

DRINKING BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN ADEKUNLE AJASIN UNIVERSITY, AKUNGBA-AKOKO: A FUNCTION OF PARENTAL ALCOHOL USE AND PERSONALITY TRAITS**Aderonke A. Akintola (PhD)**

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ABSTRACT:

Youth alcohol consumption, its misuse and abuse are among the most prevalent mental health problems among young adults today (Lorant & Nicaise et al., 2013) an observation of this behaviour was made amongst both in and out of the campus undergraduates of Adekunle Ajasin University. This study therefore investigated the contextual factors within which this behaviour which is of utmost concern to the university authority occurs, with the aim of proffering solution to the problem. The participants were 240. Males (150), females (90). Hierarchical regression revealed that Parental alcohol use is a causative factor [$\beta=.20$, $p < .01$], personality also significantly predicted this behaviour Extraversion [$\beta=-.03$, $p < .01$], Conscientiousness. [$\beta=.33$, $p < .01$] and Neuroticism [$\beta= .15$, $p < .05$]. Males were found to be more involved in the act. The fresh students or those in lower levels of study also drink more than those in higher levels of study which indicates conformity and immaturity that characterize this age range and generally, poor social skills. Based on these findings, there's urgent need for psycho-education for these youths and necessary actions taken by the university authority to curb this behaviour.

Keywords: Parental alcohol use - Personality traits - Undergraduates -Drinking behaviour**INTRODUCTION:****BACKGROUND**

Adolescence is a dynamic developmental period, during which young people develop behaviours and habits that affect their health and social outcomes. Youth drinking in particular has become a major public health concern, with youths 15-24 consuming more alcohol than in previous generations, seduced by a new range of alcoholic drinks designed for the brand-savvy youth consumer. Youth alcohol use has been associated with delinquency and violence (Ellickson, Tucker & Klein, 2003; Felson, Teasdale & Burchfield, 2008) early sexual debut and risky sexual behaviour (Cavazos-Rehg, Spitznagel, Bucholz et al., 2010; Fergusson & Lynskey, 1996) and poor academic performance (Balsa, Giuliano, & French, 2011; Barry, Chaney & Chaney, 2011). A thorough understanding of youth substance use must consider the complex interplay among these youths, their families, and their social environments (Cleveland, Feinberg & Greenberg, 2010). The family is a key influence on children's and young people's behaviour (Sondhi & Turner, 2011) Parents play a critical role in their children's introduction to alcohol. Parental drinking patterns have been shown to affect drinking by offspring over the life course. Adekeye, (2012) said youths who are exposed to/ or who observe adults who drink and smoke may want to experiment to see how it feels. Young people model their own behavior on their parents' patterns of consumption (including quantity and frequency), situations and contexts of use, attitudes regarding use, and use expectancies (White, Johnson & Buyske 2000). Young adult offspring from the families with alcoholism had elevated levels of alcohol problems compared with peers with no family history of alcoholism (White et al, 2000). In a systematic review of longitudinal studies investigating parenting factors associated with adolescent drinking, Ryan, Jorm & Lubman (2010) identified several predictors of timing of initiation and levels of drinking. Key parental factors included parental modeling of drinking behaviour, alcohol specific communication, disapproval of adolescent drinking, general discipline, and rules about alcohol, parental monitoring, parent child relationship quality, family conflict, parental support, parental involvement, and general communication. These risk and protective

factors were explored by Ryan, Jorm & Kelly et al., (2011) in a Delphi consensus study and have since formed the basis of the 'Parenting Guidelines for Adolescent Alcohol Use' (thereafter referred to as the guidelines) designed to help parents delay or reduce their adolescent's alcohol use as recommended by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (<http://www.parentingstrategies.net>).

Research has provided evidence that suggests that personality traits may also have predictive value for personal, interpersonal, and occupational, academic and health outcomes. (Ozer, Daniel & Benet-Martinez (2005). The [Big Five personality traits](#) Costa & McCrae (1987 & 1992a) are a commonly used set of traits in [psychology](#) for describing individual differences in [personality](#). These traits include [extraversion](#), [agreeableness](#), [neuroticism](#), [conscientiousness](#), and [openness](#). Coasta & MaCrae's characterization of the five factors (NEO) personality Inventory includes neuroticism (N) which is a measure of emotional stability/instability, Extraversion (E) is a scale of that represents an individual's sociability, assertiveness, activity & ambitiousness. Openness (O) is a measure of an individual's imagination, artistic sensitivity and Intellectual curiosity. Agreeableness (A) is a measure of a person's cooperativeness and trustfulness. Conscientiousness (C) assesses an individual's responsibility, dependability, persistence and achievement oriented activity.

The Big Five has been utilized in some studies looking at alcoholism. (Bottlelender & Soyka 2005). In clinical samples, individuals diagnosed with alcohol dependence display elevated N scores (Shaw, Waller, McDougall, MacGarvie& Dunn 1990). Studying NEO personality traits of substance abuse, McCormick, Dowd, Quirk & Zegarra (1998) found N to be the only scale elevated on the NEO in a subgroup of alcoholics. In students, higher levels of N and lower levels of C and A were associated with alcohol and alcohol related problems (Ruiz, Pincus& Dickinson, 2003). Martin and Sher (2000) found that N was positively associated with alcohol use disorders. One paper surmised that high levels of N and lower levels of C may serve to maintain addiction by exerting an influence on relapse rates (Fisher, Elias & Ritz, 1998). Weitzman (2003) found that students with poor mental health were less likely to report never drinking and significantly more likely to get drunk. Although N is not a diagnostic scale, the general tendency to experience negative effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt and disgust is the core of the N domain (Costa &MMcCrae, 1992).

Personality of an individual could be an outcome of parenting amongst other factors as already inferred. Interventions at the level of the family that aim to reduce adolescent behaviour have weak effects overall (Smit et al., 2008). As young people get older, primary influences tend to move from the parents to the peer group and other environmental factors (Armsden, and Greenberg,1987) which explains why youths who came from non alcohol use homes indulge in this act when they get to tertiary institutions and this brings in the variable Academic or educational level. A large number of Adekunle Ajasin University undergraduates have been observed to indulge in alcohol consumption even on the campus and well outside of the campus.

Research attests to it that the first year at college is a unique transitional period. In the university environment, students will establish, test, and refine their new psychological identity (Scheier, Botvin, Diaz, & Williams, 1997). There is some debate in the literature regarding typical patterns of alcohol consumption as a student progresses through university. Newbury-Birch, Lowry, & Kamali (2002) found no overall change in the mean alcohol consumption levels of some students from second to final year. However, in the same study, medical students were found to demonstrate an increase from their second to their final year. In contrast, Bewick, Trusler, & Barkham (2008a), also looking at UK students, reported that first year students drank at the highest levels. Similarly, Engs (1975) found that older students tended to drink less frequently and more in moderation than younger students. Explanation for lower levels of drinking in the final year has centered upon increasing responsibility, greater concern and motivation for and importance placed on coursework and grades and growing thoughts about future careers (Bewick et al., 2008a). Alcohol use may also be one of the ways that first year students cope with the stressors or negative emotions experienced during their first year on campus. Gender is another variable that has been linked to alcohol use. A growing body of literature suggests that

there is a relationship between alcohol consumption and gender, Dumbili (2015). Several reasons have been suggested for the differential in drinking patterns between men and women (Myerson, 1940; Gusfield, 1962; Lisansky, 1958). Windham and Aldridge (1965) as well as Siegel (1952) referred to the traditional belief that the use and abuse of alcohol was a male prerogative. Clark (1967) suggested that drinking differences are based largely on the expectation that female sex roles are characterized by what he termed "conventionality." Over the years, the sex role thesis appeared to be disappearing as submitted by Wilsnack and Wilsnack (1978) even though (Emslie, Hunt & Lyons 2012; 2000; Holmila & Raitasalo 2005; Wilsnack, Vogeltanz, Wilsnack & Harris 2000) from their studies found that young men consume alcohol more frequently than young women. In view of these contradictions, it would be worthwhile to investigate the role of gender in the current study.

HYPOTHESES:

1. Parental Drinking, Level of Study and Gender will significantly predict undergraduate Drinking Behaviour in Adekunle Ajasin University.
2. Personality Traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) will have a significant predictive influence on Drinking Behaviour of the undergraduates.
3. Parental Drinking, Level of Study, Gender and Personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) will have a significant joint predictive influence on drinking behaviour among AAUA undergraduates.

METHODS:

Design and Participants:

This study adopted an expo-facto research design. A total of 240 students from Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba in Ondo state were selected using accidental /convenient sampling techniques. The participants were made up of 90 males (37.5 %) and 150 females (62.5%). The distribution on academic level indicated that 53 respondents (22.1%) were in 100 level, 67 respondents (27.9%) were in 200 level, 38 respondents (16.8%) were in 300 level, 61 respondents (25.4%) were in 400 level, and 21 respondents (8.8%) in 500 level. On parental alcohol use, 96 respondents (40%) indicated that their parents use alcohol while 144 (60%) stated otherwise.

INSTRUMENTS:

The parental drinking behavior was measured by the participants responding as either Yes or No to the question Does any of your parent or Guardian use alcohol was I? Level of study was from 100-500 level while gender was either male or female.

Personality characteristics were measured using the big five personality scale developed by John, Donahue & Kentle (1990). It is a 44-item scale rated on a 4 point response pattern ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). It is subdivided into five broad areas of personality types; Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. It measures personality and sample items include 'I see myself as someone who is generally trusting'. According to the author, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.80 and it has a 3-month test retest coefficient of 0.85 and mean convergent validity coefficient of 0.75 and 0.85. In the present research, the researcher obtained Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of .65, .66, .69, .73 and .83 for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness respectively. It has a direct scoring format and scores higher or equal to the norms indicate the specific personality type.

Drinking behavior was measured using the Alcohol Dependence Scale (ADS) developed by Skinner and Allen (1982).The 25 item scale covers alcohol use, impaired control, over drinking, awareness of a compulsion to drink, increased tolerance to alcohol, and drink seeking behavior. The ADS is widely used as a research and clinical tool, and studies have found the instrument to be valid and reliable. The current study recorded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .92 and Scale Mean of 12.64 with a Standard Deviation of 11.84. All items are scored directly and sample items include, "Do you constantly think about drinking or alcohol? "High scores indicated high alcohol use and low score implies low drinking behavior.

PROCEDURE:

Using convenient sampling technique, self-reported questionnaires were administered on different groups of students in selected lecture halls in all faculties on campus by reason of their availability after lectures. Instructions were stated on the questionnaires to help the respondents fill correctly. The questionnaires were distributed to participants that consented to participate in the study. Collection of data was within two months. Out of the 270 questionnaires administered, 240 were retrieved for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis was conducted for the three hypotheses generated.

RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of Correlation Matrix showing the Mean, SD and the Relationship among study variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	1								
2. Level of study	-.137*	1							
3. Parental Alcohol Use	.228**	-.177**	1						
4. Extraversion	.060	.155*	.099	1					
5. Agreeableness	.057	.081	-.058	.510**	1				
6. Conscientiousness	.046	.096	.045	.383**	.620**	1			
7. Neuroticism	-.069	.104	-.010	.284**	.408**	.615**	1		
8. Openness	.060	-.006	-.017	.484**	.463**	.494**	.305**	1	
9. Drinking Behaviour	.132*	-.181**	.236**	-.063	.194**	.356**	.281**	.063	1
Mean	-	-	-	28.63	31.03	31.08	27.43	38.58	12.64
Standard deviation	-	-	-	4.94	5.08	5.41	5.52	6.51	11.84

**p <.01,*p <.05,N=240.Gender was coded Female 0, Male 1; level of study was coded 100 level 1, 200 level 2, 300 level 3, 400 level 4, 500 level 5: Parental alcohol use was coded No 0, Yes 1.

The results in Table 1 indicated that Extraversion [r (238) = -.63, p> .05] and Openness [r (238) = .63, p> .05] had no significant relationship with Drinking Behavior of Undergraduates. This implies that the level of Extraversion or Openness displayed by an undergraduate does not determine his/her behavior towards drinking. It was also observed from the Table above that Agreeableness [r (238) =.194, p, < .01], Conscientiousness [r (238) = .36, p< .01] and Neuroticism [r (238) = .28, p< .01] had positive significant relationships with drinking behavior among undergraduates.This simply implies that high conscientiousness,

neuroticism and agreeableness were significantly associated with increased drinking among undergraduates. It was indicated that Openness had significant relationships with extraversion [$r(238) = .48, p < .01$], Agreeableness [$r(238) = .46, p < .01$], Conscientiousness [$r(238) = .46, p < .01$] and neuroticism [$r(238) = .31, p < .01$] such that increase in Openness was synonymous to increase in other personality dimensions although less in Neuroticism. However, Openness had no significant relationship with youth drinking behavior.

Finally, the results of the socio-demographic variables showed that Parental drinking [$r(238) = .24, p < .01$] and Gender [$r(238) = .13, p < .05$] had positive significant relationships with drinking behavior while Level of study [$r(238) = -.18, p < .01$] had a significant inverse relationship with drinking behavior. This implies that students in the lower levels of study were more associated with drinking while male undergraduates and individuals whose parents used alcohol were more linked/ related to drinking.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES 1-3

Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Regression on Drinking Behaviour

Predictors	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
Parental alcohol use	.20**	.02**
Gender	.07	.07
Level of study	-.14*	-.015**
Personality Traits		
Extroversion		-.03**
Agreeableness		.11
Conscientiousness		.33**
Neuroticism		.15*
Openness		-.08
R	.28	.53
R ²	.08	.28
ΔR^2	-	.20
df	3, 236	8, 231
F	6.84**	11.18**
ΔF	-	12.76

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, N=240

The Table above shows that Parental alcohol use and other socio-demographic variables had a significant prediction on undergraduates' drinking behavior [$R = .28, F(3, 236) = 6.84, p < .01$]. Parental alcohol use [$\beta = .20, p < .01$] and Level of study [$\beta = -.14, p < .05$] were significant predictors of drinking behavior among adolescents while Gender [$\beta = .07, p > .05$] did not independently predict drinking among the undergraduates. Based on these results, hypothesis one was partially accepted.

The Table also indicated that Extraversion [$\beta = -.03, p < .01$], Conscientiousness [$\beta = .33, p < .01$] and Neuroticism [$\beta = .15, p < .05$] significantly and independently predicted drinking among the undergraduates even though a negative relationship was observed between Extraversion and Drinking behavior. Agreeableness [$\beta = .11, p > .05$] and Openness [$\beta = -.08, p > .05$] had no independent significant prediction on drinking behavior of the undergraduates. As a result, Hypothesis two was also partially accepted.

Finally, the Table indicates that Socio demographic variables (Parental drinking, Gender and level of study) and Personality characteristics (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness) had a significant joint prediction on drinking behavior [$R = .53, R^2 = .28, F(8, 231) = 11.18, p < .01$]. This

implies that Parental alcohol use, Gender, Level of study and Personality traits yielded a significant 28% in explanatory power and coefficient of determination for the socio demographic variables of study and personality prediction of youth alcohol use. It is an indication that undergraduate behavior displayed towards drinking was as a result of both internal (personality) and external (environmental) factors. Based on these findings, hypothesis three was confirmed.

DISCUSSION:

Hypothesis 1 which states that Parental Drinking, Level of Study and Gender will significantly predict undergraduate Drinking Behaviour in Adekunle Ajasin University was partially confirmed. The results on parental alcohol use are in line with literature which has linked parental use of alcohol to subsequent use by children (Hawkins, Catalano and Miller, 1992). Getz & Bray, (2005) submitted that parental use of alcohol frequently predicts adolescent alcohol use. Current study also buttresses that of White et al., (2000) who confirmed that young people model their own behavior on their parents' patterns of consumption of alcohol (including quantity and frequency), situations and contexts of use, attitudes regarding use, and use expectancies. In general, when fathers express strict alcohol-specific attitudes, both parents talk more often about alcohol with their children which has a preventive effect on adolescent initiation and excessive alcohol use, while among older adolescents, maternal attitudes on alcohol prevent offspring from engaging in excessive alcohol use. (Mares, Vorst, Engels & Lichtwarck-Aschoff 2011). This is in accordance with the idea that fathers might employ more indirect parenting strategies, such as holding strict attitudes, while mothers are supposed to use more direct strategies, like communication (Cabrera, Fitzgerald, Bradley, & Roggman, 2007; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004). The underlying thought of fathers exerting their influence indirectly via the mothers is that they are generally less present at home (Lewis & Sussman, 1986). Previous research indeed showed that fathers' attitudes influence maternal behaviors towards their offspring (Scott, Binns, & Aroni, 1997). In view of the foregoing, the predictive influence of parental drinking behaviour on youth alcohol use cannot be overemphasized. As university undergraduates, their parents can only be corrected through educational workshops and mass jingles on the communication media while direct concerted efforts are made towards reformation of the youths.

Hypothesis two states that Personality Traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) will have a significant predictive influence on Drinking Behaviour of the undergraduates. This also was partially confirmed, attested to by literature. The Big Five has been utilized in a number of studies looking at alcoholism (Bottlender & Soyka 2005). In clinical samples of studies, (Sandahl, Lindberg & Bergman 1987) reported that individuals diagnosed with alcohol dependence display elevated neuroticism scores. McCormick, Dowd, Quirk & Zegarra (1998) also found neuroticism to be the only scale elevated in a subgroup of alcoholics in their study on personality traits of substance abuse. Lower levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness were associated with alcohol and it's related problems in Ruiz, Pincus & Dickson (2003) study. Martin & Sher (2000) also found that neuroticism was positively associated and conscientiousness, agreeableness negatively, with alcohol use disorders. However, in the current study in line with literature, neuroticism significantly predicted alcohol use and contrary to what was reported, conscientiousness also significantly predicted the use of alcohol. Extraversion also was predictive but negatively which is quite surprising because one would have thought the sociable ones who have tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others would be involved in the act of drinking. Assertiveness is an attribute of the extraverted personality which could be responsible for why they are able to resist the temptation or pressure from friends to drink. It must be noted that under the correlation matrix, extraversion was found to be highly related to alcohol use. Openness to experience and agreeableness were not significant in predicting alcohol use in this study even though agreeableness was highly correlated with the behaviour. This relationship buttresses the work of Cauchi & DeGiovanni (2015). In their study, students who scored higher on agreeableness reported a significant decrease in binge drinking in comparison to students scoring lower on agreeableness. The insignificance of openness is surprising because psychologists in the early 1970s used the concept of openness to experience to describe people who are more likely to use substance like alcohol, [marijuana](#) and others (Eisenman, Grossman & Goldstein 1980; Victor, Grossman &

Eisenman 1973). More recent research has replicated this finding using contemporary measures of openness Flory, Lynam, Milich, Leukefeld & Clayton (2002). Gender was not significant even though the majority of studies identify that in general male's drink more alcohol than females as found in the study of Wilsnack, Vogeltanz, Wilsnack, & Harris (2000). However, research has indicated that the gender gap is decreasing (MacLean & Lecci, 2000). This is also confirmed by mere observation in the eateries/restaurants on the campus by the researcher where both and male and female undergraduates engaged in alcohol drinking. Davoren, Shiely, Byrne & Perry (2015) equally reported similar prevalence of hazardous alcohol consumption in men (65.2%) and women (67.3%) undergraduates in their study.

Regarding the year of study as it influences alcohol use, Britton (2004) and Brady & Sonne (1999) reported a positive relationship between stress and alcohol use, and attributed the stress to unfamiliar experiences the fresh undergraduates go through, and the alcohol use, a coping mechanism. The two studies concluded that fresh students or those in lower levels of study tend to be involved in alcohol use more than their senior colleagues. While the aforementioned studies attributed fresh undergraduates intense drinking to stress, Onyebuchukwu, Sholarin, Agoha & Emerenwa (2015) submitted that it's because they are no more under the guidance of their parents and are such free to do whatever they choose. They also opined that the students' background influence the peers they associate with that could have eventual adverse effect on their lives and future. Generally, they concluded that a number of the undergraduates drink in their quest to have a sense of belonging among the big boys on the campus. When alcohol is involved, acts meeting the legal definition of rape appear more likely to occur (Ullman, Karabatsos & Koss 1999) and a host of other risk behaviours engaged in by the youths aside the detrimental effect alcohol has on their academic performance.

Recommendation:

*Akungba, is a small town in Ondo state with less recreational and sporting facilities which could have given diversion of energy use and interest to these students. I think the university should begin to look into this to see what could be done to rectify this shortcoming.

*The university is non residential, only about five percent of the girls are accommodated with other students living outside of the campus without any supervision of home wardens as you see in residential universities. With good funding from the government and fund raising, I believe this issue can be resolved. In the interim, a system of harnessing and coordinating the students' different accommodation in town coined Off Campus Unit is being discussed so that a bit of check can be put on their activities to curtail excesses.

*There should be a continuous awareness program on the dangers of alcohol consumption for the undergraduate's right from resumption as freshmen till their final year.

*Drinking joints and bars should not be allowed to operate within or around the university. Self-esteem training will be carried out periodically to let the undergraduates understand that alcohol is not a self esteem booster neither does it fix one's problems.

* There should be a periodic alcohol level screening in the universities and a stiff penalty for those found wanting so as to deter others. Alcohol consumption is a common problem amongst undergraduates in Nigerian universities. World health organization (2004) ranked Nigeria among the thirty nations with the highest per capita consumption of alcohol worldwide. [The new drinking norm that has evolved is drinking competitions among youths. Bar owners, breweries' representatives set out prizes for the fastest drinkers and the winner is judged based on the quantity consumed (Odejide et al, 2006). There are also various promotional sales of alcohol in the country such as Star Beer Trek, Gulder Ultimate Search and a host of others including a group known as Kegite club which uses palm wine as holy water in the universities, all which encourage youth alcohol use].

The itemized recommendations apply to all the universities and lastly, promotional sales by alcohol companies should be prohibited in the higher institutions and discouraged as much as possible in the country.

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