

# **GENDER, ALCOHOL AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATES. (A STUDY OF EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI)**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated the effects of alcohol and gender on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates in a sample of 100 undergraduates of Psychology Department, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki which comprised (50) males and (50) females. The result revealed that alcohol has effect on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates,  $F(1, 98) = 2.59, P < 0.01$ . The results showed that there was a significant difference between male and female undergraduates on aggressive behaviour ( $F(1, 96) = 0.68, P < 0.01$ ). Results also indicated that alcoholics and Non-alcoholic differs in their levels of aggressive behaviour. The researcher observed that alcohol consumption facilitates aggressive behaviour and increase the risk of being victim of violent acts, particularly in male heavy drinkers among undergraduate.*

**Key word:** *Alcohol, Gender, aggressive behaviour, violence, personality.*

## **Introduction**

The objective of a preacher or teacher is not just to get people to pay attention to the message and go away, but his or her goal involves, to a large extent, a kind of behaviour change resulting from cognition and absorption of the message (Emenike, 2006). Hence, every indoctrinate habit or high intake of drugs such as Alcohol, Indian herb, Marijuana and cocaine results to changes in behaviour. This study therefore examines how alcohol addiction or consumption affects the behaviour of male and female students in Ebonyi State University.

Hence, high consumption of alcohol leads to changes in behaviour of users/undergraduates. Alcohol is a volatile flammable liquid synthesised or obtained by fermentation of sugars and starches and widely used either pure or denatured as a solvent and in drugs. Cleaning solution, explosives and intoxicating beverages, also called ethanol, ethyl alcohol and grain alcohol (Eze and Omeje, 1999).

Schaeffer (1999) explains that yeasts are living organisms that grow in a solution containing sugar and water. They are chemically transformed sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide is used by plant while alcohol is consumed. Alcohol is taken orally and because of its small molecular sizes as well as liquids and water solubility, it is rapidly absorbed from the stomach and small intestine and transported by the blood throughout the body. Due to the above characteristic, alcohol can easily penetrate both neural and ordinary cell and easily cross the blood brain barriers.

Alcohol toxic effects vary considerably in different individuals and are influenced by such variables as gender, body weight, rate of consumption (Time) and total amount consumed level of education and age of users. (Eze and Omeje,1999). Alcohol consumption is more prevalent among male gender than their female counterpart. This may be caused by mild brain acquired naturally by the female gender, due to those differences, the females consumed alcohol less than males and the quantity of alcohol intake that influence the male sexual characteristic behaviour increase aggressive behaviour in male than in female counterparts.

Aggressive behaviour is reactionary and impulsive behaviour that often results in breaking household rules or the law. This behaviour is common among alcoholic consumers/users when under the influence of alcohol intoxication (Berkowir, 2003). Aggressive behaviour in school settings has been increasing through the years and therefore affecting school work at different levels.

Gender-refers to human sex grouping of being a male or female and in this study is the rate to which being a male or being female determines the quantity of alcohol consumption and its influence on their aggressive behaviour. Men who drink alcohol and have a predisposition for physical violence towards their female partners are more likely to be violent on the days they drink alcohol. According to a study conducted at the university at buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions (RIA) and reported in the February 2003 issue of the American Psychological Association's journal of consulting and chemical Psychology, the odds of any male- to female Physical aggressiveness are eight times higher on days when these men drink alcohol than on days with no alcohol consumption, with the changes of severe male-to-female physical aggression on drinking days more than 11 times higher.

A study conducted by Fals-Stewart, said the study followed 137 men entering a domestic violence treatment program and 135 domestically violent men entering alcoholism treatment program over a 15 month period. "Across both groups, our results show a significant and comparatively similar relationship between men's drinking and violence against women". Fals-Steward not that the data are drawn from two relatively large samples of domestically violent men, revealing highly similar relationships between male partners' drinking and the occurrence of male to-female physical aggression for both groups. "According to Fals-Steward "Also, individuals seeking treatment for domestic violence who have move sever alcohol misuse problems were found generally to be more likely to engage in partner-violence on any given day regardless of drinking, than their counterparts without drinking problems". Alcohol use and intoxication are perhaps best viewed as only one of servant factors that help to create the situation in which partner-violence result," Fals-Stewart said: there exist only a small number of published studies on alcohol-related aggression in women in a survey investigation; White et al (1993) report that adolescent males engaged in more alcohol-related aggression (fights, hurting someone, forced sex, vandalism, setting fires) than their females counterparts. In contrast, a laboratory study aggression on an adjective checklist in females but not in males (Rohsemow & Bachorowsk, 1984). In a study using a modified version of the TAP, Bond and Lader (1986) found that alcohol equally increases aggression (i.e, tone blasts) for men and women when they were exposed to low level of provocation (i.e low intensity tone blasts). However, when highly provoked, only men showed increased aggression with alcohol (Bond & Lader, 1986). In a

study using a point subtraction task, Dougherty et al (1996) showed that alcohol increases aggression for women. In another study using men and women, Dougherty et al (1999) reported that alcohol equally increased aggression for both genders. Bermen, Gladue & Taylor (1993) found that alcohol increased shock intensity and duration for men but not women. Although alcohol did not affect aggression for women, higher levels of provocation increased their aggressive responding to the same degree as intoxicated men.

The relationship between alcohol and aggressive behaviour is well known. The modulating effects of personality and anger on alcohol related aggression, however, are less clear. A study of drinkers' facial expressions of anger, published in the June 2003 issue of *Alcoholism: clinical & experimental research*, finds that drinking alcohol may place those individuals with a tendency toward anger at greater risk of becoming aggressive. The association between alcohol and aggression is huge. According to Pihl (2000 p, 55-61) "Alcohol is involved in half of all murders, rapes and assaults". Alcohol intoxication brings out people's natural tendencies in the expression of anger, said Parrot (2003). Also that alcohol increases the likelihood that certain drinkers, particularly those with the tendency to be angry and to express their anger outwardly, become aggressive when provoked. The accumulated research in alcohol and aggression clearly indicates that consumption of alcohol does not unilaterally, cause aggressive behaviour. Ito, Miller & Pollock (1996). Instead, the data suggest a vulnerability model of alcohol and aggression un which intoxicated individuals are both more likely to interpret ambiguous stimuli in the environmental as threatening and to respond aggressively to perceived threats than when Sober. (Schmulse, Leonard & Taylor, 1997) thus, this vulnerability mode suggests that alcohol use increases the likelihood of aggressive behaviour primarily among individuals who posses aggression-relevant traits. Bailey and Taylor (1991) demonstrated that intoxicated males high in aggressiveness responded to provocation with elevated aggression relative to sober control group participants. There were no differences in aggressive response among individuals low in aggressiveness regardless of alcohol condition (ALC). Giancola (2002a) and Giancola, Saucier & Burkhardt (2003) found that alcohol intoxication was associated with aggressive responses only among participant high in aggressivity, especially among males. Thus; the limited laboratory research to date suggests that the psychopharmacological properties of alcohol may exert the strongest effects on aggression on those individuals who are dispositionally prime to act aggressively. Alcohol us is associated with interpersonal violence and aggression, as indicated by a wealth of laboratory (eg. Giancola & Zeichner, 1997) and longitudinal (eg. Fals-Steward, Golden & Schumacher 2003) investigations. Although the consistency of the alcohol-aggression relationship is robust, the magnitude of the effect is moderate, suggesting that additional moderating situational, psychological and methodological variables are necessary to fully explain how alcohol use may relate to aggression. Quantity of past alcohol consumption is positively related to self-reported aggression in male (Dermen and George, 1989) and female (White & Gustafson, 1993), the social drinker. Theory suggests that increased alcohol consumption and aggressive behaviour are both components of an overarching construct of "deviant behaviour. We have notes from our literature review that existing studies covered the effect of alcohol and gender on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates. There is no detail research on this topic. This forms the basis for this work. Due to the literature reviewed above, the following hypothesis are raised for statistical testing.

1. There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour between male and female students.
2. Alcohol and non-alcoholic drinkers do not differ in their level of aggressive behaviour.

### **Objective of the study**

1. The purpose of this study was to ascertain if there is any relationship between gender aggressive behaviour of undergraduates.
2. To explain whether alcohol and non-alcoholic drinkers differ in their aggressive behaviour.

### **Statement of problem**

Most of the death that occurs in our society are speculated to result from the use of alcohol. A high percentages of this, is attributed to alcoholic effects on aggressive behaviours. The high aggressive behaviour resulting from alcohol influences in people is becoming alarming. Some cities and communities whose inhabitants are predominately alcohol users are almost on the point of extinction due to high level of violence such as fights, hurting someone, forced sex, vandalism, setting fires. This unfortunate situation is creating a great health concern to scientists and researchers. In other to find solution to this tidal wave, the following pertinent questions are raised:

1. Is there any significant relationship between male and female in their alcohol consumption towards aggressive behaviour?
2. Do Alcohol and non-alcohol drinkers differ in their level of aggressive behaviour?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants:**

Participants for the study were 100 undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU), consisting of 50 males and 50 females. The participants were randomly selected from the population of 120 third-year students of the Department of Psychology, Ebonyi State University; Sampling was conducted on Psychological laboratory in the Department of Psychology, through the distribution of questionnaire. The age range of the participants was between 20 and 30 years, within mean age of 23.89.

### **Instrument:**

The instruments that were used for the study were LA (Lestica Agresionosti) aggression questionnaire developed by Buss, & Perry (1992). It consist of 97 items, where the respondent has 7 point likert scale response format ranging from (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= mostly agree 4 = something in between, 5 = mostly agree, 6= agree, 7= strongly agree) was used to measure aggressive behaviour of undergraduates.

The instrument used to test the student alcohol consumption was the QF (quantity frequency) and GF (Graduate frequency approach developed by Room, (1990) which reflect the respondent's current drinking status. The QF approach measures alcohol consumption within the reference period and (2) the usual number of drinks consumed on days when the respondent drank alcohol.

The GF approach it is used to asks respondents how often during the designated reference period they drank various quantities of standard drinks (eg one to two drink, three to four drinks, five to six drinks, seven to eight drinks, nine to ten drinks and eleven to twelve drinks and so forth).

### Procedure:

The two instruments were distributed and collected from the selected students in Psychology Department with the aid of the researcher's colleagues. Of 120 copies of the questionnaire returned 20 discarded either because they were incompletely filled or there was no gender indication. As a result, 100 copies of the two questionnaires were properly completed and scored. The returned rate was 80%.

### Design & Statistics

The design of the study was a 2 (Alcohol: low and high) x 2 (Gender: males and females) completely randomised factorial design. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data collected.

### Result

In the study, effects of alcohol and gender on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki were explored. Mean (X), standard Deviation (SD) and two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of alcohol consumptions of gender with risk of aggressive behaviour were analyzed, to find out if there were gender difference and alcohol effects on aggressive behaviour.

**Table 1:** Table of mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) of the groups on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates:

Sources of variation	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation
<b>Alcohol:</b> High	6.43	2.62
Low	3.26	1.82
<b>Gender:</b> Male	123.96	20.56
Female	120.96	11.30

The result in table 1 indicate levels of alcohol and gender, participants in the high alcoholic obtained higher mean score(X) = 6.43 and standard deviation (SD) = 2.62. Then others in the low alcoholics of mean scores (X) = 3.26 and standard deviation (SD) = 1.82. The descriptive analysis also showed that the aggressive behaviour mean score (X) = 123.96 and standard deviation score (SD) = 20.56 for male participants were higher than that of the female participants in aggressive behaviour of mean score(X)= 120.96 and standard deviation (SD)= 11.30.

**Table 2:** ANVOA Summary on Group differences on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates

Sources of variation	SS	DF	MS	F-Ratio	Significant
Alcohol: (A)	1217.12	1	1217.12	32.61	NS
Gender: (B)	25.32	1	25.32	0.68	NS
A X B -	40.49	1	40.49	1.09	NS
Error -	1282.93	96			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1341.51</b>	<b>99</b>			

NS = Not significance,  $P < 0.01$

Result above showed that the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis of the student which proposed no significance difference between males and females on aggressive behaviour was ejected.  $F = (1, 96) = 32.61, P < 0.01$ .

Therefore participants of high alcoholics were more disposed to aggressive behaviour than those of lower alcoholic consumption. Results showed that male students significantly differ in aggressive behaviour than the female  $F (1, 96) = 32.61, P < 0.01$ .

**Table 3:** The mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) of alcoholics and Non-alcoholics on aggressive behaviour among undergraduates.

Sources of variation	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation
<b>Alcohol:</b>	63.45	31.73
<b>Non-Alcohol:</b>	36.55	18.28

The results showed that the mean score (X) and standard deviation (SD) of alcoholics ( $M = 63.45, SD = 31.73$ ), were higher than mean score (X) and standard deviation (SD) of non-alcoholic ( $M = 36.55, SD = 18.28$ ). This implies that the alcoholics will exhibit more aggressive behaviour than the non-alcoholics. Therefore the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis of this study which proposed not difference was rejected.

The results from table 3 indicate that the alcohol participants had ( $M = 63.45, SD = 31.73$ ) which is greater than the non-alcoholic participants of ( $M = 36.55, SD = 18.28$ ). This result is used to test for hypothesis 2 which state that alcoholics and non-alcoholics drinkers will not differ in their level of aggressive behaviour is rejected. The alternative hypothesis which state that alcoholics and non-alcoholics will differ in their levels of aggressive behaviour is accepted. This is attributed to the nature of work done by man; the physiological structure of man brain capacity and psychological characteristics of man enables him to take in more drugs (alcohol, Indian herb, marijuana and cocaine etc) than their females counterparts.

## Discussion

In the research of effects of alcoholic and gender on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Department of Psychology, results

from table 1; indicate that males had a mean score (X) of 123.96 and standard deviation (SD) of 20.56 which is greater than the mean female score (X) of 120.96 and standard deviation (SD) of 11.30 and high alcoholic consumption mean of 6.43 and standard deviation (SD) of 2.62 greater than lower mean alcoholic consumption of 3.26 and standard deviation of 1.82. This indicates that male students are more prone to aggressive behaviour when intoxicated with alcoholic than their female counterparts. This finding is consistent with the study of crick; N (2003) concerned with aggression show significant gender differences indicating that male students are more aggressive than female students.

Results from table 2, indicate that alcoholic consumptions significant influence aggressive behaviour of male students than female students at  $F(1,96) = 32.61, P < 0.01$ .

According to American Psychological Association (2003) males who drink alcohol and have a predisposition for physical violence towards their female's partners is more likely to be violent (exhibit aggressive behaviour). On the days they drink alcohol, the odds of any males-to-females physical aggression are eight (8) times higher than on days with no alcohol consumption, with the chances of severe male-to-female physical aggression on drink days more than eleven (11) times higher. According to Fals-steward, (2003) study, result showed a significant and comparatively similar relationship between men's drinking and violence against women. The result also showed that alcohol drinkers play some role in the facilitation of aggressive behaviour among student and in marital relationship.

According to Pihl, (2000) men who take alcohol involved in half of all murders, rape fighting, assaults and accident in our society which are in line with findings. According to Giancola (2002a) and Giancola et al (2005) found that alcohol intoxication was associated with aggressive response only among participants high in aggressivity, especially among males. According to research done by Giancola (2002b) and Giancola et al (2005) alcohol appears to be stronger predictor of aggressive behaviour using the ATP for male than for females. Results from table 3: indicate that males had 8% and female 6% in alcoholic consumption. Therefore males consume alcohol frequency than the females and exhibit more aggressive behaviour. According to (White, H 1999) on study of college student, found that of 391 young adults between 18-22years of age, 30% of males and 25% of females reported having engaged in violence (a fight, assault & Anger) while intoxicated), this implies that the percentage of alcohol consumption in males is higher than in females. Again, these percentages were found to be significantly higher in heavy drinkers. Interestingly, this suggests that one is more likely to be victimized by an intoxicated assailant if one is a heavy drinker. Finally, when considering schools with high levels of students drinking, 61% of college administrators indicated that physical assaults were a moderate or major problem at their school, 35% indicated a problem with damage to campus property and 86% indicated a problem with sexual assault, and 90% aggressive behaviour (Wechsler et al, 1995).

Finally, the literature indicates that alcohol consumption facilitate aggressive behaviour and increases the risk of being the victim of a violent act, particularly in heavy drinkers.

### **Limitation of the study**

#### ***This study had the following limitation:***

1. The students' shows unwillingness to tick the aggressive questionnaire and alcoholic consumption questionnaire because they believe that it may be used to assess their behaviour and academic performance.

2. The students lack knowledge of answering/ ticking questionnaire, as a result of this, some of the questionnaire was unfilled or incompletely filled which create some problems for the researcher.

### **Recommendation**

#### ***This study recommends the followings:***

1. That the present campaign against the effects of alcohol on aggressive behaviour by medical and non-medical teams should be intensified across the whole fabrics of the society. However, special attention should be paid to males' population since they are found to consume more alcohol and exhibition of aggressive behaviour than their female counterpart. Counseling, dangers of drugs and other method adopted for prevention and control of sources of aggressive behaviour should be enlightened to the undergraduates.
2. Alcohol consumption should be discouraged as much as possible in Nigeria society since alcoholics are found to be greater facilitators of aggressive behaviour and violence in our society today than the non alcoholics. Government should discouraged alcohol manufacturing within the country and its importation into Nigeria from foreign countries. The present situation in Nigeria where alcohol appears to be enjoying a revolutionary status makes the spread of violence rapid in many parts of the country. Alcohol breweries are many in Nigeria today. Legislative, religious and persuasive communication strategies could be used in achieving the goals.

### **Suggestion for further studies**

1. The researcher suggested further study on effects of alcoholics and non-alcoholics on aggressive behaviour of undergraduates.
2. The effect of alcohol and gender on physical aggression among undergraduates.



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