

Implications of Alcohol Abuse on Undergraduates' Academic Achievement in Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar

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Abstract

This study investigate the implications of alcohol abuse on undergraduates' academic achievement in Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A detailed literature was reviewed according to the variables in the study. Survey descriptive design was adopted for the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select two hundred and thirty-one (231) respondents randomly selected from three Departments in the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was vetted by approved authorities. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks, alcohol-related social problems and undergraduates' academic achievement in the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar. Based on these findings, it was recommendations that a sustainable educational program on the impact of alcohol use on academic achievement be implemented for students; also, the school management should educate their students on the health implications related to effective consumption of alcohol and its consequences.

Keywords: Alcohol Abuse, Alcohol-Related Health Risks, Alcohol-Related Social Problems, Undergraduates, Academic Achievement

Introduction

Alcohol abuse among students and young people is fast becoming a public health challenge. Ajibola, Olatayo, Olumide and Olumuyiwa (2018) noted that, there is a growing concern about this trend and its consequences. According to World Health Organization (2019) alcohol has been classified as a depressant alongside barbiturates, benzodiazepines, chloral hydrate and rohypnol, which is a major cause of death of more than 2.6 million young people aged 10 to 24 each year in the world. These deaths are mostly due to preventable causes such as alcohol and substance abuse. Not less than 14% of adolescent girls and 18% of boys aged 13 - 15 years in low- and middle-income countries are reported to have been taking alcoholic drinks. This problem is very serious in some countries in the Western Pacific Region of the World Health Organization, as more than 50% of girls aged 10 - 19 and more than 80% of boys

aged 10 - 19 had ever consumed alcohol. However, Ajibola et al (2018) submitted that, this precarious situation is also prevalent in Nigeria, as previous studies have revealed a high burden of substance abuse among students.

In Cross River State, alcohol abuse amongst students, is an alarming public health concern. According to Bello, Ndifon, Mpama and Oduwale (2014), it was observed that in 2020, a study published in the East African Medical Journal, found that: 61.1% of students in Cross River State reported consuming alcohol at least once in the past year. 34.5% reported binge drinking (consuming 5 or more bottles in a row) in the past month. 23.1% reported experiencing alcohol-related problems, such as blackouts, injuries, or trouble with authorities. Factors contributing to alcohol abuse among students in Cross River State include: Peer pressure, stress and anxiety, lack of parental supervision, easy accessibility of alcohol, cultural and social norms.

According to Ajayi, Owolabi and Olajire (2019), tolerance and dependence may develop after chronic excessive use of alcohol and dependent drinkers may suffer withdrawal symptoms if they reduce or stop their alcohol consumption. Severe alcohol withdrawal complicated by delirium tremens is a medical emergency. Withdrawal symptoms include tremor, sweating, anxiety, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, insomnia, headache, hallucinations, and convulsions. Olujide, Muiyiwa, Adeusi and Cheube (2015) noted that, alcohol abuse is a recognized phenomenon among university students in Nigeria and has a negative impact on the education and performance of students. This may include disruption of interpersonal relationships especially within the family, criminal behavior, academic failure, vocational failure, and a lack of commensurate achievement.

Olujide et al (2015), also reveals that certain factors have been associated with alcohol use among students and they include but are not limited to; substance availability, accessibility, poor mental health, high social class, unhealthy family background, perceived adult drug use, peer's use of substances, poor academic achievement, desire to remain awake at night, conflicts with parents, emotional distress, low sense of social responsibility, its use in local films and videos and low level of religiosity. All these factors are real and play a part in this fast-growing problem among young people. Students are particularly at risk because they have unchecked freedom; some have too much money, poor role models, peer pressure, and irrational ambition. Students experience independence and freedom during the university period from direct adult and family supervision, self-decision making, and intense academic pressures, as well as sharing accommodation and hostels with people they barely know. They also form new social

groups and may be exposed to values different from their parental values. These new values may motivate the youth to indulge in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, alcohol, and illicit drug use. Undergraduate students make the transition from the restricted life monitored by parents to a more self-directed life influenced by the university environment and as such, the risk of substance use is increased in the university environment.

The tendency for an increase in antisocial tendencies and behavioral problems among undergraduate students in the school, makes it imperative to find out the implications of the use and abuse of alcohol among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks on students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between alcohol-related social problems on students' academic performance.

Literature review

Alcohol-related health risk and undergraduates' academic achievement

Education and health are closely connected. According to Dumbili and Williams (2016), alcohol use is considered the main risky behaviour among adolescents, young adults and students in general. Lasebikan, Ayine, Odunleye, Adeyefa, Adepoju and Fakunle (2018), noted that, harmful alcohol use among this cohort is strongly associated with various health and mental disorders such as suicidal ideation, aggressiveness, self-harm and alcohol dependency. Likewise, Mekonen, Fekadu, Mekonnen and Workie (2017), observed that, harmful use of alcohol can lead to functional impairment among students, which may result in poor academic performance, as well as increased drop-out rates. University students are vital to every nation and their wellbeing and health are essential to national development. Alcohol use, especially when excessive and uncontrollable, is a major threat to students' academic performance and their future.

Mekonen et al (2017), pointed out that excessive alcohol consumption has been associated with some chronic health diseases, and low academic performance. Alcohol consumption can have a significant impact on general health, as it is associated with both physical, medical problems and psychiatric disorders (Molina & Nelson, 2018). Davis, Dumas, Espelage, Tank and Hong (2018) also noted that poor academic performance of university

students has been associated with excessive alcohol consumption. with Patte, Qian, and Leatherdale (2017), pointing more specifically to compulsive or binge drinking (BD). These effects will have an impact not only on students' learning and education but will also have consequences in later life in the form of lost opportunities and reduced employability, thus resulting in a greater social and economic burden.

In the 2016 Global Burden of Disease Study, alcohol use was reported to be the seventh leading risk factor for disability and premature mortality and the foremost risk factor for risk-attributable disease burden among people aged 15 to 49 years (Esser, Hedden, Kanny, Brewer, Gfroerer, Naimi 2014). Globally, an estimated 2.8 million deaths (which represent 320 deaths every hour) were recorded as a result of hazardous alcohol use. An additional 1.6 and 6.0% of the Disability-adjusted Life Years among females and males is associated with alcohol use (World Health Organization 2018). Among adolescents, alcohol is the most widely used and abused drug in the world today.

Oteyo and Kariuki (2019) reported that the prevalence of alcohol use has caused the concern that the students may not reach their full potential and may be at high risk to abuse drugs later in life. Chikere and Mayowa (2017) reported that 26.7% of 482 male undergraduate students in Owerri were heavy drinkers. They found that students consumed alcohol because they wanted to feel high and because it enabled them to build and maintain their friendship network. A number of alcohol health risks were noted: some students drank for sexual enhancement, and students also reported that alcohol caused memory loss, poor academic performance and accidents.

In a similar study, Abayomi, Onifade, Adelufosi, and Akinhanmi (2018) revealed that 31.1% of the students they surveyed engaged in heavy episodic drinking, while 8.9% had suffered alcohol-related injury. In a more recent study from the same Western region, Abayomi, Babalola, Olakunlehin, and Ighoroje (2016) reported that 10.7% of 431 students had driven under the influence of alcohol. Drinking, they note, also increased risky driving behaviours, such as using mobile phones to send text messages or make calls while driving, 'driving against traffic,' and neglecting to use helmets and seat belts (Abayomi et al.2016). Such research confirms the findings of (Adeoye, Adeoye, Ngozi and Iseoluwa (2014), who report that alcohol abuse, dependence, and alcohol use disorder are some of the common problems among university students in South-western Nigeria. Recently, a survey of 1119 participants found that 39.5% had alcohol use disorder (Lasebikan et al, 2018).

According to Witkiewitz, Litten and Leggio (2019), the damaging effects in connection with alcohol are largely as a result of high rates of alcohol abuse among the consumers. Alpert, Slater, Yoon, Chen, Winstanley and Esser (2022), noted that excessive alcohol use has immediate effects that increase the risk of many harmful health conditions. These are most often the result of binge drinking and include the following: Injuries, such as motor vehicle crashes, falls, drownings, and burns. Violence, including homicide, suicide, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. Alcohol poisoning, a medical emergency that results from high blood alcohol levels. Risky sexual behaviors, including unprotected sex or sex with multiple partners. These behaviors can result in unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV as well miscarriages and stillbirths or fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) among pregnant women.

Alcohol-related social problems and undergraduates' academic achievement

Alcohol consumption can have significant social risks and negative impacts on academic achievement, particularly for students. Alcohol forms part of many social gatherings in Africa, and it is central to many cultural activities (Ferreira-Borgies, Parry and Babor 2017). Also, alcohol sale is a source of income for many in Africa, and as a result, little attention is paid to it both by the government and the populace, neglecting the detrimental social effects. Lasebikan et al., (2018), posited that alcohol use is considered the main risky behaviour among adolescents, young adults and students in general. Dumbili (2014), observed that harmful alcohol use among this cohort is strongly associated with various disorders such as suicidal ideation, Increase risks of accident, injury, financial problems, aggressiveness, self-harm and alcohol dependency. Likewise, harmful use of alcohol can lead to functional impairment among students, which may result in poor academic performance, as well as increased drop-out rates (Mekonen et al 2017). There is also an associated increase in risky sexual behaviour among students who use alcohol in a harmful way (Choudhry, Agardh, Stafstrom and Ostergren 2014).

Alcohol abuse among this group is often accompanied by the use of other psychoactive substances, which further increase the negative social effects on individuals (Donald 2017). In addition, Bockerman, Hyttinen and Maczulskij (2015), noted that, alcohol use among this sect could also have an economic impact such as its negative effect on labour market outcomes, specifically, labour market earnings and attachment. According to Eze, Njoku, Eseadi, Akubue, Ezeanwu, Ugwu and Ofuebe (2017), in addition to socio-demographic factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status of students, there are several underlying drivers of this social

behaviors among students. Some scholars have posited that the change in lifestyle behaviour that accompanies tertiary education, as well as the perceived freedom from parental control or supports further heighten this risky behaviour (Castano-Perez and Calderon-Vallejo 2014).

Adeniyi and Seekoe (2017), noted that, gender play a significant role and males are more likely to engage in binge drinking more frequently than their female counterparts. According to Skrzynski and Creswell (2020), studies conducted in Western contexts have shown multiple health and social risks associated with alcohol use and misuse among adolescents and young adults. Alcohol consumption affects young people's brain development and it negatively impacts their motivation to study for good grades and educational achievement more generally (El Ansari & Stock 2014).

Besera, Carlos, Leita-da-Mota and Ferrianidas (2019), also opined that, alcohol consumption may also induce aggressive and violent behaviours and can cause impaired driving, accidents, injuries, and death among youths. Research across sub-Saharan Africa on alcohol-related social harm is still emerging, but recent research in Uganda, as an example, also demonstrates significant self-reported alcohol-related adverse consequences among youth (Swahn, Culbreth, Salazar, Tumwesigye, Jernigan, Kasirye, Obot 2020). However, it is clear that there are important differences across cultures and countries that are important to consider when designing prevention and intervention strategies.

In Nigeria, noticeable harmful drinking practices that facilitate alcohol-related social harms are common among contemporary youth (Adeloye, Olawole-Isaac, Auta, Dewan, Omoyele, Ezeigwe, and Alemu (2019). One of the recent practices, especially amongst boys and young men, is to use herbal alcoholic beverages (i.e., cocktails of liquor, roots and leaves) and other psychoactive substances such as tramadol purposefully to enhance sexual performance (Igweze, Amadi and Orisakwe, 2019).

Zamboanga, Pesigan, Tomaso, Schwartz, Ham, Bersamin and Forthun (2015), noted that, another practice that encourages heavy drinking among Nigerian youth is various drinking games, despite the risks associated with drinking game participation. Young Nigerian men and women as well as students, play diverse drinking games, such as first-to-finish, spinning, and endurance games, for pleasure and other purposes (Dumbili, 2022). Some of the reasons for these drinking practices include fun/pleasure and socializing with peers, experiencing the bodily intoxicating effects of alcohol (i.e., 'to get high'), coping with stress and ameliorating heartbreaks caused by failed romantic relationships (Dumbili and Onyima, 2018).

Additionally, most adolescents and young adults who consume alcohol also perform masculinity and femininity with heavy drinking in public spaces (Dumbili, 2015). The study demonstrates that the main reason why gender performance with alcohol is common among youth in Nigeria is that they believe that the ability to outdrink peers is a status conferral. Research in Eastern Nigeria has also shown that young people, particularly students, consume large quantities of alcohol to cope with harsh economic conditions in Nigeria and to ameliorate sorrow and heartbreaks from failed romantic relationships (Dumbili and Onyima, 2018). Surprisingly, students also consume alcohol to boost their confidence to present oral examinations and seminars and to cope with poor academic performance (Dumbili and Onyima, 2018).

Methodology

Survey descriptive design is adopted for this study. This design is considered appropriate for the study because it enables the researcher collect data through survey instrument. The population of this study comprised all undergraduate students of the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, giving a total of 1,148 from the three departments for year 2023/2024 academic session. The sample of the study comprised of two hundred and thirty-one (231) respondents, randomly selected from three (3) departments in the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education in the University of Calabar.

The instrument used for the data collection in the study was a questionnaire titled: Implications of Alcohol Abuse on Undergraduates' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (IAAUAAQ). It divided into two (2) sections. Section A contained items on respondents' personal data. Section B was developed using modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Items 1-5 measured alcohol-related health risk. Items 6-10 measured alcohol-related social problems and students' performance. While items 11-20 measured alcohol abuse on undergraduates' academic achievement.

Result

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks and undergraduates' academic achievement. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment

analysis was used at .05 level of significance. The summary of the result obtained from the analysis is as presented in table 1.

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Table 1: Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between alcohol-related health risks and undergraduates' academic achievement

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Cal.r	Critical r-value
Alcohol-related health risks	4716	3481	65743	0.43	0.138
Undergraduates' academic achievement	1253	2715			

*Significance at .05 level, df=229, critical r = 0.138

The result from the table above shows that the calculated r- value of 0.43 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at .05 level of significance with 229 degrees of freedom with this result; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Hence, there is a significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks on undergraduates' academic achievement.

Hypotheses two

States that There is no significant relationship between alcohol-related social problems on undergraduates' academic achievement. To test this hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used at .05 level of significance. The summary of the result obtained from the analysis is as presented on table 2 below.

Table 2: Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between alcohol-related social problems and undergraduates' academic achievement (N=231)

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Cal.r	Critical r-value
Alcohol-related social problems	1346	4862	5649	0.56	0.138
Undergraduates' academic achievement	1253	2715			

*Significance at .05 level, df=229, critical r = 0.138

The result from the table shows that the calculated value of 0.56 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at .05 level of significance with degree of freedom with this result; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Hence, there is a significant relationship between alcohol-related social problems on undergraduates' academic achievement.

Discussion of findings

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks and undergraduates' academic achievement. However, on the bases of the result obtained from the statistical analysis of data, the null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.43 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.138. The implication of this result is that there is no significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks and undergraduates' academic achievement.

The findings of this hypothesis agreed with the assertion of Lasebikan, Ayine, Odunleye, Adeyefa, Adepoju and Fakunle (2018), who noted that, harmful alcohol use among this cohort is strongly associated with various health and mental disorders such as suicidal ideation, aggressiveness, self-harm and alcohol dependency. Also in support of this hypothesis is the views of Mekonen, Fekadu, Mekonnen and Workie (2017), who observed that, harmful use of alcohol can lead to functional impairment among students, which may result in poor academic performance, as well as increased drop-out rates. The scholars further maintained that University students are vital to every nation and their wellbeing and health are essential to national development. Alcohol use, especially when excessive and uncontrollable, is a major threat to students' academic performance and their future. Also in support of this hypothesis is the assertion made by Patte, Qian, and Leatherdale (2017), who pointed out more specifically to compulsive or binge drinking (BD). These effects will have an impact not only on students' learning and education but will also have consequences in later life in the form of lost opportunities and reduced employability, thus resulting in a greater social and economic burden.

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between alcohol-related social problems on undergraduates' academic achievement. However, this null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.56 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.138. The implication of the result is that there is a significant relationship between alcohol-related social problems on undergraduates' academic achievement.

The findings of this hypothesis is in accordance with the views of Eze, Njoku, Eseadi, Akubue, Ezeanwu, Ugwu and Ofuebe (2017), who noted that in addition to socio-demographic factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status of students, there are several underlying drivers of social behaviors among students. Some scholars have posited that the change in lifestyle behaviour that accompanies tertiary education, as well as the perceived freedom from parental control or supports further heighten this risky behaviour. Also in support of this hypothesis is the result from a study conducted by Skrzynski and Creswell (2020), the result shows that multiple health and social risks associated with alcohol use and misuse among adolescents and young adults. Alcohol consumption affects young people's brain development and it negatively impacts their motivation to study for good grades and educational achievement more generally.

Conclusion

The findings obtained in the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between alcohol-related health risks, alcohol-related social problems and undergraduates' academic achievement in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis in the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A sustainable educational program on the impact of alcohol use on academic achievement be implemented for students.
2. The school management should educate their students on the health implications related to effective consumption of alcohol and its consequences.

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