

## CHILDHOOD MALTREATMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI: PREDICTIVE ROLES OF ALCOHOLIC CONSUMPTION, PERSONALITY AND LONELINESS

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### Abstract

This study investigated Childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki: predictive roles of alcoholic consumption, personality and loneliness. A total of 300 participants comprising undergraduates were tested from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Their ages ranged between 18 to 30 years with a mean of 24.32. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. The four instruments used for data collection includes: childhood maltreatment inventory, big five personality inventory, alcoholic consumption and loneliness scales. Stepwise multiple regression were used to test the stated hypothesis and results indicated that personality profiling: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, alcoholic consumption and loneliness statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment. Agreeableness and conscientiousness do not statistically and significantly predictors of childhood maltreatment. The study concludes that school management, parent should always deem it necessary to understand alcoholic consumers and personality profiling of persons that are susceptible to childhood maltreatment. The study recommends that personality assessment form should be integrated during student admission processes, especially for students who have risk factors for alcohol consumers and with past history of childhood maltreatment,

**Keywords:** Personality profiling, alcoholic consumption, loneliness, childhood maltreatment, undergraduates

### Introduction

Childhood maltreatment is a worldwide negative psychological and mental health outcomes with various life-long challenges and consequences ranges from traumatic sexualization, suicide, alcohol abuse problems, depression, anxiety alexithymia, revictimization, dissociation, post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorders, low self-esteem, personality disorders, impaired judgement and loneliness. In spite of current global surveys in various developing and developed countries, data from various countries are still inadequate and poorly studied. In Nigeria, high prevalence rates of childhood maltreatment have been reported for the general population: 31.1% for emotional abuse, 25.9% for physical abuse, 15.4% (Female) and 6.7% (Male) for sexual abuse, 18.3% for physical neglect and 19.4% for emotional neglect (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024). Childhood maltreatment had become critical physical and mental health burden to our society today with prevalent rates as high as 9 percent in parts of West African especially Nigeria. In recent year, 15 to 50% of female and 15 to 25% of male globally were victims of childhood maltreatment or adolescent childhood maltreatment (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; World Health Organization, 2020; Burnett, & Thomas, 2016; Roland, 2012).

Childhood maltreatment (CM) is a complex life experience that has become the subject of great community and societal concern and the focus of many researchers, scholars, policy makers, legislative and professional initiatives towards expanding body of knowledge on childhood (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, & Van der Feltz-Cornelis, 2023;

Maltz, 2020; Laila, Abdenbi, Badr, & Benjelloun, 2016). Childhood maltreatment is defined as emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and neglect that occurs during onset of childhood and is a well-established risk factor for early alcohol use initiation, alcohol-related problem behaviors, and alcohol use disorders in adulthood (Enoch, 2011; Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024). Childhood maltreatment (CM) also includes a wide range of harms to children including insufficient provision of care and physical abuse, both of which are associated with life-long negative consequences (Norman et al., 2012). CM involvements, including several types of abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, being the witness of domestic violence, and other serious household dysfunctions), indicate potentially established traumatic sources of stress and alcoholic abuse, poor mental health, higher risk of psychological and psychiatric problems, poor educational achievement and job potential (Liptáková, Szántova, Patarák, Koller, Batalik, Makara, and Skladany 2022; Herzog & Schmahl, 2018; Sulejova, Líška, Liptáková, Szántova, Patarák, Koller, Batalik, Makara, & Skladany 2022; DeLisi & Beauregard, 2018; WHO, 2022; Herzog & Schmahl, 2018).

Globally, it has been observed that children maltreatment occurs from various psychological and mental health issues such as personality disorders, loneliness, alcoholic abuse, depression, unintentional injury, and child abuse, which pose serious threat to the young children's negative mental health and psychological outcomes (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, & Van der Feltz-Cornelis, 2023; McCollum, 2023). According to Tracy (2008) there are four kinds of childhood maltreatment (Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect). Physical abuse is any kind of actual or potential physical harm to the children. Sexual abuse is using children for sexual satisfaction. Emotional abuse is unable to promote a supportive environment for children or inadequate/inappropriate responses to children's emotional development. Child neglect can be defined as putting the children under some circumstances in which their basic needs such as; feeding, sheltering, having proper clothes, being safe, being loved, having the necessary care for health, education, and socialization could not be met by their caregivers and it creates a possibility or a potential harm on children's physical, psychological, emotional and well-being (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Wang, Xu, & Sun, 2022; Smith & Fong, 2004). Childhood maltreatment is any sexual contact with a child that occurs when the offender is significantly older than the child, is in a position of authority over a child, or the actions are perpetrated using violence, force, threat, dishonesty, deceit, or child who is incapable of consenting due to age, disability or power of differential. It also includes: touching of the breasts, buttocks and genitals, whether the victim is dressed or undressed, fellatio, cunnilingus and penetration of the vagina or anus with sexual organs or with objects as well as watching of pornographic photography (Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud & Bonsaksen, 2023; World Health Organization, 2020; Maltz, 2020; Finkelhor, 2016; Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Muhammad, 2023; Fujimura and Shimura, et al, 2023; Mohamedamin, & Fatahi, 2022; Moran et al., 2011).

Children who grew up in families with parental alcohol abuse are at increased risk of developing alcoholic use disorder with a wide range of psychological, physical, and mental health challenges during adulthood (Choi et al., 2020; McLennan et al., 2020; Seitz et al., 2018). A number of assumptions have been suggested to explain increased risk for negative alcohol-related outcomes associated with childhood maltreatment (Young-Wolff et al., 2011). Alternatively, the relationship between childhood maltreatment and alcohol-related outcomes could be indirect, such as the result of environmental and genetic interactions, in which a genetic predisposition toward alcoholic problem drinking is potentiated by early childhood maltreatment, or gene and environment correlations, in which individuals with a genetic predisposition are more likely to experience childhood maltreatment (Enoch, 2011; Young-Wolff et al., 2011a).

Alcohol consumption is one of the psychological variable of interest in this research. In Nigeria for example where alcoholic drinks are consumed across all age, social issues such as

alcoholism, truancy, death, gambling etc have raised heightened concerns. Alcohol is one of the few psychoactive drugs of which society both allows and encourages consumption; it is also the world's most widely consumed drug (Machado, Félix Lana, Felisbino-Mendes, & Malta, 2013). Psychoactive substances are chemical substances that, when taken, have the ability to change an individual's consciousness, mood or thinking processes (WHO, 2022). Alcohol is among the most common psychoactive substances used (Akindutire&Adeboyega, 2012; Yakasai, 2010; Yusuf, 2010).

According to Nwonyi, Effiong and Ubonm (2017), the involvement in alcohol consumption apart from biological and psychological consideration arises as a result of its availability and acceptability. Additionally, alcohol is the world's third largest risk factor for disease burden and 2.5 million people die as a result of the detrimental consumption of alcohol (WHO, 2014). According to Foster and Marriott (2016), alcoholism or alcohol abuse is associated with a variety of serious health and social problems, including sexually transmitted diseases, low workplace productivity, domestic violence, admissions to emergency healthcare services, acute myocardial infarction, and traffic accidents; with a considerable proportion in young people and ranking third among the main risk factors for premature death and disability (WHO, 2010). Alcohol consumption levels are highest among the youngest age group (between 15-24) and regarding measured occupational groups the highest percentage of respondents who usually have 3-4 or more drinks per occasion are students at 46% (European Commission, 2010). The high rates of substance abuse in student populations have been reported. Secondary school is unique in having the high number of teenagers who are seemingly battling with self-identity and peer pressure influence. These make them more vulnerable to undertaking even illicit actions (Egbuonu, Egbuonu& Samuel, 2015).

Alcohol is a significant contributing factor to child maltreatment as many as 11% of all cases of maltreatment in the general population are associated with parental alcohol use (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020). Rates of alcohol-involved maltreatment appear to be much higher for children involved with the child welfare system, where it is estimated that 40–80% of parents have problems related to alcohol use (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020). Heavy drinking is also associated with higher levels of maltreatment (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020; Freisthler& Price Wolf, 2016), including physical abuse (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020; Freisthler& Price Wolf, 2016), involvement in the child welfare system (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020), and recurrent maltreatment (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020). Despite these results, whether alcohol directly causes childhood maltreatment remains unknown. In some first attempts to study this, parents and caregivers were asked if they thought their own or someone else's alcohol use had caused harm to their child (Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020; Laslett et al., 2011; Esser et al., 2016; Kaplan et al., 2017). Alcoholic consumption is one of the factor in this research as it's predict childhood maltreatment (Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud & Bonsaksen, 2023; McCollum, 2023). Alcoholic abuse is defined as harmful or hazardous use of alcohol that result to negative mental health challenges by its users and put a heavy financial burden on individuals, families and society.

Alcoholic abuse is a pattern of compulsive substance use marked by recurrent significant social, occupational, legal, or interpersonal adverse consequences, such as repeated absences from work or school, arrests, and marital issues (Oluwagbemiga, Johnson, Bolajoko, Giro, Rasheed, & Tulushe,2022; Kaliszewski,2022; Ogundare & Ghebrehiwet, .et al, 2022; Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Murase, Simons, & Simons, 2021).In general, the harmfulness of alcohol consumption can be related to the total volume of irregular heavy drinking (Maisto, Galizio, & Connors, 2018). Furthermore, people who drink frequently in licensed establishments are more likely to be harmed by other's drinking Awareness about the negative effects of alcohol consumption on physical and mental health has increased in recent decades. The main reason for this is that alcohol not only harms individual drinkers but also the wellbeing of their families and communities. In

general, excessive alcohol consumption accounts for 5.1% of global diseases and injuries (Moan & Brunborg, 2021).

According to an investigation based on gender, harmful drinking accounts for 7.1% and 2.2% of global diseases for men and women, respectively (Alford, Martinkova, Tiplady, Reece Verster, (2020). Furthermore, alcohol consumption is also responsible for 10% of all deaths among people aged 15–49 (Hendriks, 2020). Besides that, alcohol is the leading cause of premature death and disability of newborn babies (Hajek, Bock, Weyerer and König (2017).Alcohol consumption also has other negative effects on individual performance, such as slower responses, particularly as a result of an alcohol hangover (Alford, Martinkova, Tiplady, Reece Verster, 2020). This was also observed by Martins, Guimarães, Jorge, Silva, Ferreira, Pordeus, Kawachi, & Zarzar, 2020), who reported that employees' consumption of alcohol was related to their performance both at the workplace and outside. According to the literature, alcohol consumption patterns can be related to life events (Hendriks, 2020), as well as demographic and sociocultural factors (Khamis, Salleh, Ab Karim, Mohd Rom, Janasekaran, Idris, Abd Rashid, 2022).For instance, it can be related to age (Sohn, &Jang 2022) socioeconomic background (Alford, Martinkova, Tiplady, Reece Verster, 2020), and family background Toornstra, Massar, Hurks, Timmermans, Kok, Curfs, 2020).

Sulejova, Líška, Liptáková, Szántova, Patarák, Koller, Batalik, Makara, and Skladany (2022) examine the relationship between alcohol consumption and adverse childhood experiences in college students and found that emotional abuse by a parent, physical abuse by a parent, and sexual abuse was significantly higher in women. Also, women reported greater emotional and physical neglect when compared to male. Previous research suggested childhood maltreatment and alcoholic consumption are Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud and Bonsaksen, (2023) who examined the associations between exposure to sexual abuse, substance use, alcohol, adverse health outcomes, and use of youth health services among Norwegian adolescents. Results revealed a significant interaction between sexual abuse and smoking that was associated with increased odds of having suicidal thoughts for males but a decreased odds of having suicidal thoughts and have conducted suicide attempts once or more for females.

McCollum (2023) investigated the associations between childhood maltreatment, adult sexual assault experiences, psychological distress, and substance use and found that positive correlations between childhood sexual abuse, psychological distress, problematic drinking, and drug use. Also, there was an indirect effect of CM on substance use through ASA, but not psychological distress. Oluwagbemiga Johnson, Bolajoko, Giro, Rasheed, and Tolushe (2022) examined substance abuse and sexual frequency among youths: implications for sexually transmitted infections in Nigeria and found that estimate incidence of relative risk (IRR) of alcoholic abuse on sexual frequency confirmed a positive significant effects for both adjusted and unadjusted data (Smoking cigarette; consuming alcohol everyday unadjusted adjusted). While a significant relationship between substance abuse, sexual frequency, and likelihood of contracting STIs was established in the study. Ogundare, and Ghebrehiwet, .et al (2022) investigated risky sexual behaviors and substance use among youths in post-conflict Liberia and found that substance use increases the risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviors among youths in Liberia. Evans, and Reed (2021) in their study on the impulsivity and the effects of alcohol in women with a history of childhood sexual abuse and found that impulsivity can lead to hazardous drinking, and alcohol consumption can further increase impulsivity, putting women with CSA at increased risk for sexual victimization, particularly in the context of alcohol use. Khamis, Salleh, Ab Karim, Mohd Rom, Janasekaran, Idris, Abd Rashid, (2022) examined alcohol consumption patterns: a systematic review of demographic and sociocultural influencing factors and found that alcohol consumption patterns can be associated with several factors related to communities and individuals, and our review revealed demographic factors, including age and proximity to alcohol

outlets, as well as social factors, including family background, socioeconomic background, and religious influence.

Other researchers that supported the view that alcoholic consumption predict childhood maltreatment are (Young-Wolff, Kendler, & Prescott, 2023; Kaliszewski, 2022; Hogarth, Martin & Seedat, 2019; Griffith, France, Bacchus & Ortega, 2018; Maisto, Galizio, & Connors, 2018; Lil & Shields, 2011; Smith, Smith, & Grekin, 2014; Goldstein, Flett, & Wekerle, 2010; Hajek, Bock, Weyerer & König, 2017; Hendriks, 2020; Freisthler, Wolf, Hodge, & Cao 2020; Kaplan et al., 2017; Skinner, Kristman-Valente, & Herrenkohl, 2016; Esser et al., 2016).

Personality was implicated in this research because it seem to be variable that predicts childhood maltreatment. Personality is defined as an individual's entire repertoire of relatively stable and enduring behaviours, emotion, thoughts, cognition, feelings, emotions, interpersonal functioning and psychophysical system that create individual or person's unique characteristic patterns of behaviour (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko; Enyioha, 2018; John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008)). Personality profiling are identified by the consistent pattern of behaviour that an individual who possesses such traits exhibit over time (Bling, 2018; Tracy. 2016). Researchers have also found a relationship between childhood maltreatment and adult personality characteristics (Moran et al., 2011). Costa and McCrae (1995) classified personality profiling into five domains: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Extraversion (deals with individuals characteristics such as gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, positive emotions, and warmth), agreeableness (is makeup of altruism, modesty, trust, tender-mindedness, compliance, and straightforwardness, conscientiousness (deals with achievement, dutifulness, self-discipline, competence, and deliberation, neuroticism ( is measured by anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability, and impulsiveness., openness (is characterized through ideas, aesthetics, fantasy, actions, feelings, and values (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Harms, 2018; John et al., 2008). Previous research suggests that a history of childhood maltreatment is related to higher levels of extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Harden et al., 2015; Allen & Lauterbach, 2007). Harden and colleagues (2015) also found that a history of CM is related to lower levels of conscientiousness. Muhammad, (2023) examined personality trait of psychoticism and academic performance as correlates of adolescent neglect among senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. Descriptive survey design format was used. The total 18, 234 from 47 senior secondary schools as documented from Sokoto State Ministry for Basic and Secondary Education. Two instruments were used for data collection. Pearson correlation was used to test the first and second hypotheses, and independent sample t-test was also used to test the third hypothesis. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between adolescent neglect and psychoticism trait of personality, and between neglect of adolescents and academic performance. Fujimura and Shimura, et al (2023) examine neuroticism mediates the association between childhood abuse and the well-being of community dwelling adult volunteers and found that effect of childhood abuse on subjective well-being was indirect and was mediated by neuroticism. Also neuroticism has effect on the negative outcome, but not positive, change score on the Life Experiences Survey was significant. The indirect effect of neuroticism on subjective well-being was not significant via either negative or positive change scores.

Mohamedamin, and Fatahi, (2022) examine relationship between personality traits and violence involvement - a study of high school students in northern Iraq. The result showed a significant positive correlation between extraversion, neuroticism, and violence involvement. Also agreeableness, openness, and consciousness were negatively correlated. Furthermore, results indicate that personality traits neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and consciousness predicted violence among students. Ménard, Dowgwillo, and Pincus, (2018) their work on gender, child maltreatment, alcohol expectancies, and personality pathology on relationship violence among

undergraduates using a total 2441 Male and female students'. Four instrument were used for data collection which comprise of childhood maltreatment, alcohol expectancies, and narcissistic personality traits. Z tests of the correlations and t tests of means were used for data analysis. Result revealed that men and women statistically and significantly differ on childhood sexual abuse. Relationship violence was associated with child sexual abuse for both men and women, whereas high scores on negative alcohol expectancies and vulnerable narcissism, and low scores on grandiose narcissism, were significantly associated with violence for men only. Also, z tests revealed the regression coefficients for child sexual abuse and negative alcohol expectancies were significantly different for men and women. Child sexual abuse and alcohol expectancies had stronger associations with men's than women's violent behaviour. In addition, the models explained a greater amount of variance in men's than in women's behavior.

Vaz. Et al, (2021) examined the association between personality traits and parenting styles in boys victims of sexual abuse (SA) using sixty-two (62) boys who were divided into two groups: Victims and non-victims. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ-J) and the Parenting Styles Inventory (PSI). The intelligence quotient (IQ) were used to elicit formation from the participants. Results revealed that SA victims had higher neuroticism ( $p < 0.001$ ) and identified riskier parental practices, while the comparison group reported good parental practices ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results of the logistic regression analysis showed that higher negative paternal parental style scores increase the chance of belonging to the victims group.

Ghezselflo and Rostami (2015). Relationship of childhood maltreatment with personality features and high riskbehaviors in adolescents. Results of independence t-test indicated significant differences between girls and boys in terms of child abuse and high risk experience, respectively. Also, the results demonstrated a significant relationship between child abuse and personality characteristics, high risk behavior and all its subscales. The findings of multiple linear regression indicated that child abuse could explain 14% total risk-taking, 25% neurotic personality feature, 14% extroversion, 10% agreeableness, 1% flexibility and 13% conscientiousness.

Another important variable in this research is loneliness. Loneliness has recently emerged as a major predict of childhood maltreatment (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Mohammadi, 2023). Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, and Van der Feltz-Cornelis, (2023) defines loneliness as an enduring condition of emotional distress that arises when a person feels estranged from, misunderstood, or rejected by others. Children who were victimized report feelings of fear, disgust, intense shame, and loneliness (Turner, 2013). Individuals who have been violated often isolate themselves from their family, peers, friends, teachers, and/or co-workers (Wang, Xu, & Sun 2022). Coriena de Heer, Bi, Finkenauer, Alink, & Maes (2022) found feelings of isolation to be significantly more prevalent in a sample of childhood maltreatment abused women compared to those who had not been abused. Mohammadi, (2023) examined educational effect of the family on the feeling of security: the mediating role of loneliness in the correlation between childhood abuse and psychological security. The result revealed that childhood abuse experiences have a direct relationship with psychological security and an indirect effect on psychological security due to loneliness .In addition, the feeling of loneliness had a direct effect on psychological security.

Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, and Van der Feltz-Cornelis, (2023) in their study on associations among childhood trauma, loneliness, mental health symptoms, and indicators of social exclusion in adulthood using hierarchical multiple regression models indicated small associations between childhood trauma and social exclusion outcomes, explaining between 1.5% and 5.0% of the variance. Associations weakened but remained significant when loneliness, anxiety, and depression were entered in the models; however, anxiety symptoms demonstrated a negative association with "individual deprivation" and "social exclusion" in the final models. Depression was most strongly associated with "individual deprivation," "area deprivation," and "social exclusion" followed by

childhood trauma. Loneliness was most strongly associated with “limited social participation. Wang, Xu, and Sun (2022) examine loneliness and coping skill mediate the association between child maltreatment and depression for rural males and females and found that child maltreatment was more common and severe in males than females. Loneliness and coping skills partially mediated the relationship between child maltreatment and depression in males, but loneliness fully mediated the relationship between child maltreatment and depression in females.

Matthews, Caspi, Danese, Fische, Moffitt, and Arseneault, (2020) examined a longitudinal twin study of victimization and loneliness from childhood to young adulthood. The results indicated that exposure to different forms of victimization was associated with loneliness in a dose response manner. In childhood, bullying victimization was uniquely associated with loneliness, over and above concurrent psychopathology, social isolation, and genetic risk. Moreover, childhood bullying victimization continued to predict loneliness in young adulthood, even in the absence of ongoing victimization. Within-twin pair analyses further indicated that this longitudinal association was explained by genetic confounds. In adolescence, varied forms of victimization were correlated with young adult loneliness, with maltreatment, neglect, and cybervictimization remaining robust to controls for genetic confounds. These findings indicate that vulnerability to loneliness in victimized young people varies according to the specific form of victimization in question, and also to the developmental period in which it was experienced.

Coriena de Heer, Bi, Finkenauer, Alink, and Maes (2022) examined the association between child maltreatment and loneliness across the lifespan: a systematic review and multilevel meta-analysis. Results indicated that individuals with maltreatment histories, on average, feel lonelier than individuals without maltreatment histories. Moderator analyses showed that effect sizes were larger for emotional abuse and emotional neglect as compared to other types of child maltreatment and decreased when participants were older at the time of loneliness assessment. These findings suggest that individuals with maltreatment histories, especially those who have been emotionally abused and/or emotionally neglected, are vulnerable to experiencing loneliness across the lifespan. The results also suggest that feelings of loneliness warrant attention in prevention and intervention programs for individuals with maltreatment histories. Other scholar that investigate the predictive roles of loneliness and childhood sexual behaviour are (Başoğlu, 2019; Jehu, 2018; Marshal, 2016; Gibson & Hartshorne, 2017; Kurt, Bumby, David & Hansen, 2015; Louise, Hawkey, John, & Cacioppo, 2016; Newcomb & Bentler, 2016; Rook, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Investigating childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki: Predictive roles of alcoholic consumption, personality and loneliness. Personality profiling is one of the psychological variables that seem to have both positive and negative impact on childhood maltreatment in the western and non-western culture as such there is need to investigate the domains of personality profiling as its predictive roles in childhood maltreatment. Also it is important to identify personality characteristics of vulnerable groups, as well as to investigate the potential role played by personality profiling on childhood maltreatment.

Regardless of abundance of study on personality profiling, alcoholic consumption, loneliness on childhood maltreatment as independent topics, there is a gap in the theoretical, empirical literature, methodological and practical knowledge regarding the predictive roles among these variables of interest. Also, a lot of research exists on childhood maltreatment and its relationship to personality traits, alcohol consumption and loneliness using western samples, few researchers was carried out in non-western sample like Nigeria using the big five personality inventory(BFI) for personality evaluation and fewer still have used it in relation to alcohol use and loneliness. Notwithstanding the fact that it is important to identify personality domains susceptible to undergraduates, as well as to

investigate the potential role played by personality in vulnerability to alcohol use, dependence and loneliness in Nigerian samples need to be further investigated. Targeting characters which could lead to childhood maltreatment, alcoholic consumption and development of health promotion strategies and interventions which target the individual personality profiling which lead to these behaviours could mitigate the impacts of these traits, since personality targeted interventions have been shown to reduce drinking of alcohol, loneliness and childhood maltreatment in our society. However, there is still a need for more researchers on personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness on childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

### **Research Questions**

1. Will personality profiling statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki?
2. Will alcoholic consumption statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki?
3. Will loneliness statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study include:

1. Examine whether personality profiling will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University.
2. To investigate whether alcoholic consumption will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
3. To ascertain whether loneliness will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Personality profiling will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
2. Alcoholic consumption will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
3. Loneliness will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

A total of two hundred and seventy (300) undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki comprising 178 females (71.37%) and 122 males (29.63%) who were drawn through convenient sampling techniques. Their ages ranged between 18 to 30 years with a mean of 23.32.

#### **Instruments**

Four instruments were used data collection.

#### **The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI; Goldberg, 1993).**

This is a 44- item inventory developed by John Donahue & Kentle (1990). It assesses personality from five distinct dimensions. Extraversion (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items), consciousness (9 item), Neuroticism (8 item) and openness to experience (10 items), According to Omolluabi (2002). BFI was adapted for the use of professionals in Nigeria after several years of research at standardizing it, in order to enhance its suitability and relevance for Nigerians. John Donahue & Kentle (1991) reported a cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability of 80 and a 3 month test retest reliability of 85 for the BFI. The authors also reported mean convergent validity coefficient of

75 and 85 with the big five instruments authored by Costa & McCrae (1992) and Goldberg (1992) respectively. Using a Nigerian sample, Umeh (2004) obtained the following divergent validity coefficient with University Maladjustment scale (Kleinmuntz, 1961): Extraversion = .05, Agreeableness = .13, Conscientiousness = .11, Neuroticism = .39 and openness to Experience = .24. Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Ekwo, & Nwoba, 2018), reported the Cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability of .78.

#### **Alcoholism Scale (MAC; MacAndrew, 1965)**

Alcoholism Scale is a standardized psychological instrument developed by MacAndrew, (1965) is a 49 item design to measure alcoholism which is the disorder or disease resulting from the excessive use of alcoholic beverages. The participants are required to rate each item as either True (1) and False (1) in some items like 2, 15, 16, 20, 25, 28, 38, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49. Sample items include "I am a mixer"; "I have a cough most of the time". The developers reported high reliability of coefficient  $\alpha$  ranging from .89, test-retest reliability  $r = .73$ ). Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis yielded good fits for the present study. The instrument had been revalidated by Omoluabi (1997) using Nigerian samples and found the reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .89$ .

#### **UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996).**

The University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale (UCLA-LS), developed by Russell, Peplau and Ferguson (1978) is a 20-item instrument designed to measure individuals' subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. Sample items include "I am unhappy doing so many things alone", "I am no longer close to anyone", "People are around me but not with me", etc. Participants are required to rate each item as either O ("I often feel this way"), S ("I sometimes feel this way"), R ("I rarely feel this way"), N ("I never feel this way"). The developers reported high reliability, both in terms of internal consistency (coefficient  $\alpha$  ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest reliability over a 1-year period ( $r = .73$ ). Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis yielded good fits for the present study.

#### **Childhood Maltreatment Scale**

Childhood maltreatment was diagnosed with the shorter version of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein et al., 2003). It was validated for community and clinical samples with good reliability and validity (Grassi-Oliveira et al., 2014). The CTQ is composed of 28 questions that evaluate the subtype of maltreatment experience (emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect) as well as its intensity through a five-point Likert scale. The cut-off mild-high was used in accordance with the author's manual. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was 0.93, which indicates the high internal consistency.

#### **Procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter from the Office of Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Heads of all the Departments that make up Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Psychology and Sociological Studies, Economics, Political Science and Mass Communication) in the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, for the research. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher created rapport with the participants, in which case the participants were told that the exercise is purely for academic research purpose. Participants were equally assured that their responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and that participation in the study will be voluntary participation and can withdraw at any time. Afterwards, the researcher and the trained research assistants administered the questionnaire to the participants.

The four instruments were distributed to the participants through a luck dip containing "YES", and "NO". Yes means that the participants will be administered questionnaire, while "NO" means exclusion of the participant in the study. A total of three hundred and twenty (320) copies of

questionnaires were distributed and collected for data analysis. But copies were discarded due to incomplete filling of the questionnaire. The remaining 300 copies were used for data analysis.

**Design/Statistics**

The design of the study was cross-sectional survey design and stepwise multiple regression was also used for data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 25.

**Result**

**Table 1** Means, standard deviations, and correlations for control variables, personality profilings (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), alcoholic consumption, loneliness on childhood maltreatment (dependent variables).

S/N	Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Child. Malt	146.94(15.32)	1							
2	Extra	33.61(5.23)	408**	1						
3	Agree.	48.92(6.31)	.378	1.41*	1					
4	Consci	82.93(8.31)	.125	.026	.503*	1				
5	Neuro.	179.85(14.24)	.313**	.513*	.065	.422*	1			
6	Open	35.34(7.57)	.042**	.282**	.048	.371*	.017	1		
7	Alco Con	54.91(11.23)	.129**	.268*	.107*	.142**	.126*	.103*	1	
8	Loneliness	46.93(5.31)	.079**	.156**	.129*	.127*	.020	.386**	.212	1

Predictor variable = childhood sexual abuse

N=228, M = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, extea= extraversion, agree= agreeableness, consci= conscientiousness, neuro= neuroticism and open= openness to experience, alco. Con= alcoholic consumption, loneliness and childhood maltreatment as dependent variables. \*\* p< 0.001, \* p< 0.05.

Personality profiling such as extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience, alcoholic consumption and loneliness are significant predictors of childhood maltreatment while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical predictors of childhood maltreatment.

**Table 2:** Showed stepwise regression analysis for the predicting childhood maltreatment through personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness among undergraduates.

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F	Df	beta t	P
<b>Block 1:</b>							
Personality profiling	.47	.15	.03	2.35	2.08	3.39**	.20 5.46
Extraversion.						.19	5.32 .03
Agreeableness.					.20	5.32	.05
Conscientiousness.						.07	1.32 .07
Neuroticism						.05**	3.41 .01
Openness						.07**	1.52 .04
<b>Back 2</b>							
Alcoholic Con.	.41	.23	.21	2.05	8.06	1.3**	.27 .05
<b>Back 3</b>							
Loneliness	.36	.12	.06	3.03	2.04	1.4**	.15 3 .02

Note: \*\* p < .001. \* P < .05.

**In block1:** personality profiling such as extraversion ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), neuroticism personality ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), openness to experience ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), In **block 2:** Alcoholic consumption ( $\beta = 1.3$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and in **Block 3:** Loneliness ( $\beta = 1.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse Also in **Block 1:** agreeableness ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) and conscientiousness ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) are not statistical and significantly predictors of childhood maltreatment .

## Discussion

The study investigated childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki: predictive roles of alcoholic consumption, personality and loneliness. The findings of this study showed that childhood maltreatment was predicted through personality profiling and supported by the first hypotheses which stated that personality profiling will statistically and significant predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. This result is consistent with the research results of Mohamedamin, and Fatahi, (2022) in their research on relationship between personality profiling and violence involvement a study of high school students in northern Iraq. The result showed a significant positive correlation between extraversion, neuroticism, and openness on childhood sexual abuse. In the vein, Fujimura and Shimura, et al (2023) examine neuroticism mediates the association between childhood maltreatment and the well-being of community dwelling adult volunteers and found that effect of childhood abuse on subjective well-being was indirect and was mediated by neuroticism. Others researchers that supported this finding's includes (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Vaz. Et al, 2021; Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Ekwo, & Nwoba, 2018; Ménard, Dowgwillo, & Pincus, 2018; Moran et al., 2011). Based on previous studies and the findings of this study, it can be said personality profiling such as extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience are significant predictors of childhood maltreatment while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical predictors of childhood sexual abuse. Which implies that people with extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience are vulnerable to childhood maltreatment.

The second hypotheses which stated the alcoholic consumption will statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki was accepted and supported by Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud and Bonsaksen, (2023) in their study on the associations between exposure to childhood maltreatment , substance use, adverse health outcomes, and use of youth health services among Norwegian adolescents and found that a significant interaction between childhood sexual abuse and substance abuse. Also McCollum (2023) investigated the associations between childhood sexual abuse, adult sexual assault experiences, psychological distress, and substance use and found positive correlations between Childhood sexual abuse, psychological distress, problematic drinking, and drug use. Others researchers that supported the view that substance abuse predict childhood sexual abuse are (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Hogarth, Martin and Seedat, 2019; Griffith, France, Bacchus & Ortega, 2018; Skinner, Kristman-Valente, & Herrenkohl, 2016; Lil & Shields, 2011; Smith, Smith, & Grekin, 2014).

Third hypotheses which stated that loneliness will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki was accepted. This finding is consistent with the research results of (Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Francisca & Oko, 2024; Wang et al., 2022; Wang et al, 2020; Yang & Swekwi, 2021). Based on previous studies and the findings of this study, it can be said that people who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse more loneliness (Wang et al, 2020). Other scholar that investigate the predictive roles of loneliness and childhood sexual abuse includes (Başoğlu, 2019; Kurt, Bumby, David & Hansen, 2015; Louise, Hawkey, John, & Cacioppo, 2016; Newcomb & Bentler, 2016; Rook, 2014).

### **Implications of the Study**

The result of the study provided a vital information about the predictive roles of personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness on childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University. Personality profiling: extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience was found to be predictors of childhood maltreatment. This practical knowledge can contribute to the development and improvement of personality profiling that are venerable to childhood maltreatment, psychological and mental health services in our society.

Secondly, alcoholic consumption was found to be predictors of childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki since most undergraduates indulge in alcoholic consumption. Understanding childhood maltreatment and alcoholic consumption and their risk factors, signs, symptoms, and barriers to disclose and seek support after being exposed to childhood maltreatment can help to improve undergraduate's psychological and mental health services for undergraduates, youth and adolescents by developing targeted programs that successfully identify, prevent, intervention and treat this vulnerable population group.

Thirdly, Loneliness was also found to be predictors of childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Helping undergraduates, youth, children and adolescents achieve social skills and seek social support, it also focuses on helping individuals with childhood maltreatment histories to think more positively about themselves and others which seems to be the most effective aspect of an intervention to reduce loneliness. Also, using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) intervention to address loneliness in undergraduates, children and adolescents who have experienced childhood maltreatment is of vital important in our society.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of the present study is related to the sample size, since the researcher used only undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and all participants involved were undergraduates, and the findings may not be applicable to the general public. Secondly, the participants were unable to understand the content of the items on the questionnaire and it imposes much stress on the researcher by trying to explain to the participants to understand content and the important of the research. Thirdly, the inability of some respondents to complete their questionnaire because it involved childhood maltreatment, alcoholic consumption histories and their individual personality characteristics.

### **Conclusion**

This study, focused on personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness as predictors of childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The result indicated that personality profiling such as extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, alcoholic consumption and loneliness statistically and significantly predict childhood maltreatment while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical and significantly predictors of childhood maltreatment among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University. This finding implies that parent, school management should always deem it necessary to understand the personality profiling of an individual that are susceptible and vulnerable to childhood maltreatment. Also, alcoholic consumption and loneliness of undergraduates of Ebonyi State University should be checked and control since it has psychological and mental health effect on undergraduates, children and youth. It also contributes to low academic achievement and low performance of undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Therefore, appropriate care should be taken to control the predictive roles of personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness on childhood maltreatment among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

## Recommendations

Considering the sensitivity and issues of the childhood maltreatment, an integrated approach, focusing on therapists, psychologist, parent, scholars, teachers and medical professionals should focus the issues concerning personality profiling, alcoholic consumption and loneliness on childhood maltreatment among primary and secondary student in our society. Moreover, government should make some laws and policies through which an immediate action can be taken against the offenders and abusers, as well as special laws on childhood maltreatment should be developed. Laws guiding the use of alcoholic consumption should also be provided by the government.

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