



FACTORS INFLUENCING ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors influencing alcohol consumption among undergraduates in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Using a survey design, 100 students from five faculties at Ekiti State University were randomly selected and surveyed to determine the prevalence of alcohol consumption and identify contributing factors. The instrument was validated by experts and test-retest method was used to test for reliability. The reliability test yielded 0.78 coefficients which was considered high to make the instrument reliable. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage and frequency counts) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed considerable awareness among students regarding alcohol's negative health effects. Statistical analysis found significant negative relationships between alcohol consumption and six factors: peer pressure, guardian monitoring, upbringing, environmental factors, residence type, and religion. These negative correlations highlight how these factors impact student wellbeing when alcohol is consumed. The study recommends implementing peer education initiatives, enhancing parent-university communication, addressing family history during orientation, regulating alcohol availability near campus, extending policies to off-campus housing, and partnering with religious organizations to develop culturally appropriate prevention programs.

Keywords: *Alcohol consumption, Undergraduates, Health effects, Peer pressure, Religion, Environmental factors*

Introduction

Beverages including wine, beer, and spirits contain alcohol, a hallucinogenic ingredient. Around the world, alcohol is the most popular and socially acceptable recreational drug. When alcohol is consumed excessively or incorrectly, it can affect many organ systems and raise the risk of physical and mental health problems. These effects can be both short-term and long-term (WHO, 2021). Drinking alcohol is the act of consuming liquids that contain ethyl alcohol, or ethanol. Beer, wine, and spirits are examples of alcoholic beverages that have been used for a very long time in a variety of social and cultural situations. Although alcohol is allowed in many nations, excessive use of it can result in addiction, health issues, poor judgment, and a higher chance of accidents (Salem, 2014).

The influence of drug and alcohol consumption extends beyond individual health. It impacts families, communities, and societies as a whole. Relationship strain, financial hardship, lost productivity, elevated crime rates, and strain on healthcare systems are all consequences of substance abuse (Alimi, 2012). It is necessary to take into account a number of variables, including biological, psychological, social, and environmental influences, in order to comprehend the complex nature of drug and alcohol use. Biological factors include genetic predispositions and the impact

of substances on the brain and body. Psychological factors involve motivations, emotions, and mental health conditions that may contribute to substance use (Kay, 2016). Social factors encompass cultural norms, peer influence, and societal attitudes towards drug and alcohol consumption. Environmental factors include availability, affordability, and marketing strategies that influence substance use patterns.

One of the factors contributing to both short-term and long-term health issues appears to be ongoing, unchecked drug addiction. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that substance addiction either causes or exacerbates dangerous social conduct. Since alcohol is one of the most widely used drugs in the nation, many campaigns have been launched to increase public awareness of the harmful effects of alcoholism. Neglecting children is simply one of the detrimental consequences of alcoholism. Children who are neglected suffer long-term harm that impairs their emotional growth. The vicious cycle may eventually be perpetuated by these children drinking alcohol or using other drugs themselves (Berman, 2012). Such children may abuse drugs to get out of their seemingly unavoidable dilemma, as well as feeling inadequate because they are unable to free their parents.

In South East Nigeria, the current rate of alcohol

use has been reported to be the highest in the country (Onodugo et al 2019). Alcoholism is more than just a social and economic concern, since alcohol consumption is widespread. For instance, alcoholism is a major issue in Laikipia East Constituency (an electoral constituency in Kenya). Family members are affected by alcoholism and its associated consequences. Cotran, (2008) stressed that alcohol consumption by young people is a widespread habit that transcends socioeconomic, religious, and cultural boundaries. Teenagers who grow up in households with one or both alcoholic parents may wind up imitating their parents' habits. While girls eventually marry alcoholics or are so traumatized that they avoid marriage entirely, there are many documented incidents of boys raised by alcoholic parents becoming alcoholics. The emotional needs of children from these families are neglected because they grow up in dysfunctional households. As such, it is not uncommon to find children from such households being attracted by situations that are at best emotionally uncomfortable (Barrow, 2013).

One of the main elements influencing drug and substance misuse is peer pressure. According to a World Drug Report, drug users look to their friends for approval before committing to their habit in an effort to fit in. The majority of college and university students are surrounded by their classmates who are experimenting for fun. The desire to have a unique experience is another component that fuels this factor. Arabia (2015) was of the view that it is typical for university students to delve deeply into drug and substance experimentation as they explore various facets of their lives in a new setting. The majority of them believe that the best way to fit in while they are separated from their friends and family is to act like the other students, go to school-sponsored parties, and become wasted and high.

Most university students have unrestricted freedom to act or behave anyway they choose due to the absence of guardian monitoring and supervision, which leaves them open to using drugs. Elliot (2014) found that students in their third and fourth years were more likely than those in their first and second years to abuse drugs and other substances. This was due to the fact that most first-year students were aware that they were in a Christian university setting and had not been exposed to freedom or drug and substance addiction.

Drug and substance use and abuse are significantly influenced by upbringing. According to Desmond (2015), the likelihood that younger family members may abuse drugs and other substances increases with the number of drug and substance-abusing household members. In addition to parents serving as behavioral role models, older siblings can

influence their younger siblings by engaging in drug and substance misuse behaviors, such as bringing them a pack of cigarettes, beer, or alcohol. According to a study conducted at a Christian university, the majority of respondents who used drugs and abused substances had seen their fathers use alcohol and abuse other drugs. This suggests that parents' drug and alcohol use is a significant contributing factor to their children's drug and substance abuse, particularly during their formative years. Additionally, it revealed that parents are failing to fulfill their parental duties, allowing the media to shape the youth's personalities and actions (Khalil, 2015).

One of the main contributing factors to drug and substance misuse is the surrounding around universities. It was also discovered that one of the main contributing factors to drug and substance abuse was the accessibility and availability of these drugs. According to Gust (2016), having easy access to drugs fosters an environment that makes it easier for drug and substance abuse to start and encourages greater usage of these substances. Drugs and other psychoactive substances are easier to obtain, which lowers the barriers to obtaining them and increases the risk of substance use and abuse. According to Stahler (2016), college students and adults who live nearby are more likely to consume alcohol when there are alcohol outlets nearby, such as shops and bars that offer alcohol, beer, and wine, among other drugs.

Another significant factor influencing drug and substance use is the housing of university students. Victor (2003) found that a large number of students living in private hostels off campus suffer from drug and substance misuse. Students who lived in university residence halls reported the lowest levels of drug and substance misuse, while those who lived with their parents made up the second-largest percentage of students who admitted to alcohol and substance abuse. This was due to the fact that private hostels outside school do not uphold strict rules and regulation on drug and substance abuse within their premises as compared to the university hostels. These students are allowed to express their freedom in the use and misuse of drugs and other substances since landlords prevent the risk of losing their tenants by imposing stringent restrictions and regulations on them (Ashati, 2016).

Another important element linked to drug use and substance addiction was the role of religion. Certain scholars found that while "khat" was utilized for prayers by religious leaders, alcohol was frequently employed in religious rites by orthodox Christians. According to some of the kids, this is one way that religious leaders are encouraging the use and misuse of these drugs. Evidence-based research, however, has shown that the majority of students in spiritual



universities had lower rates of drug and substance misuse. Young men and women are said to be protected against drug use and substance misuse by faith. Numerous studies demonstrate that young people's faith serves as a potent deterrent to drug and substance addiction (Zhu, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Alcohol drinking among Ekiti State undergraduate students is a serious public health issue that needs to be thoroughly examined. Alcohol use at this stage can result in addiction, health issues, poor judgment, and a higher risk of accidents even if it is a legal and socially acceptable substance. Across social, religious, and cultural boundaries, alcohol consumption appears to be common among college students, resulting in a pattern that impacts not only personal health but also academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and chances for the future.

Several interconnected factors appear to influence undergraduate alcohol consumption, including peer pressure, limited parental supervision, family history of alcohol use, environmental accessibility, residential arrangements, and religious influences. Without proper understanding of these contributing factors and their relationships, developing effective intervention and prevention strategies remains challenging. This study therefore addresses the critical need to identify the prevalence of alcohol consumption among undergraduate students in Ekiti state and determine which factors most significantly contribute to this behavior pattern.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing drug and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students in Ekiti state. Therefore, the specific objectives for this study are:

1. To determine the influence of alcohol consumption among undergraduate students.
2. To identify the factors that contribute to alcohol consumption among undergraduate students.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of alcohol consumption on undergraduates?
2. What factors contribute to alcohol consumption among undergraduate students?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students
2. There is no significant relationship between

guardian monitoring and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

3. There is no significant relationship between upbringing and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students
4. There is no significant relationship between environment and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students
5. There is no significant relationship between residence and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students
6. There is no significant relationship between religion and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Methodology

This study adopted the survey type of descriptive research design. The population of the study consists of all undergraduate students of Ekiti State University. The sample for this study consisted of 100 students selected from five faculties (Education, Science, Arts, Social Science and Law) in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti using simple random sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study. The instrument was validated by experts and test-retest method was used to test for reliability. The reliability test yielded 0.78 coefficients which was considered high to make the instrument reliable. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage and frequency counts) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of alcohol consumption on undergraduate students?

Table 1: Influence of alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%
Regular drinking increases the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors.	47	47	53	53
Alcohol consumption leads to long-term health problems such as liver damage.	71	71	29	29
Drinking alcohol can impair memory and cognitive function.	66	66	34	34
Students who consume alcohol are more likely to experience anxiety and depression.	81	81	19	19
Alcohol consumption among students contributes to poor decision-making.	59	59	41	41

Result in table 1 shows that 47% of the respondents agreed that regular drinking increases the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors while 53% disagreed. 71% of the respondents agreed that alcohol consumption leads to long-term health problems such as liver damage while 29% disagreed. 66% of the respondents agreed that drinking alcohol can impair memory and cognitive function while 34% disagreed.



81% of the respondents agreed that students who consume alcohol are more likely to experience anxiety and depression while 19% disagreed. 59% of the respondents agreed that alcohol consumption among students contributes to poor decision-making while 41% disagreed. The table shows that most respondents acknowledged the harmful effects of alcohol on students' health, cognition, mental well-being and decision making, though views on its link to risky behaviour are mixed.

Research Question 2: What factors contribute to alcohol consumption among undergraduate students?

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of factors contribute to alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%
Peer pressure plays a significant role in drug/alcohol consumption.	91	91	09	09
Religious influence contributes to drug/alcohol experimentation.	89	89	11	11
Area of residence drives some undergraduate to substance use.	73	73	27	27
Campus social events often involve alcohol consumption.	79	79	21	21
Students' environment or surroundings encourage them to drink alcohol.	67	67	33	33

Result in table 2 shows that 91% of the respondents agreed that peer pressure plays a significant role in drug/alcohol consumption while 9% of the respondents disagreed. 89% of the respondents agreed that media influence contributes to drug/alcohol experimentation while 11% of the respondents disagreed. 73% of the respondents agreed that stress and anxiety drive some undergraduate to substance use while 27% disagree. 67% of the respondents agreed that their environment or surroundings encourage them to drink alcohol while 33% disagree. This implies that majority of the respondents believe that peer pressure, media influence, stress and environmental factors contribute to drug and alcohol use among undergraduates.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig.
Peer pressure	100	5.44	11.75	-0.181	0.105
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students. From the above table, r value is -0.181 is greater than r-table 0.105 level of significant. Therefore, the hypotheses rejected that is, there is negative relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between guardian monitoring and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between guardian monitoring and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	sig.
Guardian monitoring	100	3.734	12.79	-0.157	.000
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$p < 0.05$

Result in table 4 shows that r-calculated value was -0.57 and the corresponding p-value was 0.00. Since the p-value of 0.00 was < 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between guardian monitoring and undergraduate students. In addition, it was revealed that the correlation that exists between the guardian monitoring and undergraduate students was weak and negative.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significance relationship between upbringing and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between upbringing and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	sig.
Upbringing	100	3.716	12.88	-0.198	.000
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$p < 0.05$

Result in Table 5 shows that r-calculated value was -0.198 and the corresponding p-value was 0.00. Since the p-value of 0.00 was < 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between upbringing and undergraduate students. In addition it was revealed that the correlation that exists between upbringing and undergraduate students was weak and negative.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between environment and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students



Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the environment and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	sig.
Environment	100	7.736	12.971	-0.163	.000
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$p < 0.05$

Result in Table 6 shows that r-calculated value was -0.163 and the corresponding p-value was 0.00. Since the p-value of 0.00 was < 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between environment and undergraduate students. In addition it was revealed that the correlation that exists between environment and undergraduate students was weak and negative.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between residence and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between residence and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig.
Residence	100	5.44	11.75	-0.187	0.105
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$P < 0.05$

Table 7 shows the relationship between residence and undergraduate students' well-being. From the above table, r value is -0.187 is greater than r-table 0.105 level of significant. Therefore, the hypotheses rejected that is, there is negative relationship between residence and undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant relationship between religion and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students

Table 8: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between religion and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	sig.
Religion	100	3.734	12.79	-0.166	.000
Undergraduate students	100	2.327	5.03		

$p < 0.05$

Result in table 8 shows that r-calculated value was -0.166 and the corresponding p-value was 0.00. Since the p-value of 0.00 was < 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that

there is a significant relationship between religion and undergraduate students. In addition, it was revealed that the correlation that exists between the religion and undergraduate students was weak and negative.

Discussion

The findings indicate a significant awareness among undergraduate students regarding the influence of alcohol consumption, with varying levels of agreement on different aspects. While 81% of students acknowledge that alcohol consumption is associated with anxiety and depression, fewer students (47%) recognize that regular drinking increases the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. This disparity suggests that students may be more aware of the mental health implications of alcohol consumption than its behavioral consequences. These findings align with research by Stahler (2016), who found that university students often underestimate the relationship between alcohol consumption and risky behaviors despite recognizing other health consequences. Khalil (2015) similarly noted that students' awareness of health risks does not necessarily translate to behavioral change, particularly when social factors influence drinking patterns. The high percentage of students acknowledging long-term health problems such as liver damage demonstrates a reasonable level of health literacy regarding alcohol's physiological effects. This awareness is consistent with findings from Elliot (2014), who observed that health knowledge about alcohol increases throughout university years, though this knowledge does not always deter consumption.

The study reveals that 91% of respondents agreed that peer pressure plays a significant role in alcohol consumption, making it the most influential factor identified. The statistical analysis further confirms a significant negative relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' wellbeing. This finding strongly supports Arabia's (2015) research, which documented how university students seek peer approval through participation in drinking activities, particularly as they navigate new social environments. Peer influence is especially potent in university settings where students are establishing new identities and social connections. As noted by Desmond (2015), the collective behavior of peer groups creates normative expectations around alcohol consumption that can be difficult for individuals to resist, especially when combined with the desire to belong and fit in.

The significant negative relationship between guardian monitoring and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption confirms the importance of



continued parental or guardian oversight during university years. This finding corroborates Elliot's (2014) research, which found that alcohol abuse was more prevalent among third and fourth-year students compared to first and second-year students, attributing this difference partly to decreased parental supervision over time. The transition to university often represents the first experience of substantial freedom from parental oversight for many students. Without adequate monitoring, this freedom can lead to experimentation with alcohol and other substances. As Khalil (2015) observed, parents who maintain appropriate levels of awareness regarding their children's activities during university years can significantly reduce the likelihood of problematic alcohol consumption.

The study found a significant negative relationship between upbringing and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption patterns. This finding reinforces Desmond's (2015) assertion that family influence, particularly exposure to alcohol use within the household, significantly impacts students' likelihood of engaging in similar behaviors. When parents or older siblings model alcohol consumption, younger family members often internalize these behaviors as normative. The strength of this relationship highlights the enduring impact of early family experiences on alcohol-related decisions even after students have left the family environment. Khalil (2015) similarly found that parental modeling of substance use creates powerful behavioral templates that young adults often replicate in university settings, especially when combined with newfound independence.

The significant relationship between environmental factors and undergraduate students' alcohol consumption supports Gust's (2016) findings regarding the influence of alcohol availability. With 67% of respondents agreeing that their environment encourages alcohol consumption, the study confirms that proximity and ease of access to alcohol outlets significantly impact consumption patterns. University environments often feature numerous alcohol outlets and social venues where drinking is normalized. Stahler (2016) documented the correlation between alcohol outlet density near campuses and increased consumption rates among students. This environmental factor represents a significant challenge for prevention efforts, as it creates a context where alcohol is both physically and socially accessible.

The significant negative relationship between residence type and undergraduate students aligns with Victor's (2003) research, which found that students in private off-campus accommodations reported higher levels of alcohol consumption

compared to those in university hostels. The current study confirms that residential arrangements significantly influence students' alcohol consumption patterns. Private residences typically lack the oversight and regulations found in university accommodations, creating environments where alcohol consumption faces fewer restrictions. As noted by Ashati (2016), landlords of private accommodations often prioritize tenant retention over enforcing substance use policies, resulting in environments where students can freely engage in alcohol consumption without institutional constraints.

The findings reveal a significant negative relationship between religion and alcohol consumption among undergraduate students. This supports Zhu's (2014) conclusion that religious faith can serve as a protective factor against substance abuse. Religious commitments often involve moral frameworks that discourage excessive alcohol consumption, providing students with alternative value systems that can counterbalance peer and environmental influences. However, the study also acknowledges the complex role of religion, with some religious practices incorporating alcohol in ceremonial contexts. This dual nature of religion regarding alcohol highlights the importance of understanding specific religious teachings and practices rather than treating religion as a monolithic protective factor against alcohol consumption.

Conclusion

This study provides comprehensive evidence that alcohol consumption among undergraduate students in Ekiti state is influenced by a complex interplay of factors including peer pressure, guardian monitoring, upbringing, environmental context, residential arrangements, and religious beliefs. While students demonstrate awareness of alcohol's negative health effects, this knowledge is often insufficient to counteract the powerful social and environmental factors that promote consumption. The consistent negative correlations between these factors and student wellbeing highlight the need for multifaceted approaches to address alcohol consumption on university campuses. Effective interventions must acknowledge these various influences and work to create supportive environments that reduce alcohol's appeal and accessibility while strengthening protective factors and promoting healthy alternatives for social connection and stress management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Institutions should implement peer education



- initiatives that leverage positive peer influence to promote responsible alcohol consumption.
 2. Universities should develop structured communication channels with parents/guardians to maintain appropriate levels of monitoring without compromising students' developing autonomy.
 3. Pre-university orientation programs should include family components that address how family history and upbringing influence alcohol consumption patterns. These programs should provide strategies for students from homes with problematic alcohol use to develop healthier relationships with alcohol.
 4. Universities should work with local governments to regulate alcohol outlet density near campuses and create alcohol-free social spaces and events that provide alternatives to drinking. Campus policies should limit alcohol advertising and promotion.
 5. Universities should extend alcohol awareness programs and policies to private accommodations through landlord partnerships and off-campus student support services. Creating supervised social activities in residential settings can provide alternatives to drinking-centered gatherings.
 6. Universities should partner with religious organizations to develop culturally appropriate alcohol prevention programs that leverage spiritual values while respecting diverse beliefs. Supporting religious student groups that promote responsible choices can strengthen this protective factor.
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