

The description on the effects of alcoholism in relation to the university students' academic progression

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Abstract

This study was done so as to determine how the effects of alcoholism among university students can affect their academic progression. Survey Research Design was employed during data collection, within a sample of 300 respondents, who were obtained through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed to 290 students because they live with/among the addicted students; while interviews were also done to 10 students and lecturers because they have clear details concerning the addicted student, who have encountered hindrances on academic matters due to alcoholism. The obtained data are presented in tables, showing frequencies and percentages of each item, while others are explained as theories, concepts and views. For those cases, alcoholism among university students has been proven to be accompanied with unsafe sexual practices, which results into unwanted pregnancies and STDs like gonorrhea, syphilis, UTI, HIV/AIDS, etc. Due to alcoholism, most of students have been involved in accidents and injuries, which make them ill and not attend lectures. Some have developed kinds of aggressive behaviors that makes them indiscipline and violent. Such factors hinder their academic prosperity due to failing in exams, attaining low GPAs, proponding the semester(s) due to financial crisis after squandering school fees, and being incompetent within their profession. Then if so, universities should set strategies and techniques in order to educate the fresh year students who have not been addicted. Rehabilitation counselling should take part to eliminate alcohol dependency on their students. And lecturers should use professional skills to ensure all students attend lectures.

Keywords: alcoholism; effects of alcoholism; academic progression; university students

Article History

Received: April 25, 2022

Accepted: June 16, 2022

Cite this as: Welwel MB, Josue N, Mushobozi BTA, Kessy AA, Mkwama FR, Mtweve AJ, & Mugane JJ (2022) The description on the effects of alcoholism in relation to the university students' academic progression. Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences 14 (1):52-60. DOI 10.20473/ijss.v14i1.35222.

Introduction

The discussion concerning "Alcoholism" has been an ongoing phenomenon since humanity began to experience the consequences of using/misusing alcoholic substances. Likewise, from the analysis of Horton (1974:539), the use of alcoholic substances is as old as of agricultural products. Those who have been dealing with traditional studies of several global societies, they have reached a point of proving how "Alcoholism," as an addiction to alcoholic substances, has been perceived from ages. For instance, some studies have shown that: "the highly use of alcohol in Africa has been due to ceremonial obligations, like births, initiation, marriages and deaths. This is because traditional



Africans believe that alcohol is like a propitiating/pacifying substance, which fortifies social relations” (World Health Organization 2011).

From the findings of several scholars/researchers, alcoholism has been rising from time to time, due to alcohol production. For instance, by the late of 20th Century, World Health Organization (WHO) found that “140 million people in the world were addicted to alcoholic substances” (Mayor 2001). That being the case, many societies in the whole world had developed a tendency (social habit) of producing alcohol as one of its economic product(s), so as to make contribution to the revenue of their countries. And despite of all efforts in rebuking its supply and consumption (by religious powers), but still some modern industries took risk(s) of producing them within their breweries or distilleries (Edwards & Arif, 1980:23). As if it is not enough, the high number of consumers of alcoholic substances was remarked to be of young adults and of adolescents (World Health Organization, 1995). Then if so, such an increase in supplying and consuming alcoholic substances has continuously/continually been fostering a lot of effects within the lives of the addicts—this is all about an increasing threat to the well-being of the individuals (Myadze & Rwomire 2014). Its effects were/are believed to be encountered by even university students in different corners of the world. Such noticeable effects include: (1) rejections from their families; (2) being engaged in crimes and violence; (3) get involved in unsafe sexual activities, which may prompt infections and diseases; (4) acquiring some accidental injuries; and (5) attaining mental and psychological damages (Castaño-Perez & Calderon-Vallejo 2014). Hence due to such and many other effects encountering university students due to alcoholism, this work/paper tries to discuss and analyze them in relation to their academic progression.

The facts concerning alcoholism

When you hear the word or read the concept concerning Alcoholism, it is all about being addicted in using alcoholic substances like wine, beers, spirits, etc. Such alcoholic substances are proven to be manufactured when the ingredients of yeasts/grapes become decomposed without the presence of oxygen (fermentation), while being added with the ingredients of sugar (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2010). Recent Researches have found that: “the content of alcohol acts like sedative hypnotic drug, which depresses the central nervous system at a high level; although when taken in small amount, it may act as a stimulant (Roehrs & Roth 2001).

When entering the body of an individual through drinking it, there are some sorts of mechanisms taking place, so as to monitor the concentration of it within the body (Rehm 2003). According to Lohr (2005), the first reaction of the body after receiving alcohol is to absorb it into the blood. After absorbing it, 20% of the remaining alcohol becomes retained in the stomach, while 80% goes to the small intestine. Due to the absorption and concentration, there are some immediately effects/reaction of it within the body. Such immediately effects/reactions become felt in an interval of 5 to 10 minutes after drinking or 30 to 90 minutes when it is adequate within the blood (Lohr 2005). Moreover, other reactions of the body when receiving alcohol include “Metabolism”. The very fact concerning metabolism after drinking alcohol begins: “when the liver breaks down the toxic-alcoholic substances into water (H₂O) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), allowing the kidney to filter the water into urine; and sometimes through breathing, the lungs may filter them into breathed-out vapor or through sweats” (Zakhari 2006).

The general effects of alcoholism

Ever since “Alcoholic substances” are depressant substances after entering in the body, they may cause some of effects—immediately ones or of lifelong. The immediately effects of alcoholism include: (1) feeling euphoric, while being talkative; (2) feeling drowsy; (3) having depressed respiratory rates—this is all about having slow, low or shallow breathing rates; (4) encountering accidents and injuries; and (5) death may sometime be encountered by the drunkards (Brust 2005; Fingerhood 2007). The lifelong effects include: (1) diseases like cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular

diseases, and other health complications; (2) development of aggressive behavior; (3) stresses and economic deprivation; (4) unresolved conflicts; (5) Committing of violence and humiliation; (6) mental health complications; (7) social phobias and anxiety; and (8) death (Babor et al. 2010; Girling et al. 2006; Leonard 2005).

The effects of alcoholism in relation to academic progression

On the side of academic progression, several researchers have found how the effects of alcoholism influence poor academic progression. According to Wegosasa (2011), alcoholism makes the students to (1) be indiscipline; (2) fail to accomplish the intended syllabus—as stipulated in the course outline; (3) fail to accomplish the given assignments; (4) attaining poor/low grade points; and (5) often encountering repetitions for the fulfillment of the requirements for the academic award—this is accompanied by supplementary exams and carries. Likewise, “Alcohol” consumes the time of students and makes them to be absentees. Thus, making them to miss classes, skip acquiring key concepts, and finally performing poorly in tests and exams (Presley & Pimentel 2006; Wechsler et al. 2000). As if it is not enough, the sleepiness and other bodily/mental complications caused by alcoholism, hinders the attentiveness and learning accuracy of the students. Thus, due to that, many fail in exams and tests, attain poor GPAs, and some repeat some courses (Ansari, Stock, & Mills 2013).

Conceptual framework

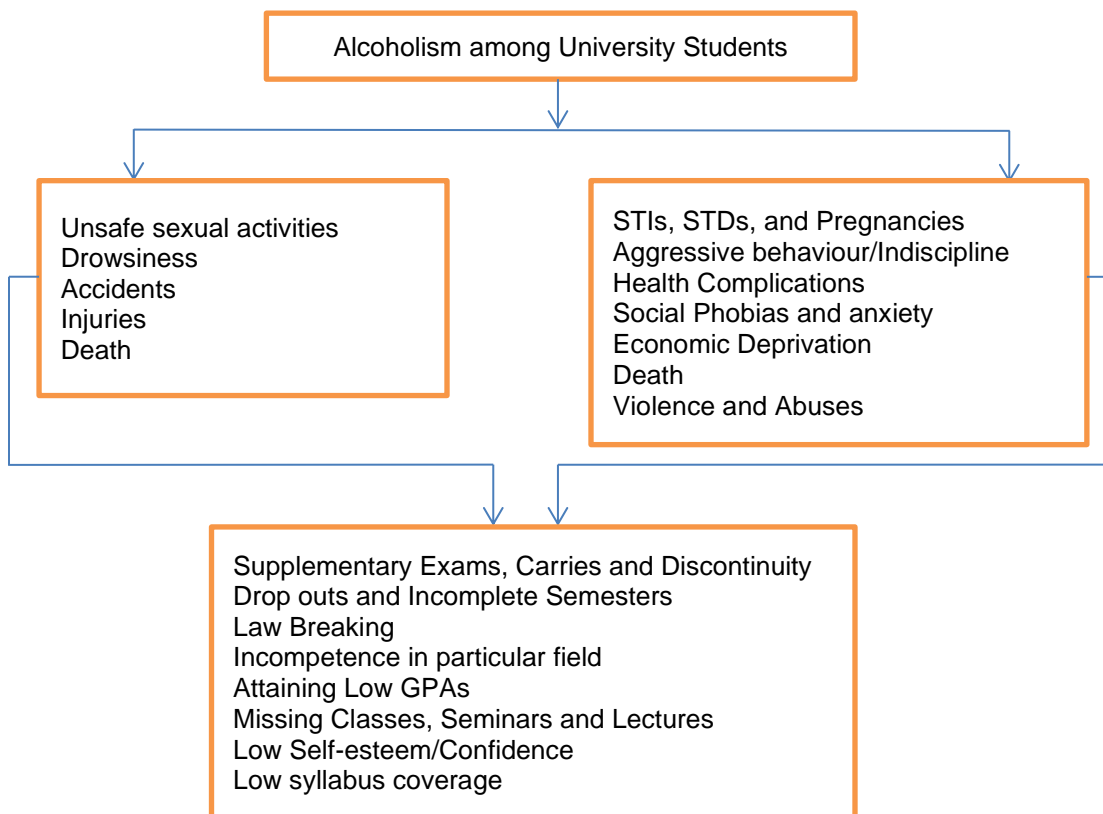


Figure 1.
Conceptual framework (Source: Self-compiled concept)

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), conceptual framework is a researcher’s map that navigates and stipulates the area being investigated. Thus, it tends to explore, explain and schedule the existing knowledge, so as to integrate them with the ideas and the objectives of the study. Then if

so, Figure 1 acts as a Researchers' scheduled map that shows how the effects of alcoholism have hindered university students' academic progression. For that case, alcoholism prompts the students to encounter (1) Supplementary Exams, Carries and Discontinuity; (2) Dropouts and Incomplete Semesters; (3) Law Breaking; (4) Incompetence in particular field; (5) Attaining Low GPAs; (6) Missing Classes, Seminars and Lectures; (7) Low Self-esteem/Confidence; and (8) Low syllabus coverage.

Methods

The study employed Survey Research Design—Cross-Sectional Survey Design. Such a design was chosen and used because of the output it fosters. For that case, it was used because: it allowed researchers to collect/gather the intended information, which seemed unavailable from other sources; it assisted the researchers to collect information in a wide targeted population/area of study; and it allowed several modes like personal contacting (face-face), telephone, web, mail or combined methods to be implemented (Owens 2002). Moreover, researchers employed such kind of research design because: it often influences the information to be treated in a quantitative manner, due to surveys conducted in a large population. Hence, due to that, it made easy for the researchers to adequately obtain information, which were from respondents' attitudes, behaviors, opinions and beliefs (Avedian 2014; Mathers, Fox, & Hunn 2009).

The study was conducted within Iringa Municipal Council in Iringa region, Tanzania. This region called Iringa is measured and found to range from 900m to 2,300m above the sea level, as its elevation—the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley. Its bordered regions include Njombe, Morogoro and Dodoma. It is estimated to have 996,105 residents coming from all its districts; and 160,167 residents are particularly living within Iringa Municipal Council (FinScope Tanzania 2017). Moreover, 1,981.932 hectares (5.985%) of the landscape of Iringa region is occupied by administration, health and education institutions. Such institutions include Primary Health Care Institute, VETA, Primary and Secondary Schools, Mkwawa University College of Education, University of Iringa, Ruaha Catholic University (RUCU), Open University Iringa Branch, Moshi University Collage of Cooperative Society (MUCUS) Iringa Branch, and Ruaha Community Development Training Institute (Iringa Municipal Council 2017). Due to such reality, the study specifically concentrated itself at Iringa Municipal Council, where there are University students studying at Ruaha Catholic University (RUCU), University of Iringa and Mkwawa University College of Education. Moreover, the study concentrated itself at Iringa Municipal Council because, around such universities there are night pubs that sell alcoholic substances to their nearby customers, who might even involve university students.

The population that participated during the study involved 290 students, who filled in the provided questionnaire and 10 selected lecturers, who have experience of teaching and assessing students' academic performances. They were sampled under purposive sampling technique, which is often applied during surveys, and especially when questionnaires are being used as instruments for data collection. For that case, the researchers had to employ it during the study.

The Researchers adhered to some of basic ethical principles that are necessary during research studies. Such Principles consider the potentials of human beings, who were thought to participate during the whole research studies. For that case, the respondents were informed of what was to take place, and by their willingness participated during the study. The issue of plagiarism was avoided by the means of complete referencing the borrowed concepts/theories/views. The researcher ensured safety and integrity to the respondents and to themselves. Finally, all who participated during the study are not directly/openly revealed by their names, but rather preserved as adherence of confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Table 1.
The noticeable effects of alcoholism among university students

Items in Questionnaire	Interpretation, Frequency and Percent			
	Positive Response (Strong Agree + Agree)		Negative Response (Not Sure + Disagree + Strong Disagree)	
	Freq N=290	%	Freq N=290	%
1 It leads to unsafe sexual activities	271	93.4	19	6.6
2 It results into STDs & Unwanted Pregnancies	233	80.3	57	19.7
3 Many got accidents and injuries due to it	280	96.6	10	3.4
4 It leads to Health complications or Death	285	98.3	5	1.7
5 Its users have become economically deprived	265	91.4	25	8.6
6 Make people to be aggressive and indiscipline	266	91.7	24	8.3

Many students taking too much alcoholic substances encounter several effects, while at the university or sometimes after graduating from such universities. The findings reveal that 93.4% of the respondents accept that: alcoholism motivates students to practice unsafe sexual activities. Such unsafe sexual activities include romantic kisses, sexual intercourse, etc. Due to such unsafe sexual practices, 80.3% of the respondents have agreed that: most of dinking students have ended up with sexual transmitted diseases (STDs) like gonorrhea, syphilis, UTI, and HIV/AIDS; together with unexpected pregnancies. Moreover, despite the fact that 6.6% and that of 19.7% had deny such effects as caused by alcoholism, still several scholars have proven them to be one of the effects of alcoholism to even university students (Iconis 2014). Such aspects happen because alcoholic substances tend to increase the heat of the body (which raises sexual desires); and due to that sexual thirst, most of them do sex without considering other safety factors.

Moreover, 96.6% of the respondents have asserted that: many students taking too much alcoholic substances often encounter accidents and injuries. They often encounter injuries and accidents because of failing to control themselves when they are walking, crossing on roads or sometimes driving (especially for those who have cars). It has been proven that alcohol often depresses the normal functioning of the body organs (eyes, brain, ears, nose, etc.), hindering the drunkards to be conscious/sensitive to what is taking place/going to take place—it may be due to drowsiness caused by alcoholism. For that case, most of the drinking students are often blocked to avoid some avoidable accidents and injuries.

Due to several repercussions, students who take too much alcoholic substances often acquire some health complications, or sometimes they encounter death. The 98.3% of the respondents have mentioned such factors as what are often encountered by the drinking students in universities. Perkins (2002) substantiates such facts by saying: “the alcoholic substances taken by university students tend to affect their self-health aspects, which paves way for other physical illnesses.” Rehm et al. (2010) proves such illnesses caused by alcoholism to be one of the major causes for many people to encounter death. Their findings reveal that most of the drunkards often suffer from different health complications like cancers (oesophageal cancer, colon and rectum cancer, liver cancer), diabetes, heart/cardiovascular diseases, stokes, and depressive disorders. Such complications pave way for most of them to become ill then finally encounter death. Sometimes due to accidents and injuries as caused by drunkenness, drinking students become physically ill and due to such illness’s death becomes inevitable to them.

Furthermore, those who take too much alcoholic substances often encounter economic deprivation, because alcoholism is a catalyst for over expenditures—buying a lot of bundles of beers and wine for themselves and others—sometimes bribing women for sexual practices. According to Matheson et al. (2012) and Shaw et al. (2011), alcoholic substances do not add economic/monetary value to the drunkards rather than to the sellers. And due to such over expenditures, most of them become bankrupt. The similar concept was asserted by 91.4% of the respondents in this study. Similarly, the Interviewed respondent QASW gave a testimony of how alcoholic substances have consumed his income and earnings. He justifies it by saying: “I often spend more than 80,000 Tshs per one night due to drinking alcohol. Sometimes I may spend extra money than that because of buying some bundles for my friends. Then due to such overspending, I often end up in economic crisis.”

Finally, the 91.7% of the respondents have said: “Alcoholic substances make university students to be more aggressive and indiscipline.” It may be so because most of them become biased, thinking that they are disvalued by others due to their habit of drinking too much alcoholic substances. Most of them do things that are unacceptable to the community/society/universities. Some may be engaged in stealing things, items, and money of others, so that they may get some alcoholic drinks. Parrott and Eckhard (2018) justifies the preceded facts by proving that too much taking of alcoholic substances, often makes human beings to be aggressive.” The aggressiveness caused by alcoholism is often accompanied with violence conducts (Beck & Heinz 2013). Such violence conducts are the ones being referred to as indiscipline cases. For example, drinking students often disrespect their lecturers and fellow students; they are usually abusive—they use abusive speeches, vocabularies or statements when communicating with others; they often don't respect other peoples' properties—they have no discipline in controlling themselves when using things that are not theirs; they are very rough and dirt/unclean—some of them do not consider neatness as one of vital aspect of humanity; and they are often involved in conflicts, quarrels or fighting with their fellows.

Table 2.
The effects of alcoholism in relation to students' academic progression

Items in Questionnaire	Interpretation, Frequency and Percent			
	Positive Response (Strong Agree + Agree)		Negative Response (Not Sure+ Disagree + Strong Disagree)	
	Freq N=290	%	Freq N=290	%
1 It makes students to sup and carry courses	255	87.9	35	12.1
2 It has increased the number of dropouts	240	82.8	50	17.2
3 It makes students to have incomplete semesters	260	89.7	30	10.3
4 It makes students to miss classes and lectures	270	93.1	20	6.9
5 It makes students to have low syllabus coverage	263	90.7	27	9.3
6 Most of drinking students get too low GPAs	269	92.8	21	7.2

Alcoholism among university students has further affected the academic progression of many students. This study has obtained several issues to have been accompanied by alcoholism, especially on academic matters. Beginning with the first concern, 87.9% of the respondents have said: “Alcoholism make students to fail their tests and examinations, to the extent of not meeting even the pass grades, which may allow them to proceed with other courses. Due to such a reality, most of the drinking students regularly are obligated to sit for supplementary exams or carry courses, so that they meet even the passing grades.” The reason behind such effect depends on several cases like being absent when classes/lectures are on progress, making them to miss concepts/ideas that would help them tackle examination questions. This issue of missing classes/lectures was also mentioned by 93.1% of the respondents. According to them, drinking too much alcohol make students to have long sleeps, thus by no chance they become able to attend the set lectures/classes. Even if they will attend

the lectures/classes, still they will have anxiety and fatigue which will limit their learning. Hence, due to such missing of classes/lectures, anxiety and fatigue, most of them do not fulfill the requirements of some courses and become failures (Onyebuchukwu, Sholarin, & Emerenwa 2015).

Similarly, due to missing of classes/lectures, most of drinking students have failed to cover the intended syllabuses, as shown in the course outlines. The 90.7% of the respondents have mentioned this fact, as one of the effects caused by too much drinking of alcoholic substances. The expected syllabus coverage is to be within 15 weeks of each semester in the academic year. But due to what alcohols offer to students, most of the students never cover the intended syllabuses within 15 weeks of each semester in academic year. The interviewed respondent EWR and YTG explained this point by saying: “Most of the drinking students are usually absent in classes/lectures. We usually notice this after taking attendance register; and when we make some follow ups, we often find out that among the absentees, drinking students are one of them. Such aspect makes them to not adequately cover what has been covered by their fellows.”

The failure of covering the intended syllabuses as stipulated in course outlines makes a lot of students to be incompetent in their specific fields/professions. Such incompetence may be measured by the help of GPAs, which tests and describes students’ mastery of course(s). That being the case, the 92.8% of the respondents referred it to be one of the effects for the drinking students. The same concept was elaborated by 5 respondents, who were timely interviewed by the researchers. According to them, most of the addicted students perform poorly in their tests and exams, leading to attain low GPAs. Such low GPAs are acquired because of failing to meet the requirements of the specific courses, as instructed by the lecturers. Moreover, due to their absence that makes them to not acquire concepts and ideas as presented in the classes/lectures, most of them fail to tackle the exams and finally their GPAs become low.

Finally, most of the addicted students have incomplete semesters and due to that some have dropped out from studying. The findings from the field of study stipulates that 89.7% of the respondents accept that, most of addicted students have incomplete semesters; and 82.8% of the respondents also accept that, most of the addicted students dropout from studying. According to the interviewed respondent CVT and RTO, most of the addicted students squander even their school fees, and by no chance they can be allowed to sit for final examinations. For those who are either self-sponsored (by parents/guardians) or sponsored by the loan board, they often get assistance within 3 to 5 years (especially for those who study medical degrees). Failure to accomplish their studies within such a time limit, they finally get hard time to repay in order to meet the requirements for graduation. Hence, due to such factor and others, addicted students often don’t continue with schooling.

Conclusion

The issue of university students taking too much alcoholic substances (alcoholism) has a lot of repercussions in their personal lives, and even on their academic matters. Due to alcoholism, most of them end up in having unsafe sexual activities, getting unwanted pregnancies, being involved in accidents and injuries, and being stressed and economically deprived. Similarly, most of them develop kinds of aggressive behaviors and become indisciplined. To mark the worst effect of it, alcoholism makes them to later on have health complications. Such effects of alcoholism among university students trigger their academic progression. For that case, alcoholism makes most of the students to fail to complete their semester due to squandering of school fees—some of them have even decided to dropout from continuing to study; it makes most of students to have low syllabus coverage due to missing of classes/lectures; and it makes students to fail meeting the course requirements. Thus, due to such cases, most of the addicted students fail in their tests and examinations; become eligible for supplementary exams, repeat courses or carry courses; attain low GPAs; then finally become incompetent in their professions.

Recommendations

There should be strategies, ways and techniques of assisting all addicted students, towards elimination of alcohol dependency in their lives. Universities should have early education programs to fresh year students, who might have not joined bad companies of drunkards; and they should establish counselling rehabilitation services for those who have become addicted, so that they may begin to control themselves from too much drinking or being alcohol dependent. Similarly, lecturers in classes/lecture rooms should identify the absentees, and if they find addicted students are one of them, they should find professional ways of assisting them to often participate in class sessions. Finally, students studying/staying with their fellows who miss classes/don't fulfill the requirements of the courses (tests and assignments) due to alcoholism should motivate, encourage and inspire them to put focus on educational matters, while trying to abandon too much drinking of alcoholic substances.

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