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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	EXTENT OF ABSOLUTE POVERTY IN RURAL SECTOR OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A MEASURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT RAMNA	1
2.	THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CORE COMPETENCES FOR DISTRIBUTION SERVICE INDUSTRY SU-CHANG CHEN, HSI-CHI HSIAO, JEN-CHIA CHANG, CHUN-MEI CHOU, CHIN-PIN CHEN & CHIEN-HUA SHEN	5
3.	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES AND CEMENT INDUSTRY RETURNS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTANI CEMENT INDUSTRY MUHAMMAD IMRAN & QAISAR ABBAS	10
4.	OUTLOOK OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS TOWARDS EFFICIENCY OF ONLINE LEARNING-A CASE STUDY OF SHIVAMOGGA CITY, KARNATAKA STATE SANDHYA.C, R. HIREMANI NAIK & ANURADHA.T.S	17
5.	TRAFFIC RELATED MORTALITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MURAT DARÇIN	21
6.	SUBSCRIBER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE IN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TUTICORIN CITY S. ANTHONY RAHUL GOLDEN. & DR. V. GOPALAKRISHNAN	27
7.	A STUDY OF WAVELET BASED IMAGE COMPRESSION ALGORITHMS CHETAN DUDHAGARA & DR. KISHOR ATKOTIYA	31
8.	A STUDY OF CONSUMER'S IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR WITH REFERENCE TO EFFECT OF PROMOTIONAL TOOL IN THE OUTLETS OF CHHATTISGARH DR. MANOJ VERGHESE & POOJA G. LUNIYA	37
9.	STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN CELL PHONE INDUSTRY DR. ARUNA DEOSKAR	41
10.	ANOTHER APPROACH OF SOLVING UNBALANCED TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM USING VOGEL'S APPROXIMATION METHOD DILIP KUMAR GHOSH & YASHESH ZAVERI	45
11.	PROBLEM OF NON-PERFORMING ASSETS OF STATE BANK OF INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF NAGPUR DISTRICT DR. N. K. SHUKLA & M. MYTRAYE	49
12.	INVESTMENT STRATEGY OF LIC OF INDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON PROFITABILITY T. NARAYANA GOWD, DR. C. BHANU KIRAN & DR. CH. RAMAPRASADA RAO	59
13.	PREDICTION OF DHAKA TEMPERATURE BASED ON SOFT COMPUTING APPROACHES SHIPRA BANIK, MOHAMMAD ANWER & A.F.M. KHODADAD KHAN	65
14.	SET THEORETIC APPROACH TO FUNDS FLOW STATEMENTS – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO STATE BANK OF INDIA DR. PRANAM DHAR	71
15.	STRATEGIES FOR THE SUCCESS OF BRAND EXTENDED PRODUCT : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF DEHRADUN DISTRICT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FMCG DR. AMIT JOSHI, DR.SAURABH JOSHI, DR. PRIYA GROVER & PARVIN JADHAV	80
16.	VALUE ADDED TAX AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE (1994 -2010) DR. OWOLABI A. USMAN & ADEGBITE TAJUDEEN ADEJARE	85
17.	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES BY POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED: A STUDY DR. S. RAGHUNATHA REDDY & MM SURAJ UD DOWLA	90
18.	METADATA MANAGEMENT IN DATA WAREHOUSING AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE VIJAY GUPTA & DR. JAYANT SINGH	93
19.	QUALITY OF WORK LIFE - A CRITICAL STUDY ON INDIAN HOSPITALS B.UMA RANI & M. SARALA	97
20.	BUSINESS ETHICS: WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISATION DR. SATYAM PINCHA & AVINASH PAREEK	105
21.	USE OF ICT TOOLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SANDEEP YADAV & KIRAN YADAV	108
22.	CONSTRUCTING CONFIDENCE INTERVALS FOR DIFFERENT TEST PROCEDURES FROM RIGHT FAILURE CENSORED NORMAL DATA V. SRINIVAS	111
23.	RECOGNISING CUSTOMER COMPLAINT BEHAVIOUR IN RESTAURANT MUHAMMAD RIZWAN, MUHAMMAD AHMAD ATHAR, MUBASHRA WAHEED, ZAINAB WAHEED, RAIMA IMTIAZ & AYESHA MUNIR	116
24.	SOCIO-CULTURAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG COMMERCIAL DRIVERS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA DR. ADEJUMO, GBADEBO OLUBUNMI	123
25.	MEAN-SHIFT FILTERING AND SEGMENTATION IN ULTRA SOUND THYROID IMAGES S. BINNY	126
26.	E-TAILING, ONLINE RETAILING ITS FACTORS AND RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE WASIMAKRAM BINNAL	131
27.	THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND THE PARAMETERS OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION PROCESS: APPLICATION IN THE TUNISIAN CASE MLLE MAALEJ RIM & HABIB AFFES	134
28.	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: META-ANALYSIS ASMA RAFIQUE CHUGHTAI & AAMIR AZEEM	139
29.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON STRESS SYMPTOMS OF ARTS, ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU S. NAGARANI	144
30.	PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS COUNTERFEIT PRODUCT MUHAMMAD RIZWAN, SYEDA RABIA BUKHARI, TEHREEM ILYAS, HAFIZA QURAT UL AIN & HINA GULZAR	152
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	159

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SOCIO-CULTURAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG COMMERCIAL DRIVERS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The negative consequences of the hazardous use of alcohol are well established. Thus the emphasis of this study is on the socio-cultural consequences of alcohol consumption, particularly, in the family related context such domestic violence, divorce, inhibiting sexual intercourse, pregnancy and others such as alcohol induced high-risk behaviours like unsafe sex. A survey design was adopted in this study. Questionnaire was used to collect data. 1884 commercial drivers responded to questionnaire but the responses of 1,432 participants were analysed. The survey covered six states in Nigeria. The participants were between 21 and 35 years with mean age of 24.6years. The majority of these participants or 84% reported to have engaged in the use of alcoholic beverages at least twice a day while 16% engaged in the use of alcoholic beverages once daily. All these participants are male. Their marital status distribution revealed that 76% of them were married and only 24% of them were single. The findings revealed significant relationship between rate of domestic violence, divorce rate, rate of extramarital affairs, unprotected sex behaviour and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria. There are indications that heavy alcohol use at a young age is predictive of a range of social and cultural problems. Protracted and continuous abuse of alcohol may be predictive of more severe health problems in general for young male individuals. It was recommended that government should enforce policy that will reduce alcohol consumption especially in both workplaces whether public or private.

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KEYWORDS

Alcohol Consumption, Divorce, Domestic violence, Socio-Cultural Effects.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The services rendered by commercial drivers have significant impact on the socio economic activities of Nigeria. This is because a large fraction of the working population travels on commercial vehicles daily to and from work. People equally engaged on journeys for recreation, shopping and other social activities through the same medium. Also both raw materials and finished goods are also transported over a long distance either for production or consumers.

This has underscored the importance of road transportation mostly powered by commercial drivers as an integral part of the functioning of Nigeria like other developing economies of the world. Apart from this positive impact, there are other undesirable effects of commercial drivers' activities. The road accident majorly traceable most times to their negligence constitutes a major cause of morbidity, mortality, disability and socio-economic loss (WHO, 2009). One important factor that is likely responsible for the undesirable outcomes is alcohol use among commercial drivers. Alcohol consumption is common among commercial drivers because it is readily available in motor parks. Makanjuola, Oyeleke and Akande (2007) reported that the use of psychoactive substances, especially alcohol, was very common among long-distance vehicle drivers in Ilorin, Nigeria. Abiona, Aloba and Fatoye (2006) found that all their respondents (commercial drivers) were engaged in the use of commonly available alcoholic beverages in the vicinity of their various motor parks.

The negative consequences of the hazardous use of alcohol are well established (Enekwechi, 1984; Ewhrudjakpor, 1995; 2001; W.H.O. 2002; Hammarstrom and Janlert, 2002; Olley, 2009). Thus the emphasis of this study is on the socio-cultural consequences of alcohol consumption, particularly, in the family related context such domestic violence, divorce, inhibiting sexual intercourse, pregnancy and others such as alcohol induced high-risk behaviours like unsafe sex.

Domestic violence is a devastating social problem that affects every segment of the population. It is a social problem because it affects so many more people than just the intended victim. Domestic violence affects all social groups and can consist of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Although men can also be affected by domestic violence, women suffer disproportionately. On a daily basis, Nigerian women are beaten, raped and even murdered by members of their family on seemingly provocation. In Nigeria, Section 55 (d) of the Penal Code permits a husband to physically abuse to correct his wife as long as they are married according to the native/custom law in which such correction is recognised as lawful (Suleiman, 2001). Up to a third of women in Nigeria report that they have been subjected to some form of violence, including battering and verbal abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, marital rape, sexual exploitation, or harassment. Domestic violence is one of socio-cultural factors which causes vary widely in Nigeria. Studies have reported a high correlation between alcohol or other substance abuse, and battering. There is no agreement on the fact the alcohol use directly causes violence. But is a known fact that alcohol does affect the user's ability to perceive, integrate and process information. Alcoholic households are less cohesive and have more conflicts, and their members are less independent and expressive than households with nonalcoholic or recovering alcoholic parents. This distortion in the user's thinking may increase the risk that the user will misinterpret his partner or another's behaviour. Batterers can also use drinking as one of many excuses for their violence and as a way to place the responsibility for their violence elsewhere. The consequences of spousal violence can be severe, for example, abused women are statistically more likely to have an unintended pregnancy, report a history of abortion, miscarriage, or stillbirth than those who had never experienced violence.

Divorce is another growing social problem. It has caused so many discomforts in the family life. Divorce has made couples to pass through a period of strong emotional trauma. There are those who fall into deep depression, others come down with some illness, due to the involvement in divorce (Melgosa and Melgosa. 2012). Also, loneliness is equally a widespread condition both spouses feel tremendously occasioned by divorce. Oneke (2004), observed that divorce is painfully destructive and nothing good comes out of it. Children from divorced families face the problem of academic performance, juvenile problems, food and clothing. Children who grow up in divorced families often have more difficulties getting along with siblings, peers, and their parents. Furthermore, adolescents who experience divorce are likely to engage in delinquent activities to get involved in early sexual activity, and to experiment with illegal drugs. Alcohol abuse has torn apart countless marriages and ruined countless lives. When alcohol abuse is involved, there are always serious trust issues, and a marriage cannot survive without trust. The alcoholic has lied often, made and broken too many promises, and generally not done his/her part of the work in the relationship.

Alcohol use has been found as an independent risk factor for intentions to engage in unprotected sex, and as risky sex intentions have been shown to be linked to actual risk behaviour. Some previous studies suggest an association between alcohol abuse and unsafe sexual behaviour, such as multiple concurrent sexual partnerships and inconsistent condom use in sex with non-spousal non-cohabiting partners (Kongnyuy & Wiysonge, 2007; Mitsunaga, Powell, Heard, & Larsen, 2005; Oyediran, Isiugo-Abanihe, Feyisetan & Ishola, 2010).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A review of the empirical literature indicates that little attention has been paid to important social and cultural effects of hazardous drinking habits of commercial drivers in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the prevalence of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria
2. To investigate the socio-cultural effects of alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between rate of domestic violence and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between divorce rate and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria
3. There is no significant relationship between rate of extramarital affairs and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between unprotected sex behaviour and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A survey design was adopted in this study. Questionnaire and interview methods were used to collect data. 1,884 commercial drivers responded to questionnaire. The survey covered six states, Oyo, Ogun, Kwara, Kogi, Ekiti and Lagos states. The participants were between 21 and 35 years with mean age of 24.6 years. 32% had spent between 2-4 years while 64% had spent between 5-8 years while only 4% had spent above 8 years driving commercial vehicles. The majority of these participants or 84% reported to have engaged in the use of alcoholic beverages at least twice a day while 16% engaged in the use of alcoholic beverages once daily. All these participants are male. Their marital status distribution revealed that 76% of them were married and only 24% of them were single. The responses of 1,432 participants that were married were analysed.

INSTRUMENTS

Five scales were developed to obtain data for this study. Alcohol consumption was measured using 4 items which include "I take *sepe* (alcoholic herbal concoctions) to be alive when driving" and "I prefer to take beer instead of *sepe*". 5-point rating scale, Not at all, slightly true, moderately true, Very true and completely true was used for all subscales. Domestic violence was measured using 4 items which include "I slap my wife only when she annoys me" and "I prefer to warn my wife severely before beating". The divorce was measured using 4 items which include "I divorced my wife before my happiness returned" and "My in-laws were to be blamed for divorcing my wife". Extra-marital affairs was measured with 4 items which include "I satisfied my sexual urge outside my marital home a times" and "My wife may reject my sexual advances which indicates that I should look elsewhere". Unprotected sex was measured with 4 items which include "Condom a times steal enjoyment of sex then I don't use it" and "My sex partner hates condom or any form of protection". The psychometric properties of the all subscales were ensured with test-retest reliability after two weeks ranging from 0.78 to 0.84 and validity of 0.68 to 0.72.

RESULTS**HYPOTHESIS 1**

There is no significant relationship between rate of domestic violence and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.

TABLE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Variations	Freq	Mean	r-observed
Domestic violence	1,432	18.2	0.73*
Alcohol consumption	1,432	14.6	

*Significant at 0.01

The findings revealed a significant relationship between rate of domestic violence and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers at $r=0.73$, 1,431 degree of freedom and 0.05 significant level.

HYPOTHESIS 2

There is no significant relationship between divorce rate and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria

TABLE 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVORCE AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Variations	Freq	Mean	r-observed
Divorce	1,432	8.4	0.67*
Alcohol consumption	1,432	14.6	

*Significant at 0.01

The findings revealed a significant relationship between divorce rate and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers at $r=0.67$, 1,431 degree of freedom and 0.05 significant level.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There is no significant relationship between rate of extramarital affairs and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.

TABLE 3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Variations	Freq	Mean	r-observed
extramarital affairs	1,432	6.2	0.72*
Alcohol consumption	1,432	14.6	

*Significant at 0.01

The findings revealed a significant relationship between extramarital affairs and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers at $r=0.72$, 1,431 degree of freedom and 0.05 significant level.

HYPOTHESIS 4

There is no significant relationship between unprotected sex behaviour and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in Nigeria.

TABLE 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNPROTECTED SEX BEHAVIOUR AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Variations	Freq	Mean	r-observed
unprotected sex behaviour	1,432	6.2	0.77*
Alcohol consumption	1,432	14.6	

*Significant at 0.01

The findings revealed a significant relationship between unprotected sex behaviour and alcohol consumption among commercial drivers at $r=0.77$, 1,431 degree of freedom and 0.05 significant level.

DISCUSSION

It was found that among commercial drinkers who are alcohol users there exist an association between domestic violence and alcoholic consumption. These findings are in agreement with earlier studies (Karaoglu, Celbis, Ercan, Ilgar, Pehlivan, Gunes, Genc, Egri 2006; Okemgbo, Omideyi, Odimegwu, 2002; Iliyasu, Abubakar, Babashani, Galadanci, 2011). Alcoholic spouses tend to use more negative and damaging communication (e.g., criticizing, blaming, contempt), express more anger and show lower levels of warmth when trying to solve a problem than do nonalcoholic spouses. This kind of negative communication discourages the use of positive problem solving skills such as open discussion and encouragement. This may lead to escalated aggression and husband overpowering the wife which may be resulted to battering or other forms of violence at home.

The findings revealed an association between extramarital sex among commercial drivers and alcohol consumption. This relationship has been documented by other studies (Hall, Fals-Stewart, & Fincham, 2008; Kongnyuy & Wiysonge, 2007; Oyediran, Isiugo-Abanihe, Feyisetan & Ishola, 2010) and therefore supports the theory that alcohol consumption influences men to engage in higher risk. It was equally found that sex under the influence of alcohol is more likely to be unprotected. This supported the earlier study of Hall, et al., (2008). The relationship between marital instability and alcohol consumption is far complex. An alcoholic spouse may neglect or abuse his or her family, deplete financial resources, and increase the level of poverty. Alcoholics like all abusers and addicts, lie (bold faced lies, lies of omission, cover-ups), make excuses, blame others for their drinking, and continue to use alcohol regardless of consequences. This may be at risk factor for family instability or eventual divorce.

CONCLUSION

Alcoholic beverage consumption patterns in Nigeria vary considerably among ethnic groups and even among different professions. These variations in drinking patterns include, for example, the types of beverages consumed preferentially, occasions on which consumption typically occurs, drinking levels that are considered normal, and population subgroups for whom drinking is considered acceptable. There are indications that heavy alcohol use at a young age is predictive of a range of social and cultural problems. Protracted and continuous abuse of alcohol may be predictive of more severe health problems in general for young male individuals.

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