PERCEIVED FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HABITUAL CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS AMONG THE YOUTHS IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Abstract
Consuming alcohol forms an important habitual social practice for the youths in many cultures despite the fact that it is harmful to the body. To gain more knowledge on the perceived factors that influence alcohol consumption among the youths in Anambra State, three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A descriptive survey was adopted. The population for the study comprised all the youths in Anambra State .Purposive sampling technique was used to select 1,495 youths in Anambra State. Two hundred youths were purposively selected for the study. Data were collected using youth alcohol consumption questionnaire (YACQ) and was analyzed using mean scores for the research questions and z-test for the hypothesis. Based on the analysis of the data, the following findings were made. Male youths in the State are aware of the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks. Also the female youths are aware of the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks in Anambra State. The implication for counselling were discussed and the study made a number of recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Key words: Perceived Factors, Habitual Consumption, Alcoholic Drinks, Youths

Background to the Study

The world discovered alcohol many thousands of years ago through its natural occurrence in decaying fruit or fermenting bowls of grain in which air-borne yeasts and natural sugars combined. Though the discovery of alcoholic drinks may have been accidental, humans soon learned how to deliberately produce it. Alcoholic beverages became common in virtually all cultures. The earliest recipe ever found, from more than 5,000 years ago in the region that is modem Iraq, was not for food but for beer (Oglivie, 2007). Alcoholic drinks were universally used as an everyday drink, as medicine, as part of social celebrations and feasts, as a means of conflict resolution, and for spiritual purposes. Heavy drinking and even intoxication were not necessarily seen as problems as long as drinkers behaved in whatever way had been set up as acceptable. Although it is often said Aboriginal Peoples in North America did not know alcohol before the arrival of the Europeans, alcoholic drinks had in fact been produced by at least some tribes from South America to the Plains. Such groups used alcohol primarily in rituals and ceremonies.

All humans seem, to have a need for occasional altered consciousness, in social gatherings or spiritual purposes. Alcohol has been the most common means for achieving that end but the negative effects were also known. For that reason, all cultures developed mles about appropriate use about acceptable and unacceptable intoxication. Alcohol has been man's constant companion since the earliest times hence; the use of alcoholic beverages began very early in human history. Alcohol is a liquid distilled from fermented mixture of sugar and other saccharine matters (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). Alcohol consumption is defined as the drinking of beverages containing ethyl alcohol (Tikkanen, 2008). Alcohol consumption

is the drinking of beverages containing ethyl alcohol, which are consumed mainly for their psychological and physiological effects. They are also taken for social purposes like celebration, fun and can also be part of religious practices all over the world (Dumbili, 2012) but excessive alcohol consumption is one of the more prominent health risks in modem society.

In the modem day Nigeria, alcoholic beverages produced and consumed include *burukutu,* often fermented from guinea-com especially in the northern Nigeria. Other are native gin (spirit) locally called *ogogoro* or *kai-kai* (Korieh, 2003) and palm wine that is whitish in colour (tapped from oil palm tree or raffia palm) in the south. There also exists the local and industrial beer which is invariably the most popular among the youth (Jemigan & Obot, 2006). Production and consumption of these alcoholic beverages in Nigeria is on the increase (Chikere & Mayowa, 2011). According to Jemigan and Obot, (2006) people who drink can become habituated to the use of alcohol under certain circumstances. For example, they may develop the habit of drinking to relieve stress or drinking heavily when out with certain friends. Habituation is a kind of psychological dependence, but it is not the same as physical dependence. Psychological dependence is learned and does not fit with the medical criteria of dependence (Ogilvie, 2001). A person who feels the need to have one drink everyday after work to unwind is psychologically habituated or dependent on that drink. Being psychologically dependent on one drink is not a problem. But the person who is habituated to getting drunk whenever he/she feels stressed has a problem.

Heavy drinking is not easily defined because the effects of alcohol depends on variety of factors including seeing a certain friend, arguing with the spouse, feeling anxious, thinking about past abuse, gender and weight . However, Canadian low-risk guidelines say men should not drink more than 14 bottles a week and women not more than nine, spread out during the week (Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, 2000b).

Alcohol consumption among youths all over the world has assumed an alarming dimension. It has become so worrisome that it has gained prominence in social discourse. The high rate of alcohol consumption among youths could be associated with the availability of alcohol in most societies and communities. More so alcoholic drinks are relatively cheap compared with other abused drugs.

Peer group is a source of great influence during adolescence (Chauhan 2007). In a contemporary society, peer groups have become an increasingly important context in which adolescents spend time. Alcoholic beverages are constantly advertised as contribution to the enjoyment of life. When youths watch alcoholic advertisement on the television and hear them on the radio, there may be urged to experiment on it. For instance, the advertisement put up by makers of Harp larger beer which says “Harp for happiness” which indeed encourage any willing youth to take or depend on alcohol since it presumably brings about happiness. And naturally human beings are associated with things that are good. Socially, alcohol is accepted in the society and for this reason, the society may see alcoholic drinking as normal and may unconsciously promote the habit of drinking alcohol in social gathering like, wedding, launching and other celebrations which occur all round the year. Alcohol consumption has been in all human Society for more than ten years (Smart, 2007) but its excess consumption has not been without consequences. Alcohol is a stimulant; the substance is basically a depressant. When ingested, alcohol is immediately absorbed into the portal venous blood and taken directly into the heart. The effect of alcohol therefore is first experienced in cerebral area due to depressant action in the nervous system. The first cells to

be depressed are those of highest cortical areas including the association areas of the cerebral cortex that house the centre of judgment, self-control, and other learned inhibitions. The reason why drunks misbehave therefore is simple, learned inhibition are removed from the government of behaviour. It is not surprising therefore to see a lot of anti-social behaviours being shamelessly exhibited by consumers of alcohol.

The consequences of alcohol may be seen from the social, economic and health perspectives. Socially, as human beings, we interact with other people both on official capacity and unofficial capacity at personal and other various levels. We enjoy self-esteem, respect a virtue we so much cherish as human being. For drunks who are dependent on alcohol other crime becomes easy for example frauds which are used as a means to finance the drinking. Economically, problem of drinking can lead to major financial problems at a personal level. As alcohol consumption increases proportionally, the income spent on alcoholic drinks increases too. This, in itself can cause serious difficulties but, when drinking also leads to loss of job and consequent loss of income and the problem may become insurmountable.

Health wise, if a youth goes on with habit of alcohol consumption, his level of tolerance to alcohol will grow and will become physically and psychologically dependent on alcohol. Tolerance is a condition in which it takes increasing larger amount of alcohol to produce the same effects previously felt at a lower level of alcohol intake, This condition no doubt has a lot of health implications with repeated use of alcohol, a youth may suffer one or more of the following health conditions obesity, malnutrition, impotence, severe mental disorder, ulcer, and brain damage. Youths who consume alcohol are likely to become poor achievers academically, appear resentful of adult, interest in their personal lives, have little interest in school activities and often have an alcoholic aroma around them. These have prompted the researcher to look into the factors that are responsible for the consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths. There is also need for the counsellor to be involved in the prevention and remediation of alcohol consumption among youths. The term youth is a stage of life with many definitions. For WHO (2006), the youths are just young people aged between 10-29 years. The youth are also seen as young persons between adolescent and maturity (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010).

Perceived Factors that Influence Alcohol Consumption

There are many factors that influence consumption of alcohol among youths which may include among other factors, peer group, parents, media, availability, and social norms. Ducher (2001), in his study, states that young people sometimes start drinking alcohol as a result of giving in to social pressure or because of a desire to go along with the group hence they want the approval of the friends. This is to say that if they do not drink, they will not be accepted in their group and so they drink because they think it is adult to do so and others to have fun or excitement. Mcpherson (2000) also confirmed that peer pressure is one of the factors that encourage students to drink alcoholic beverages. The compelling need to fit into and belong to a group of friends may be a motivating factor in alcohol use. Peer pressure can take the form of direct offer or even pressure to drink and it can be more subtle such as the perception that “everyone is drinking”. Adolescents related pressure as one of the reason for using alcohol. The desire by adolescent to gain emancipation from parental control and develop a unique individual identity predisposes them to behave in a way that helps them to be liked and respected by their peers.

Van Hecke (2011) pointed out the use of alcoholic beverages by adolescents is often seen as a way to become more adults, because they have grown up to believe this. The influence of

peer factor such as peer norms and susceptibility to peer pressure has been found to account for significant variance in adolescent alcohol consumption (Schwarzer, 2010). According to Ethen (2000), parental influence was identified as a critical factor in adolescent drinking of alcohol. Swaim (2009) confirmed that parents who are permissive about discipline and who do not enforce any rules or standard are even more likely to end up with children who drink alcohol regularly. He discovered that some parental approval and close associations with parents that drink alcohol influence the act of alcohol consumption. Underage individuals are more likely to drink when alcohol is readily available to them. This includes being able to buy alcohol on their own at the bar or store, having others being able to buy it for them. The adolescent livings in areas with more bars are expose to alcohol consumption (Martin, Treno & Gnibe, 2003).

Several other determinants have been shown to influence on alcohol consumption. Another important determinant is positive social norms regarding alcohol consumption. When it comes to consuming alcohol, social norms are among the strongest predictors of alcohol use (kypri & Langley, 2003). The theory on social norms that explains the influence of social norms on behaviour is the social norms approach. It is a theory that states that human behaviour is influenced by incorrect perceptions among adolescents, this means that adolescent assumes that other adolescent consume more than what they really consume. The consuming behaviour of adolescent is influenced by these misconceptions and induces them to drink more (Berkowitz, 2009). It is against this backdrop that the researchers carried out the study on the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The menace of alcohol consumption by the youth seems to have assumed a serious dimension in Nigeria society. Habitual consumption of alcohol in Anambra State. This is not surprising because the State is one that is known for its high production of palm wine, thereby making it very much available to the youths in the area at a very cheap rate. Johnston (2011) identified alcohol consumption as a factor that could possibly contribute to youth involvement in violent behaviours. When younger people start drinking, they are more likely to become addicted to alcohol and other substances. Parents are worried of the lives of their children and the school administrators are sometimes scared of what goes on because they may be the next target.

In social gathering and celebrations like festivals, weddings, launching which occur all year round, the tables are packed with all kinds of alcoholic drinks especially *kai-kai.* It is not unusual to see these youths after taking excess of the alcohol to be involved in fights, crime and so many other violent acts. Some of them end up sleeping in the gutters. Those of them in school who engage in the consumption of alcohol are usually undisciplined. They use abusive word towards teachers and fellow students. They often involve in theft, and destruction of school properties. Some of them end up as school dropouts. The communities are not free from their problems, parents are worried of the lives of their children and the school administrators are scared of what goes on because they may be the next target.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study is designed to;

1. Determine the perception of the youths on the factors that influence the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths.
2. Determine the perception of the male and female youths on the factors that influence the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among youths.

Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to finding out the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State?
2. What are the females' perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State?
3. What are the males' perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was stated and tested at 0.05 significant level. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female youths on the factors influencing the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks in Anambra State?

Method

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. According to Akuezuilo and Agu (2007) descriptive survey design is one to be representatives of the entire group. The choice of this design was made because it documented events in their most naturally occurring setting.The study was carried out in Anambra State.lt has common boundaries with Enugu in the North, Imo in the west, Kogi state in the east, and Delta state in the south. The people of the area are known for their hospitality. They are mostly traders, civil servants and few farmers.

The population comprised all the youths in Anambra State ,between the ages of 18 and 40. One thousand four hundred and ninety five youths in Anambra State were selected using purposive sampling technique and made up of 995 males and 500 female youths The instrument used for data collection was youth alcohol consumption questionnaire (YACQ). This instrument has sections A and B, section A is for the personal data of the respondents, while section B has questions in which the respondents are required to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement on the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drink among the youths by ticking the appropriate columns. The structures on how to answer the question are as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2 and Strongly Agree(SD) =1. Two experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling validated the research instrument. The instrument was given to them along with the research questions and the purpose of the study; they were requested to assess the extent to which the items would be able to elicit the information from the respondents subsequently. Their corrections and inputs were accepted and this led to the modification of some items before the final production of the instrument

The researchers made use of on the spot administration of questionnaire to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants. The respondents were made to understand the reasons for the exercise. The research assistants waited to supervise the respondents during the filling of the questionnaire to ensure independent work. Questions raised by the respondents were answered. The questionnaires were collected back from the respondent on the spot; this gave a return rate of 100%. The data retrieved from the respondents on the

responses was analysed using simple mean score. The mean is obtained by adding the scores for responses on each item and dividing by the total number of responses on each item. This shows that any mean score that is up to 2.50 and above was accepted while any mean score below 2.50 was not accepted. The hypothesis was tested using Z-test

Results

Research Question 1

What are the perceived factors that influence the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean score of youths on the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths.

	S/N ITEMS	MEAN(X)	RANK	DECISION
1.	Availability of alcoholic drinks in outlet	2.4	13th	Accepted
2.	Some youths drink to escape from family problems and depression	4.5	1st	Accepted
3.	Some youths drink due to Peer Pressure	3.01	6th	Accepted
4.	Some youths drink for social acceptance	3.9	2nd	Accepted
5.	Some youths drink to forget pains and worries	2.3	13th	Accepted
6.	The advertisement put up on the media by the makers of alcoholic drinks contributes to the consumption of alcohol among the youths	2.9	10th	Accepted
7.	Some youths drink to have experience of being drunk	3.7	3rd	Accepted
8.	Some male youths drink due to free offer	3.5	5th	Accepted
9.	Some females drink alcohol to get relief from menstrual	2.6	11th	Accepted
10.	Some female youths drink alcohol to know its taste	2.5	12th	Accepted
11.	Some males drink because their fathers drink	2.91	7th	Accepted
12.	Some youths drink to feel high	2.78	8th	Accepted
13.	Some youths take alcohol for self-medication	2.20	9th	Rejected
14.	Some youths drink due to family background	3.02	4th	Accepted

The data on table 1 indicate that the youths agreed to all the items except for item 13.

Research question 2

What are the males perceived factors that influence the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths

Table 2: Mean score of male youths on the perceived factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks among the youths.

S/n	items	Mean (X)	Rank	Decision
1.	availability of alcoholic drinks in outlet	3.6	8th	Accepted
2.	some youths drink to escape from family problems and depression	4.05	6th	Accepted
3.	some youths drink due to peer pressure	4.35	4th	Accepted
4.	some youths drink for social acceptance	3.45	7th	Accepted
5.	some youths drink to forget pains and worries	3.0	11th	Accepted
6.	the advertisement put up on the media by the makers of alcoholic drinks contributes to the consumption of alcohol among youths	2.88	10th	Accepted
7.	some youths drink to have experience of being drunk	2.1	13th	Rejected
8.	some male youths drink due to free offer	2.8	12th	Accepted
9.	some females drink alcohol to get relief from menstrual pains	2.0	14th	Rejected
10.	some female youths drink alcohol to know its taste	4.3	5th	Accepted
11.	some males drink because their fathers drink	3.3	9th	Accepted
12.	some youths drink to feel high	4.53	1st	Accepted
13.	some youths take alcohol for self-medication			
14.	some youths drink due to family background			

Table 2 indicates that the youths agreed to all the items except for items 9 and 11.

Hypothesis

The mean perception scores of male and female youths on the factors influencing the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks in Anambra State will not differ significantly.

Table 3: Z-test on the perception of the youths based on gender

Source of variation	N	X	SD	df	Cal z	Crit z	Remark
Male	995	3.53	0.73				
Female	500	3.02	0.98	1493	4.19	1.96	Significant

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 1493 degrees of freedom, the calculated Z (4.19) is greater than the critical Z (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Then, there is a significant difference in the perception of male and female youths on the factors influencing the habitual consumption of alcoholic drinks.

Discussion of the Finding

The findings of this study shows that the factors that influence habitual consumption of alcoholic drink among the youths are youths drinks due to peer pressure, youths drink for social acceptance, the advertisement put up on the media by makers of alcohol contributes to consumption of alcohol among the youths, youths drink alcohol to have experience of being drunk, male youths due to free offer, some female youths drink alcohol in order to know its

taste, male youths drink alcohol because their fathers drink, availability of alcohol in outlets and youths drink due to family background.

According to Newburg-birch (2009), relationship in family also plays a role in factors that influence habitual alcohol consumption. Egblue (2002) stated that frustrating and stress contributes to youth alcoholic consumption. Frustrating problems such as loss of job, unemployment as well as loss of contract could make one indulge in alcohol consumption as a means of alleviating and forgetting the problem in a temporary level as arrived by consumption of alcohol.

Conclusions

Habitual consumption of alcohol is one of the social problems facing the society today for it often brings poverty, domestic violence and crime among others. These problems concern all and sundry. Alcohol affects the brain, impairs judgments and affects conscious activities. The youths need to be helped if they are to overcome their drinking problem. Counselling intervention such as self monitoring, peer pressure management, self regulation, values clarifications and thought stopping could help the youth to withstand peer pressure, social acceptance and all of which were implicated in this study as perceived causative factors in youth drinking.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the researcher on the finding:

1. Awareness programs on alcohol use should be organised by the counsellors in conjunction with the ministry of Education.
2. Peer-to-peer educational programs for the high risk youths should be encouraged by major stakeholders.
3. Effective implementation of laws, regulation and policies on alcohol consumption. The government through the NDLEA should work towards making these policies implementable.
4. There is need for the parents, relatives and friends to be good role models to the youths since their behaviour affects the behaviour of the youths.
5. There is need for the establishment of counselling centres in every community by the government, NGOs or private individuals and qualified health counsellors should be employed in helping the youths who are habitual drinkers by giving them special advice on how to go about the withdrawal system.

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