Cognitive Behavior Pattern of Substance Use Among Individuals

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Abstract: Substance use is one of the intense topics in current times, especially due to the health and social effects impacted by its abuse. According to WHO, over 5% of the disease worldwide can be attributed to alcohol. Alcohol use has also significantly increased in the past decade among youth as they are more vulnerable to peer and societal pressure. Anti-substance use advertisements (e.g., media ads on television, print media, etc.) rely heavily on emotional reasoning to persuade people not to drink liquor. Still, its effectiveness is yet to be ascertained. Hence, this research aims to understand the cognitive behavior pattern of substance use among individuals. To achieve this aim, our objectives assessed were determining the factors that lead to avoidance of drinking liquor. These factors trigger liquor use among individuals and the role of the financial situation & living environment in the choice of liquor consumption. Alcohol was chosen as the substance for this study due to its popularity. Our investigation revealed that individuals stop liquor consumption mainly due to health problems, family issues, and negative effects. At the same time, stress and societal influence are the main reasons they consume liquor. Also, individuals staying with parents showed little or no tendency to drink liquor, while those staying with friends were prone to consume liquor occasionally. Therefore, the focus is shifting towards the systematic intervention of substance use during school life to reduce the burden of its consumption during adulthood and improvisation of anti-substance use advertisements that create fear arousals and are emotionally evocative.

Keywords: Cognitive Behavior Pattern, Alcohol, Liquor Consumption, Avoidance of Drinking, Parents, Stress, and Societal Influence


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1. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol consumption is a significant public health challenge globally. Though the consumption level varies around the globe, the burden of death and disease remains a serious issue in many regions, with America and Europe the most attributable segments at 5.6% and 6.5%, respectively. Past study shows that alcohol drinking is the world's 3rd largest risk factor for disability and disease, amounting to 4% of deaths globally. Analysis of international trends and determinants of alcohol use revealed that consumption of alcohol is often used and abused by youngsters and adolescents. Binge drinking is becoming popular among young adulthood, introducing risk for unfavorable health conditions and social effects. In recent years, assessment has started to look deeper into alcohol-related health issues like cancer, mortality, and chronic ailments.

1.1 Review of Literature

Substance use exists in all ages and is prevalent in many different forms. With these changes in substance usage, social factors, and technology, drivers of substance addiction may have changes which become important to analyze.

1.2 Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapeutic technique to identify and manage negative thoughts associated with negative behavior. This therapy deals with troubling thoughts arising in individuals, which lead to emotional distress and hypertension. Some of the common problems against which CBT can be used are:

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress problems
- Phobia
- Anger

CBT is effective when countering unrealistic thoughts and helps to address present thoughts and beliefs. It is interesting to note that CBT has become very popular in the current age as people are willing to let go of their mental blocks and accept healthy thoughts.

The process of practicing Cognitive Behavior Therapy is straightforward:

a) Identification of negative thoughts
b) Acquire skills and practice which help counter the negative thoughts
c) Goal setting is the next step, as it helps recover from mental illness through short-term and long-term goals
d) problem-solving helps an individual tackle tough times and overcome ill habits by making appropriate decisions
e) Monitor the change and stay in the real world without getting distracted or relapse
f) Progress slowly and make the goal achievable, which will also result in avoiding relapse

A study conducted earlier by the author revealed an exhaustive list of factors leading to addiction among individuals.
1.3 Following are the types of liquor-consuming situations observed often

**Tasting:** In certain situations, (for example, family dinner, Christmas/New Year celebration, birthday party, etc.) Individuals consume liquor (wine, special beers, spirits) sensibly for taste purposes. This type of consumption brings pleasure, where taste is a key dimension. In the countries where related studies were conducted, the first experience with liquor mostly took place within such social settings, in the family circle, "just to see," "to taste," or "to do like adults."

**Party:** Individuals consume large quantities of liquor in groups. There is little social control, and most individuals want to modify their perceptions and emotion, to reach another level of consciousness. In such circumstances, individuals drink in excess under the influence of friends. This is a setting where most get drunk out of family context.

1.4 Asserting oneself

In this situation, individuals consume liquor to promote their image to attract others. They try to control their consumption levels to prove they are self-confident and to avoid irresponsible behavior. Such type of consumption can pose a threat on a long-term basis.

1.5 Relaxation

Individuals consume liquor to relieve stress or tension and not get drunk.

1.6 Parental influence

The studies carried out between the 1970s and 1980s highlighted that parents were the main influencers until children became adolescents. At this stage, peers then exert maximum influence. 18 Parents are the primary socialization agents who pass on rational and socially desirable behavior to their children and adolescents. 19,20 Parents mainly have two ways of influencing behavior: directly, by specific and explicit guidelines, or indirectly, by observation of the behavior of their parents, taking them as examples. 21 The direct influence assumes that parents have the intention, as opposed to the indirect influence, mainly undertaken by observing or mimicking parents’ behavior. 21,22 Though the influence of parents is evident in childhood and adolescent age, it has been observed that parental commitment towards a child’s socialization process and the kind of influence they exert depends on the age of the child 22,23, on the gender 22,24, on the social class 25, and parental orientation (restrictive or permissive) 26,27 among many other aspects. Considering that youngsters model the behavior of their parents 21, parental alcohol consumption is directly proportional to the alcohol consumption intention of youngsters. Moreover, the presence of liquor products at home can result in a child’s awareness and brand recall 28, and each usage occasion will turn into a retrieval cue of previous liquor-related cognitions. 29 It has also been stated that parents directly influence children through conversations and discussions. 21,30 Peers exert a more irrational influence on individuals, derived from the need for acceptance by the peer group. 19,31 In its true sense, it can be considered that the frequency of alcohol consumption by peers is directly proportional to the frequency of consumption intention of the individual. Hence, if individuals spend a considerable amount of their free time with their peers and consume liquor, then the presence of brand awareness and brand recall will favor consumption. Having keenly analyzed the causes above, this study decided to conduct an independent investigation into the influence of demographics and location on substance use.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Method

Using secondary data, a descriptive research design technique was used to collect information demonstrating relationships. In addition, an exploratory research design technique was implemented to examine a data set and determine potential relationships between variables. The advantage of exploratory research is that it is easier to make discoveries due to the less stringent methodological restrictions. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques was used to select the participants in the study.
2.2 Intervention

Of the 110 participants approached, 100 individuals (91%) consented to participate in the study. Unfortunately, 42 individuals (38%) didn't meet the inclusion criteria, i.e., individuals from rural and semi-rural backgrounds who did not have exposure to liquor or were not at least informed about the subject. The remaining 58 individuals (52%) were randomized, all allocated with the questionnaire. Unfortunately, 4 individual surveys were lost in the follow-up, and 2 were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete data. Finally, a total of 52 individual surveys were analyzed for this study.

2.3 Sample

The survey was carried out as a questionnaire and conducted at Technologies Company. Clarifying the questionnaire structure was a dominant factor in ensuring that the respondent decodes the questions as the researcher intended. The questionnaire was e-mailed to the researcher’s known contacts, resulting in a sample size of 52 individuals. Participation was voluntary, and the questions were designed in English.

2.4 Measurement

Respondents completed a self-administered questionnaire which ensured anonymity. Cognitive behavior patterns were measured with “What made individuals drink liquor,” “What made individuals avoid drinking liquor,” and “Choice of liquor consumption.” Measurement was done based on the strength of response for each variable in the study.

2.5 Procedure & Participants

The survey data was collected from Technologies Company during February 2023. 52 individuals completed the survey via Google Forms, which were sent to their email ids. Responses were obtained in a spreadsheet by the researcher.

2.6 Ethical Statement

Participation in the survey was voluntary, and no names or references to an individual could be traced from the responses, making the survey anonymous. However, the survey was sent to participants via email, clearly articulating the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained from the respondents.

3. Results

The research objectives aimed to understand the cognitive behavior pattern of substance use among individuals (1) what factors lead to avoidance of drinking liquor; (2) what factors trigger individuals to start drinking liquor; and (3) the role of the financial situation & living environment on the choice of liquor consumption.
3.1 Age of respondents

![Pie chart representing the age group of respondents](image)

The survey results revealed that 65.4% of the respondents were in the age group of 18 – 24 years, which relates to being fresher in the organization, while 28.8% of respondents were in the age group 25 - 29 years who had few years of experience and 5.8% respondents were either below 18 years or above 30 years age group.

3.2 Why do individuals avoid drinking liquor?

A multi-response table is drawn between the age group and a series of independent variables that were chosen for this study like health issues, work-related issues, family issues, sports, studies, sports, religion, social issues, to be a role model, bad experience, seen negative effects, financial issues, taste dislike, parent pressure, peer pressure, charity and not interested. Analysis of the survey data exposed that respondents in the age group 18 – 24 years predominantly avoided liquor consumption due to the negative effects of drinking (67.8%), potential health issues (65.2%), family issues (53.1%), and social issues (43.7%), while experienced individuals avoided drinking liquor mainly due to potential health issues (87.5%), family issues (68.7%), negative effects of drinking (62.5%), bad experience (56.2%) and parent pressure (50%).

3.3 What made individuals drink

A multi-response table is drawn between the gender of the respondents, their physical location, and the reason why people drink:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you come from?</th>
<th>What makes people drink?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Gender Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Rural Gender Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Gender Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

*Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Individuals from the rural sector exhibited stress (100%) as the dominating factor that led people to drink liquor, while happiness, sadness, and fear (66.6%) having equal weightage were the other common factors. Semi-rural sector individuals presented stress, happiness, and pressure (71.4%) as the main reasons for drinking liquor, while sadness and status symbol (57.1%) were the following weighted reasons. On the other hand, individuals from the urban sector had stress (73.8%) depicted as the major reason for drinking liquor, and status symbol (71.4%) was the next significant reason.

3.4 Choice of liquor consumption

A clustered bar graph was prepared between family income, whom individuals lived with, and their choice of liquor consumption.
Fig 3 Clustered bar graph associating frequency of drink with income and location

4. DISCUSSION

Liquor consumption is a great risk factor for many health issues and a major reason for diseases worldwide. It has been identified that alcohol consumption is an important risk factor for disability, illness, and mortality. Drinkers encounter various social issues due to their drinking, including issues at work, family, and financial problems. This confirms our first objective, highlighting the major reasons for consuming: health issues, family issues, and negative effects of drinking. The two main motives for the consumption of alcohol highlighted in the etiological and reasons for drinking literature are: (a) individuals consume alcohol to cope with stress, and (b) individuals consume alcohol due to social influences. Etiological literature on alcohol drinking presents that psychological factors linked to stress reduction and social factors linked to companionship or togetherness are associated with alcohol consumption. These confirm our second objective that individuals consume liquor due to stress being a dominant factor and happiness, sadness, fear, and status symbol being the social influences. Parents posing restrictions on teenage use of alcohol is profusely associated with less drinking and reduced alcohol-related behaviors.

Based on the studies conducted, it has been found that teenagers chose to avoid drinking alcohol when their parents didn’t permit drinking at home or at parties/social events. Our third objective is that choice of liquor is minimal or negative when individuals stay with their parents, which is consistent with the above study. Adolescents who are not monitored properly start alcohol consumption early and tend to drink more, thus are at higher risk of developing heavy drinking patterns.

Frequent drinking behavior in adolescence has more alcohol-related harms in young adulthood, showcasing that an early start increases the risk of problematic use of alcohol later. Few studies in the past suggested that social norm campaigns aimed at college students were ineffective at preventing alcohol misuse and gave mixed evidence of the effectiveness of school-based alcohol prevention campaigns. Our study proposes the need for substance-use intervention in school life compared to later and also to understand the effectiveness of anti-substance use advertisements to gather more insights on how addiction overpowers an individual's intent to abstain from use.

4.1 Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of the study was that it took time to get the necessary information from those who drink liquor since drinking is a sensitive issue in India. In this case, the researcher administered questionnaires under the supervision of a guide. It was safe to get information from the questionnaire, which was perceived as fair by the respondents. Another study drawback was the fear of the respondents who filled out the questionnaires. There was a seeming fear of victimization even...
though individuals were assured they would not be victimized by the details they gave.

5. CONCLUSION

Our investigation revealed that individuals stop liquor consumption mainly due to health, family, and the negative effects of drinking. At the same time, stress, happiness, pressure, and status symbol are the main reasons they drink liquor. Also, individuals staying with their parents showed little or no drinking tendency. Therefore, substance use should be intervened during childhood involving parents such that the burden of its usage and continuation is managed well during adulthood and later. This study can be considered as a baseline to assess the effectiveness of anti-substance use advertisements since individuals consume substances even after widespread awareness of health issues and can be used to kick start further research in this regard.

6. AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

R.C. Sudish developed the theoretical formalism, performed the analytic calculations, and performed the numerical simulations. Both R.C. Sudish and Divya Ramachandran contributed to the final version of the manuscript. Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Bansal supervised the project.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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