

The Influence of some Factors on Alcohol Use and Abuse among Education Students of Osun State University, Nigeria

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Abstract

Many of the students in Nigerian higher institutions are adolescents and some of them engage in various risky behaviours such as smoking, reckless driving, premarital and indiscriminate sexual activities, alcohol abuse. The study examined the influence of some factor on alcohol use and abuse among Education students of Osun State University. Data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire to one hundred and thirty-eight students. Data obtained were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential tools. The multiple regression analysis (MRA) result indicated that 34.8 per cent of the students' alcohol use and abuse are explained by parental lifestyle and peer influence. The ANOVA result further revealed that parental lifestyle and peer influence impact significantly on the frequency of alcohol use (F-ratio of 4.778, $p < 0.05$); it also revealed that parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities influence students' frequency of alcohol use and abuse (F-ratio of 5.528, $p < 0.05$). The study also revealed that parents and peer exercise enormous influence on students' alcohol use because they are seen as models, while students with strong commitments to conventional activities such as reading books, sports and religious activities will not want to jeopardize them by engaging in deviant behaviour. To reduce this phenomenon, conventional activities that would engage students from risky behaviour are suggested to be put in place on Nigerian University campuses. The study also suggested that parents should develop strong bond with their children to enable them have confidence and see them as friends to share problems with.

Key words: Alcohol Use, Parental Attachment, Parental Lifestyles, Peer influence, Conventional Activities.

Introduction

In different parts of the globe, the incidence rate of alcohol use among adolescents in tertiary institutions give room for great concern. The prevalence rate of alcohol use and abuse vary from one country to the other, for instance, in the United States of America, 52% of the eighth graders and 80% of the high school seniors have used alcohol at sometime, while 25% of the eighth graders and 62% of high school seniors have been drunk (National Youth Violence Prevention, 2000; Adeyemo, 2007). In Nigeria, the situation shows there is high prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents and there is high probability that the frequency of alcohol drinking will continue to increase (Adeyemo, 2007). In Nigeria, many of the students in higher institutions are adolescents and some of them engage in various risky behaviours such as smoking, reckless driving, premarital and indiscriminate sexual activities, alcohol abuse (binge drinking) and drug abuse. The high rate of deaths in Nigeria, especially among the youths may not be unconnected with the unhealthy lifestyles. Alcohol use among students is characterized by a number of risky behaviours which in the long-run affect their well being and academic performance. As levels of alcohol intake increase, so also is the prevalence of a variety of risky behaviours.

Heavy alcohol intake may lead to depression and liver damage. In addition, alcohol affects many parts of the brain, but the most vulnerable cells are those associated with memory, co-ordination, and judgment. Short-term effects (usually lasts up to 72 hours after heavy use) Alcohol has several physiological and psychological effects, which may inhibit academic performance of students. Cognitive abilities are affected by even small amounts of alcohol and can persist for a substantial period of time after the acute effects of alcohol impairment disappear. Students' poor academic performance is associated with alcohol consumption; this is because it contributes to students missing classes, failing tests, dropping out of school due to poor grades, and compromising the academic mission of colleges and universities.

One of the most common consequences of alcohol abuse by students is difficulty keeping up with academic responsibilities. Alcohol abuse in the context of this study connotes excessive consumption of alcohol which in order word is referred to as binge drinking.

Students' substance use and abuse is influenced by a number of factors, among which are parental lifestyles, peer influence, parental attachment, and commitment to conventional activities among others. Indeed, each of these factors exerts tremendous influence on students' frequency of substance use and abuse. Families in which children have a cordial relationship with their parents, parental control efforts are effective means in preventing children from involving in problem behaviours. Thus, the attachment relationship goes hand in hand with parenting (der Vorst, Engels, Meeus, Dekovic, and Vermulst, 2006). Parents who adequately control and supervise their adolescents may prevent them from starting to drink early in life. When children are also highly attached to their parents, the attachment relationship might strengthen the impact of control on adolescents' alcohol use. Because of this, it is assumed that the expected association between parental control and an early development of drinking will be moderated by parental attachment (Der Vorst et al., 2006).

Students who are more committed to their studies and other conventional activities stand the chance of not being victims of negative behaviours. Sherkart (2007) writes that students who participate in religious groups have made a choice about social commitments. Being active in religion precludes other types of social ties, particularly the ones which might cut against the prescriptions and proscriptions of religious traditions. If a student is going to Mosque on Friday, he/she is unlikely to be found at the bar. Commitments to religious groups also preclude negative behaviours like going home for the weekend, or taking impromptu road trips. Connections to positive social groups promote conformity, and in the college setting, conformity means going to class and completing assignments. Wood, Read, Mitchell and Brand (2004) investigated the influences of peer and parent variables on alcohol use and problems in a sample of late adolescents in the summer immediately prior to entry into college. The study observed significant associations between both peer and parental influences and alcohol involvement, and showed that parental influences moderated peer-influence– drinking behaviour. This study examines the incidence of alcohol use and abuse among Education students of Osun State University, Nigeria

Theoretical construct

This study is situated on the social control theory which traces the incidence of alcohol use and abuse among students in relation to four fundamental components of attachment, commitment, and involvement and belief system. Hirschi's social control theory has been exclusively used on deviant behaviours, such as delinquent acts (theft, vandalism,) and drug use as well as alcohol use and addiction, rather than deviant roles and identities. As a general theory of crime and delinquency Hirschi began theorizing about deviance by assuming people would violate norms and break the law unless they were actively prevented from doing so. The key to such prevention was effective socialization, which is a long process starting in childhood and lasting into adulthood. Hirschi on this note, pin-points families, peers, and schools as institutions having the most insightful impact on each of our lives, especially as children and adolescents (Hirschi, 1969). Hirschi argued that close associations with parents and siblings, law-abiding peers, and teachers or other school officials go a long way in controlling individuals' behaviour. Attachment, commitment, involvement and belief are the four elements of a critical moral bond between the individual and society which would guard against deviance or risky behaviours.

For Hirschi, delinquent behaviours, like drug use and binge drinking which in recent times is common among students, would be a likely outcome of ineffective ties to these things, that is, improper socialization importance (Leonard and Decker, 1994). This implies that the incidence of alcohol use and abuse among students of tertiary institutions shows that the establishment of a strong moral bond between the students and society (mostly parents and conventional activities like reading) would promote conformity to existing ethics and in the long-run prevent the involvement of students in risky behaviours. Thus, students' attachment to parents (the degree to which students have affection or emotional ties to family members, identify with them, and care about their expectations. According to social control theory, individuals with strong attachments are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour), commitment (aggregate investment of time, energy, and resources in conventional activities such as getting an education or holding a job. These investments represent stakes in conformity), involvement (the amount of time a person spends engaging in conventional activities, such as doing school work or participating in clubs or athletics).

The theory has it that individuals who spend their time involved in conventional pursuits simply do not have enough time available to engage in deviant behaviour) and belief (the acceptance of a conventional value system. It equally maintains that any weakening of these conventional beliefs increases the likelihood that an individual will engage in deviant behaviour. This belief component includes a general acceptance of the rules of society as being morally valid and binding, as well as respect for authority) are the four elements of a critical moral bond between the individual student and society which would guard against deviance or risky behaviours.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the contributions of parents' lifestyle, peer influence, parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities to alcohol use and abuse among education students of Osun State University.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were investigated in the study:

- (1) Parents' lifestyle and peer influence impact significantly on students' frequency of alcohol use and abuse
- (2) Parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities exert significant effect on students' frequency of alcohol use. and abuse

Materials and method

Research design

The study adopted descriptive research design using the ex-post facto type. The researcher was interested in knowing the influence of the independent variables (parents' lifestyle, peer influence, parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities) on the dependent variable (alcohol use and abuse) without necessarily manipulating the independent variable

Participants

The population of the study comprised all education students in the college Of education, Osun State University, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used to select one hundred and thirty eight students from the two departments in the college. The participants were made up of 72 males and 66 females. Their ages ranged from 18 to 29 years. The mean and standard deviation of the sampled age were 19.6 years and 3.5 respectively

Instrument

A structured questionnaire was the sole instrument used to collect data. The questionnaire contained questions in relation to the purpose of the study. The instrument is divided into four sections. Section A measured students' socio-economic background; section B contained questions designed to measure the effect of peer influence on the frequency of alcohol use as well as influence of attachment to parents and commitment on alcohol use and abuse using a 4-point likert scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree= SA; Agree = A; Disagree = D; and Strongly Disagree = SD. In the same manner, section D measured the effects of alcohol use and abuse on the academic performance of students using also responses ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA).

Procedure

The instrument was administered to the participants by the researcher. The instrument was collected immediately after completion. The exercise lasted for two weeks due to the nature of the study as well as the number of items contained in the questionnaire. As a result of the sensitivity of the subject matter, permission was obtained from the provost of the college of education and the heads of departments. Consent was equally obtained from the students after the purpose of the survey was explained to them. The status and names of respondents were made anonymous.

Method of data analysis

Data obtained were analyzed using frequency, tables, and charts, cross tabulation and multiple regression analysis (MRA).

To effectively carryout multiple regression analysis, the item on frequency of alcohol use coded for descriptive analysis was transformed into two dummy variables of frequent consumption (comprising of daily, weekly and monthly use) as 2 and seldom consumption (comprising of quarterly and yearly use of alcohol) as 1. Statistical computation was done with the aid of SPSS 17.0 for Windows.

Results and discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic characteristic of respondents' reveals a total of 138 respondents were studied, comprising 72 males (52.2%) and 66 females (47.8%). The gender distribution with higher number of males in this study is similar to findings from previous studies (Oshodi1, Aina and Onajole, 2010; Adelekan and Ndom, 1997). Information on the age of respondents shows that 73.2% were within the age group of 15 - 19 years, 25.4% were within the age group of 20 – 24 years, while those within the age group of 25 – 29 years were 1.4%. This implies that majority of the respondents are within the age group of 15 – 24 years which falls within the adolescent period (the high risk age group for substances use) and is similar to data obtained in previous studies in Nigeria (Oshodi et al., 2010; Adelekan and Ndom, 1997). In terms of religion, 93 (67.4%) were Christians, 44 (31.9%) were Muslims and only 1 (0.7%) was of traditional African religion.

Frequency of alcohol consumption

Information on the frequency of alcohol use is shown in fig 1. The figure indicates that 42% of the respondents consumed alcoholic substances daily/everyday, which shows that this category of people are alcohol addicts who are usually not alright without substance use. 34.1% of the respondents consumed alcohol weekly, 14.5% and 4.3% consumed alcoholic beverages monthly and quarterly probably during stress and to feel high or occasion demands. However, 5.1% consumed anything alcohol yearly, this group of individuals are not addicts and binge drinkers. The information however shows that respondents consume alcoholic beverages daily and weekly mostly for fun, as depressant to stay awake to read, to be bold or highly spirited and to relief stress. This supports the study by Otieno and Ofulla (2009); Oshodi et al., (2010) that the reasons for alcohol and substance uses among adolescents include fun, relief from stress, self-medication to treat illness and to stay awake at night to study.

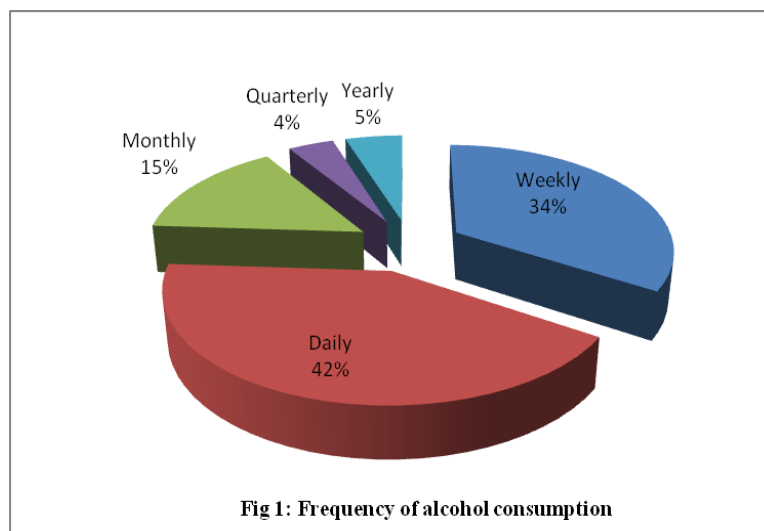


Fig 1: Frequency of alcohol consumption

Frequency of alcohol and number of bottles consumed

Table 1 gives exciting information on the incidence of alcohol use and abuse (binge drinking). Information in the table shows that 58 (42%) of respondents consumed alcohol daily, out of this, 16 (27.6%) consumed 3 bottles of alcoholic beverages per occasion or day; 9 (15.5%) consumed 4 bottles of alcohol per occasion or day, while only 1 (1.7%) of the respondents consumed more than 5 bottles of alcohol per occasion or day. In addition, 47 (34.1%) of the respondents that consumed alcohol weekly, 14 (29.8%) and 10 (21.3%) consumed 1 and 2 bottles per day or occasion respectively; 12 (25.5%) and 11 (23.4%) consumed 3 and 4 bottles of alcoholic beverages per day, but none consumed more than 4 bottles per day. Of the 20 (14.5%) respondents that consumed alcohol monthly, 9 (45%) consumed 3 bottles, 5 (25%) consumed 4 bottles, while 1 (5%) consumed bottle 4 and 5 bottles per day.

The information in the table therefore indicates that 79% of the respondents consume maximum of 3 bottles of alcoholic beverages per occasion or day, this group of individuals can be said not to abuse alcohol, while 21% are binge drinkers who in one way or the other get drunk or tipsy depending on the number of bottles consumed. This rate of drinking is quite similar to rates reported in earlier studies (Thomas, Olds, Bondy, Winchell, Baliunas and Rehm, 2009).

Table 1: Frequent of alcohol * bottles of alcoholic beverages consumed Cross tabulation

Frequency	Bottles consumed per occasion or day						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	>5	
Daily	10 17.2%	22 37.9%	16 27.6%	9 15.5%	0 .0%	1 1.7%	58 100.0%
Weekly	10 21.3%	14 29.8%	12 25.5%	11 23.4%	0 .0%	0 .0%	47 100.0%
Monthly	1 5.0%	3 15.0%	9 45.0%	5 25.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	20 100.0%
Yearly	6 85.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 14.3%	0 .0%	7 100.0%
Quarterly	6 100%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 100.0%
Total	33 23.9%	39 28.3%	37 26.8%	25 18.1%	2 1.4%	2 1.4%	138 100.0%

$$X^2 = 60.552; DF = 20; p < 0.05$$

Perceived implications of alcohol use and abuse

Respondents' perceived implication of alcohol use and abuse are depicted in table 2. From the table, it is evident that all respondent were aware of the health implication of alcohol use having been taught in school or heard. The information shows that 33 (23.9%) alleged it results in brain damage; 27 (19.6%) of the respondents asserted that alcohol consumption makes people to be assault (violence), which is a common phenomenon among drunks; 19 (13.8%) believed the consumption of alcohol irrespective of the number of bottles consumed increases one's desire for sex, which in most cases could be unprotected, while 18 (13%) alleged it results in cognitive impairment (inability to co-ordinate oneself as well as memorize what has been read) and poor physical health. Again, the above result agrees with those of Oshodi et al., (2010) that respondents believed poor physical health could complicate substance use. Others perceived complications or problems to include poor finance (7.1%), declined academic performance (3.9%), problems with family relationships (2.9%) with 1.6% mentioning emotional problems.

Table 2: Perceived implications of alcohol use and abuse

Option	Frequency	Percent
Poor academic performance	17	12.3
Brain damage	33	23.9
Cognitive impairment	18	13.0
Unprotected sexual intercourse	19	13.8
Assault	27	19.6
Poor physical health	18	13.0
Poor finance management	5	3.6
Others	1	.7
Total	138	100.0

Effect of parental lifestyle and peer influence on frequency of alcohol use

The hypothesis that parental lifestyle and peer influence impact significantly on students' frequency of alcohol use was tested using multiple regression. Result obtained (table 3) shows there is a fair correlation (0.59) between the independent variables (parental lifestyle and peer influence) and dependent variable (frequency of alcohol use). The coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) indicates that 34.8 percent of the changes in adolescents' frequency of alcohol use and abuse explained the combination of the predictor variables. The ANOVA result in table 3 indicates parental lifestyle and peer influence impact significantly on students' frequency of alcohol use ($p < 0.05$). The significance and individual contributions of the independent variables to the observed changes in the dependent variable shows that between parental lifestyle and peer influence, only the latter is significant and exerts higher influence on students' frequency of alcohol use and abuse ($t = 2.117$, $p < 0.05$), while the latter though shows a positive relationship with frequency of alcohol use, is insignificant ($t = 1.184$, $p > 0.05$). The strength of individual variable to the outcome in adolescents' alcohol use indicates that a unit increase peer influence holding parental lifestyle constant will result in 0.48 or 48 per cent unit increase in students' frequency of adolescents' alcohol use and abuse; while a unit increase parental lifestyle holding peer influence constant will result in 0.32 or 32 per cent unit increase in the frequency of adolescents' alcohol use and abuse. The two variables share direct relationship with adolescents' frequency of alcohol use.

Table 3: Summary of multiple regression result

Variables	Coefficients		
	B	β	t-value
Peer pressure	0.48	0.53	2.117*
Parental lifestyle	0.32	0.30	1.184**
Test results			
F- value	4.772*		
R	0.59		
R^2	0.348		
Constant	2.658		11.033*
DF	2/135		
Table F-value	3.06		

*Significant at 5% significance level; **Significant at 5% significance level

Influence of parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities on frequency of alcohol

The hypothesis that parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities influence the frequency of alcohol was also tested using multiple regression. Result obtained is shown in table 4. The result shows there is a moderate correlation (0.63) between the independent variables (parental and commitment to conventional activities) and dependent variable (frequency of alcohol use). The coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) indicates that 36.7 percent of the changes in adolescents' frequency of alcohol use and abuse are explained by the combination of the predictor variables. The ANOVA result in table 4 indicates that parental attachment and commitment to conventional activities significantly influence the frequency of alcohol use ($p < 0.05$). The significance and individual contributions of the independent variables to the observed changes in the dependent variable shows that though the predictor variables shows a positive relationship with frequency of alcohol use, both are insignificant ($p > 0.05$). However, between the two variables, parental attachment exerts greater influence on the outcome of students' alcohol use; in that a unit increase attachment of students to parents holding commitment to conventional activities constant will result in 0.43 or 43 per cent unit decrease in the frequency of students' alcohol use and abuse; while a unit increase commitment to conventional activities holding attachment to parents constant will result in 0.23 or 23 per cent unit increase in the frequency of students' alcohol use and abuse.

Table 4: Summary of multiple regression result

Variables	Coefficients		
	B	β	t-value
Parents attachment	-0.43	-0.46	-1.239**
Commitment to conventional activities	0.23	0.25	1.017**
Test results			
F- value	5.528*		
R	0.63		
R ²	0.367		
Constant	3.064		14.752*
DF	2/135		
Table F-value	3.06		

*Significant at 5% significance level; **insignificant at 5% significance level

Discussion of result

Parental lifestyle plays significant role on the development of the child in terms of the child's value system, as the home is the first agent of socialization where children learn good morals. So, in a home where both parents are drunks and the child is allowed at an early stage of his/her development to indulge in alcohol without any caution, such a child grows up to be an addict, such that he/she cannot stay a day without consuming alcohol or being drunk. The assertion made above is strongly supported by Adeyemo's (2007) study on interpersonal factors as correlates of alcohol use among secondary school adolescents in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings of study submit that parents wield enormous influence on their children and in fact they wield primary influence on them. When therefore, parents are into alcohol, they become drinking models to their adolescent children. Parents' life styles have sensational effect on their children. Thus adolescent drinking behaviour can be a product of parental modeling. Peer on the other hand constitutes a potent factor in adolescent alcohol use as the compelling need to fit into and belong to a group of friends may be a motivating factor in adolescents' alcohol use. This confirms the findings of Adeyemo (2007) that peer influence is the most potent predictor of alcohol use among adolescents; this could be understood from the fact that adolescents are easily susceptible to peer pressure, peer encouragement and attitude. In another study, Kypri, Cronin, and Wright (2005) report that students with peers have been reported to drink at higher levels than non-student peers.

The study further reveals that students' use and abuse of alcohol is influenced by the degree of their attachment to parents and commitment to conventional activities. Attachment involves the degree, to which the students have affectionate or emotional ties to parents thereby seeing them as their role model. According to social bond theory, individuals with strong attachments are less likely to engage in deviant behavior. As such, the attachment of adolescents to parents would help them to learn conventional value system thereby deterring them from delinquent and risky behaviours such as substance use and abuse. Parental attachment goes hand in hand with parenting which enables parents to adequately control and supervise their children which might prevent them from starting to drink early in life. Indeed, for young people, attachment to parents is of primary importance (Leonard & Decker, 1994), and the quality of communication with parents is a major indicator of parental attachment. Commitment is the second component of the social bond theory; it refers to the aggregate investment of time, energy, and resources in conventional activities such as reading books, sports, religious activities or doing a part-time job (Durkin, Wolfe and Clark, 1999).

Perhaps, individuals with strong commitments to any of these conventional activities will not want to jeopardize them by engaging in deviant behaviour. Commitment on the other hand, enables adolescents to spend time, energy, and resources in conventional activities such as reading books, sports, religious activities or doing a part-time job. If adolescents have strong commitments to any of these conventional activities, the chances of engaging in deviant behaviour will be minimized. This assertion agrees with those of Sherkart (2007) that students who participate in religious activities have made a choice about social commitments. If a student is going to Mosque on Friday, he/she is unlikely to be found at the bar. In similar way, Fatoye and Morakinyo (2002) allege that there is ample evidence that lack of involvement provides students with more time to participate in other activities such as recreational drug use.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study reveals that parental lifestyle, attachment, peer influence and commitment to conventional activities have significant impact on students' frequency of alcohol use and abuse. This is true as parents exercise substantial influence on their children. When therefore, parents are into alcohol, they become drinking models to their adolescent children. Parental life styles therefore have sensational effect on their children. Peer on the other hand, constitutes a powerful force in students alcohol use; this is because the need to fit into and belong to a group of friends may be a motivating factor in students' alcohol use. The study further identified commitment as bond that makes students dissipate their energy on, thereby being able to stay away from risky behaviours. However, in order to reduce this phenomenon among students, conventional activities that would engage students from frivolous behaviours are suggested to be put in place on Nigerian university campuses. Parents should develop strong bond with their children to enable them have confidence and see them as friends to share problems with.

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