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Use of energy-enhancing drugs among farm labourers in rural communities of Lagos state, Nigeria

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Abstract
The use of drug to enhance energy for performance boosting among rural farm labourers is unfortunately a socio-economic issue of concern nowadays. This research was carried out in Two (2) Local Government Areas of Lagos state (Epe and Ikorodu). A total of 161 respondents were considered for the study. A structured questionnaire was developed to extract the necessary information from the respondents. It was observed that majority (73.9%) of the respondents are males and are mostly (42.9%) between the ages of 21-30. Planting activities (W.M. S= 2.74), land clearing (W.M. S= 2.66) and harvesting (W.M. S= 2.56) were farm labour activities engaged in mostly by the respondents. Drugs such as paracetamol (W.M. S= 2.95), Panadol-extra (W.M. S= 2.76), and Tramadol (W.M. S= 2.74) were the most consumed drugs by the respondents respectively. Chi-square Test of relationship showed that there is no significant relationship between the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs (E.E. Ds) and personal characteristics such as Age, Sex, and level of education with a p-value of 0.2813, 0.2914, 0.37 respectively. Primary occupation of the respondents had a significant relationship with the use of E.E. Ds with a p-value of 0.000. Also, there is a significant difference in the use of energy-enhancing drugs for farm activities among farm labourers. It was concluded that majority of farm labourers are young male adults who engaged in the use of E.E. Ds to enhance their performance which made them weaken and eventually leading to poor labour output and economic condition of the rural communities. It is therefore recommended that supply of E.E. Ds to rural communities be monitored and enlightened-by the concerned authority.

Keywords: Drug, energy, farm labourers, rural communities

1. Introduction

In any developing country, agriculture remains the most important source of employment for a substantial proportion of rural population. This is evident from the fact that rural communities are mostly responsible in the primary production of food and other items used in the urban centers. Molly (2016) pointed out that the viability of rural livelihoods is especially critical for farming and fishing communities, whose assets are often tied to rural areas. Similarly, the growth as well as sustainable development of the rural areas in terms of economy and quality of life depends majorly on improved agricultural activities which are majorly carried out by able bodied farm labourers. The contribution of farm labourers to the rural economy therefore becomes imperative as they supply the most human effort that invigorates rural development.

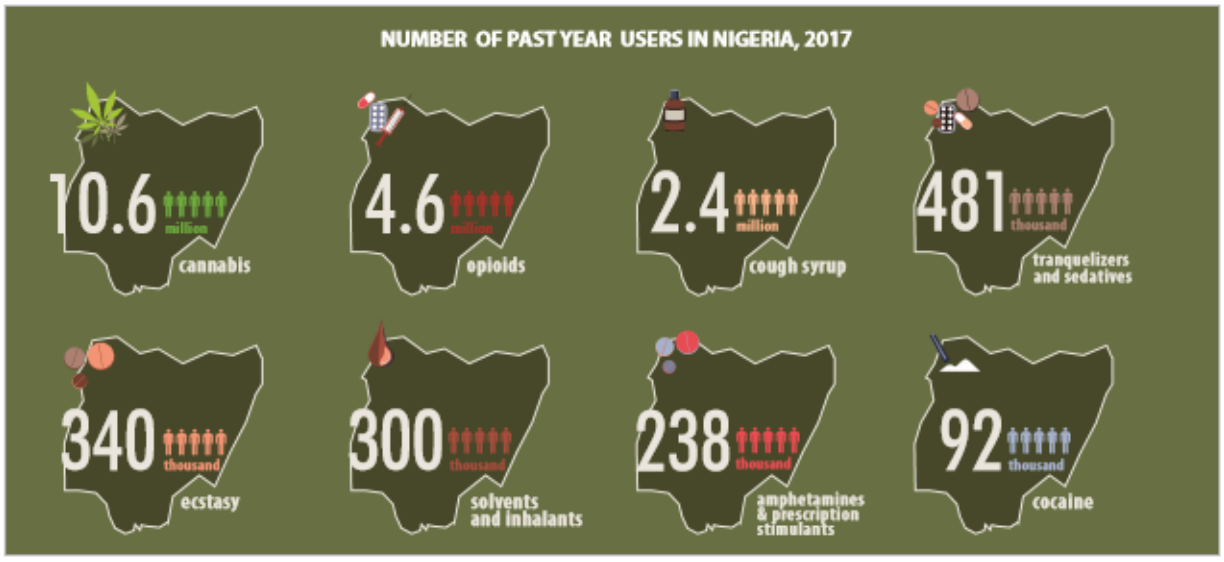
Undoubtedly, the involvement of youths in farm labour is quite evident in the rural areas, which is largely due to the fact that the youths make up the larger portion of the population of Nigeria at both urban and

rural locations. According to the World Bank (2023), the population of individuals between the ages of 15-64 in Nigeria as at 2021 is about 53.73%. This youthful population makes up the bulk of the agricultural workforce in Nigeria. Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) in Nigeria was reported at 34.66 % in 2020, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators.

The high energy need of farm labourers is a major factor of consideration today in terms of the health, safety and productivity of the workers. Several farm labourers depend on the use of certain energy enhancing drugs to boost their work rate which leads eventually to social and health problems and productivity issues, consequently, leading to the death at some instance. Performance-enhancing substances, also known as performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) (USADA, 2019) are substances that are used to improve any form of activity performance in humans. A well-known example involves doping in sport, where banned physical performance-enhancing drugs are used by athletes and bodybuilders.

Liddle and Connor (2013), Pesta, Angadi, Burtscher and Roberts (2013) noted that Athletic performance-enhancing substances are sometimes referred to as ergogenic aids. Cognitive performance-enhancing drugs, commonly called nootropics (Frati, Kyria, Del-Rio, Marinelli, Vergallo, Zaami, Busardo; 2015), are sometimes used by students to improve academic performance. Performance-enhancing substances are also used by military personnel to enhance combat performance.

The implication of drug use on the social community is evident in Nigeria. Key informants considered that disruption in family lives, loss in productivity and legal problems as a consequence of drug use in their communities were major social problems witnessed in th communities. Also, nearly 1 in 8 persons in the general population had experienced consequences due to other peoples' drug use in their families, workplace and communities (UNODC, 2018).



1 UNODC, *World Drug Report 2018.*

In Nigeria, for individuals who are between the ages of 15-64 years, one in seven persons had used a drug asides tobacco and alcohol in the preceding year. The prevalence of any drug use for the preceding year is estimated at 14.4 per cent (range 14.0 per cent - 14.8 per cent), corresponding to 14.3 million people aged 15-64 years who had used a psychoactive substance in the past year for non-medical purposes (UNODC, 2018).

1.1 Statement of Problem

Considering the nature of farming as a dominant occupation in the rural areas and its high demand for active human labour, it is important to note that most individuals eventually in farm labour will consist of the rural youths. With reference to the fact that farm labour requires huge amount of energy (Poulianiti, Havenith, Flouris; 2019), then there is every possibility that rural farm labourers seek solace in the use of energy enhancing drugs to meet up with the energy demands of their job. This practice in turn may, or, will lead to negative health and social issues such as drug abuse and certain drug use related diseases.

The use of drug among youths is quite at an alarming level. Several reports have shown the negative effect of drug use and abuse on the physical, mental and social health of individuals. Drug use can also increase the risk of contracting infections (NIDA. 2022).

The probability of the emergence of several drug related diseases is a big threat to the current and future economic development of the rural areas. The farm labourers who are believed to be majorly individuals between the ages of 15-60 are a key component of the social and economic structure of the society because they occupy about 54% of the total population of Nigeria as at year 2020 (statista.com, 2021); and if this category of individuals are being wiped out one after the other as a result of drug related diseases, then the economic and social implications on the rural areas in both near and later future will be disastrous, likewise its negative ripple effect on Food and Nutrition Security.

Worldwide, the prevalence of alcohol consumption among the rural population varies greatly, ranging from 1.4% to 64% (Subady, Assanangkornchai and Chongsuvivatwong, 2013; Eather, Fragar, Depczynski, 2011) and among farmers, the prevalence of high-risk alcohol consumption ranged from 18% to 43% (Brumby, Kennedy, Chandrasekara; 2013, Eather et al; 2011) especially in the developing countries, such as South Africa, where the use of dop system, a form of remuneration whereby farm workers are part-paid in kind with alcohol, has contributed to a wide dispersion of a culture of alcohol consumption in agricultural and rural communities (McLoughlin, Little, Mazok, Parry, London; 2013). From the foregoing, it is therefore against this background that this research seeks to unravel the situation with regards to the use of energy enhancing drugs among farm labourers in rural communities of Lagos state.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theories have aimed to analyze the link between drug and substance use, and social cultural factors such as family, religion, occupation, and lifestyle. There are two theories which will be adoptd by this paper, which are the social control theory and the behavioral choice theory.

According to **social control theory**, the presence of a strong affinity between an individual and his or her family, religion, work life, friends, and other aspects of cultural society, creates a motivation for individuals to not engage in irresponsible behaviours and stay away from drug and substance use and other social vices. According to social control theory, people are motivated to act responsibly and refrain

from substance use and other deviant behaviors by their strong ties to family, friends, school, employment, religion, and other facets of traditional society. These ties include controlling or supervising behavior and guiding it toward appropriate objectives and activities. People are less inclined to uphold traditional values and are more likely to participate in undesirable conduct, such as drug and alcohol abuse, when such social relationships are weak or absent. Inadequate monitoring and shaping of behavior, such as families lacking cohesion and structure, friends who uphold deviant values and behave disruptively, and a lack of supervision and vigilance in educational and professional settings, are the main causes of weak attachments to existing social standards (Hirschi, 1969).

The social control perspective, which is closely related to **behavioral economics or behavioral choice theory,** places a special emphasis on taking part in protective behaviors. The social context's primary component in the behavioral choice theory is the alternative rewards offered by behaviors other than substance use. These incentives can shield users from exposure to drugs and chances to use them, as well as from their usage's progression and maintenance. According to the hypothesis, choosing a single rewarding conduct, like abusing drugs, is somewhat influenced by the inability to access effective rewards from involvement in activities like employment, education, religion, and exercise. For instance, both substance use and physical activity may improve mood and reduce anxiety, which could make them functionally equivalent and interchangeable (Bickel and Vuchinich 2000).

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the use of energy enhancing drug among farm labourers while the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the personal characteristics of respondents in the study area
2. Ascertain the farm activities carried out by farm labourers in the study area
3. Determine the energy-enhancing drug used by farm labourers in the study area

Research Questions

The research tends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics of respondents in the study area?
2. What are the farm activities carried out by farm labourers in the study area?
3. What are the energy-enhancing drugs used by farm labourers in the study area?

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between the personal characteristics of farm labourers and the use of energy enhancing drug.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs for farm activities among farm Labourers

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative survey research design. The study was carried out in rural areas of Lagos state. The population of the study includes all farm labourers in rural areas of Lagos state. Two (2) Local Government Areas i.e., Epe and Ikorodu were purposively selected and considered appropriate as the sampling area. 161 respondents were randomly selected in the sample area to serve as the sample size. A structured questionnaire was developed to extract adequate information from the respondents. Validity and reliability tests were carried out on the instrument. A test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument,

which gave stability co-efficient of 0.75 and 0.70 respectively. The questionnaire was self-administered and retrieved immediately after filling by the respondents to avoid a scenario of missing data. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive (frequency and percentage count) and inferential statistical (Chi-square) analysis; and which were presented in contingency tables.

4. Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

The personal characteristics of the respondents as presented in Table 1 shows that majority (73.9%) of the respondents were males. Most (42.9%) of the respondents were between the ages of 21-30, this was followed by 23.6% of the respondents that falls between the ages of 31-40. This implies that the youths are the ones involved mostly in farm labour which is believed to be a manifestation of the level of youth population and unemployment in Nigeria. This is in tandem with the release of National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria (2021) that youth unemployment in Nigeria increased to 53.40% in the fourth quarter of 2020 from 40.80% in the second quarter of 2020. The bulk of the respondents (50.9%) possess only SSCE as their highest academic qualification, which is followed by 22.4% who have only primary school education. This is an indication of the fact that farm labour work is done mostly by individuals who do not have tertiary education. As of 2020, Nigeria's labour force consisted of about 80 million people and nearly 29 million people concluded the Senior Secondary School only, representing the most numerous group (Statista.com, 2021). Most (47.8%) of the respondents have farm labour work experience of between 6-10 years while 23.6% have work experience of between 0-5 years. This implies that individuals that are engaged in farm labour had some level of experience in the various farm labour they engage in.

Table1: Personal Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	119	73.9
Female	42	26.1
Age		
< 20	06	3.7
21- 30	69	42.9
31- 40	38	23.6
41-50	28	17.4
51- 60	15	9.3
61 and >	05	3.1
Marital status		
Single	37	22.9
Married	92	57.1
Divorced	22	13.7
Widow	08	4.9
Separated	02	1.2
Religion		
Islam	81	50.3
Christian	74	45.9
Other	06	3.7

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level of Education		
No formal Education	20	12.4
Primary School Certificate	36	22.4
SSCE	82	50.9
NCE/OND	17	10.6
HND/BSC	06	3.7
MA & above	-	-
Primary Occupation		
Farming	61	37.9
Artisan	13	8.1
Trading	06	3.7
Farm labouring	81	50.3
Years of Experience		
0-5yrs	38	23.6
6-10yrs	77	47.8
11-15yrs	18	11.2
16yrs & above	28	17.4
Total	**161**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Farm activities carried out by the farm Labourers

The finding of this study found out that the various farm labour in the study area includes weeding, ridge making, stumping, planting, harvesting etc. The nature of farm labour being carried out by the respondents was observed in Table 2 in the course of this research and is hereby presented. Majority (W.M. S= 2.74) of the respondents engage in planting activities which was ranked 1st based on its weighted mean score. Land clearing (W.M. S= 2.66) and Harvesting (W.M.S =2.56) were farm activities that are engaged in the most respectively by the respondents aside planting and are ranked 2nd and 3rd.It can be denoted from the finding also that loading of products (W.M. S= 1.68) is the least engaged in activity by the respondents. This implies that the farm labour activities carried out by the labourers covers pre-planting, planting, and post planting farm.

Table 2: Farm activities carried out by the respondents

S/N	Farm Labour	Often		Occasionally		Never		WMS	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%		
1.	Weeding	98	60.9	53	32.9	10	6.2	2.55	4th
2.	Ridge Making	48	29.8	69	42.9	44	27.3	2.45	5th
3.	Heap making	56	34.8	70	43.5	35	21.7	2.13	6th
4.	Stumping	29	18.0	98	60.9	34	21.1	1.97	7th
5.	Land clearing	117	72.7	33	20.5	11	6.8	2.66	2nd
6.	Planting	126	78.3	28	17.4	7	4.3	2.74	1st
7.	Harvesting	96	59.6	61	37.9	4	2.5	2.56	3rd
8.	Loading Products	32	19.9	45	27.9	84	52.2	1.68	9th
9.	Processing	21	13.0	97	60.2	43	26.7	1.86	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Types of Energy Enhancing Drugs (EED) Used by the Respondents

Farm labourers in the study area were found to be using various EEDs which include paracetamol, aspirin, tramadol, Panadol etc. The results are revealed in table 3. It reveals that Paracetamol (W.M. S=2.95) is the most used drugs by the labourers. Panadol extra (W.M.S=2.76) and Tramadol (W.M.S=2.74) are also consumed next in rank respectively to Paracetamol as drugs that are mostly consumed by the labourers. This revelation shows the reliance of labourers on the use of drugs such as Paracetamol and Tramadol which are drugs that have been shown to have serious negative effects on the health of an individual when consumed in high dosage frequency. Mirza (2022) stated that Paracetamol overdose is common, and significant overdose can result in liver failure if not promptly treated with the antidote. It is reported by Axel, Maria-Goretti, Ann, Osasuyi, Johnny, Fifame, and Lorette (2018) that the use of Tramadol in high potency dosage is not unpopular with physical labourers in urban and rural areas for its ability to enhance performance. Their report also stated that farmers in northern Ghana have reported that people take Tramadol so that they can work harder, then others see it and admire it. They also reported that other substances like Paracetamol and Ephedrine are usually in use in high dosages.

Table 3: Type of Energy Enhancing Drugs used by the respondents

S/N	Drugs	Always		Periodically		Not at all		WMS	Rank
		F	%	f	%	F	%		
1.	Paracetamol	129	80.1	29	18.0	3	1.86	2.95	1st
2.	Asprin	69	42.9	49	30.4	43	26.7	2.16	8th
3.	Alabukun	103	63.9	39	24.2	19	11.8	2.52	5th
4.	Codeine	51	31.7	64	39.8	46	28.6	2.03	9th
5.	Tramadol	131	81.36	18	11.2	12	7.5	2.74	3rd
6.	Panadol	118	73.3	38	23.1	5	3.1	2.69	4th
7.	Panadol Extra	132	81.9	19	11.8	10	6.2	2.76	2nd
8.	Cough mixture	85	52.8	68	42.2	8	4.9	2.48	6th
9.	Mixture of two or more drugs	92	57.1	49	30.4	20	12.4	2.45	7th

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Test of Hypotheses

Relationship between personal characteristics of farm labourers and use of Energy Enhancing Drugs

The test of hypothesis on the relationship between the personal characteristics of the farm labourers and their use of EED reveals that there was a significant relationship between primary occupation of the farm labourers and their use of EED. This finding shows that there are individuals of a particular primary occupation who enhanced more of their activities in farm laboring with the use of EED.

The age, sex and education of farm labourers were not found to be significantly related to the use of EED among farm labourers. This means that age, sex as well as level of education are not key factors that determine the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs among these set of individuals. The implication is that farm labourers take or uses drugs regardless of whether they are old or young. This finding is contrary to that of Allan, Meister, Clifford, Whittenburry, Auston &Ball (2012) who posited that young labourers have more tendencies to use EED than the older farm labourers.

Table 4: Chi-square table showing the relationship between the use of E.E. Ds and selected personal characteristics

Variable	X^2	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	0.679	5	0.0686	0.2813	NS
Sex	0.817	1	0.0913	0.2914	NS
Education	3.867	4	0.073	0.37	NS
Primary Occupation	11.713	3	0.00081	0.000	S

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Test of difference in the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs for farm activities among farm Labourers

The result of the second hypothesis of this study which state that "There is no significant difference in the use of Energy-Enhancing Drugs for farm activities among farm Labourers" shows that there is significant difference in the use of energy-enhancing drug. This implies that there are more individual of particular age group (21-30years) using energy-enhancing drug for farm activities among farm labourers. Similarly, drug like Paracetamol and Panadol extra are much more utilized by farm Labourers for farm activities in the study area.

Table 5: Table of Test of difference in the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs for farm activities among farm Labourers

Variable	Mean difference	t-value	p-value	Decision
Use of energy-enhancing drug for farm activities among farm Labourers	4.67	3.686	0.001	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Summary of findings

The majority of the respondents were males. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 21-30. The bulk of the respondents possess only SSCE as their highest academic qualification, which is followed by 22.4% who have only primary school education. As of 2020, Nigeria's labour force consisted of about 80 million people and nearly 29 million people concluded the Senior Secondary School only, representing the most numerous group (Statista.com, 2021). Majority of the respondents have farm labour work experience of between 6-10 years.

The finding of this study found out that the various farm labour in the study area includes weeding, ridge making, stumping, planting, harvesting etc. Majority of the respondents engage in planting activities. Land clearing were farm activities that are engaged in the most respectively by the respondents aside planting.

Farm labourers in the study area were found to be using various EEDs most especially paracetamol, aspirin, tramadol, Panadol-extra etc. Mirza (2022) stated that one of the commonly used drugs leading to liver injury is paracetamol, and it can result in liver failure if not promptly treated with the antidote.

The research also revealed that there was a significant relationship between primary occupation of the farm labourers and their use of EED. The age, sex and education of farm labourers were not found to be significantly related to the use of EED

among farm labourers. This means that age, sex as well as level of education are not key factors that determine the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs among these set of individuals.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Indeed, the use of Energy Enhancing Drugs (E.E. Ds) by farm labourers is a menace which has the potential of initiating a social, health, economic and productivity issues of high magnitude in the rural areas which arguably contributes a lot to the agricultural sector of the nation. The implications of this include food and nutrition security challenges, loss of active labour force to health crisis and hazard etc. this research study therefore looked into the use of E.E.Ds among farm labourers in rural areas of Lagos state. It is concluded from the findings of this search that E.E.Ds are mostly consumed by individuals who fall between the ages of 21-40 and are majorly uneducated beyond secondary school education which by extension happens to be the most populated age category among farm labourers. It is further concluded that E.E.Ds like Paracetamol and Tramadol are the most commonly consumed E.E.Ds by farm labourers in Lagos state. Furthermore, the research has shown clearly that there is no significant relationship between the use of E.E.Ds and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, sex, and level of education, albeit, there is a significant relationship between the use of E.E.Ds and primary occupation of the farm labourers. Based on the findings of this research study, the following are therefore recommended:

1. The supply and sale of E.E.Ds should be given proper monitoring by the government
2. There should be enactment of a strong employer and employee rules that will allow for the discipline of employer or employee that may want to or allow the use of E.E.Ds to boost performance at work
3. Enlightenment campaign should be carried out by government and private bodies to sensitize individuals on the dangerous aspect of the use of E.E.D.

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