impact of environmental and occupational factors on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. Influence of friends and group pressure on the use of drugs among intra and inter commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. **H_{01}:** Drug availability and accessibility have no significant impact on drug use among intra and inter commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. **H_{02}:** Environmental and occupational factors do not have a significant influence on the drug use among intra and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
3. **H_{03}:** The influence of friends and group pressure does not have a significant influence on drug use among intra and inter commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Availability and Accessibility of Drugs

Drug availability concerns the presence or supply of psychoactive substances in an environment while drug accessibility involves the ease with which individuals can access or purchase those substances. The presence of drug suppliers, informal distribution networks, and the location of motor parks may influence the availability and accessibility among commercial drivers (Akande et al., 2023; Egwuatu et al., 2020). If substances are easily available and accessible, opportunities to consume may be increased. Accessibility may also be affected by affordability, social connections, and the presence of people to facilitate the purchase of drugs (Iroanya et al., 2020). Thus, availability and accessibility of drugs are social conditions that may stimulate or maintain drug-use behavior among commercial drivers.

Environmental and Occupational Factors

Environmental and occupational factors are associated with the physical, social and work-related conditions surrounding commercial driving activities. Commercial drivers are exposed to long working hours, traffic congestion, demanding passengers and economic pressures associated with their occupation (Edo & Nwosu, 2022). The environment of the motor-park may also expose drivers to social interactions and behaviors that shape their choices. Olaniyi (2020) states that some drivers may use substances as a means of coping with work-related challenges, due to occupational stress, fatigue, inadequate rest, and pressure to meet daily financial obligations. Thus, the driving environment and occupational demands may play a role in the drug use patterns of commercial drivers.

Peer Pressure and Group Influence

Friends' influence is the impact that peers and close associates have on a person's attitudes, decisions and behaviors. Group pressure is the perceived or actual expectation to conform to the practices of a social group. Interaction with other drivers and motor-park workers frequently presents commercial drivers with chances for social influence. "Friends may introduce individuals to specific substances, promote use or make drug use seem socially acceptable" (Osamika et al., 2022). In addition, group pressure may also further promote conformity where drug use has become a norm within a specific social setting. Thus, peer relationships can reinforce behaviors and attitudes toward substance use, particularly when individuals identify strongly with their social groups (Satinsky et al., 2021). Therefore, the attitudes of friendship networks and group norms may influence attitudes toward drugs and influence individual decisions about drug use.

Drug Use by Commercial Drivers

Drug use refers to the consumption of psychoactive substances which may influence an individual's physical, psychological and behavioral functioning. Commercial drivers' drug use could involve substances taken for perceived purposes such as increasing alertness, reducing fatigue, coping with stress or improving confidence while driving (Akande et al., 2023; Jegede et al., 2026). But prolonged or inappropriate use can affect judgment, concentration, reaction time and overall behavior. The drug use of commercial drivers is of particular importance, because drivers are responsible for the safety of passengers, pedestrians and other road users. Substance use can therefore be viewed not only as an individual behavioral issue but also a social problem influenced by interpersonal relationships, occupational demands and the wider transport environment (Osamika et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design to examine the influence of social factors on drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study population comprised approximately 3,500 commercial drivers operating in major motor parks in Ibadan. Four motor parks, namely Ojoo, Iwo Road, Gate and Bodija, were purposively selected, while intra- and inter-commercial drivers were stratified to ensure representation of both categories. Using the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error, a target sample of 300 drivers was obtained. However, 260 valid questionnaires were returned and analyzed. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through interviews with purposively selected drivers, transport-union officials and other relevant stakeholders. The questionnaire covered drug availability and accessibility, environmental and occupational factors, friends' influence, group pressure and drug use. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and regression analysis with SPSS version 25, while the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation were observed throughout the study.

RESULT

Research Question One: To what extent do drug availability and accessibility influence drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Drug Availability and Accessibility Factors (N=260)

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Availability Factors									
1	Within my community there is access to drugs.	42	113	52	43	10	3.52	1.07	Agree
2	I see people selling drugs around places I go to a lot.	32	110	54	52	12	3.38	1.08	Agree
3	In my area it is not difficult to get drugs.	33	109	57	48	13	3.39	1.08	Agree

4	The drug-selling places are very conveniently reachable.	35	100	55	53	17	3.32	1.14	Agree
5	I know a number of places you can get drugs without any restrictions.	33	82	54	64	27	3.12	1.22	Agree
6	Drugs are around me, and harder to avoid.	29	90	53	68	20	3.15	1.16	Agree
7	In this area drugs are accessible to young or inexperienced users.	31	107	39	65	18	3.26	1.16	Agree
Accessibility									
8	Within my community there is access to drugs.	24	84	62	72	18	3.09	1.11	Agree
9	I see people selling drugs around places I go to a lot.	19	88	48	87	18	3.01	1.12	Agree
10	In my area it is not difficult to get drugs.	22	99	50	72	17	3.14	1.11	Agree
11	The drug-selling places are very conveniently reachable.	22	102	50	66	20	3.15	1.13	Agree
12	I know a number of places you can get drugs without any restrictions.	31	88	46	68	27	3.11	1.22	Agree
13	Drugs are around me, and harder to avoid.	44	88	50	55	23	3.29	1.23	Agree
14	In this area drugs are accessible to young or inexperienced users.	34	98	58	50	20	3.29	1.15	Agree
Grand Mean 3.23									

Respondents generally agreed that drug availability and accessibility exist in their communities and working environments. The highest mean for availability was for the statement that drugs are easy to get in the community (M = 3.52, SD = 1.07). The accessibility item with the highest mean was the statement that the lack of strict monitoring makes drug access easier (M = 3.29, SD = 1.23), and the one with the second highest mean was the statement that the location of drug vendors makes drugs easy to purchase (M = 3.29, SD = 1.15). The overall mean of 3.23 indicates a generally positive perception of availability and accessibility as relevant social conditions related to drug use. The regression analysis supports the descriptive findings. Availability factors had results of $R = .503$, $R^2 = .253$, $\beta = .503$, $p < .001$, indicating that availability significantly predicted drug use, which was accounted for by 25.3% of the variance. Accessibility factors also explained a significant proportion of variance in drug use ($R2 = .315$, $p < .001$), accounting for 31.5%. Accessibility was therefore more explanatory than availability.

Research Question Two: To what extent do environmental and occupational factors influence drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My community has physical locations that are used by drug users.	30	83	60	64	23	3.13	1.17	Agree
2	Drug use is more probable in areas with weak supervision in my surroundings.	38	90	50	60	22	3.24	1.20	Agree
3	How often do you use drugs? This depends on how safe my neighborhood is.	28	105	59	45	23	3.27	1.14	Agree
4	In my area, litter, noise and overcrowding lead to risky behaviors like drug abuse.	30	91	55	66	18	3.19	1.15	Agree

5	The community status of public spaces makes it easier for drug activities.	31	87	58	65	19	3.18	1.15	Agree
6	There are abandoned buildings or isolated spots in my environment that encourage drug-related activities.	36	98	54	54	18	3.31	1.15	Agree
7	The environmental stressors in my environment make drug use seem more prevalent or acceptable.	29	95	55	65	16	3.22	1.13	Agree
Grand Mean 3.22									

Most respondents agreed that environmental conditions were related to drug use. The statement that abandoned buildings or isolated spots encourage drug-related activities obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.31, SD = 1.15), followed by the perception that the general safety level in the neighborhood affects how often drugs are used (M = 3.27, SD = 1.14). The presence of physical spaces where drug use commonly occurs had the lowest mean (M = 3.13, SD = 1.17). The overall mean of 3.22 indicates a general agreement that the state of the environment is an important issue. Regression analyzes also revealed that environmental factors were significant predictors of drug use ($R = .473$, $R^2 = .224$, $\beta = .473$, $t = 8.621$, $p < .001$). Thus, 22.4% variance of drug use among the respondents was explained by environmental factors.

Research Question Three

To what extent do friends' influence and group pressure influence drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My friends' attitudes toward drugs influence my feelings about drug use.	34	77	50	75	24	3.08	1.21	Agree
2	Sometimes I feel peer pressure to get high or get some drugs.	24	64	51	79	42	2.80	1.24	Undecided
3	Most of my friends believe drug use is acceptable in social settings.	27	79	43	74	37	2.94	1.26	Undecided
4	Having friends who use drugs makes it harder for me to avoid drugs.	22	67	50	84	37	2.82	1.21	Undecided
5	I have friends who talk about using drugs in a way that makes it seem okay or even good.	26	80	43	72	39	2.93	1.26	Undecided
6	It is up to my close friends whether I will take drugs or not.	24	72	35	83	46	2.79	1.28	Undecided
7	When I hang out with some friends, I get exposed to drugs.	24	78	43	71	44	2.87	1.27	Undecided
Grand Mean 2.89									

Mixed perception of the influence of friends. The statement with the highest mean was that the attitude of friends toward drugs affects the respondents' thinking about drug use (M = 3.08, SD = 1.21). This was the only item with mean > 3.00. The lowest mean was for the statement that close friends influence respondents decisions about whether to use drugs (M = 2.79, SD = 1.28). The grand mean of 2.89 indicates that the respondents on the whole were neutral in relation to the extent of direct friends' influence at the descriptive level. Regression analysis indicated that friends' influence was a significant predictor of drug use, $R = .804$, $R2 = .647$, $\beta = .804$, $t = 21.751$, $p < .001$. Thus, the variance of drug use explained by the influence of friends was 64.7%. Group pressure also had a significant regression model, $R = .670$, $R^2 = .449$, $\beta = .670$, $p < .001$, accounting for 44.9% of the variance.

Regression Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

Table X: Summary of Regression Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Social factor	R	R^2	β	t	F	p	Decision
H_{01}	Drug availability	.503	.253	.503	9.341	87.253	<.001	Reject H_{01}
	Drug accessibility	.561	.315	.561	10.881	118.390	<.001	
H_{02}	Environmental factors	.473	.224	.473	8.621	74.318	<.001	Reject H_{02}
H_{03}	Friends' influence	.804	.647	.804	21.751	473.088	<.001	Reject H_{03}
	Group pressure	.670	.449	.670	14.507	210.441	<.001	

Note: R=correlation coefficient; R2=coefficient of determination; β=standardized regression coefficient; t=t-statistic; F=F-statistic; p=probability value. Dependent variable = drug use. N=260 Source: SPSS Computation by Author.

This shows that drug availability and accessibility were significant predictors of drug use among intra- and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan. Drug availability had a significant positive relationship with drug use (R =.503, R^2 =.253, β =.503, t = 9.341, p <.001), indicating that availability accounted for 25.3% of the variance in drug use. Drug use was also significantly positively associated with drug accessibility (R =.561, R 2 =.315, β =.561, t = 10.881, p <.001), explaining 31.5% variance. The probability values for both factors were less than the significance level of 0.05 and H 0 1 was rejected. This shows that availability and accessibility of drugs were important factors associated with drug use among the drivers.

The result showed a significant positive relationship with drug use for environmental factors (R =.473, R^2 =.224, β = .473, t = 8.621, p <.001). Environmental factors explained 22.4% of the variance in drug use. The regression model was statistically significant, F(1, 258) = 74.318, p < .001. Thus, H0 2 was rejected in relation to the environmental component of the hypothesis. However, the study's analysis does not provide a separate regression result for occupational factors. Other than such an analysis in the data or in Chapter Four, no further independent statistical conclusion about occupational factors should be drawn. Among the social factors examined, the influence of friends appeared to be the most important predictor. Drug use was strongly positively associated with drug use (R = .804, R2 = .647, β = .804, t = 21.751, p < .001) and accounted for 64.7% of the variance in drug use. There was also a significant positive relationship between group pressure and drug use (R =.670, R 2 =.449, β =.670, t = 14.507, p <.001). Group pressure explained 44.9% of the variance in drug use. Both predictors were significant at the .05 level. Therefore, H_{03} was rejected. The results indicated significant association of drug use among the drivers with social influences from friends and group pressure.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of social factors on drug use among intra and inter-commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria. The findings showed that availability, accessibility, environmental conditions, influence of friends and group pressure determine drug use among commercial drivers. The regression results showed statistically significant positive relationships between the social factors studied and drug use, indicating that the social and occupational environment in which commercial drivers work plays a significant role in shaping their drug-use behavior. Of the factors examined, the strongest predictor of drug use was the influence of friends, which accounted for 64.7% of the variance in drug use, while group pressure accounted for 44.9%. Availability and accessibility of drugs accounted for 31.5% and 25.3% of variance respectively, while environmental factors accounted for 22.4%. Results indicated that peer and interpersonal influences may be particularly relevant to understanding drug use among commercial drivers. Qualitative findings also indicated that the motor-park environment may normalize drug use, and that drivers' dependence on psychoactive substances may be reinforced by informal availability networks, occupational stress, long working hours, traffic congestion and other challenging working conditions.

The study thus concludes that tackling drug use among intra and inter commercial drivers requires more than enforcement and interventions at the individual level. Current enforcement efforts may have reduced some types of drug use, but the persistence of drug availability, peer influence and environmental pressures suggests the

need for a broader and more sustained response. Effective interventions should consist of drug control measures coupled with peer-led education, counseling and rehabilitation services, improved occupational conditions, health support and stronger collaboration between transport unions and relevant government agencies. This integrated approach is more likely to mitigate the social conditions that sustain drug use and promote safer and healthier practices among commercial drivers in Ibadan.

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