

Determinants of Alcohol Use among Female University Students in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT There has been an increasing trend of female involvement in drug use particularly alcohol consumption in Nigeria. The present study examines prevalence as well as pattern of harmful alcohol use among female undergraduate students at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. It also documents the determinant to this harmful alcohol consumption. Five hundred and twenty-five students constituting 30.8% of the entire resident female students in the university got a questionnaire consisting several items assessing alcohol use disorder and other psychosocial factors filled. From this number, 285 i.e. (54.2%) satisfied caseness for alcohol consumption. 87.3% were within the normal drinking range while 7.7% were hazardously drinking alcohol and 5% were harmfully abusing alcohol. Factors such as age, social anxiety and family type were found to affect this consumption pattern. Results were discussed in relation to existing literature of drug abuse in Nigeria particularly among females and a need for an urgent policy formulation regarding institutionalized female residence.

INTRODUCTION

Many studies report substantially higher prevalence of illicit drug use among youths in Nigeria (CRISA, 1996). This prevalence is particularly striking with respect to alcohol abuse. There are relatively few systematic analyses of female who use alcohol, despite increasing indication for that (Oshodin, 1984; Oshodin & Osayuki, 1982; Odejide, Ohaeri, Adelekan and Ikuesan, 1987; Ihezue, 1988; Onwuzurike, 1998; Odejide, 1989; Abidoye & Bankole, 1989; Nafziger & Tamen, 1993; Oladimeji and Fabiyi, 1993; Ikuesan, 1994) For example, Oshodin & Osayuki (1982) studied alcohol use among university students found from a survey of 1,000 students that 79% of females drank alcohol while 87% of the sample of the males drank alcohol. Ihezue (1988) found 19% of females in a sample of university undergraduate to use alcohol. Onwuzurike (1988) found that the drinking

patterns of female students tend to assume equal proportion with women liberation process in Nigeria. Nafziger and Tamen (1993) in their studied found 1.3% of females to be in serious alcohol problems. Also, Oladimeji & Fabiyi (1993) in a study on trends in alcohol consumption among Nigeria undergraduates found an increase of 83.3% within 5 years interval and more females were observed to be regular users of alcohol. Ikuesan (1994) examined drinking problems and the position of women in Nigeria. This problem was examined against the background of society's general attitudes toward women. It was found that women who misuse alcohol in Nigeria suffer enormous psychological and social damage, besides the physical complications experienced by alcohol misusers.

In a just recently concluded survey of children of the street in Ibadan, Nigeria (Olley, 2000), it was found that 94.4% of the females as against 65.5% of males use and abuse alcohol. This study concluded that the girl child would rarely be of the street, but when they do, the tendency to have behavioral excess such as alcohol dependence is higher than the boy child.

Factors related to females and males alcohol use belong to four domains of influence: family, individual factors, peer, and socio-demographic characteristics.

Family factors are important predictors of adolescents and young adults substance use more generally (Adesina, 1987; Oyefeso, 1990 and Karick, 1993). Parenting practices including lack of parent - child closeness, weak or excessive controls, inconsistent discipline and ineffective monitoring are positively associated with substance use. There is a positive association between parental factors and drug use (Karick, 1993). Studies have also shown that behavior problems and delinquency are consistently re-

lated to adolescent substance use (Ibanga & Zwandor, 1993).

Peer influence as measured by peer drug use; peer approval normative and social pressure is strongly associated with adolescent substance use (Odejide, 2000). Age is positively associated with substance use for females and the rates of lifetime and current drug use are equivalent to or slightly higher than those of males (Adelekan, 1989).

The present study examines the prevalence of alcohol use among females and specifically studied factors uniquely associated with this prevalence, by evaluating the effect as well as differential effects of these factors to alcohol use.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects used for these study were drawn from a population of female university students from all levels using their hall of residence as a sample frame. A total number of 525 students participated in the study. The mean (\bar{x}) age of respondents was found to be 22.06, with standard deviation (SD) of 2.3.

Instruments

This study utilized a 76-item questionnaire comprising 6 mutually exclusive scales namely: the socio-demographic, need for affiliation, need for autonomy, social anxiety scale, the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT).

Socio-demographic Scales

The following fourteen variables consisted the socio-demographic scale: family type, religiosity, age, years of education, family type, birth order, parental status, parental absent, father socio-economic status, mother job outside, number of siblings, residential area, sociability status, parent-child interaction and confidant index. Most of these variables have been implicated as determining factors in general drug literature (Oyefeso, 1990).

Need for Affiliation

This is an eight-item scale adapted from the validated version of the 15-item forced-choice questionnaire of Edward's Personal Preference schedule (EPPS) Oyefeso (1990). It assesses the level of affiliation of an individual subjects to his social environment. It has split half reliability of 0.80 ($P < .0001$), coefficient alpha of 0.69 coefficient of equivalence of 0.73 ($P < .0001$); and a stability coefficient of 0.47 ($P < .001$). It has a construct validity of 0.51 ($P < .001$) with a known criterion – number of close friends; and a convergent validity of 0.67 ($P < .001$) with subject actual self-rating on perceived need for affiliation. Response categories range from one, meaning strongly disagree to five, meaning strongly agreed. For the purpose of this study, a Cronbach Alpha of 0.76 was recorded using a sub-sample of 100 respondents.

Need for Autonomy

This also is a 9-item Likert type scale adapted and validated from a 15-item forced-choice questionnaire of the Edward's Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) Oyefeso (1990). It assesses degree of inhibition in social and interpersonal interaction. It has a split-half reliability of 0.77 $P < .001$, coefficient alpha of 0.78, coefficient of equivalent of 0.59 $P < .001$ and a stability coefficient of 0.22 $P < .05$. It has a convergent validity of 0.27 $P < .01$ with subjects actual self-rating as criterion on perceived need for autonomy. For the purpose of this study, Cronbach Alpha of 0.75 using a sub-sample of 100 respondents.

Social Anxiety

This in its original form was a 28-item true-false, self-report questionnaire, and was modified into a 10-item Likert-type questionnaire by Oyefeso (1990). It has a convergent validity of 0.72 $P < .001$ with the original version and a discriminant validity of -0.31 , $P < .001$, score ranges from 10 – 40. For the purpose of this study, Cronbach Alpha of .83 was observed using a sub-sample of 100 respondents.

Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Tests (AUDIT)

This is a scale developed by WHO through a six-nation cross-cultural study to tap frequency of drinking, dependence symptoms and signs of harmful consumption (Saunders and Aasland 1987). The AUDIT consists of two parts, a clinical instrument and a 10-item alcohol specific questionnaire, with the potency of classifying drinking habits into normal (0-8) hazardous (9-18) and harmful (19-40). The 10-item questionnaire was used in this study. The AUDIT has been used in Nigeria (Gureje, Obikoya and Ikuesan 1992), though with a poor sensitivity record of 32% and a specificity of 93%. An internal consistency of the item was established however with an alpha of .70 with a sample of 100 respondents. For the purpose of this study two hundred and eighty-five (54.2%) of the sample who reported alcohol use and whose scores ranges between 1 and 40 constituted the caseness used for analysis in this study.

Procedures

The researcher made use of the 3 female hostels of the University of Ibadan. These hostels are Queens Elizabeth hall, Queen Idia hall and the Awolowo hall for female. They have an estimated 1700 legal occupants living in them. Their participation in the study was made voluntary after an informed consent with an exclusion criterion of illegal/squatter occupants. The questionnaire was administered to 525 participants, which constitute (30.8%) of the entire estimated female population, who were approached by 10 research assistants in their various rooms. Before filling the questionnaires, they were instructed about the purpose of the study and how the questionnaire is to be filled and submitted in a locked box provided for the purpose at the entrance of their hall of residence. The research assistants helped at the end of each day to retrieve the filled questionnaires from the box provided. Out of 525 questionnaires that were administered, 433 (82.4%) questionnaires were returned. From this 14 (3.2%) were void due to errors, omissions and multiple responses and therefore discarded.

Design/Statistics

The design for this study is the ex-post factor design. The researcher did not manipulate the independent variable (alcohol) and there were no experimental-control groups. Therefore, statistics such as means, standard deviation, correlations and analysis of variance was used to analyze the responses from the filled and coded questionnaire. Independent variables include the fourteen socio-demographic factors, need for affiliation, need for autonomy and social anxiety while the dependent measure is the aggregate score of the respondent on the AUDIT. All variables are treated as continuous variables. The dichotomous variables such as family type, birth order, etc were converted into dummy variables and included in the analysis. The statistical package for the social sciences SPSS version 6.1 was used for the entire analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

From a total of two hundred and eighty-five female respondents, 205 (71.9%) were from monogamous home and 80 (28.1%) were from a polygamous home.

109 (38.3%) attended all female school while 176 (61.8%) attended co-educational schools. Also, 226 (76.3%) attended a nursery school and 59 (20.7%) did not attend a nursery school.

Twenty (7.0%) did not attend in the last 12 months any religious activities, while 36 (12.6%) indicated attendance several times but less than once a month. Twenty-two (7.7%) attended religious activity once a month or more often but less than once in a week. Seventy-six (26.7%) attended once a week and 131 (36.0%) attended more than once a week.

From all the respondents, 7 (2.5%) rated their father as not loving at all while 51 (17.9%) rated their father as little loving. Two hundred and twenty-seven (79.6%) rated their father as very much loving. Twelve (4.2%) rated their father as not understanding while 91 (31.9%) rated their father to have little understanding and one hundred and eighty-two (63.9%) rated their father as very much understanding.

Twenty (7.0%) of the females indicated

inability to talk to their father while 101 (35.4%) rated a little ability to be able to talk to their father and 164 (57.5%) rated a very much ability to talk to their father. Also from all respondents, 11 (3.9%) rated their father as not having interest in their welfare while 39 (13.7%) rated their father to have a little interest in their welfare and 235 (82.5%) rated their father to have very much interest in their welfare.

On the ratings of their mother, 4 (1.4%) rated their mother as not loving at all while 19 (6.7%) rated their mother as little loving and 262 (91.9%) rated their mother as very much loving. For mother's rating on understanding, 4 (1.4%) rated them as not at all understanding while 54 (18.9%) rated them as little understanding and 227 (79.6%) rated them as very much understanding.

Seven (2.5%) of the female respondents indicated that they were not able to talk to their mother while 44 (15.4%) indicated a little ability to talk to their mother and 234 (82.1%) indicated a very much ability to talk to their mothers.

Five (1.8%) of the respondents rated their mother as not having interest in their welfare while 17 (6.0%) rated their mother as having little interest in their welfare and 263 (92.3%) rated their mother as having very much interest in their welfare.

Regarding decision making process in family matters, 9 (3.2%) said mother always decides, while 28 (9.8%) said mother has the greater say, 188 (66%) indicated that depending on the

problem at hand, both father and mother usually have a say. Forty (14.0%) said father has the greater say, and 20 (7.0%) indicated that father always take decisions at home.

On the question on which the female respondents will run to in the face of the personal problem, 5 (1.8%) indicated that they would first talk to their teacher or lecturer, while 76 (26.7%) indicated close friend. Fifty-one (17.9%) indicated they would first meet their sister while 17 (6.0%) will meet their brother and 112 (39.3%) would meet their mother and 24 (8.4%) their father respectively.

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis showed that several correlation matrixes of all the variables used in the study. Several associations such age ($r = .18$, $P < .01$), family type ($r = .19$, $P < .01$), social anxiety ($r = .70$, $P < .01$), sociability status ($r = -.14$, $P < .05$) was found to be associated with alcohol use disorder as measured by AUDIT.

Multivariate Analysis

A significant effect ($F = 5.658$, $df 1$; $P < .05$) was recorded for need for affiliation as indicated in table 1. Also, a significant effect of age ($F = 7.972$, $df 1$; $P < .01$) and family type ($F = 20.700$, $df 1$; $P < .01$) respectively was recorded as determinants of alcohol use among the female students (see table 2).

Table 1: Summary of a three-way analysis of variance as determined by need for autonomy, affiliation and social anxiety for alcohol use disorder (N = 285)

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Main Effects	221.786	3	73.929	1.887
Autonomy	3.445	1	3.445	.088
Affiliation	221.697	1	221.697	5.658*
Anxiety	3.717	1	3.717	.095
2-Way Interactions	146.119	3	48.706	1.243
Autonomy vs Affiliation	14.761	1	14.761	.377
Autonomy vs Anxiety	83.524	1	83.524	2.132
Affiliation vs Anxiety	44.884	1	44.884	1.145
3-Way Interactions	49.902	1	49.902	1.273
Autonomy vs Affiliation vs Anxiety	49.902	1	49.902	1.273
Explained	417.807	7	59.687	1.523
Residual	10854.390	277	39.186	
Total	11272.196	284	39.691	

* $P < .05$

Table 2: Summary of a three-way analysis of variance as determined by age, years of education and family type for alcohol use disorder (N = 285)

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Main Effects	891.171	3	297.057	7.972**
Age	77.349	1	77.349	2.076
Years of Education	50.460	1	50.460	1.354
Family Type	771.377	1	771.377	20.700**
2-Way Interactions	58.850	3	19.617	.526
Age vs Years of Education	.337	1	.337	.009
Age vs Family Type	58.403	1	58.403	1.567
Yrs of Educ. vs Family Type	.967	1	.967	.026
3-Way Interactions	.028	1	.028	.001
Age vs Years of Education vs Family Type	.028	1	.028	.001
Explained	950.049	7	135.721	3.642
Residual	10322.147	277	37.264	
Total	11272.196	284	39.691	

P < .01

DISCUSSION

This study assessed prevalence and determinant of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) among a non-probability sample of female undergraduate's students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Seventeen hypothetical constructs of associated variables of alcohol use were used. Results showed that several of psychosocial and demographic associations exist with alcohol use among the female population and that significant effect: age, social anxiety and family type existed and therefore a possible determinant to increase harmful alcohol consumption among the sampled studied.

A prevalence of 54.2% harmful alcohol consumption was found among this sample. From this number 87.3% were within the normal drinking range while 7.7% were hazardously drinking alcohol and 5% were harmfully abusing alcohol.

Though there has been a noticeable trend and increasing involvement of the female sex in alcohol abuse (Ihezue, 1988; Nafziger and Tamen, 1993; Oladimeji & Fabiyi, 1993), which elicited the present endeavor. Harmfully and clinically significant pattern of this particular among the female population has rarely been documented. This study has therefore pointed out that the female population may indeed be at great risk for harmful alcohol consumption and this may be common among the university population. Increasing female participation in alcohol consump-

tion underscore previous cultural stereotype and biases that harmful alcohol consumption is in the domain of the male gender. This particularly has pointed out that the level of moral decadence already existing in our higher institutions of learning. Moral orientation is gradually fading away from our social life, more females are taking to prostitution and other social vices for survival in the increasing sophistication of the Ivory tower, and this particularly could therefore be the reason for this increasing trend in alcohol consumption pattern of the female gender.

Another significant finding is the power of family type in predicting harmful alcohol usage. Some studies have implicated the role of family variable in involvement of drug use (Adesina, 1987). Family factors are known to be very important predictors of involvement in drug use Oyefeso (1990).

Oyefeso (1990) recorded the importance of parental values and socialization techniques in involvement in drug use. Though polygamous home structure is common to the African and evidence abound in literature about its possibility of creating crisis at the home front. Children reared from this type of family are conflict prone. Crisis could be in form of broken homes, poor parent child relationship, and large family size. A possible escape from this stressed induced environment is the use of drugs which alcohol consumption or problem drinking could be. Oyefeso (1990) in their contention indicated that

perceived father-son relationship, alone and in the context of maternal relationship influences the adult male's use of drug. They have also observed that the degree of paternal affection, i.e. care love and attention, is related to the adolescent male's use of drug. Boys who received insufficient paternal affection are more likely to use drug than boys whose fathers are affectionate.

A family being monogamous or polygamous is usually characterized with a small size and close ties, with the two parents expected to give maximum attention and affection to their children. A polygamous family, on the other hand, is characterized with a large size and decentralized authority. The authority inherent in the father is shared with two or more wives. As a result, the father, who is the traditional head of the family, may then share his authority with the wives, each of whom is of course, less insistent. The resulting permissiveness may encourage liberal behavior such as harmful drinking. Adesina (1987) observed that drug users are from polygamous homes than those from monogamous home. The significant finding of social anxiety as a predictor of alcohol use disorder is perhaps equivocal. It supports the contention that alcohol usage is an element of escape and therefore a coping strategy for individuals who seek refuge from mild to severe levels of fears, anxieties boredom and depression.

SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATION

In this study, it was found that age, family type and need for affiliation affect harmful alcohol consumption among female university students in Ibadan, Nigeria.

These associations as well as the prevalence is rather insightful, firstly it confirms the importance of social factors as important variable in the explanation of drug usage especially among young persons. Secondly, the total case ness as well as the prevalence rate of 54% among these students is rather alarming and has implication for urgent policy formulation in the environmental milieu as well as the condition of instructions for Nigerian teaming student population. The insistence strike actions by teachers and students characterized in our citadel of learning and

the upsurge of cultism, could have worsen the alcohol use pattern observed in this study. This finding should therefore serve as inference for school counselors and also help in proper formulation of policies that will promote mental well-being among the generality of the student.

Nevertheless, the data should be interpreted with caution. A study of this nature will require a more rigorous sampling procedure for it to make an appreciable impact in the alcohol pathology literature and the entire student population may be studied in future

Also, the instruments used for assessing alcohol use pattern among the subject is a self-reported ten item-screening test, it is therefore not a diagnostic tool on the subject. Again due to its self-reported nature of the instrument used, most information supplied could have been distorted by social and conformity factors, more so when the questionnaire were distributed in the hall of residence of student and retrieving from a locked box not withstanding.

Efforts should be made to improve on this present endeavor a trend analysis of this prevalence should be done, as indication for higher prevalence is strife. A more cross-sectional study with larger samples size of the students is highly recommended and this could be supported with a more diagnostic criterion for alcohol use disorder.

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