

**Motivation for Alcohol Use and Risky Behaviors among Undergraduate Students in Southern Nigerian Universities**

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**Abstract.** This study explored the motivational basis for alcohol use among Nigerian youth, focusing on five universities from southern Nigeria and employing 770 undergraduate students as a sample. The design was an ex post facto quantitative field survey utilizing a multistage cluster sampling strategy. The participants consisted of youth aged 18-30 years, who were from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. A self-administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection (Cronbach alpha .77 & .79). The results showed among other things that conformity and coping with stress (30%), impulsivity and sensation-seeking (15%), parental/guardian influence (30%), and peer pressure (25%) were reported by the participants to be at the basis of their motivation to become alcohol users. The findings have implications for policy in terms of existing knowledge and nuanced policy with the potential to comprehensively both clinically and socially address the issue of alcohol use and abuse among students in Nigerian universities generally and in southern Nigerian universities in particular.

**Keywords:** alcohol use, alcohol and risky behaviors, motivation for university students' alcohol use, Nigeria, social bond theory, substance use

### **Introduction**

Alcohol use among youth in Nigeria is a big issue with far-reaching implications of health and social dimensions. With a considerably large youth population in global terms and the largest youth population in Africa, Nigeria attracts the largest network of breweries in Africa mostly of European origin that are concerned with the brewing of beer and other alcoholic beverages, a condition that is also reflective of a persisting pattern of economic relationality between European corporations and the Nigerian and by extension African environment that was forged in the days of colonial invasion, occupation, and physical domination of the space that would be known today as Nigeria (see Arukwe, 2010; 2021). Nigeria, therefore, is properly set up in present times for alcohol use (and abuse) problems among the youth population.

Alcohol use among university students on a continental basis has been identified as a major public health problem with a high magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity (Hingson et al., 2002). Thus, there has been consistent evidence from studies conducted in Europe for instance that suggests that young adults in universities suffer from clinically significant alcohol-related problems compared to their non-university attending peers (Slutske, 2005). Alcohol use disorders are typically more prevalent among male and young adults (Dawson et al., 2004), people who started drinking from a younger age especially children of parents with drinking problems, and students with low scores on religiosity (Weitzman & Wechsler, 2000).

As levels of alcohol intake increase, so also is the prevalence of a variety of risky behaviors that are likely to cause physiological and psychological effects, which may among

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other things affect academic performance in the students. Alcohol is used extensively in the student population and its frequent use has been associated with depression, stress, and anxiety (Cooper et al., 2008).

High levels of alcohol intake have been studied under several conditions in terms of binge drinking. Binge drinking has been highly correlated with academic failure, drop-out, and an increased risk for various negative health conditions. In this regard, university students with disabilities have also been studied with the result that such undergraduate students with disabilities end up placing themselves at extreme risk for various negative outcomes associated with binge drinking (West et al., 2017).

In the same vein, negative affect studies were done amongst college students which demonstrated a complex relationship between negative affect and alcohol involvement. Consequently, negative affect has been shown to be associated with alcohol problems in college drinkers (Camatta & Nagoshi, 1995; Collins et al., 2001; Hutchinson et al., 1998; Kassel et al., 2007), but has demonstrated a less consistent relationship with alcohol use (Collins et al., 2001; Hufford et al., 2002; Kassel et al., 2007). Research also suggests that a substantial portion of college undergraduates report drinking as a result of negative emotions (Beck et al., 1995; Perkins, 1999; Weinberger & Bartholomew, 1996).

Tension-reduction alcohol expectancies refer to beliefs about alcohol's ability to alleviate negative mood states. The tension-reduction alcohol expectancy hypothesis is that individuals who have these expectancies will be motivated to drink at times when they experience such emotions (Cooper et al., 2008; Johnson & Gurin, 1994). Tension reduction alcohol expectancies have been demonstrated to be associated with problem drinking in college students (Brown, 1985; Kassel et al., 2007).

Although numerous factors are related to drinking which includes: parental lifestyle, peer influence, parental attachment, the need to avert emotional stress and depression, and commitment to conventional activities among others, according to motivational models of alcohol use, motivations to drink alcohol constitute the final common pathway to its use, whereby an individual makes the decision to drink based on anticipated positive and/or negative reinforcement (Cooper, 1994; Cooper et al., 1995; Cox & Klinger 1988). The common stereotype is that undergraduate students drink alcohol as part of having a good time at the university. It is seen as part of an image of being young and carefree. An American study challenged this stereotype, however, associating excessive alcohol use with greater stress levels and low self-esteem in students (Dedhart et al., 2009).

Consumption of alcohol is a goal pursued by many, according to evidence presented by Cox and Klinger (1988) since goal-striving is a major aspect of peoples' lives, and pursuing goals helps human beings define the meaning of life. To look at what underlies this striving Shamloo, and Cox (2009) identified a motivational structure that shows a combination of various factors that contribute to goal striving. This motivational structure can be identified when the following factors combine. For example, when a person knows what to do, then makes a commitment to do something, and then engages in an emotional expectation, this combination influences a person's goal striving. However, motivational structures vary from person to person, but it is more or less the stable way in which each individual pursues her or his goals. These structures are not rigid due to a person's current concern and their goal in resolving them in addition to success with or failure at goal pursuits as these can change how they will strive for their goals.

Cox and Klinger (1988) and Ham and Hope (2003), in their report, reveal that greater levels of sensation seeking are correlated to high levels of problem drinking, and conversely, low levels are normally associated with abstinence or another non-problem drinking. Historical factors that may help a person to drink and influence their motivation to drink again, include past experiences with alcohol, biochemical reaction to alcohol, characteristics of that

individual's personality, and their current societal living environment. Furthermore, as Cox and Klinger contend that, biochemical mechanisms appear to assist the reinforcing effects of the alcohol consumed. These mechanisms appear to be related genetically and may predispose certain individual's which then result in their further alcohol problems. The biochemical mechanisms responsible and that may reinforce the effects of alcohol are still not fully understood, however, Cox and Klinger state that what is evident is that there are huge differences between individual bodies and the different ways human beings break down and metabolize alcoholic beverages into their byproducts and these byproducts are controlled by each individual's metabolic enzymes. Consequently, individuals with insufficient enzymes needed for the quick metabolic change of acetaldehyde (which is the first byproduct of alcohol) feel greater negative physical effects than a person with sufficient levels of these enzymes. With the result, as posited by Cox and Klinger, that these people are then predisposed not to drink huge amounts of alcohol and not then to develop alcohol problems.

Drinking behavior may be driven in part by motives to induce, increase, or maintain positive affective states (Cooper, 1994; Stewart, Zeitlin, & Samoluk, 1996). These enhancement motives have been linked to drinking behaviors in university and college students (Carey & Correia, 1997; Stewart et al., 1996).

Consequently, alcohol outcome expectancies — beliefs about the effects or consequences of alcohol use — are strongly associated with alcohol use and related problems among college students (Darkes, Greenbaum, & Goldman, 1998; Kidorf et al., 1995; Sher et al., 1996; Werner, Walker, & Greene, 1995).

Social lubrication expectancies are beliefs that alcohol use will enhance social situations and make them more enjoyable. As social contexts have been linked to heavy drinking in college students (Carey, 1993, 1995) it is not surprising that expectancies regarding how alcohol will positively affect or enhance social interactions also are important correlates of university alcohol use (e.g., MacLatchy-Gaudet & Stewart, 2001; Mooney et al., 1987; Wall, Hinson, & McKee, 1998).

Impulsivity, characterized by a general tendency to act without planning or thinking ahead and to seek out immediate gratification (Zuckerman et al., 1993), has often been conceptually linked to the construct of sensation seeking - which is a dispositional need for high levels of stimulation (Depue & Collins, 1999; Zuckerman, 1992, 1994). Impulsivity and sensation-seeking are associated with increased alcohol use in university students (Beck et al., 1995; Jackson & Matthews, 1988; Johnson & Cropsey, 2000; Ratliff & Burkhart, 1984; Schall, Weede, & Maltzman, 1991). Among people with this predisposition, there may be increased motivation to obtain stimulation from alcohol use, greater responsivity to the effects of alcohol, and a greater likelihood of acting on this motivation without consideration of potential consequences (Sher, 1991).

Students who engage in problem and or risk-associated behaviors, in general, are more likely to also engage in binge drinking which may be associated with the possibility of common sensation-seeking tendencies across several behaviors. Additionally, the personality style of sensation seeking, and greater problematic drinking has been consistently found, particularly for males. College students that engage in high-risk driving behaviors who also drink are higher sensation seekers than those that do not engage in these high-risk behaviors. Also, venturesomeness and impulsiveness are positively correlated along with alcohol consumption and frequency but not with alcohol-related problems (Ham & Hope, 2003).

Shamloo and Cox (2009) found a positive correlation between helplessness and drinking, what might explain this correlation is that negative feelings such as helplessness led some people to drink alcohol in an attempt to overcome their negative feelings. According to Shamloo and Cox, helplessness, a poor sense of control and maladaptive motivation might be in a vicious circle, and an individual's helplessness and perceived lack of control reduce their

chance of successful goal attainment, and this lack of success, in turn, increases their negative feelings. However, attempting to cope by ingesting alcohol may further exacerbate this situation.

The social bond theory has been adopted as a theoretical framework for this study to give it a theoretical anchorage. The social bond theory is a sociological theory that is used to help explain behavior that is termed deviant, particularly binge or problem drinking by university and college students. Four elements of this theory have been identified as significant elements, namely: significant others attachment, conventional activities commitment, involvement in conventional activities, and the belief in conventional wisdom which means the person holds significant respect for authority and acceptance of societal rules. Empirical data support the assertion that individuals who lack conformity and conscientiousness have a weak social bond which can then lead to problem drinking behaviors. Therefore, an individual may display problem behavior when the connection between society and themselves known as the "social bond" is lacking or has weak linkages. These weak-linked individuals also possess nonconforming and low conscientious personality type behaviors which form a weak social bond (Ham & Hope, 2003).

In a pioneering study in Nigeria, a 77% lifetime prevalence of alcohol use was found among Nigerian Undergraduates compared with between 51.5% and 56.0% found among youths in Nigerian cities. Perceived homelessness, perceived availability, low religiosity, and poor parental/guardian supervision were significantly associated with drugs and alcohol use among Nigerian university students in that study (Adelekan et al., 1993).

In Nigeria, also, as in many other countries, many of the students in higher educational institutions are youth and some of them engage in various risky behaviors such as smoking, reckless driving, and alcohol abuse. Alcohol use among university students is characterized by several behaviors that in the long run may affect or inhibit their well-being and academic performance. Despite such consequences, a large number of university students are classified under the high-risk age-bracket drinkers, either classified as heavy or moderate drinkers; they have also been classified in terms of gender and course of study among others (Adelekan et al., 1993; Ofokansi et al., forthcoming; O'Hare, 1990; Wechsler et al., 1995).

Nevertheless, the Nigerian youth, especially those in tertiary educational institutions have remained grossly understudied. Therefore, meaningful baseline data and reliable statistics on the topic do not exist, making attempts to grapple with the issue less likely to produce reliable results for knowledge and policy purposes. Indeed, even where reliable data may appear to exist regarding youth alcohol use the research has had other foci other than the motivational bases for youth alcohol usage. Thus, such research in Nigeria has focused more on lifetime and current prevalence rates of alcohol use rather than exploring the motivational basis for alcohol use. In this regard, the Nigerian youth, especially those in tertiary educational institutions continue to be grossly understudied. The purpose of this research was therefore to begin to fill this gap by understanding these motivational factors to be in a position to determine ways to address them both clinically and socially using youth/students in universities in southern Nigeria as the target population.

Therefore, this study hopes to contribute to bridging the gap by focusing on exploring the motivational factors, which may be demographical or not, that lead to the Nigerian youth in tertiary educational institutions becoming users or consumers of alcohol.

In the light of all the foregoing, the problem of this study was to explore the motivational basis for alcohol use among Nigerian youth, focusing on five universities from southern Nigeria. Using the undergraduate students at Nigerian universities for this study, therefore, we examined the various motivating factors like the extent to which peer-group influence motivate undergraduate student drinking; what proportions of undergraduate students have factors such as conformity, impulsivity, and parental influence motivating their drinking; and the issue of

perceived consequences produced by alcohol use among undergraduate students, among others.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants

The participants in the study were undergraduate students in universities in southern Nigeria consisting of youth aged 18-30 years, who were from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Based on the heterogeneity of students found in this population, the research sample of participants was randomly selected from the undergraduate student population. A major inclusion criterion is that participants must have had at least one drink within the last three months. The majority of the participants were of the age range of 18-24, mostly males, and mostly in the later years of their academic programs.

### Instrument

Since the study is a quantitative survey and makes use of a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was self-administered. Face, construct, and content validity for the questionnaire was achieved through engaging five senior academics from both the social sciences faculty and the pharmaceutical sciences faculty of the University of Nigeria, who are experienced in research methodology, to validate the instrument. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of .77 and .79 were obtained for the instrument. The instrument had a test-retest reliability coefficient of .73. The data collected from the questionnaire instrument were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20).

### Procedure

The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to enable the researchers to reach a good number of respondents, giving the limited time frame for the study. The multistage cluster sampling technique was used to select the sample. This enabled a probability based as well as statistically equitable representation of universities, faculties, and categories of students. The study was carried out in five universities in five southern states of Nigeria. The states are Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Akwa Ibom, and the Rivers States. In analyzing the data collected, the SPSS software (version 20) was deployed. To that extent, there was the use of percentages, graphical presentations, and contingency tables.

### Ethical Considerations

Because of the involvement of human participants in this study, ethical clearance to embark on the study was sought and obtained from the University of Nigeria Human Experimentation Ethics Committee (HEEC), whose responsibility is to moderate and approve all research in the University involving human participants.

During the fieldwork, each participant was informed of their right to refuse enrolment into the study or to drop out from the study at any period that they no longer felt like continuing with the study. Each participant was given the assurance that there would be no harm that to them from participating in the study and that the data generated from the study will be kept strictly confidential and that the study would be purely for academic purposes. If after explaining the participant agrees with the explanations provided, the researchers proceeded to ask such participant to sign the informed consent form. Generally, the enrolment procedure into the study and every other aspect of the study were operated per the Helsinki Declaration on studies involving human participants (see Arukwe & Okwara, 2020; Declaration of Helsinki, 2001).

**Results**

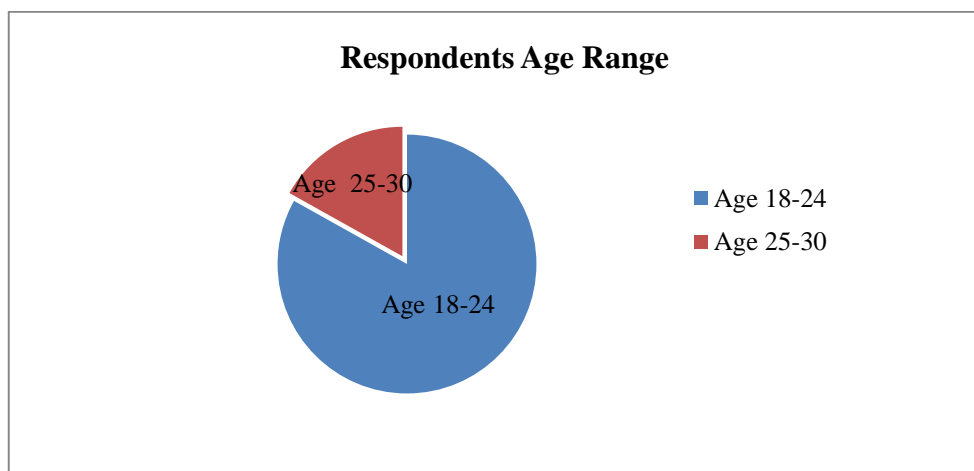
**Data Analysis and Results**

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of participants by age**

Age range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>18-24</b>	640	83.1
<b>25-30</b>	130	16.9
<b>Total</b>	770	100

Table 1 shows that 83.1% of the respondents were of the age range of 18-24 while 16.9% of the respondents were of the age range of 25-30. It can be observed from the above that majority of the respondents were of the age range of 18-24.

These findings are graphically captured in the pie chart below.



**Figure 1. Distribution of participants by age**

**Table 2. Percentage distribution of participants by year of study**

Year of Study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>100 level students</b>	140	18.2
<b>200 level students</b>	120	15.6
<b>300 level students</b>	180	23.4
<b>400 level students</b>	300	38.9
<b>500 level students</b>	30	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 shows that 18.2% of the participants were 100 level students, 15.6% of them were 200 level students, 23.4% of them were 300 level students, and 38.9% of them were 400 level students while 3.9% of them were 500 level students. From the table, the dominant percentage of participants in the study (38.9%) were 400 level students. The findings show that majority of the respondents were 400 level students. This category of participants has spent 4 sessions in the university and may have more knowledge of alcohol use within the university community than the others.

The findings in Table 2 are captured graphically in the pie chart below.

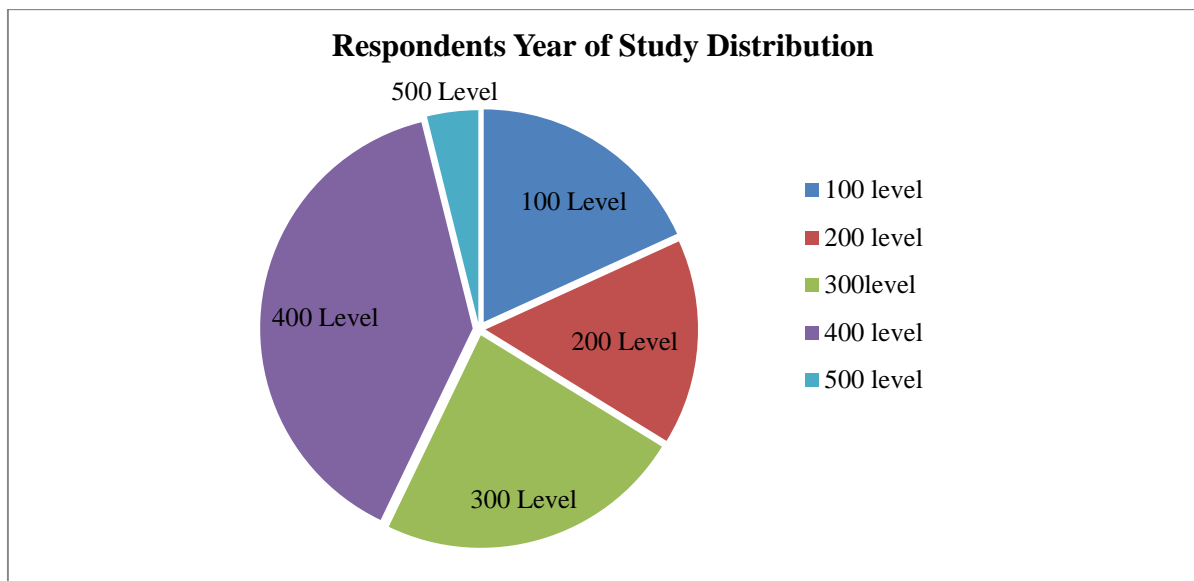


Figure 2. Distribution of participants by their year of study

Table 3. Distribution of participants by the rate at which they use alcohol

Rate of alcohol use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
At least once per day	60	7.8
At least once per week	110	14.3
At least once per month	210	27.3
Less than once per month	200	26
Can't recall	190	24.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 shows the distribution of participants by the rate at which they use alcohol. The table indicates that 7.8% of the respondents stated that they use alcoholic beverages at least once per day, 14.3% of them indicated that they use alcoholic beverages at least once per week, 27.3% of them reported that they use alcoholic beverages at least once per month, 26% of them indicated that they use alcoholic beverage less than once per month while 24.6% of them reported that they do not recall the rate at which they use alcoholic beverages. The results imply that the undergraduates who have at least one drink per month are in the majority among the Nigerian undergraduate alcohol users studied.

Table 4. Distribution of participants by the degree of agreement/disagreement on the consequences produced by alcohol use

S/ N0	Participants' views	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Victimization of sexual abuse	140(18.2%)	100(13%)	160(20.8%)	140 (18.2%)	230 (29.8%)
2	Predisposition to engage in sexually abusing acts	70 (9.1%)	140(18.2%)	120(15.6%)	160 (20.8%)	230 (29.8%)
3	Predisposition to stealing	170 (22%)	110(14.3%)	200(25.9%)	140 (18.2%)	150 (19.4%)
4	'Dutch Courage'	190(24.7%)	150(19.4%)	110(14.3%)	230 (29.8%)	90(11.7%)
5	Enhanced academic performance	310(40.3%)	140(18.2%)	100 (13%)	60 (7.8%)	160 (20.8%)
6	Reckless driving	130(16.8%)	80 (10.4%)	80 (10.4%)	100 (13%)	380 (49.4%)
7	Death/road accidents	11(14.3%)	13(16.8%)	4 (5.2%)	11(14.3%)	38 (49.4%)
8	Alcohol-related sickness	6 (7.8%)	12(15.6%)	14(18.2%)	18 (23.3%)	27 (35.1%)

The distributions in Table 4 above are the participants' views of the consequences of alcohol use among Nigerian university undergraduates. On the perception that alcohol use exposes one to being a victim of sexual abuse, 18.2% of the participants agree that alcohol use exposes one to being a victim, 13% further strongly agreed, 20.8% neither agreed nor disagreed; 18.2% disagreed whereas 29.8% strongly disagreed. The finding shows that 29.8% of the participants which is the greater percentage strongly disagreed that alcohol use predisposes one to be the victim of sexual abuse. However, while a cumulative total of 31% of the respondents were of the view that alcohol use predisposes one to be a victim of sexual abuse, a cumulative total of 48% believed that alcohol use does not predispose one to become a victim of sexual abuse.

On the perception that alcohol use, predisposes one to engage in sexual abuse acts, 9.1% of the participants agreed, 18.2% strongly agreed, 15.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, 20.8% disagreed and 29.8% strongly disagreed. The findings, therefore, show that 49.8%, being the greater cumulative percentage of the participants who disagreed (as against a cumulative of 27.3% in agreement) do not think that alcohol use predisposes one to engage in sexually abusive acts.

On the perception that alcohol use exposes a person to crimes like stealing 22% of the respondents agreed that alcohol use exposes one to stealing, 14.3% further strongly agreed, 25.9% neither agreed nor disagreed; 18.2% disagreed whereas 19.4% strongly disagreed. The findings show that a significant number of the participants sat on the fence on this issue (25.9%). However, on a cumulative basis, those who think that alcohol use exposes a person to crimes like stealing and those that think that it does not are almost equally split on a cumulative basis (36.3% and 37.6% respectively).

On the perception that alcohol use gives a person false/Dutch courage or increases one's confidence 24.7% of the participants agreed, 19.4% further strongly agreed, 14.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, 29.8% disagreed and 11.7% strongly disagreed. This shows that for the question of alcohol use as a source of Dutch courage for Nigerian undergraduate students a cumulative 41.5% of the participants think that alcohol use does not increase one's confidence or engender Dutch courage as against 44.1% that thinks that alcohol use increases one's confidence or provokes an act of Dutch courage.

On the perception that alcohol use enhances a person's academic performance 40.3% of the respondents agreed that alcohol use enhances one's academic performance, 18.2% further strongly agreed, 13% neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.8% disagreed and 20.8% strongly disagreed. The findings show on a cumulative basis that a total of 58.5% of the respondents think that alcohol use enhances the academic performance of students as against a cumulative 28.6% of participants that do not believe that alcohol use enhances students' academic performance.

On the perception that alcohol use leads to reckless driving 19.2% of the respondents agreed that alcohol use leads to reckless driving, a further 10% strongly agreed, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, 11% disagreed and 50% strongly disagreed. The finding shows that 50% of the participants not only strongly disagreed that alcohol use leads to reckless driving but on a cumulative basis, 61% of the participants do not believe that alcohol use leads to reckless driving. This is against a mere 29.2% of participants who think that alcohol use leads to reckless driving.

On the perception that alcohol use increases the rate of road accidents and death 16.8% of the respondents agreed, a further 10.4% strongly agreed, 10.4% neither agreed nor disagreed, 13% disagreed and 49.4% strongly disagreed. The findings show on a cumulative basis that 62.4% of the participants do not believe that alcohol use increases the rate of road accidents and death. On the other hand, a cumulative 27.2% of the participants thought that alcohol use increases the rate of road accidents and death.



On the perception that alcohol use exposes a person to some sicknesses 7.8% of the participants agreed that alcohol use exposes one to some sicknesses, 15.6% further strongly agreed, 18.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.3% disagreed whereas 35.1% strongly disagreed. The findings, therefore, show on a cumulative basis that 58.4% of the participants believe that alcohol use does not expose one to some sicknesses. On the other hand, a cumulative 23.4% of the participants think that alcohol use exposes a person to some sicknesses.

**Table 5. Self-report data on factors motivating alcohol use by Nigerian students**

Sex	Factors Motivating Alcohol Use				
	Impulsivity & sensation seeking	Peer pressure	Parental/Guardian Influence	Conformity & Coping with Stress	Total
Male	80(10%)	140(18%)	130(17%)	140(18%)	490(63%)
Female	40(5%)	50(7%)	100(13%)	90(12%)	280(37%)
Total	120(15%)	190(25%)	230(30%)	230(30%)	770(100%)

Table 5 is a contingency table from the fieldwork data showing factors that are antecedent to alcohol use among southern Nigerian university students. The table shows that for the factor, ‘Impulsivity and sensation-seeking’, the males make up 10% of those who are motivated by it to use alcohol whereas the females who are motivated by the same factor to use alcohol make up 5% of the population. This produces a cumulative total of 15% of participants of both gender categories who chose ‘Impulsivity and sensation-seeking’ as an antecedent to their motivation to use alcohol.

Similarly, 18% of the respondents who are motivated by Peer pressure to use alcohol are male while 7% of them are women. This, on a cumulative basis, led to a total of 25% of the participants of both genders reporting that they are motivated by peer pressure to engage in alcohol use.

Also, 17% of the respondents who use alcohol due to Parental/guardian influence are males while 13% of them are females. This, when added up, produces a cumulative of 30% of the participants of both genders who reported that their alcohol use was encouraged by the influence of their alcohol-using parents or guardians.

Again, males make up 18% of the respondents who use alcohol as a result of Conformity & coping with stress while 12% of them are females. On a cumulative basis, this adds up to another 30% of participants of both genders whose alcohol use habits have been engendered by the need to conform and cope with academic stress in the university.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study to some degree align with the findings from previous studies that report alcohol use as being associated with undergraduate risky behavior. In this regard, the findings of the present study, therefore, agree with the findings of Cooper et al. (2008) and Ham and Hope (2003). A considerable percentage of the participants in this study thought that such factors as stress and depression could be associated with alcohol use hence their responses were coded under the variable category, ‘Conformity & coping with stress’.

The motivational model for alcohol consumption had argued that when an individual is unable to reach emotional satisfaction through other goal pursuits, they are more likely to regulate their affect with the consumption of alcohol (Ham & Hope, 2003). However, from the findings of the present study, students tend to be motivated to use alcohol because of adaptation to conformity and coping with stress (30%), sheer impulsivity and sensation-seeking (15%), parental/guardian influence (30%), and peer pressure (25%).

Even though the social bond theory, which focused on how peer influence could expose one to engage in alcohol consumption (Ham & Hope, 2003), would appear to be supported by some of the responses from the study participants who are motivated to use alcohol by peer pressure or influence, the theory does not, however, seem to account for the other highly subscribed antecedents to the motivation for alcohol use among undergraduate students in southern Nigerian universities.

In line with what has been reported in the literature concerning drinking as a result of negative emotions (see for example Beck et al., 1995; Perkins, 1999; Weinberger & Bartholomew, 1996), tension-reduction alcohol expectancies (see Brown, 1985; Cooper et al., 2008; Johnson & Gurin, 1994 Kassel et al., 2007), anticipated positive and/or negative reinforcement (see Cooper, 1994; Cooper et al., 1995; Cox & Klinger 1988), the issue of greater stress levels and low self-esteem among students (see Dedhart et al., 2009), or sensation-seeking (see Cox & Klinger, 1988; Ham & Hope 2003); the findings of the present study indicate that the highest factors motivating undergraduate student drinking for males are Peer pressure as well as Conformity and coping with stress. These are followed by Parental or guardian influence and Impulsivity and sensation seeking in that order. On the other hand, the highest factor motivating undergraduate student drinking for females is Parental/guardian influence. This is followed by Conformity and coping with stress, and then followed by Peer pressure and finally Impulsivity and sensation seeking.

On Impulsivity and sensation-seeking, characterized by a general tendency to act without planning or thinking ahead and to seek out immediate gratification (Depue & Collins, 1999; Zuckerman, 1992, 1994; Zuckerman et al., 1993), the present study found it to be the third strongest motivating factor among the factors considered in the survey (15%) for undergraduate students' alcohol drinking among southern Nigerian university students.

Conformity and coping with stress were found by the present study to be amongst the top motivating factors for undergraduate students' alcohol drinking in southern Nigeria (30%). When disaggregated by gender, the data shows that conformity and coping with stress were the top motivating factors for male undergraduate students (18%), whereas they were next to the top motivating factors for female undergraduate students (12%).

On peer pressure, the study found it to be the second most important factor responsible for motivating undergraduate students' drinking in southern Nigerian universities (25%). When broken down by gender, the data shows that peer pressure is very important for male undergraduate drinking among southern Nigerian university students (18%), as important as the factor of conformity and coping with stress. For female undergraduate students, on the other hand, peer pressure does not figure as a top factor motivating their drinking. Peer pressure for female undergraduates only ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in importance as a motivating factor towards undergraduate alcohol drinking.

Parental influence (or guardian influence) turned out to be the other top contender in the self-reported ranking provided by the participants about undergraduate students' alcohol drinking in southern Nigerian universities (30%). Parental/guardian influence equally turned out to be the topmost reported motivating factor for female undergraduate alcohol drinkers in southern Nigerian universities (13%). For male undergraduate students' alcohol drinkers, however, parental/guardian influence is ranked second (17%) to both the factors of 'conformity and coping with stress' and 'peer pressure' (18% each), which were jointly ranked topmost factors.

In the survey on the consequences produced by alcohol use that was part of the present study, there were some counterintuitive but overwhelming responses that were returned by the participants. For example, a cumulative total of 48% believed that alcohol use does not predispose one to become a victim of sexual abuse, 49.8% of the participants do not think that alcohol use predisposes one to engage in sexually abusive acts, 61% of the participants do not

believe that alcohol use leads to reckless driving, while 62.4% of the participants do not believe that alcohol use increases the rate of road accidents and death. This bias in the survey responses could be explained by the nature of the population of the study. The study was a self-report study and alcohol use was an inclusion criterion in the sampling process. However, the findings call for the urgency of tailored social engineering to engender the right kind of knowledge among the alcohol-using undergraduate population of Nigerian students in particular and the overall Nigerian student population at large. Right knowledge is conceived in the sense of Arukwe (2014) to mean the veracity of properly understanding a phenomenon with familiarity acquired through education, experience, or association. The importance of the right knowledge in the proper evolution as well as the safety of human society cannot be overstated, especially as the undergraduate student population of Nigerian universities is easily the future of the country. There cannot be any room for the emergence and propagation of an ignorant intellectual category of people on whose shoulders the bureaucratic manpower and workforce future of the country and, by extension, the future of the African continent would depend. This point has been made by several recent studies carried out on those in charge of managing critical public environmental infrastructure in Nigeria (see, for example, Arukwe & Offor, 2021; Arukwe & Offor, 2020; Arukwe, Offor, & Chime, 2020). Therefore, there is some urgent need for the management of universities in southern Nigeria and the rest of the country to learn from what universities and colleges elsewhere are doing about student alcohol and substance use in terms of, for instance, the area of preventive practices, education about alcohol, control of access to alcohol, restriction of alcohol advertising, and creation of alcohol-free student hostels, among many other innovative approaches to addressing the issues (see Wechsler et al., 2000).

This study aimed to explore the motivational basis for alcohol use among Nigerian youth, focusing on five universities from southern Nigeria and employing undergraduate students at Nigerian universities as the target population. The design was an ex post facto quantitative field survey utilizing a multistage cluster sampling strategy. Having examined the major findings of the study and considering the gender-sensitive implications of our data, there is a need for both gender-specific and non-gender-specific intervention programs (both clinical and social) tailored to the realities of the different sexes regarding alcohol use among undergraduate students in southern Nigeria.

Similarly, given the cross-sectional nature of the present data, further research is needed that could be longitudinal or experimental or both which could more precisely determine the nexus between several other variables that may not have been captured in the present study. For example, there could be a deeper focus on the relationship between alcohol consumption and certain maladaptive behavior among students to determine if alcohol use should be further regulated in and around university campuses.

Policy and regulation concerning alcohol use around university campuses as well as possible interventions in Nigeria's university system will therefore benefit from this study in practical terms if the policy takes into cognizance the nuances that have been engendered by the findings of this study. Such policy could therefore be in a position to comprehensively (both clinically and socially) address the issue of alcohol use and abuse among students in Nigerian universities generally and in southern Nigeria if regulation and laws based on the right knowledge are generated and implemented by the appropriate authorities, institutions, organizations, and offices.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflicting interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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