

Social Events and Alcohol Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Alcohol Consumption in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to assess empirical information concerning social events and alcohol self-efficacy as predictors of alcohol consumption in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 279 participants comprising of 189(67.7%) males and 77(28.0%) females (12 participants did not specify gender) were randomly selected using simple random sampling method. Data were collected through two instruments namely alcohol consumption scale and alcohol self-efficacy questionnaire. Two hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis. The first hypothesis tested was social events will significantly predict alcohol consumption ($\beta = .04$, $F(1,259) = .35$, $P < .01$). Second hypothesis predicted a significant relationship between alcohol self-efficacy and alcohol consumption ($\beta = -.19$, $F(1,273) = 9.61$, $P < .01$). Results reviewed that social events did not significantly predict alcohol consumption. However, alcohol self-efficacy was a significant predictor of alcohol consumption. The relative contributions of each variable revealed that while "social events" was not a significant predictor, alcohol self-efficacy did significantly predict alcohol use in Makurdi metropolis. On the basis of these findings it is suggested that further research be conducted to examine the psycho-social factors inherent in alcohol self-efficacy as evident in individuals' temptation to drink and confidence to restrain from drinking even in the face of much temptation. Drinking motives may also provide in-route on the reason for alcohol consumption.

KEYWORDS: social events, alcohol self-efficacy, alcohol consumption

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I. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol has played a central role in almost all human cultures since Neolithic times (about 4000BC). All societies without exception make use of intoxicating substances, alcohol being by far the most common (European Commission, 1998). The production and consumption of alcohol occurs in most countries of the world, from hunter - gatherer people to nation states. Alcoholic beverages are often an important part of social events in these cultures. In many cultures drinking plays a significant role in social interaction mainly because of alcohol's neurological effects and its symbolic nature in perceived cultural settings. There is convincing evidence that the development of agriculture – regarded as the foundation of civilization was based on cultivation of grain for beer, as much as for bread (Abad & Suarez, 1975). The persistence of alcohol use, on a near-universal scale, throughout human evolution, suggests that drinking must have had some significant adaptive benefits, although this does not imply that the practice is invariably beneficial (Caetano & Medina-Mora, 1988).

From the earliest recorded use of alcohol, drinking has been a social activity, and both consumption and behavior have been subject to self-imposed controls. Attempts at prohibition have never been successful except when couched in terms of scared rules in highly religious cultures. Alcoholism is tied to the social and cultural environment of the drinker (Enneth & Bauman, 1991).The relationship between alcohol consumption and social events is complex but worth devoting time to understand the intricacies. This is because social; health and economic concerns such as crime, illness, premature death and significant loss in productivity are all affected by alcohol and drug abuse. Many people who eventually become problem drinkers or alcoholics learn early in life to associate drinking with pleasant social occasions. They may develop a social life centered on drinking such as going to bars or attending parties where alcohol consumption is prominent (Obot, 1993). In recent times in Nigeria and in Makurdi in particular, the act of wake keeping for the bereaved, wedding celebration, naming ceremonies, birthday celebrations, etc. attract alcohol consumption. Many atrocities like drinking of alcoholic beverages, immoral dancing, sexual immorality, stealing etc. are done during wake keeps, celebrations, etc. Given overwhelming evidence for the primacy of socio- cultural events in determining both

drinking, drinking patterns and their consequences, it is clear that ethnographic research findings on the social and cultural roles of alcohol may have important implications for policy-makers (European Commission, 1998) – particularly in areas such as Nigeria where economic and political ‘convergence’ could have significant impact on drinking-cultures and their associated lifestyles. From the ethnographic material available, it is clear that in all cultures where more than one type of alcoholic beverage is available, drinks are classified in terms of their social meaning, and the classification of drinks is used to define the social world. Few, if any, alcoholic beverages are ‘socially neutral’: every drink is loaded with symbolic meaning; every drink conveys a message (Wong, 1992). Alcohol is a symbolic vehicle for identifying, describing, constructing and manipulating cultural systems, values, interpersonal relationships, behavioural norms and expectations. Choice of beverage is rarely a matter of personal taste (Turner, 1992). At the simplest level, drinks are used to define the nature of the occasion. In many Western cultures, for example, champagne is synonymous with celebration, such that if champagne is ordered or served at an otherwise ‘ordinary’ occasion, someone will invariably ask “What are we celebrating?” (Karl & Ramlagan, 2009). In Nigeria and Benue State in particular, certain types of drinks are offered at certain social events. The type of drink served defines both the nature of the event and the social relationship between the drinkers. The choice of drink also dictates behavior. Choice of beverage is also a significant indicator of social status. In general terms, imported or ‘foreign’ drinks have a higher status than ‘local’ beverages.

Choice of beverage may also be a statement of affiliation, a declaration of membership in a particular group, class, ‘tribe’ or nation and its associated values, attitudes and beliefs. Certain drinks, for example, have become symbols of national identity: *burukutu* for the Tiv and Etulo people, *palm wine* for the Idoma and Igbo people, etc.; and to choose, serve – or indeed refuse – one’s national beverage can be a powerful expression of one’s loyalties and cultural identity. The ‘national drink’ is often the symbolic locus for positive, sometimes idealized or romanticized images of the national character, culture and way of life. The consumption or rejection of a national, local or traditional beverage is often an emotive issue, particularly in areas undergoing significant cultural change or upheaval, where ‘new’ drinks are associated with ‘modern’ lifestyles and values. Alcohol is used in all the cultural groups in Nigeria. It is one of the most available psychoactive substances in the country, and it is consumed either in the form of traditional beverages (e.g., *burukutu*, *pito*, *emu funfun*, palm-wine, *ogogoro*), or as western lager beer, wine or spirituous liquors (e.g., brandy, whisky and gin). In many parts of the country, the production and consumption of alcoholic beverages is organized around traditional rituals, festivals and other social activities which include arrangements around marriages, childbearing and child-naming, weekly market days, and settling of quarrels between families and communities. Presenting or offering alcoholic beverage is also an expression of hospitality to visiting guests (Ibanga, Adetula, Dagona, Karick & Ojiji, 2005).

The works of Netting (1964) and Odejide & Olatuwura (1977) have shown that in some cultures, the use of alcohol, especially by social groups during festivals and ceremonies is usually associated with rituals to highlight the hierarchies within a particular social group or community. This may take the form of passing the traditional wine cup around in a gathering in a particular order that gives primacy to age and title (Umana, 1967). While the age groups of men and women are often not explicitly separated during these occasions, elders and men are expected to drink more than either young men or women (Oshodi, 1995). In traditional Nigerian society, daily consumption of alcoholic beverages was not the norm, as drinking revolved around festivals, rituals and important ceremonies. Additionally, these occasions allowed for the exercise of control over who was served or not served, and the quantity which they are served. In this way people were somewhat protected from drinking excessively. This is evident in some expressions of culturally constructed norms that decry excessive drinking. It was however possible that outside these circumscribed settings, alcohol was produced and used privately (Obot, 1993).

- **Social Events and Alcohol Consumption**

According to Obot (1991) alcohol plays an important role in African cultural life. Alcohol is present in all major life transitions – from birth to death. A child is welcomed to the world with merriment and good supply of alcohol befitting the status of parents. The gods are appeased with a sprinkle of gin or palm wine on the ground; conflicts are resolved with the sharing of drink; and contracts (marriages, land sales, etc.) are sealed in the presence of a jar of palm wine, a calabash of *burukutu*, or a bottle of local gin. According to the European Commission (1998), drinking is, in all cultures, essentially a social activity, and most societies have specific, designated environments for communal drinking. Cross-cultural differences in the physical nature of public drinking places reflect different attitudes towards alcohol. Positive, integrated, non-temperance cultures tend to favour more ‘open’ drinking environments, while negative, ambivalent, temperance cultures are associated with ‘closed’, insular designs (European Commission, 1998).

Research (e.g. WHO, 1994) also reveals significant cross-cultural similarities or ‘constants’ on drinking environments and cultures:

- In all cultures, the drinking-place is a special environment, a separate social world with its own customs and values
- Drinking-places tend to be socially integrative, egalitarian environments
- The primary function of drinking-places is the facilitation of social bonding.

In all societies, alcohol plays a central role in transitional rituals both major life-cycle events and minor, in everyday transitions. In terms of everyday transitions, cultures (such as the US and UK) in which alcohol is only used to mark the transition from work to play where drinking is associated with recreation and irresponsibility, and regarded as antithetical to working – tend to have higher levels of alcohol-related problems (World Health Organization, 1994). Cultures in which drinking is an integral part of the normal working day, and alcohol may be used to mark the transition to work (e.g. France, Spain, Peru), tend to have lower levels of alcohol-related problems. Shifts away from traditional pre-work or lunchtime drinking in these cultures could be a cause for concern, as these changes can indicate a trend towards drinking patterns and attitudes associated with higher levels of alcohol-related problems (World Health Organization, 1994). Alcohol is universally associated with celebration, and drinking is, in all cultures, an essential element of festivity (Obot, 2006). In societies with an ambivalent, morally charged relationship with alcohol, ‘celebration’ is used as an excuse for drinking. In societies in which alcohol is a morally neutral element of normal life, alcohol is strongly associated with celebration, but celebration is not invoked as a justification for every drinking occasion (Wittchen, & Bronisch, 1992).

1.2. Social Events and Alcohol Self-efficacy

Alcohol self-efficacy implies an individual’s judgment, capability or capacity to refrain from alcohol consumption in the face of temptation to drink. Being exposed to alcohol cues at social events should be very demanding for people to drink alcohol and for drinkers who are trying not to drink. On the basis of the principles of classical conditioning, the sight, smell, or taste of alcohol should elicit a conditioned urge to drink alcohol (e.g., Rohsenow, Niaura, Childress, Abrams, & Monti, 1990–1991). Hence, people who are exposed to drinking cues at social events (such as the person who attended a social function where alcohol is served) and who wish to restrain or limit their drinking (to remain clearheaded for a meeting after the social function) must exert great effort to overcome the conditioned response of drinking (Brown, 1998). Furthermore, resisting temptations may be costly, as it depletes a limited resource needed for self-control, resulting in poorer self-control performance subsequently (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Drinking restraint involves a conflict between the individual’s urge to drink and his or her resistance to these impulses (Bensley, 1989). When the strength of the temptation to drink exceeds an individual’s ability to restrain him or herself, violation of drinking limits is likely to ensue (Collins & Lapp, 1993). Evidence from social drinkers supports this conclusion: Social drinkers who are both high in urge to drink and high in restraint drink less than social drinkers who are high in urge to drink and low in restraint (Bensley, 1991; Collins & Lapp, 1992). More specifically, non-automatic processes must be used to alter and inhibit well-learned cognitive and behavioral patterns that link situations or emotions with drinking (Tiffany, 1990).

Individuals with weaker inhibitions therefore should be more likely to violate their drinking limits compared with individuals with stronger self-control. Indeed, social drinkers whose self-control ability was weakened through the depletion of self-control strength drank more alcohol at social events in a situation that called for restraint than did social drinkers who did not exert self-control (Muraven, Collins, & Nienhaus, 2002). This is further supported by research on underage drinkers as they went about their daily lives (Muraven, Collins, Shiffman, & Paty, 2005) Although the depletion of self-control strength may lead to a greater risk of violating drinking limits, the converse also may be true: Sticking to drinking limits may lead to the depletion of self-control strength. Heavy drinkers who restrain their urge to drink may have less self-control strength than heavy drinkers who do not restrain themselves. Therefore, people who have to fight the temptation to drink may perform more poorly on subsequent tests of self-control compared with people who do not have to fight the temptation to drink.

1.3. Drinking Patterns

Initial research on alcohol and drug use was initiated as a result of casual observations that a significant number of young people were being admitted into psychiatric hospitals because of abuse of drugs, particularly cannabis and alcohol (Asuni, 1964; Lambo, 1965). Clinical studies conducted in psychiatric facilities in Nigeria found drug-related admission accounted for up to 11% of all admissions. (Ahmed, 1986; Obot & Olaniyi, 1991;

Ohaeri & Odejide, 1993). In all of these studies, alcohol was the second contributor of psychiatric problem. Alcohol use is suspected to play a role in risky sexual behavior because of its intoxicating property and the behavioural disinhibition it causes. It was found by Pithey & Parry (2009) that more drinkers engage in high risk behaviours and are at high risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections than non-drinkers. In studying alcohol consumption, there is also a need to establish associations between predictor variables like drinking status, quantity and frequency of consumption (Obot, Ibanga & Zamani, 2012). Alcohol accelerates progress of disease. In the case of AIDS, it increases cell wall permeability, suppresses the immune system and reduces infection fighting cells (Obot, Ibanga & Zamani, 2012).

Surveys among students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions have been conducted over the years. Anumoye (1980), in a survey of 17 secondary schools, reported that 20% had taken alcohol at least once. In surveys in southern Nigeria the proportion of students who had ever used alcohol ranged from 24.4% to 49.2%. Higher rates ranging from 56% - 79% have been found (Idowu, 1987; Nevadomsky, 1982; Obot, 1993; Obot, 2006). Results of the studies conducted showed a clear difference in the use of alcohol in the north and south of the country. The rates of drinking reported among the youths in the northern city (Kano) were much lower than the rates reported by students in the southern city of Lagos. This difference could be attributed to religion, the north being predominantly Muslim while most southerners are Christians. Equally high rates have been recorded for out-of-school youths (Obot, 2001).

In tertiary institutions the rates of drinking are slightly higher. Oladimeji and Fabiyi (1993) reported past year use of alcohol for 1984 and 1988 at 66.4% and 84% respectively. Oshodi (1982) found that 87% of the males and 79% of the females had drunk alcohol in their lifetime; 78% of them had started drinking before entry into colleges, and 71% had increased their drinking. Obot (1993) conducted a general population survey in the North Central region of the country and found that a high proportion of participants (39.2%) drank some form of alcohol at least once a day, and many of them showed a pattern of heavy consumption of alcoholic beverages at social events. Social celebrations such as wedding ceremonies, wake-keeps, birthday parties, special days/holidays and festivals are on the increase and add to the number of social events which are usually celebrated with alcoholic beverages. Benue State with a high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS infection and disease in Nigeria is also known for high consumption of alcohol especially among young people with a record of high sexual risk behaviour. Alcohol consumption with its intoxicating property and behavioural disinhibition tendency is feared to further worsen the already bad situation. Against these backgrounds, this study is vital as it examines social events and alcohol self-efficacy as predictors of alcohol consumption in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State.

1.4. Research Hypotheses

In order to enable the researchers articulate the variables of interest, it is important to make statements of assumptions for envisaged outcomes. The aim is to serve as a guide for the kind of information or data required for investigation. Thus, the hypotheses are as follows:

- Social events will significantly predict alcohol consumption.
- Alcohol self-efficacy will significantly predict alcohol consumption.

II. METHOD

2.1. Participants

300 individuals randomly selected from Makurdi town participated in the cross-sectional survey research. They were between ages 15 to above 46 years. 279 participants eventually responded and were made up of 189 males and 78 females. They were largely of Tiv, Idoma, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groupings. Others were of Igede and Hausa ethnic affiliations. The largest religious group was of Christians, then Muslims and traditional worshippers. Participants were of varying occupations (Refer to Table 1 under results).

2.2. Instruments

Data were collected through the use of questionnaire. Section A consisted of demographic variables seeking information on age, gender, ethnic group of participants, their marital status, religion and educational qualifications. Other personal information bothered on occupations and social events where drinking is mostly done. Two instruments used for the study were Alcohol Consumption questionnaire and Alcohol Self-efficacy Questionnaire. Section B contained 23 questions/statements on consumption of alcohol generally. These were subjected to validity and reliability testing for internal consistency and yielded a Cronbach α of .75. All 23 questions/statements were considered for the main study. Section C was a measure of Alcohol Self-efficacy containing 18 statements adopted from the Cancer Prevention Research Center (CPRC, 2012) Measures for

alcohol self-efficacy. The 20-item questionnaire on feelings of temptation to drink was adopted as a measure for alcohol self-efficacy. After item-total correlation analysis, 18 items survived for use for the study. The items had internal consistency with Cronbach α .90 for the validation study.

2.3. Procedure

With the aid of 3 assistant researchers, three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire containing all the instruments were randomly distributed in Makurdi metropolis. Consent of participants was sought before they were given the questionnaire for filling while being assured of utmost confidentiality as in handling the information which would be used strictly for research purpose. 279 of the 300 copies of questionnaire were returned representing 93% of the served participants.

2.4. Analysis of Data

The descriptive data analysis was conducted by calculating frequencies using demographic variables. Also, simple liner regression analyses were run for the two predictor variables (social events and alcohol self-efficacy) on the criterion variable (alcohol consumption).

III. RESULTS

Results of frequency distribution and linear regression analyses are presented along with hypotheses to be tested.

Table1: Distribution of participants’ demographic data by percentage

Variables	No.	%
Age(in years)		
15-24	150	53.8
25-34	107	38.4
46 and above	17	6.1
Missing	5	1.8
Gender		
Male	189	67.7
Female	78	28.0
Missing	12	4.3
Ethnic group		
Tiv	190	68.7
Idoma	38	13.6
Igede	8	2.9
Hausa	7	2.5
Igbo	9	3.2
Yoruba	12	4.3
Others	12	4.3
Missing	3	1.1
Religion		
Christian	254	91.0
Muslim	9	3.2
Traditional	8	2.9
Others	1	0.4
Missing	7	2.5
Educational Qualification		
Junior Secondary School Cert.	14	5.0
Senior Secondary school Cert.	103	36.9
NCE/Diploma	58	20.8
HND/B.Sc	87	31.2
M.Sc/M.Ed/M.A	8	2.9
PhD	7	2.5
Missing	2	0.7
Ever drink alcohol		
Never	59	21.1
Tried it once	116	41.6
Yes, often	54	19.4
Yes, frequently	44	15.8

Missing	6	2.2	
Age at first drink (years)			
10-11	56	20.1	
12-13	26	9.3	
14-15	41	14.7	
≥16	135	48.4	
Missing	21	7.5	
Frequency of alcohol consumption			
Once a year or less	54	19.4	
More than once a year	31	11.1	
Once a month	63	22.6	
Once a week but not daily	61	21.9	
Everyday	50	17.9	
Missing	20	7.2	
Where do you always drink?			
Home	63	22.6	
Wedding	38	13.6	
Office or work place	65	23.3	
Wake-keeps	6	2.2	
Restaurants	4	1.4	
Party	7	2.5	
Missing	96	34.4	

Table 2: Summary of Linear regression analysis of social events on alcohol consumption

Variable	B	SE	β	R	R sq.	t
Social events	.11	.19	.04	.04	.00	.60 ns

ns – Not significant, $p > .01$

The regression analysis on social events and alcohol consumption was not statistically significant. Social events did not statistically predict alcohol consumption ($\beta = .04$, $F(1, 259) = .35$, $p < .01$).

Table 3: Summary of linear regression analysis of alcohol self –efficacy on alcohol consumption

Variable	B	SE	β	R	R sq.	t
Alcohol self-efficacy	-.07	.02	-.19	.19	.03	-3.10**

** $p < .01$

The regression analysis on alcohol self-efficacy and alcohol consumption was statistically significant. Alcohol self-efficacy significantly predicted alcohol consumption ($\beta = -.19$, $F(1, 273) = 9.61$, $p < .01$).

IV. DISCUSSION

The results show that “social events” does not significantly predict alcohol consumption. This result is in negation with earlier findings that in many parts of Nigeria production and consumption of alcoholic beverages are organized around social events (Ibanga, Adetula, Dagona, Karick & Ojiji, 2005). It is also inconsistent with the work of Netting (1964), Odejide & Olatuwura (1977) who asserted that such social events are associated with rituals. However, alcohol self-efficacy was a significant predictor of alcohol consumption. Drinking restraint involves control on the part of the individual drinker. The strength of the temptation determines indulgence or refrain. It determines how the drinker balances his need for drinking by deciding the limits. Looking at the demographic data, much of the drinking takes place at home (22.6%) and office (23.3%). It should be noted that the context of drinking at home or work-place is not fully understood as it is not clear whether it is solitary or with others. However, a majority of participants (92%) are young people between the age brackets of 15-34 years. The trend is worrisome if much drinking is done at home as family life is implicated and children are likely to take wrong cues. If in the office or work place, productivity may be endangered along with work etiquettes.

4.1. Recommendations/Suggestions

The results of the present study point to the fact that professionals involved in the prevention of alcohol related problems need to understand issues relating to alcohol self-efficacy and increased use of alcohol. The temptation to drink must be viewed along such concept as confidence to refrain when there is a need to do so. This requires proper attention and public awareness.

4.2. Suggestions for Further Research

The results of this study suggest several possibilities for future research. One suggestion is to carry out longitudinal study of social events and alcohol consumption. This would give a better understanding of how social events and alcohol consumption is related over a time period not just a once-off research episode. The sample size should be larger to cover a wider scope. Alcohol self-efficacy can be further explored with more understanding of drinking motives and alcohol expectancies. Exploring the reasons for alcohol consumption and the individual's perceived behavioural gains would be quite rewarding empirically.

V. CONCLUSION

From the current study, there is need for an in-depth understanding of alcohol consumption focusing on how one yield to the temptation to drink or refrain from doing so. The study implies that by being in a social environment per se does not necessarily mean there could be indulgence. Assessing drinking motives in line with drinking patterns and the envisaged outcome may influence where people drink and how much is taken per time. These could have impact on the levels of control by the indulging individuals. In addition, stating relationships between social events and alcohol consumption do not precisely highlight the issue of problem – drinking. People who drink at social events may not necessarily be problem – drinkers but mere social drinkers. It would be important to specifically authenticate where and when problem – drinking begins. This sequel may form another research interest worthy of investigation. Suffice to say that temptation to drink if strong can ignite drinking and if no caution is taken, it may influence problem – drinking. Social events could be a breeding ground for social vices and risky behaviour such as reckless driving, sexual networking, brawls, stealing and other forms of crimes. Hang – over from excessive alcohol consumption could impede productivity at workplace. Alcohol consumption is prologue to all alcohol – related challenges whether done at home, workplace or anywhere else. Control on consumption may imply control of impending risks related to consumption. When instilling the need for such control adequate attention must be paid to young people. Accurate information on alcohol – related pathologies, skills on coping with peer pressure and general self – restraint measures are important.

The environment is made up of people whose lifestyle of routine work – to – rest involves drinking as a perceived sign of relaxation while indulgence can reinforce poverty as there is already high impoverishment. The much capital spent on alcohol during social events can compete favourably with essential family investments such as food, school fees, fuel and maintenance. If alcohol must be taken, it must be consumed reasonably. To this end, understanding how to effectively restrain from over-indulgence would depend on how efficacious the individual is in his /her drinking motives, expectancies of outcomes and general disposition to assert control.

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