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ALCOHOL USE AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTING STYLES

Brunilda Laboviti*, Greta Katreli, Bejlinda Mustafa*****

* Laboviti” Clinic, Tirana

Abstract

The aspect of alcohol use among adolescents and the style and role that parenting plays in their upbringing is a concept and issue that is increasingly being discussed in literature and various writings nowadays. The growing importance attributed to this topic comes from the fact that the number of adolescents consuming alcohol at such an early age has increased significantly.

The aim of this study is to identify the factors that influence alcohol use among adolescents, as well as the role that parents have played and continue to play in educating their children about the problems adolescents face during this period. It also seeks to understand what parenting style is used—whether these adolescents come from families with authoritarian, permissive, or balanced (authoritative) parents.

This is a quantitative study, as the instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire. The study includes four second-year groups from four high schools in the city of Tirana. The selected sample consists of high school students aged 16–17, with an effort made to maintain a gender balance among the participants.

This study attempts to explain the psychological and social factors that lead adolescents to alcohol use, as well as the impact alcohol has on their health and lives. Furthermore, it takes into account the role of parents and the parenting styles they use with their children, which is a very important aspect in the education of adolescents, helping to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors such as alcohol use at this age. The number of adolescents who consume alcohol regularly in Albania has been significantly increasing in recent years.

Keywords: *Alcohol Use, Adolescents, Peer Influence, Parenting Style*

1. Introduction

Historical Background

The presence and use of alcohol has been known to humanity for a very long time—alcohol began to be used approximately twelve thousand years ago (Chalke H.D., 1976). Since then, it has accompanied human civilization, becoming an integral part of its existence. It is no coincidence, therefore, that alco-

hol has also found its place in literature. Several notable historical figures, such as Homer, Aristophanes, Plato, and other writers of ancient Greek and Roman antiquity, have written or spoken about it.

Pages of the Old Testament reveal that the consumption of alcohol and intoxication were not uncommon among the population of that time. Ancient documents from Egypt confirm that alcohol was used in various ceremonies involving priests and royalty, and that prominent individuals owned their own vineyards, while common people consumed alcohol in beer shops.

Descriptions of alcohol and prohibitions against its use can also be found in the Quran (Chalke H.D., 1976). The process of alcohol production (distillation) was first discovered by ancient civilizations, but it was only much later that people learned how to produce more concentrated alcoholic beverages. These were no longer limited to beer and wine; whiskey, gin, and rum quickly spread across the globe, becoming part of social, military, and naval history.

Alcohol has also been used for therapeutic purposes—Hindus, for example, used it to relieve pain, and in some parts of Great Britain it was considered safer than untreated water. Throughout history, the use of alcohol has been associated with abuse, aggressive behavior, criminality, and antisocial conduct (Chalke H.D., 1976).

2. Methodology

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The issue of alcohol use among youth and its consequences can be considered a major public health concern at a global level. Alcohol consumption has been identified as a risk factor for various diseases and has severe health consequences. Recent data shows a growing trend in the early onset of regular and high-quantity alcohol consumption. The European region has the highest alcohol consumption rate in the world, and it is considered one of the most dangerous risk factors for illness and mortality in the region. According to data from two years ago, between 10% and 30% of individuals consume 60 grams of alcohol per day, whereas the permissible daily amount is between 10 grams and no more than 30 grams.

For this reason, the aim of this study is to identify the factors that push adolescents in the city of Berat to consume alcohol, as well as to examine the parenting style used by their families and the influence it has had—and continues to have—on their lives.

2.2 Objectives

1. To determine whether there are gender differences in alcohol consumption among adolescents aged 16–17.
2. To explore the impact of family and the parenting style used with these adolescents.

2.3 Long-term Objectives

This study may serve as a foundational basis for future comparisons of the alcohol consumption phenomenon and for assessing the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

2.4 Research Questions

1. Are there gender differences regarding alcohol consumption?
2. How do adolescents perceive alcohol consumption?

3. How do adolescents perceive parenting styles?
4. Are there gender differences in perceptions of parenting style?
5. How does parenting style influence alcohol use among adolescents?

2.5 Hypothesis

- Parenting style plays an important role in adolescent alcohol consumption.

2.6 Dependent Variable: Alcohol consumption

2.7 Independent Variables: Parenting style, gender

3. Data Analysis

3.1 Results

Chapter II presented the entire methodology followed in conducting this study. Alcohol consumption among youth and its consequences can be considered a major global public health issue, and its use is recognized as a high-risk factor for various diseases and serious health outcomes. Recent data shows a spread of early and regular alcohol use in large quantities. Europe has the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the world, which is considered one of the most dangerous factors for disease and mortality in the region. According to data from two years ago, 10% to 30% of individuals reported consuming 60 grams of alcohol daily, while the recommended daily limit is between 10 and 30 grams.

This study includes a **quantitative research** approach that examines the factors pushing adolescents aged 16–17 to consume alcohol, as well as the impact of the **parenting style** applied by their families. Through quantitative analysis based on the data collected from two questionnaires, the goal is to gather information on the levels of alcohol consumption among adolescents and to evaluate how much parenting style influences them. The quantitative analysis is conducted using the **IBM SPSS Statistics** software, through which we aim to either confirm or reject our hypothesis based on the collected data.

3.2 Study Purpose

The purpose of this study focuses on identifying the correlation between parenting style and peer influence on alcohol consumption among adolescents.

3.4 Study Objectives and Research Questions

Objective 1: To identify whether there are gender differences in alcohol consumption among adolescents aged 16–17.

Objective 2: To investigate the influence of the family and the parenting style applied to these adolescents.

Research Question 1: Are there gender differences in relation to alcohol consumption?

Research Question 2: How do adolescents perceive alcohol consumption?

Research Question 3: How do adolescents perceive parenting style?

Research Question 4: Are there gender differences in the perception of parenting style?

Research Question 5: How does parenting style influence alcohol consumption among adolescents?

3.5 Hypothesis

- **Parenting style plays a significant role in alcohol consumption among adolescents.**

3.6 Quantitative Study Methodology

This phase of the study describes all the steps undertaken to carry out the research, beginning with the **research design**, the **sample**, the **sampling procedure**, the **instruments used**, and the **reliability and validity** of these instruments. The final part of the chapter concludes with the **data analysis**.

3.7 Research Design

To address the issue of alcohol consumption among adolescents and the influence of parenting style and peer relationships, a **correlational research design** was used.

3.8 Pilot Phase

The questionnaires used in the pilot phase were based on the following instruments:

- **L. Goldberg** (Cambridge)
 - **D. Levitin** (McGill University)
 - **SAMHSA (2003)** – Division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for alcohol use
 - The **parenting style test** by **Pitzer, R. (2001)** – *St. Paul Parenting Style* (University of Minnesota)
- All instruments were adapted and translated into the Albanian language for this study.

3.9 Sample

The study included **140 second-year high school students** from schools in the city of **Tirana**, of whom **98 were male** and **42 were female**.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

With the authorization of the respective school directors, the questionnaires were administered to the selected sample for data collection purposes. The process took place in the classrooms and other school premises during **March 2023**.

The completion time for each questionnaire was **15 minutes**, and there were no issues reported. All students willingly completed the questionnaire.

3.11 Final Study

Study population: The target population consisted of high school students from schools in the city of **Tirana**. Data collection was carried out from **May 1 to May 3, 2023**.

3.12 Sampling

The participants were **16–17-year-old students**, randomly selected from various high schools in **Tirana**.

The sample size was **140 students**, comprising **98 males** and **42 females**.

The **stratified random sampling method** was used to ensure proper representation of the population.

3.13 Description of Instruments

At the beginning, each adolescent included in the study filled out a brief personal information form that included basic demographic data such as gender, age, school, etc. Following that, two questionnaires were used:

1. Alcohol Use Questionnaire:

This questionnaire contains **18 questions**. Each question has two answer choices:

- **1. No**
- **2. Yes**

The **maximum score** a student can obtain is **36**, and the **minimum** is **18**. The **higher the score**, the **greater the level of alcohol consumption** by the adolescent.

2. Parenting Style Questionnaire:

This questionnaire consists of **21 statements**. Each statement is rated on a 4-point Likert scale:

- **1. Often**
- **2. Sometimes**
- **3. Rarely**
- **4. Never**

Participants select the answer that best reflects their experience. The most frequently chosen alternative reveals the parenting style, as classified below:

a) **Mostly answer 1 (Often):**

Your parents follow a **dominant parenting style**. They have strong confidence in the rules they set and hold high expectations for your behavior. They express their love through high standards but rarely show affection openly. Usually, communication is one-way — *they speak, and you listen*. At times, they can be strict and harsh when punishing inappropriate behavior.

b) **Mostly answer 2 (Sometimes):**

Your parents are **tolerant**. They show a lot of affection toward you, tend to fulfill your wishes, communicate freely, and allow you to do what you enjoy most. They do not establish many rules and prefer to be **friendly rather than disciplinary**.

c) **Mostly answer 3 (Rarely):**

Your parents follow a **positive parenting style**. They believe children need both love and structure. They have high expectations and understand the importance of guidance and rules to help you meet those ex-

pectations. Parenting is their most important job. They listen to you, but ultimately they have the **final say** in matters related to safety, values, and health. These parents are consistent, fair, and firm.

d) **Mostly answer 4 (Never):**

These parents tend to be **uninvolved**. They are uncomfortable with the “parenting role” and do not spend much time with you. Their attention is primarily focused on work or other personal interests. Even when present, they are often mentally elsewhere. They believe the other parent is doing a better job and lack confidence in their own parenting abilities.

3.14 Definition of Variables:

- **Dependent variable:** Alcohol consumption, measured with 18 items.
- **Independent variable:** Parenting style, measured with 21 items.

3.15 Procedure:

After obtaining permission from the Directorate of Education of the city of Tirana, I approached the principals of the high schools, where, together with the school psychologists, I was allowed to distribute the questionnaires to the second-year students. The teachers and school psychologists also helped administer the questionnaires and explained the purpose of the questionnaire and how it should be completed.

Each adolescent was clearly informed from the beginning about confidentiality and the anonymity of their responses. It was also emphasized that participation was voluntary, not mandatory.

3.16 Quantitative Data Analysis:

The analysis was conducted using **IBM SPSS Statistics** and **Microsoft Excel**. The questionnaires underwent factor analysis and reliability coefficient calculations. Descriptive analyses such as correlations and logistic regressions between the study variables were performed. Additionally, independence tests such as the **Chi-square test ($p \leq 0.05$)** were conducted to examine differences between categorical variables, allowing for both descriptive and analytical in-depth analysis.

3.17 Quantitative Analysis:

This section includes all the results of the study. First, factor analysis for each instrument is presented to assess the weight of each item within the instrument. Next, a descriptive analysis of the variables included in the study is shown.

To investigate gender differences in alcohol consumption, Chi-square independence tests were used. To study relationships between variables, **Kendall’s tau correlation** was applied, and to examine the impact of variables, **binary logistic regression** was performed.

Below is the factor analysis for each instrument used in the study, followed by subsequent analyses.

3.18 Alcohol Consumption

The factor analysis aimed to measure the weight of each item within the instrument used. The minimum cutoff for factor loadings to continue the analysis was set at 0.4. For the variable measuring alcohol consumption, which consists of 18 questions, all factor loadings were above this threshold. This indicates that all questionnaire items are valid for further analysis. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) was 0.844, indicating a high level of instrument reliability.

3.19 Parenting Style

After the factor analysis of the instrument measuring parenting style, it was confirmed that the items met the criteria for further analysis, surpassing the 0.4 cutoff. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this instrument was 0.895, which also indicates a high level of reliability.

4. Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the data from this study, it was concluded that the number of adolescents consuming alcohol in the city of Berat has significantly increased in recent years. Out of 100% of the students, 80% reported consuming alcohol, while 20% reported not consuming it. The highest number of users were males compared to females. Additionally, adolescents consuming more alcohol mostly came from families with an authoritarian parenting style, which seems to have influenced their tendency to consume alcohol rather than preventing it.

4.4 Recommendations and Limitations

Firstly: The study included only adolescents from the city of Tirana and did not cover rural areas, where alcohol consumption rates and parenting styles may differ. This implies the need for future research to explore how parenting styles influence adolescent alcohol use in both large urban centers and smaller rural areas, as well as the differences between them.

Secondly: To measure the number of alcohol users among adolescents and to perceive the parenting styles of their parents, questionnaires were used. However, parents might not strictly follow an authoritarian or permissive parenting style. It appears that the adolescents' perception of parenting style influences their alcohol consumption, with adolescents perceiving authoritarian parents consuming more alcohol.

Thirdly: This study identified two main parenting styles during child upbringing, but parents may use more than one style simultaneously. It would be very interesting to further investigate how parenting style impacts adolescent alcohol use, including specific situations such as families with divorced parents or where one parent is absent.

Fourthly: The role of the school psychologist should be essential, so that meetings can be organized both with students who have alcohol-related problems and with their parents, addressing this sensitive topic which appears to be increasing significantly.

These limitations and recommendations can serve as a basis for future quantitative or qualitative research by interested scholars in this field.

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