

# MEDIATING INFLUENCE OF SELF ESTEEM IN THE PREDICTION BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

## ABSTRACT

Alcohol Abuse among students has become a serious public health issue in Nigeria. Research documentation of alcohol abuse has only been concentrated in the developed world with little or no empirical evidence to account for the perceptions from the developing world, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the mediating effect of self esteem in the predictive relationship between personality traits and alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. , Abakalilki. A Cross-sectional survey design was used for the study.

Three hundred and twelve (312) Ebonyi State University students from the faculty of Health Sciences, Presco Campus were selected for this study. They comprised 208 (63.2%) males and 104 (32.3%) females with an age range between 19 years and 33 years. Their mean age was 23.36 which the SD was 6.36. This study made use of multi-stage sampling technique which comprised simple balloting and purposive sampling technique. Measures of the personality traits in this study were based on the Big Five Inventory (BFI), Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) was used to measure global indices of self-esteem and the McAndrew Alcoholism Scale was used to measure destructive drinking.

Results showed that, personality trait significantly predicted alcohol abuse in this manner Extroversion ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Agreeableness ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Conscientiousness ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), openness ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Finally neuroticism ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The result also indicated that personality characteristics (i.e., extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism), combined significantly predicted alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Finally Self-esteem significantly predicted alcohol abuse ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $t = -2.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Post-Hoc Sobel test that was conducted revealed that perceive self-esteem significantly mediated the relationship between personality trait and alcohol abuse ( $Z = 2.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that academic institutions at all levels should try as much as possible to engage in reward systems that increase student's propensities which will enhance the psycho-emotional perspectives of the students and able to cope with social pressures with campuses, and also effort should be made to reduce to minimal access to alcoholic beverages within the university environment. Also, symposiums and seminars including workshops should be organized to sensitize and students at all levels on social acceptable best practices. Also, therapies and interventions should be conducted for students who report or show behavioural problems which are linked to alcoholism and abuse of illicit drugs. This study portends several implications for the academia, in that research studies can be harnessed to help in policy formation and implementation concerning the sale and accessibility of alcoholic beverages within university campuses.

**Key Words:** Personality Traits, Self-Esteem, Destructive Drinking, University Students

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the study

Alcohol rivals tobacco as one of the leading causes of health problems in the world (World Health Organization, 2011). Alcohol encompasses a variety of beverages containing ethyl alcohol such as, beers, wines, and distilled spirits (Babor, Higgins-Biddle, Saunders, & Monteiro, 2002). The consumption of alcohol is an ancient practice that has been largely associated with human societies in almost all cultures (Ansari, Ultram & Elbasan, 2012). Similarly, the destructive patterns of behaviours associated with the consumption of alcohol have also been documented in undergraduate populations in the annals of scientific research (Louvre, & Pierre-Manic, 2013).

During adolescence, young people are presented with opportunities to develop their ideas, attitudes and self-image. Researches in social sciences such as, Benjamin and Wulfert, (2005), have demonstrated that young people often start to experiment with substances during early adolescence. Some experimentation with alcohol may be considered normal during adolescence.

Typically, early and late adolescence is intense and unpredictable. Young undergraduates have a tendency to be moody, restless, and may exhibit erratic and inconsistent behavior including anxiety, bravado, and fluctuations between superiority and inferiority. They are often self-conscious and highly sensitive to criticism of their perceived personal shortcomings (Benjamin & Wulfert, 2005). Young undergraduates' self-esteem levels are generally adequate and improve over time, while self-competence in academic subjects, sports, and creative activities decline. Emotionally-charged situations may trigger young undergraduates to resort to

childish behaviors, exaggerate simple events, and vocalize naive opinions or one-sided arguments. Their emotional variability makes young undergraduates at risk of making decisions with negative consequences and believing that their experiences, feelings, and problems are unique (Benjamin & Wulfert, 2005).

People consume alcohol for different reasons, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages, for whatever reasons, alters people's behaviors (Merki & Merki, 1987). It has been argued that alcohol consumption can lead to alteration in conscience and sense of judgment and extreme levels of alcohol abuse have been recorded to have led to death and suicidal ideation (Combs, Hales, & Williams, 1980). Once a person's sense of judgment has been altered as a result of alcohol consumption, several forms of behavior can be exhibited.

The World Health Organization (2011), referred to alcohol abuse as a pattern of alcohol use that causes physical or mental damage or lead to impairment in the individual's health, social and occupational functioning. Wilson and Byrd, (2005) defined alcohol abuse as a chronic, progressive disorder marked by a growing compulsion to drink and impaired control over drinking that eventually interferes with health and social behaviour.

Barnes Reifman Farrell and Dintcheff, (2000), suggest that whether alcohol abuse is best viewed as a disease or as a self-control problem is the source of considerable debate, but experts have reached a reasonable consensus about the warning signs of alcohol abuse to relieve uncomfortable feelings, gulping drinks, clandestine drinking and other indicators such as, drinking to modify uncomfortable feelings and priming that is, preparing oneself for social gathering by first taking alcohol. It is worthy to note that so many psychosocial factors can predispose one to alcohol abuse or alcohol abuse these factors may include but are not limited to personality trait and self esteem as will be considered in this work.

However, several scientific authors have suggested that some personality factors predispose individuals to alcohol abuse (Caspi, Begg, Dickson, Harrington, Langley, Moffitt & Silva, 1997; Campbell, Rudick & Sedikides, 2002). Against this background, theorists have proposed concepts that backup this assumption, contesting that certain personality types are linked to alcoholism and alcohol-related behavioural problems (Cattell, 1957; Costa).

According to Costa, Terracciano and McCrae (2001), the idea of personality involves the stability in a person's behaviour over time and across situations (consistency) and the behavioural differences among people reacting to the same situation (distinctiveness). A personality trait is a durable disposition to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations. Adjectives such as honest, dependable, moody, impulsive, suspicious, anxious, excitable and domineering describe dispositions that represent personality traits (Costa et al., 2001).

The five factor model or big five (Costa & McCrae, 1989) has been widely used in investigating the role of personality on destructive drinking. These factors of personality traits are extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness.

Alcohol abuse has been found across a variety of individuals, both the rich and the poor as well as those with heightened levels of self-esteem and those with low self-worth (John & Srivastava, 1999). However, several scientific literatures have demonstrated that alcohol abuse impairs perception of self-worth in individuals with this problem (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Funk and Wagnalls (2003), define self-esteem as when one has a good opinion of oneself. Self-esteem is the way people think about themselves and how worth-while, they feel. Nwofor and Nweke (2000) assert that when a person's self -esteem is high he tends to be motivated and performs his job or task better. Task here refers to specific piece of labour/work to be done as a

duty required by an authority or delegated responsibility (Adeyemo, 2002; Akubundu, 2008). Self-esteem is a state of mind, it is the way you think and feel about yourself, having high self-esteem means having feelings of confidence, worthiness and positive regard for one's self (Judge, & Bono, 2001; Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). People with high self-esteem often feel good about themselves, feel a sense of belonging, self-respect and appreciate others (Bunmi, 2009). People with high self-esteem tend to be successful in life because they feel confident in taking on challenges and risking failure to achieve what they want (Nwosu, et al, 2013).

In conclusion, the negative effect of alcohol abuse or alcohol abuse as it is popularly called cannot be over emphasized especially when it has to do with adolescents which are mostly undergraduates hence the reason why the researcher is interested in some psychosocial factors that may play a role in the extent to which alcohol is abused in our contemporary society.

### **1.2.Aim/Objective of the Study**

The aim of this study was to examine the moderating effect of self esteem in the predictive relationship between personality traits and alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. Abakalilki, Ebonyi State. The specific objectives of this research were:

- i. To examine the influence of neuroticism on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- ii. To examine the influence of extraversion on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- iii. To examine the influence of openness to experience on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.

- iv. To examine the influence of agreeableness on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- v. To examine the influence of conscientiousness on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- vi. To determine the relationship of self-esteem on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- vii. To examine the joint influence of personality traits on alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.
- viii. To determine self-esteem will significantly be a mediator of personality and alcohol abuse among university undergraduates in Ebonyi State University.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Three hundred and twelve (312) Ebonyi State University students from the faculty of Health Sciences, Presco Campus were selected for this study. They comprised 208 (63.2%) males and 104 (32.3%) females with an age range between 19 years and 33 years. Their mean age was 23.36 which the Standard Deviation was 6.36. On the type of religion been practiced by the participants, 267 (70.2%) of them practiced Christianity and 45 were Muslims (29.8%).

### **Sampling Techniques**

This study made use of multi-stage sampling technique which comprises of simple balloting which is a type of simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique. Since unequal population of among various departments of the Health Science

faculty, proportionate sampling technique was used to select participants from each Department within the faculty. Yamane's (1967) formula would be used to determine the sample size of this study. It is used to calculate the minimum sample size of a given population. The formula is given below:

$$n = N/1 + N(e)^2$$

Where, n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision/margin of error, which is expressed as 5%. Accordingly, by applying the above formula, the sample size of the present study is calculated as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 4,421/1 + 4,421(0.05)^2 \\ &= 311.6 \text{ (Approximately, 312)} \end{aligned}$$

## **Instruments**

This study made use of copies of standardized questionnaires. The instruments comprised 4 sections.

### **Section A**

#### **Socio-demographics**

This section comprised questions on tapping the socio-demographic information on age, gender, and religion affiliation.

### **Section B: Big Five Inventory (BFI).**

Measures of the personality traits in this study were based on the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by (John & Srivastava, 2004 cited in, McCrae, et al., 2010). There were a total

of 44 items of measurement. The researcher adapted these measures because they were short instruments and easy to understand by the respondents. The BFI measure 5 aspects of personality namely; Openness to experience (10 items), Extraversion (8 items), Neuroticism (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items) and Conscientiousness (9 items). Scoring: Respondents were required to rate their degree of agreement by assigning point on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) The Big Five has provided support and is universally applicable. Sample of items include; 'I am curious about many things', 'I am creative and a deep thinker', 'I am outgoing and sociable', 'I tend to find faults with others'. Previous tested reliability of the BFI was typically ranged from 0.92 to 0.98 (McCrae & John, 1999). Among Nigerian Authors, Abiola, Udofia & Shehu, (2012) reported a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .92. Owing to the wide acceptance of Big Five to describe the most salient aspects of personality, it has been comprehensively used in recent organizational and other applied research.

### **Section C: Index of Self-Esteem (ISE).**

Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) was developed by Hudson, (1982). The ISE is a 25 item scale designed to measure global indices of self-esteem and it is scored on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 to 7 as follows, 1= None of the time, 2 = Very rarely, 3 = A little of the time 4 = Some of the time, and 5 = A good part of time, 6 = Most of the time and 7 = All of the time. ISE Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25 were reversely scored, while items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19 and 24 were scored directly. Thereafter the result of the direct scoring and the reverse scoring items will be added and 25 will be subtracted from the overall score to obtain the client's ISE score. Separate norms have been reported for male and female Nigerian samples as follows: Males = 30.89, females = 32.04 (Omoluabi, 1997). In this study, the Nigerian norms for male and female samples were the bases for interpreting the scores of the participants. Scores

lower than the norm indicated high self-esteem while scores higher than the norm indicates low self-esteem.

#### **Section D: McAndrew Alcoholism Scale (MAC).**

The McAndrew Alcoholism Scale was developed by McAndrew (1965). The MAC is designed to screen for alcoholism “covert content items,” i.e., those that do not directly mention drinking. The scale is embedded in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, but it can also be administered separately. The MAC was developed to measure cross cultural correlates of alcoholism. The MAC was used measure destructive drinking. The MAC appears to screen for alcohol problems by assessing personality and attitudinal characteristics that commonly distinguish individuals with such problems from those without such problems. The MAC is 49 item scales, and the rating of the MAC is on a 2-point Likert type scale format; True and False for each question. The time required from scale administration is 10 minutes. The questionnaire took between 5-10 minutes to answer and they were collected immediately from the respondents. Sample of items include; ‘I have not lived the right kind of life’, ‘I think I would like the kind of work a forest ranger does’, ‘I am certainly lacking in self-confidence’, ‘I do many things which I regret afterwards’, as well as ‘I regret things more or more often than others seem to’. The present study reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .89. Also, McAndrew, (1965), reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .83.

#### **Pilot Study**

Also the researcher conducted pilot study in order to obtain the reliability of the instruments using cronbach alpha reliability. 40 students Alex Ekwueme University participated in the pilot study. An alpha co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained under Index of Self-Esteem (ISE), 0.72 under

extroversion, 0.59 under agreeableness, 0.66 under conscientiousness, 0.72 under neuroticism, 0.61 under openness and 0.70 under Mc Andrew Alcoholism Scale (MAC).

## **Procedure**

A formal permission was obtained from the Provost of faculty of health sciences Ebonyi State University Abakaliki who referred , the researcher to the dean faculty of health sciences who introduced him to heads of departments of Nursing, Anatomy, Physiology, Basic medicine, subsequently the various Heads of department introduced the researcher to other lecturers as a colleague who needed assistant in carrying out a research with their departments, this introduction made it easy for the researcher to approach students with the questionnaire during lectures with the permission of the lecturer on ground. The researcher, in the course of supervising the administration of the questionnaire advised the participants to be honest in their responses to the instrument. As stated earlier, the questionnaires were given to the participants during lectures and the data collection lasted 3weeks and 4 days. 312 questionnaires were and collected.

## **Research Design/Statistics**

The research was survey while the design was Correlational. The criterion variable was Alcohol abuse. The predictor was personality traits while the mediating variable was self esteem. Based on the research design and the nature of hypotheses stated, hierarchical multiple regressions were adopted as the statistical tool to test the hypotheses.

## **RESULTS**

### **Test of Relationships among Variable**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was conducted to test the relationship among the variables of the study. The results are presented in Table 4.1

**Table1: Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Mean, Standard Deviation and the Relationship among the Study Variables**

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	39.30	8.335	1							
2. Gender	1.34	.474		-	1					
		.090								
3. Religion	1.35	.479		-.062	1					
		.064								
4. Marital Status	1.83	.377		-.115	.014	1				
		.606**								
5. Academic Level	11.03	5.99		-.056	.029	.530**	1			
		.734								
6. Personality Traits	48.22	6.78		.024	-.030	-.005	-.050	1		
		0.10				.005	.050			
7. Self –Esteem	162.24	15.53		.041	.058	.150	.179**	.258	1	
		.130*								
8. Destructive Drinking	13.13	2.65		-.161**	-.039	-.224	.034	-.165	-.133	1
									.222	

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 312$

Results in Table 1 indicated that age had significant direct relationship with alcohol abuse ( $r = .16$ ,  $p < .01$ ), implying that age, influences alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. Gender had no significant relationship with destructive drinking ( $r = -.039$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This implies that gender disparity had no significant relationship with alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. Similarly, religious affiliation had significant inverse relationship with destructive drinking ( $r = -.224$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This implies that students whose religious perception increases tend not to engage in alcohol abuse behavioural patterns among Ebonyi State University students. Marital status had no significant relationship with alcohol abuse ( $r = .034$ ,

$p > .05$ ). This implies that marital status had no significant relationship with alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students.

In addition, academic level showed significant inverse relationship with alcohol abuse ( $r = -.16, p > .05$ ). This implies that as students' academic level increases, the lower the inclination to engage in destructive drinking. Personality trait showed indirect significant relationship with destructive drinking ( $r = -.13, p > .05$ ). This implies that when overall personality trait increases, the lower the tendency to engage in alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. Perceived self-esteem showed indirect significant relationship with destructive drinking ( $r = -.22, p > .05$ ). This implies that students who have an increased perceived self-esteem show less inclination to engage in alcohol abuse and vice versa among Ebonyi State University students.

### Test of Hypotheses

To test the study hypotheses a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 1 This statistical analysis is appropriate because the aim of the researcher is to examine the independent and joint influence of personality trait and self-esteem on destructive drinking.

**Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Personality Traits and Self-Esteem on Destructive Drinking**

Variables	$\beta$	t	R	$R^2$	df	F
Extraversion	.28	1.35	.087	.391	2,312	18.28**
Agreeableness	.11	2.11				
Conscientiousness	.03	1.21				
Openness	.24	3.74				
Neuroticism	.32	2.77				
Self-esteem	-.25	-1.98				
Personality Characteristics	.33	2.87				

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 312$

The result in Table 2, indicated that extraversion showed significantly predicted alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ ; 28  $p < .01$ ). This implies that extraverted students have an increased tendency to engage in alcohol abuse behaviour patterns, The result further indicated that agreeableness significantly predicted alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ ; 11,  $p < .01$ ). The results showed that students who scored high on the measure of agreeableness personality spectrum have an increased tendency to engage in destructive drinking.

Conscientiousness on the other hand did not predict alcohol abuse among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ ; .03,  $p < .01$ ). This implies that Ebonyi State university students who indicated increase levels of conscientiousness tend not to engage in alcohol abuse behaviour patterns. In contrary to conscientiousness, openness personality trait significantly predicted alcohol abuse among undergraduate student of Ebonyi State University ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ .24,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that Ebonyi State University students who showed increased levels of openness personality have an increased tendency to engage in alcohol abuse behaviour patterns.

Finally neuroticism (personality trait) significantly predicted alcohol abuse among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ .32,  $p < .01$ ). This infers that students who demonstrate increased level of neuroticism tend to engage in alcohol abuse behaviour patterns. Therefore, hypothesis 1 which stated that the big five personality trait will significantly and positively predict alcohol abuse among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University was accepted.

Also the result indicated that the combined influence of personality characteristics (i.e., extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism), significantly predicted alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students ( $R = .087$ ;  $\beta$ ; .33,  $p < .01$ ). This

implies that the composite effect of personality characteristics will lead to an increased tendency to engage in alcohol abuse behaviour patterns among Ebonyi State University students. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was accepted.

**Table 3: Summary of Mediation Analysis showing the Mediating Role of Self-Esteem between Personality and Destructive Drinking**

Dependent Factor	Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>
Alcohol abuse	Self-Esteem	-.19	-4.32**	.19	.34	1, 312	18.67**
Alcohol abuse	Self-Esteem	-.22	-4.95**	.22	.05	1, 312	24.51**
Alcohol abuse	Personality	.31	7.05**	.31	.10	1, 312	49.72**
Alcohol abuse	Personality	.14	2.99**				
	Self-Esteem	-.18	-3.83**	.26	.07	2, 312	16.94**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ;  $N=312$

Results in Table 3 showed that, self-esteem indirectly predicted alcohol abuse ( $\beta$  -.19; -.22,  $t$  -4.32,  $p < .01$ ). This result indicated that self-esteem has an inverse relationship on destructive drinking, such that, as perceived self-esteem increases, there is a reduced tendency not to engage in alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. The outcome of this result demonstrates that self-esteem is a mediator of alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State university students. This result did not indicate the extent or degree of mediation that self-esteem has on alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. Because this result did not provide enough explanation on the strength of mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between personality traits and destructive drinking. Thus, a Post-Hoc Sobel test was conducted. The result is presented in the Table 4.

On the other hand, personality characteristics were introduced to the mediation model as predictive variable and Table 3. Showed that personality characteristics had significant influence on alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students ( $\beta$  =.31,.14;  $t$  = .7.05; 2.99,  $p < .01$ ).

These results demonstrate that personality is a strong indicator of alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University Students.

**Table 4: Post-Hoc Sobel Summary Showing the Strength of Mediation between Personality Traits and Alcohol abuse by Self-Esteem**

Variables		Z	Std. Error	p
Predictors	Personality			
Mediator	Self-Esteem	2.31	.07	<. 05
Dependent Destructive Drinking				

Results in Tables 4 revealed that perceive self-esteem significantly mediated the relationship between personality trait and alcohol abuse ( $Z= 2.31, p., <. 05$ ). This implies that personality increases undergraduates' level of self-esteem which in turn decreases their level of destructive drinking. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was accepted.

## Discussion

The study investigated the moderating effect of self esteem in the predictive relationship between personality traits and alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students.

The result showed that there is clear connection between extraversion and destructive drinking. One reason for this outcome may be that students who are inclined towards social activities and who tend to have multiple friendships often are susceptible to drinking behaviour as a result of peer influence. Also, it could be because, extraverted individuals tend to engage in social drinking and as a resultant effect of peer relationship or family history, playing a major influence on drinking behaviour.

One of the most consistent findings in the study of personality and emotion is that extraversion is moderately correlated with pleasant affect (Richardson & Ulpart, 2017). People who are gregarious, active, and outgoing tend to experience more pleasant emotions than those who are quiet, inactive, and introverted. The study of this relation has a long history in personality psychology. In 1965, Rosenberg postulated that social relations and feelings of sociability correlated with avowals of celebration and happiness.

Another plausible reason why extraversion may predict alcohol abuse among university or college students may be that, the campus life of college students involves multicuity of social interactions and exchanges and these interactions are often of a social nature, which often engage collective or group affiliation which may incline to occasional drinking that often cascades into binge drinking and ultimately alcohol abuse behaviour.

Also agreeableness as a personality trait significantly predicted destructive drinking. Reason for this result could be that, individual who have an increased tendency towards agreeableness tend to engage in activities that will lead to affability and social conformity to the group they belong. For example, in college settings, students tend to exhibit behaviours that will be applauded or recognized by the groups in which they have affiliation and in most of these college sorority groups alcohol consumption is one of the activities in which they engage in. this could plausible tend to students who are predisposed to agreeableness personality to want to engage in these activities in other to gain acceptance in the group in which they belong.

Some studies have demonstrated that there is a significant correlation between agreeableness personality and alcoholism. For instance, Dittner, Wesley, and Brown, (2011) believe that individuals with agreeable personality can be influenced at various the level of

destructive drinking. This assertion was supported in a study by (Ihejiaku, 2017) who revealed that alcohol abuse can be theorized in terms of social equity and in-group sense of belongings, which leads to a perceived ratio of outcomes, by using the concept of social exchange. These results are significant pointers to the fact that, university students with increased tendency toward an agreeable personality maybe more inclined to engage in destructive drinking.

The findings of this work further revealed that conscientiousness as a big-five dimension significantly predicted destructive drinking. One reason for this apparent disconnect may be that students who have increased level of conscientious personality tend to be morally conscious of the social vices as it pertains to the social norms of the cultures in which they belong. For instance, in Nigeria, alcohol is generally accepted in religious and traditional rites although; excessive consumption is frowned upon by individuals within the same cultural context. People who engage in this excessive alcohol abuse behaviour are often stigmatized in the society and often considered as morally bankrupt. it can be inferred therefore, that individuals who engage in perpetual alcohol consumption are often regarded with impunity and lack of responsibility and its keeps people who are conscientious away from such negative perception.

In addition openness as a personality dimension significantly predicted destructive drinking. The outcome of this result suggest that, students who are more inclined towards openness personality tend to engage in destructive alcohol drinking and this may be due to the characteristic of these individuals in that, this category of individual's susceptibility to experience new things often make them highly curious and wanting to try out new things. This predisposition often leads to a morbid of social problems which often includes alcoholism.

It could also be that individuals with openness personality can be susceptible to destructive drinking, simply because they agree to take a couple drinks with friends, colleagues or significant others. However, it is important to state that, alcohol abuse is often a gradual process that builds up over an extended period of time with constant exposure and access to alcoholic beverage.

Finally, neuroticism as one of the dimensions of big-five personality structure significantly predicted destructive drinking. Explanation for this outcome could be that, individuals with increased levels of neuroticism may be more inclined to worry, and show anxiety over situations that are not seemingly serious to warrant such attention. Due to this predisposition to be more vulnerable to agitations, uneasiness and nervous. This inclination may make them more incline to consume alcohol in other to superficially mitigate the anxiety within them. However, because alcohol is a habit-forming substance, they may develop an alcoholic disposition and therefore become potential destructive drinkers or tend to engage in social vices such as excessive drinking, smoking and driving under the influence of alcohol. In summary the first hypothesis which stated that the big five personality trait will significantly and positively predict alcohol abuse among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University was accepted.

Also big five personality dimension jointly and significantly predicted alcohol abuse among undergraduate student of Ebonyi State University, One explanation for the positive relationship between personality traits and alcohol abuse could be that personality is an endo-phenotype that is sensitive for identifying different subtypes of modification of behaviors linked to extreme, personality traits may be a strong reason for developing a alcohol abuse habit. This is because university students, being adolescents have a surge of personality expression that may make

them become more susceptible to poor drinking habit which may be connected with social influence through personality traits such as openness, agreeableness and extraversion.

Another possible explanation is that, it is observed that binge drinkers report increases in Extraversion, and greater increases in Neuroticism (anxiolytic effects) and agreeableness (more aggressive) than non-drinkers, a pattern modulated by the individuals' personality disposition.

Personality traits related to impulsivity/disinhibition appear to demonstrate the most robust and consistent relation with alcohol involvement, all Five-Factor traits (i.e., openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) have been shown to correspond, with varying degrees of consistency, to alcohol use and outcomes.

In addition, alcohol abuse represents a facet of a broad pattern of deviant behaviors that are thought to begin in childhood as a result of personality traits, deficient socialization and genetic vulnerability.

This study finally revealed that, self-esteem significantly mediated the relationships between personality traits and alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State university students in such a way that, the introduction of self-esteem as mediator will reduce alcohol abuse urge among Ebony State University, was confirmed. One possible explanation for this outcome is that individuals with increased levels of self-esteem tend to engage in appropriate behaviours such as responsible drinking especially in public events or gatherings. Another explanation could be that, individuals with self-esteem are cognizant of their self-projected image because they tend to show self-worth and tend to respect themselves in public. Another possible justification is that individuals with increased tendency towards self-esteem exhibit personality type that portend self-awareness and personal disposition towards significant others.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that, personality traits are significant predictors of perceived alcohol abuse among university students in Ebonyi State. Also, the outcome of the study, have revealed that perceived self-esteem is a good mediator of alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students. This signifies that individuals especially university students with alcohol abuse or alcoholism problems can be rehabilitated by improving their level of perceived self-esteem.

The study examined the influence of personality traits and self-esteem on alcohol abuse among Ebonyi State University students, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. The study revealed that personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, and openness neuroticism showed significant prediction on alcohol abuse behaviour. However, result revealed that conscientiousness did not predict alcohol abuse while self-esteem showed a significant inverse prediction on destructive drinking. Therefore, researchers must focus on the mechanisms that lead to improve levels of perceived self-esteem among university students in managing pleasant affect and the processes by which these levels of self-esteem control destructive drinking.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that academic institutions at all levels should try as much as possible to engage in reward systems that increase student's propensities which will enhance the psycho-emotional perspectives of the students and able to cope with social pressures with campuses, and also effort should be made to reduce to minimal access to alcoholic beverages within the university environment. However, the following recommended are suggested in line with the findings of the study;

1. Students in public institutions should be adequately and continuously trained using psychological principles and behavioural techniques to best deal with anti-social behaviours from a behavioural standpoint. This would change the overall perception of alcohol abuse in making value judgment.
2. The academic board of various public academic institutions should also be advised on how to handle student excesses by instituting systemic checks and balances that regulate the activities of principal executives of social accepted groups in a bid to avoid or reduce the problem of alcohol abuse especially within Nigerian campuses.
3. Symposiums and seminars including workshops should be organized to sensitize and students at all levels on social acceptable best practices. Also, therapies and interventions should be conducted for students who report or show behavioural problems which are linked to alcoholism and abuse of illicit drugs.
4. Finally, sick bays are to be established to provide first aid treatment for early detection of alcohol related problems within university campuses. This would help reduce drastically the number of alcohol related problems found in Nigerian campuses.

### **Implication of study**

The finding in the study showed that personality and perceived self-esteem are factors that predict alcohol abuse among students which may be responsible for the reduced academic performance especially when the studying conditions are poor, definitely those who have poor perception of their self-worth encounter huge social and peer pressure which makes them to be inclined towards destructive drinking. This study portends several implications for the academia, in that research studies can be harnessed to help in policy formation and implementation concerning the sale and accessibility of alcoholic beverages within university campuses. Also

this study can serve as a platform for other research studies to broaden the scope of influence of perceived self-esteem and personality on destructive drinking.

### **Limitation to the study**

The participants used for the study were 312 which may be considered too meager and may not be sufficient for generalization. Further study should try to inculcate larger sample size across various profession including privately own organizations. Also, the study did not indicate the causal factors of the variables; since it was not an experimental study, future studies can also look into conducting a study with experimental procedures. Also, the study was survey design and the use of questionnaire were employed and this may lead to response bias. Lastly, this study used multi-stage sampling which comprised; convenient and randomization sampling techniques which may not proffer more rigorous scientific explanation; this may have some implications for generalization as well as such further studies may adopt more rigorous sampling technique.

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