

## An Investigation into the Incidence of Alcohol Usage and Abuse among Female Student of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa

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### Abstract

This study investigates the incidence of alcohol use and abuse among University of Lagos female students. Students' questionnaire on alcohol use abuse (SQAUA) was the major research instrument used to collect relevant data from the respondents. A total of 200 randomly selected students were used as samples. Five null hypotheses were formulated and tested with the use of chi-square, and simple percentage method of analysis. The results obtained indicated that there is significant relationship between female students' use and abuse of alcohol and their social relationship, there is significant relationship between female students' use and abuse of alcohol and their morals, and there is no significant relationship between use and abuse of alcohol and female student academic performance.

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**Keywords:** alcohol, SQAUA, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

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### INTRODUCTION

Alcohol is the most widely used and abused drug in the world today mostly among the adolescence. Many people do not regard it as a drug, which it actually is. It creates vastly more social, economic and moral problems than the several illegal drugs combined. (Folawiyo, 2000). Alcohol otherwise known as ethyl alcohol or ethanol, is a beverage obtained by the process of fermentation and distillation of fruits, like grapes, grains, corn, barley etc. It could also be obtained from milk, honey and molasses (Alan R. Lang 2005)

The active ingredient in alcohol is ethanol larger beer contained 4.5% alcohol; wine about 7% - 15% per liters volume while whiskey vodka gin and local gin contain 40 – 50% ethanol (Oakley 2002).

Alcohol can be obtained as beverage through the process of fermentation (Oakley 2002). Alcohol can be regarded as drug, as against some other peoples view, looking at the definitions of drug and function rendered by alcohol. According to Leach and Jordan, drugs are chemicals, which as effects on an organism mentally and physically.

Charles (2003) said, drugs have the potentials to alter mood perception and consciousness, while Beach defined it as various chemical, which alter one's experience in one way or the other. Such drugs are called psychoactive drugs i.e. they have the ability to affect both cognitive and effective abilities of individuals. A drug is a substance that when taken into the living organism may modify one or more of its function (The World Health Organization). Definition from medical perspective by Sara son,

2002, wayne 2009, and Harris willson 2000; drugs is used for the treatment of physical or mental disorder (Amor 2008).

History has revealed that alcohol has been in existence in all cultures of the world, and it is believed to be the first known chemical mood modifier. It is probable first discovered by an early man who might have left some grains in a pot of water, and come back to the pot few days later to notice a stronger odour. The grains have fermented he tested it and liked it, he drank more of it and noticed shortly that it had some effects, which are pleasing to him (Pittman and Snyder 2009). Drinking features in the historical records of the Mesopotamians, ancient Egyptians, early Greeks, early Romans as well as the early inhabitants of the oriented people. The presence in the Bible of some passages relating to alcohol and the references of the use on variety of occasions, coupled with some verses prohibiting it in the Qur'an as well as its effect of human mind shows that alcohol use, existed before the time of Jesus Christ.

In African traditional religion, alcohol occupies a prominent position in the worship of their deities. The Hebrew and early Christian churches used alcohol in their religious churches, used alcohol in their religious worship as well as their social occasions. The Italians used it as beverage, and though their children take wine early in life, they do not indulge them to condone drunkenness. They see alcohol in terms of health and culture (Louise 2002). The Irish take a lot of alcohol and both drunkenness and alcoholism are common. Only in few cases of

drunkenness' and alcoholism are observed among the Chinese. Alcohol is however a problem among the American population who consumes a lot of beer, wine and spirit. The East and Southern Africans are not left out of this problem, so also is West Africa where it is a favorite past time to drink alcohol. Nigeria is not left out of this alcohol menace with many breweries and distilleries, together with local production at alcohol and thirst for alcohol which runs across socio-economic, ethnic class, religion affiliations, men and women etc. it may not be an over statement to say Nigeria is an alcohol drinking nation (Girdano and Girdano 2002). The phenomenal increase in the number of breweries and distilleries in the last twenty-five years seem to suggest that Nigerian society has acquired a special taste for increase consumption of alcohol. All these suggest that the population of alcohol usage is increasing steady with new recruits from teenagers who are anxious to say they have "arrived" at the scene of adulthood (Udoh 2009).

In chemistry, alcohol is a general term for any organic compound in which a hydroxyl group (HO) is bound to a carbon atom, which in turn may be bound to other carbon atoms and further hydrogen's. Other alcohols such as propylene glycol and the sugar alcohols may appear in food or beverage regularly, but these alcohols do not make them "alcoholic". Methanol (one carbon), the propane's (three carbons giving two isomers), and the butanes (four carbons, four isomer) are all commonly found alcohols, and none of these three should ever be consumed in any form. Alcohols are toxicity into the corresponding aldehydes and then into the corresponding carboxylic acids. These metabolic products cause a poisoning and acidosis. In the case of other alcohols than ethanol, the aldehydes and carboxylic acids are poisonous and the acidosis can be lethal. In contrast, fatalities from ethanol are mainly found in extreme doses and related to induction and unconsciousness or chronic addiction (alcoholism) (Abbadio). (Tims and Sue 2007).

The use of the substance and more than necessary known as alcoholism is most prominent in tertiary institution where we have academic freedom and students do things at their own free will (Donald 2011), it has physiological consequences on the body when taken. This involves an action on the central nervous system and makes the frontal lobe in the brain to be depressed and consequently, the individual is disinhibited. There is loss of memory, reasoning and loss of cognitive power. There is also neuro-pathology, characterized by tremor, weakness, dizziness and atrophy of the brain with severe mental distortion which manifest as garrulous confabulation and disorientation. (Alexander 2002).

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Over the year and in recent time, the researcher had observed with keen interest that the use of alcohol among female students of various levels of our educational institution has been a major concern to all including parents, teachers, the school management and others. In particular, it has been observed that the usage and abuse of alcohol has more implications on the health status of student in schools, for instance, it is the cause of many social and health problems, such as increase in crime rate and high proportion of accidental injury.

Therefore, the researcher is motivated by these implications to carry out an explicit investigation of the major causes, in terms of psychological, physical, social and academic consequence of alcohol intake among female students of University of Lagos.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to:

- Find out the causes of the usage of alcohol among female students.
- Determine the extent of alcohol use among University of Lagos students.
- Find out what lead to the abuse of alcohol.
- Investigate the relationship between the use and abuse of alcohol with the student's behavior, since it is possible for a person who is not under any influence to misbehave or behave too extra ordinary.
- Determine the effect of alcohol use and abuse on student's performance as the brain gets a share of alcohol and is the seat of student's academic performance.
- Suggest solution to the use of abuse of alcohol.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The outcome of the study will be beneficial to the University authority or policy makers, the entire students, the state and federal government as it could facilitate better understanding of female student reasons or sources of conflict, poor academic performance and reduction of injurious accidental occurrence which might arise from the usage and abuse of alcohol. As well as providing a searchlight for other researcher in related area of study.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question were asked and answered in this study.

- (1) Will there be any reasons for alcohol usage and abuse among female students of University of Lagos?
- (2) Will there be need for any female students of University of Lagos to indulge in the use and abuse of alcohol?
- (3) Will there be any implication for any female student's usage and abuse of alcohol on their academic performance?

- (4) Will there be any effect of alcohol usage and abuse on the health of female students who indulged in it usage?
- (5) Will there be any ways of solving the problems associated with the female student's usage and abuse of alcohol?

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

- (1) There will be no any significant reasons for alcohol usage and abuse among female student of University of Lagos.
- (2) There will be no any significant relationship between the usage and abuse of alcohol among female students of the University of Lagos and their moral status.
- (3) There will be no any significant implication of usage and abuse of alcohol on the student academics performance.
- (4) There will be no any significant effect of alcohol usage and abuse on the health of the students of the University of Lagos.

**DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was delimited to female student of University of Lagos comprising of the eight Faculties drawing only twenty five samples from each of the eight Faculties.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted descriptive research methods, as it attempts to investigate the incident of alcohol usage and abuse among University of Lagos female students.

**POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The population for this study consists of student of the University of Lagos. Samples were then randomly drawn from the eight faculties in the University. Each sample consists twenty five students with an overall total of two hundred students including one hundred male and one hundred female in all.

**RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The instrument used for data collection in this study is student's questionnaire on alcohol usage and abuse (SQAUA). SQAUA was made up of two sections A and B. Section A sought demographic information such as Department, Hall of residence, Level, Sex, Age and Marital status. While section B, had items seeking student's responses to investigation of alcohol usage and abuse among University of Lagos students.

**VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The questionnaire, which centre on students alcohol usage and abuse was construction and adopted by the researcher, with the assistance of research expert within the research unit of the university who confirmed it valid for the research after making some necessary correction and suggestions.

**PROCEDURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally, in each of the hall of residence to the students that formed part of the study.

Explanations were made where necessary for clarification on the questionnaire on the same day so as to ensure high percentage return.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected were analyzed in line with the guidelines of variable studies. Also, the statistical methods employed for the analysis were basically chi-square and simple percentage method.

These aimed at determining whether there were significant differences between the dependent and the independent variable.

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no need for any female students of University of Lagos to indulge in the usage and abuse of alcohol.

Table 1 is used to test the hypothesis computation of X<sup>2</sup>.

Responses	O	E	(O - E)	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Yes	80	100	20	400	4
No	120	100	20	400	4
Total	200	200			8.00

X<sup>2</sup> = 8.00 Degree of freedom

At 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom, the chi-square table value is 4.84.

$$(r - 1) (c - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1) = 1$$

**DECISION RULE**

Since 8.00 is greater than X<sup>2</sup> 0.95 = 4.84, we reject H<sub>0</sub> at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, we accept that there will be no need for any female students to indulge in the usage and abuse of alcohol.

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no any implication of female students usage and abuse of alcohol on their academic performance.

Table 2 is used to test the hypothesis computation of X<sup>2</sup> values use table 2.

Responses	O	E	(O - E)	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Yes	85	100	-15	225	2.25
No	115	100	15	225	2.25
Total	200	200			4.50

X<sup>2</sup> = 4.50 Degree of freedom

$$(r - 1) (c - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1) = 1 \text{ degree of freedom}$$

At 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom, the chi-square table value is 4.84.

**DECISION RULE**

Since 4.50 is greater than  $X^2_{0.95} = 4.84$ , we reject  $H_0$  at the 0.05 level of significance. Leading to the conclusion that there will be implication of female student’s usage and abuse of alcohol on their academic performance.

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

$H_0$ : Will there be any effect of alcohol usage and abuse on the health of female students of University of Lagos.

Table 3 is used to test the hypothesis computation of  $X^2$  values use table 3.

Responses	O	E	(O – E)	(O – E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Yes	105	100	5	25	0.25
No	95	100	-5	25	0.25
Total	200	200			0.5

$X^2 = 0.5$  Degree of freedom

$$(r - 1) (c - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1) = 1 \text{ degree of freedom}$$

At 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom, the chi-square table value is 4.84.

**SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The study investigates the incidence of alcohol usage and abuse among University of Lagos female students. It looked at thing that is related to the usage and abuse of alcohol in other to solve the problem there with.

Therefore the research having gone through the study arrived at the following:

- Socio-economic class significantly affects the usage and abuse of alcohol by students.
- Students’ morals as a significant relationship with the usage and abuse of alcohol.
- Ethnic affiliation does not affect the rate at which the students drink.
- Gender difference does not affect the usage and abuse of alcohol among students.
- Alcohol does not have anything to with student’s physical mental health.
- These findings were discussed.

**CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the finding of this study, it is concluded as follows:

1. Students’ socio-economic status plays an important role in their usage and abuse of alcohol, which may in turn affect students of lower status due to their close relationship.
2. Moral or religion has a crucial role to play in student’s usage and abuse of alcohol as taking alcohol too could affect their morals, which in turn bounce back on the society.
3. Belonging to any ethnic group of the society does not reduce the rate at which drink as drinking of alcohol cut across the whole of the ethnic groups in Nigeria and even the world at large.

4. Female students’ manner of drinking is different from those of the male students, as there seems to be no competition in between them for drinking.
5. If alcohol affects students physical and mental, then it is advisable to discourage female student from indulging in it abuse as it has a serious health implication on them.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of this study the following are recommended:

1. Parents who are of appreciable high status and who does not mind to extend or exposed their young adolescent to raw cash when there is less need for it. Should desist from doing so, while it is advisable to parents whose statuses are not also so high to be watchful of their adolescent peers who could lure them into drinking.
2. The school curricular should be made to include moral instructions and moral studies at both primary and secondary levels of education while it should be made general course in the higher institution.
3. There should be organizations of seminars and workshops where resource persons will enlighten the students, teachers, parents and significant others on the usage and abuse of alcohol.
4. The school counselor or committees should introduce counseling session in order to prevent problems that could arise from the indulgence of students in alcohol usage and abuse.
5. The government should be involved in solving abuse and addiction of alcohol by discouraging further proliferation of breweries and legislating tougher penalties for addiction.

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