

## The Relationship between Parenting Style and Alcohol Abuse among University Students

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### Abstract

*The parenting styles used by the parents have an impact on the adolescent's decision to consume alcohol. This study explores to see the impact of parenting styles of both mother and father on alcohol consumption among university students in Namibia. One hundred and fifteen students were selected by stratified random sampling. Parenting styles were assessed using the Children's Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI) and the level of alcohol abuse was assessed using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). The study revealed that there was a non-significant relationship between parenting style and level of alcohol consumption for both mother and father. The results also showed that the majority of the samples were in the category of mild alcohol consumption who were having authoritative parents followed by authoritarian parents and lastly the permissive parents.*

**Keywords:** Parenting Style, Alcohol Abuse, University Students

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### Introduction

It is alarming that in Africa continent, Namibia is ranked fifth in terms of annual alcohol intake. As reported in the Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011). Alcohol consumption is becoming increasingly prevalent among the youth and has been identified as a severer problem in university campuses. According to (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [SAMHSA], 2013), nearly 58% of females and 63% of males were reported to be current drinkers.

In fact, statistics clearly show that alcohol use is no longer a form of experimentation for the young, but has become the societal norm with many becoming binge drinkers (Youniss & Haynie, 1992). As adolescence is known as a transition period between childhood and young adulthood, they

encounter drastic changes such as physical, emotional, and changes in their lifestyle. These developmental transitions have been associated with alcohol use as it may be due to increasing independence. There are varieties of factors such as family environment, psychological conditions, and a personality which contribute towards the consumption of alcohol and these factors can be at the individual and the societal levels. A study done by (Shi & Stevens, 2005; Babor et.al. 2010) revealed that the causes which are responsible for alcohol consumption can affect the amount and pattern of alcohol intake. These factors can also develop the risk of alcohol use disorders and alcohol drinkers may also suffer from other problems

Besides all these aspects it becomes important to focus on the associations between parenting style and alcohol abuse among adolescents because parenting styles and behavior play an important role in this

developmental period. The parenting style which the parents choose during adolescence has an effect on adulthood behaviors. The family plays an important role in children's development and behavior and it also has an impact on the socialization of children. The children start to accommodate values and behavior which are accepted by society from the family. The family environment creates an atmosphere where a teenager's behavior is expressed and learned (Dishion, & Patterson, 2006).

According to the study by Dekovic, Janssens & Vans (2003), parenting showed the most important role in the socialization of adolescents if it is compared to the other socializing agents. The role of parents in the family is very significant and is seen as most important to prepare the children to become a responsible adult through rules and discipline. But in adolescence, there is a great influence of peer group and can be seen a most influential agent in adolescents socialization. At this stage, it becomes important for the parents to maintain an appropriate relationship with the children and to choose a suitable parenting style. As the parenting style at the adolescence stage has an influence on the behaviour in adulthood.

A study by Faden & Madison, (2006) concluded that alcohol consumption during the period of adolescence and youth is a major problem in most of the countries. A large number of researches have been done to find out the causes of alcohol use and concluded that the adolescence stage is also known as the stage of experimentation and the use of substance began at this age.

The impact of parenting style on social and behavioral development have been studied during the developmental period of childhood. But there is a dire need of investigating the effects of parenting styles on adolescence and especially young adulthood. In the period of

young adulthood, they start to begin their own identities and are more focused on their future. This is the first time when the adolescents start to live on their own as they move away from their parents to seek education and to achieve their goals in life. Therefore, as Namibia being at the alarming situation in alcohol consumption, it becomes very necessary to investigate the reasons behind alcohol consumption. As the parents have an influence during childhood but also in adolescence. In recent years it has become important to know the impact of different parenting styles on emotional and behavioral manifestations in adolescents to also to see the association with alcohol consumption.

#### **Literature Review**

In fact, the family unit was considered to be the most crucial factor in the introduction of risk and/or protective behaviours (Youniss & Haynie, 1992). Although the influence of peers was taken into regard and played a part in the influence of youth, it was found that the family unit was the biggest source of influence in the decisions made by adolescents (Youniss & Haynie, 1992). There is no doubt that there can be numerous reasons why children as young as 9 are experimenting with alcohol and why 13 or 14-year-olds are regular drinkers and in some cases binge drinkers (Chirisa 2014).

#### **Parenting Styles**

Family plays a significant role in learning values, norms, and socialization during childhood and adolescence (Blakemor, Burnett& Dahl, 2010). Parents play an important for adolescents' overall development though autonomy increases when the children are transiting from childhood to adolescence period. This process of socialization parenting plays an important role and helps the parents to shape the behavior of their children. (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

The extent to which parents are accepting and are approachable of their

children's behavior is called parental warmth and the contrast to it is being unresponsive and rejecting. When these two aspects of parenting behavior i.e. control and warmth are combined in different ways, three parenting styles emerge i.e., Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Permissive.

The two aspects of parenting behavior are warmth and control Baumrind (1991) identified three types of parenting styles. The authoritarian parents use high levels of control and restrictions in their dealings with their children and expect total respect and obedience. Authoritarian parents restrict autonomy and expect their word to be the last word. These parents expect total submission and respect. Failure to comply is usually met with strict and forceful measures which ensure that the rules are followed and conflict is resolved.

Keller et al (2012) stated that child behavioural problems such as internalizing and externalizing are liked to authoritarian parenting style. This style may hinder in the development of autonomy of the adolescent and this may lead to behavioural problems such as alcohol consumption. Further, more longitudinal studies have investigated the effect of overprotection of parents on alcohol use. Reezigt, G.J & Creemers, B.P.M. (2005) found a significant relationship between alcohol use and overprotection, while Mares, Vors, Engels & Lichtwarck-Aschoff (2011) contradicts with the above finding.

The extreme opposite of authoritarian is permissive. Permissive parents do not play a significant role in shaping a child's behavioural patterns as they are not controlling or demanding, and do not have set boundaries. They are, however, warm and loving. This kind of parents doesn't like to say no to their children. These kind of parents are inactive or passive and believe that this is the way to show their love for their adolescent's desires. The main character of

these parents is that they are high in responsiveness and low at demanding. As a result of study (Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens, 2010) adolescents are permitted to make their important decisions without the knowledge of parents. The children from permissive parents show more frequency in substance use and misbehavior in school as compared to adolescent from authoritative or authoritarian families (Querido, Warne & Eyberg, 2002).

When the children feel rejected the risk of alcohol use increases because the adolescent is lacking in the skills to regulate the emotions and faces difficulty in coping with their problems. However, inconsistent results were noticed in researches in relation to the longitudinal effect of rejection on alcohol use during the stage of adolescence (Fergusson & Lynskey (1996) found that the risk factor for alcohol use is rejection.

The middle ground of these two extremes is authoritative. Authoritative parents tend to be more expressive, involved with their children concerning punishment, rules, and boundaries. The authoritative parent favours the use of rationale over coercion to direct behaviour. These parents involve the child in decision making and have a 'give and take' stance when setting rules and boundaries. The parents are firm yet not strict, they value the autonomy of the child and so the child is able to express his concerns (Baumrind, 1991). They can be considered as parents who pay special attention, rewarding accepted behaviour, unconditional love, and being helpful and loving. Authoritative parenting style provides emotional warmth which helps in reducing the adolescent alcohol use. Adolescents who get more emotional warmth from their parents are good at expressing their emotions and are good in the coping mechanism, and therefore, will also learn to control their drinking behaviour (Wills & Cleary, 1996).

Studies have evaluated the impact of emotional warmth on adolescent alcohol intake, but the results were inconsistent. It is revealed from some of the studies that emotional warmth is inversely related to alcohol abuse (Droomers, Schrijvers, Casswell & Mackenbach, (2003); Hung, Kay & Weber (2009). Visser et al (2013) with their study on the consequence of parenting style on adolescent alcohol use found that authoritarian parenting was a determinant for future alcohol use with no relation from the other two styles of parenting. In similar research findings implicated that parenting style was a predictor of alcohol abuse in adolescence. Adolescence who viewed their parents as being authoritative score low on the alcohol intake test as compared to the adolescents who viewed their parents as authoritarian and permissive (Chirisa, 2014).

#### **Effects of Alcohol Consumption**

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), cited in The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), 2017 reported that about 15 million adults in The United States had alcohol use disorder. Alcohol misuse by adolescents is often linked with teenage pregnancy, hospitalization, and sexually transmitted infections (Cook et al., 2010), and is thus a major public health concern. What's more, because the brain is still developing at such a tender age, early drinking and binge drinking could have long-lasting effects on a child's intellectual capacity. That and the fact that it could lead to future alcohol dependence, which in most cases lead to liver and heart disease (Newsday, 2011).

However, the effects do not only affect the consumption of alcohol as, due to impaired vision and concentration caused by high levels of alcohol, but they are also more susceptible to causing accidents which can cost their lives and the lives of other innocent people. Impaired

judgment can also cause adolescents to involve in risky behaviors, such as violence, suicides, and not practicing safe sex and can make them prone to contracting sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, and can also make them vulnerable to predators which can lead to assaults and rape (Newsday, 2011). Given this prevalence in consumption and the serious consequences associated with it, researchers have tried to find out the factors which are responsible to put the adolescents at risk of engaging in such type of harmful behaviour Youniss & Haynie, (1992).

The reasons for alcohol abuse have varied, and so had their pattern. A study by (Isaac, Hawkins & Oesterlea, 2011) showed that children in urban schools drank more than those in rural schools and their main reason was easy availability. In fact, children no longer have to ask someone over 18 to purchase alcohol for them, as it is now readily available in homes, at social functions, and 'drink ups,' which are gatherings organized for the sole purpose of getting drunk (Newsday, 2011).

This has led many researchers to study the relationship between parenting styles and the probability of whether or not a child will be abused by alcohol (Kusmierski, Nichols & McDonnell, 2001). In 2012 a review was conducted for CERGA on whether parents influence adolescent alcohol consumption by introducing children to alcohol within the home (MacLeod & Matheson, 2012). This study found that there was a consensus across the studies identified which indicated that allowing adolescent's alcohol at home was associated with future alcohol consumption by adolescents and/or that 'strict' parenting was recommended to moderate this. Secondly, the parental supply of alcohol for consumption with no supervision or supervision by another adult that was not the parent was strongly associated with risky drinking. So, Namibia being at higher risk of

adolescent drinking, it becomes necessary to the factors lying behind this problem of drinking. As parents have a great influence on adolescent's behavior.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research study implemented a quantitative approach to gather the data. The exploratory research design was chosen because the results, they can provide significant insight into a given situation like the current one of alcohol abuse among students.

#### **Population and Sample**

The population comprised of students at the University of Namibia, Main Campus. A sample of 115 students, above the age of 18 years were selected by stratified random sampling. The sample was selected from each year of study.

#### **Research Instruments**

The investigator used the following major research tools for data collection:

##### **Sociodemographic Questionnaire**

The socio-demographic questionnaire, self-designed by the researcher was used to obtain participant's biographical information to be precise; gender, date of birth, age, place of birth, nationality, year of study and lastly alcohol use.

##### **Children's Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI)**

The CRPBI-30 is a self-report measure of a child's perception of parenting behaviour. It was originally developed by E. Schafer in 1965 and was later shortened by Schludermann and Schludermann in 1970 from 108 questions to 30 questions for each parent. The measure will be administered once for each parent. The scoring will be based on a Likert three-point scale of measurement.

##### **Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)**

To assess alcohol use and abuse the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test

(AUDIT) was used. The questions are associated with alcohol consumption, alcohol dependence, and alcohol-related problems. The AUDIT was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1982 and evaluated over a period of two decades, and it provides an exact measure of risk across gender, age, and cultures (AUDIT, 2001). Cronbach's alpha in the present sample is  $\alpha=0.92$ .

#### **Procedure**

The researcher ensured that all ethical considerations were well thought out before the actual research process. Prior to carrying out the study, the researcher sought written consent from the sample. The researchers explained the samples about the importance of the study. The data were collected separately for each year of study according to the availability of the sample and lecture rooms. All the three instruments were distributed to the sample and sufficient time was allotted to them to fill the questionnaires.

#### **Data Analysis**

The quantitative data were analyzed using the basic statistical process, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 24.0. Participants in the current study were categorized using the demographics; age, year of study, gender and number of children in the family. Moreover, because the study was exploratory in nature, descriptive statistics in the form of (frequencies and percentages) was calculated. Further, chi-square was calculated to assess the degree of the relationship between parenting style and alcohol abuse among the students.

#### **Results**

The data for the study were collected from 115 college students, 40 respondents were male and 75 respondents were females. Figure 1 shows the distribution of parenting style for both the parents. As reported by the samples in relation to mothers 21(18.3%) were authoritarian mothers, the majority of the mothers were authoritative 77(67.0%) and only 17(14.8) mothers were using permissive parenting style.



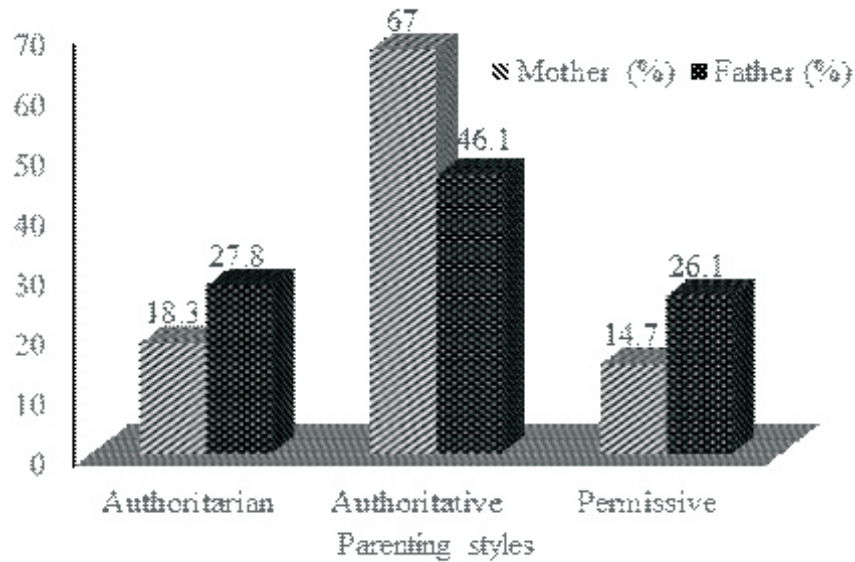


Figure 1: Frequency distribution of parenting style

In case of fathers, the same trend was seen and it is depicted in the table that 32(27.8) fathers were authoritarian, followed by authoritative fathers (46.1) and lastly 30(26.1%) fathers were using permissive parenting style.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the level of alcohol abuse and

mothers parenting style. It is clear from the table that in case of mild alcohol abuse category 18(15.7%) mothers were authoritarian, the majority of the mothers were authoritative 62(53.9%) and followed by 13(11.3%) mothers who were permissive.

Table 1: Relationship between the level of alcohol abuse and mother parenting style

Level of Alcohol abuse	Count in percentage	Authoritaria	Authoritativ	Permissive	Total
Mild	Count	18	62	13	93
	% of Total	15.7%	53.9%	11.3%	80.9%
Moderate	Count	2	13	3	18
	% of Total	1.7%	11.3%	2.6%	15.7%
Severe	Count	1	2	1	4
	% of Total	0.9%	1.7%	0.9%	3.5%
Total	Count	21	77	17	115
	% of Total	18.3%	67.0%	14.8%	100.0%

In the case of the moderate category, only two (1.7%) mothers were authoritarian, in this case, more mothers were authoritative (11.3%). Three (2.6%) mothers were using the permissive parenting style. In the last

category which is severe alcohol abuse, it was reported that only one (0.9%) mothers were authoritarian and permissive and 2(1.7%) mothers were authoritative.

**Table 2: Pearson chi-square test results (Level of alcohol abuse and mothers parenting style)**

	Value	df	P
Pearson Chi -Square	1.278 <sup>a</sup>	4	.865
Likelihood Ratio	1.314	4	.859
Linear -by-Linear Association	.388	1	.533
N of Valid Cases	115		

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

Table 2 shows the Significance of likelihood ratio ( $P \leq 0.86$ ) and this indicates that the level of alcohol abuse was independent of the mother's parenting style.

This means that there is no relationship between mothers parenting style and the level of alcohol abuse.

**Table 3: Relationship between the level of alcohol abuse and father parenting style.**

Level of Alcohol abuse	Count in percentage	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Total
Mild	Count	28	43	22	93
	% of Total	24.3%	37.4%	19.1%	80.9%
Moderate	Count	2	9	7	18
	% of Total	1.7%	7.8%	6.1%	15.7%
Severe	Count	2	1	1	4
	% of Total	1.7%	.9%	.9%	3.5%
Total	Count	32	53	30	115
	% of Total	27.8%	46.1%	26.1%	100.0%

Table 3 reveals the relationship between the level of alcohol abuse and father parenting style. In authoritarian parenting style, 24.3% were in the mild category, 1.7% were in the moderate category as well as the severe category of alcohol consumption. The second type of parenting style is authoritative in which 37.4% of students were in the mild category, 7.8% were

in moderate category and only 0.9% were in the severe category of alcohol consumption which is a negligible count. Lastly, in the permissive style of parenting, 19.1% of respondents were the mild consumer while 6.1% and 0.9% were in the moderate and severe category of alcohol abuse respectively.

**Table 4: Pearson chi-square test results (Level of alcohol abuse and fathers parenting style)**

	Value	df	P
Pearson Chi -Square	4.478 <sup>a</sup>	4	.345
Likelihood Ratio	4.808	4	.308
Linear -by-Linear Association	.780	1	.377
N of Valid Cases	115		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.04.

Table 4 indicates the Significance of likelihood ratio ( $P \leq 0.34$ ) and this indicates that the level of alcohol abuse was independent of fathers parenting style. This means that there is no relationship between fathers parenting style and the level of alcohol intake.

## Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the CRPB scores and scores on the AUDIT and to further predict the level of alcohol intake on the three subscales of the CRPBI. There was a weak relationship between the alcohol intake scores and the parental style scores. When analyzed individually, all the subscales of the CRPB had an influence on the intake of alcohol. However, for the majority, participants raised under Authoritative parenting had more alcohol intake than the other two styles of parenting. Psychological anatomy was only a predictor when it was not consistent for both parents. The participant had low alcohol intake scores when they viewed both parents as psychologically controlling. The same applied for lax and negligent control when parents were seen as contradicting themselves in their levels of control, the alcohol intake score was low.

Also, where parents were too controlling the alcohol intake scores were low. Parents thought of as being Permissive had a

weak correlation with alcohol consumption, the more Permissive the parents, the less alcohol the child consumed. However, parents that were thought of as Authoritative positively correlated with alcohol consumption. The results of the present study have not been supported by previous research. Parenting high on hostility and low on warmth was associated with a higher probability of alcohol use and abuse (Johnson & Padina, 1991). Parenting which did not set boundaries or enforce rules also predicted a greater risk of alcohol abuse (Jackson, Henriksen & Dickinson, 1999). On the other hand, parents that were warm reasoned with their children on boundaries set, and provided positive feedback predicted lower alcohol abuse (Jackson, Henriksen & Dickinson, 1999). Cohen, Richardson, & LaBree (1994) also concluded that parenting styles could be linked to the onset of alcohol abuse in children and adolescents. Cohen and Rice (1997) found a correlation between adolescents drinking and perception of parents, those who drank more perceived their parents as being demanding and those who drank less perceived their parents as warm and loving. This research, however, did not produce similar results. Drinking has increased by almost 50 percent across the entire population. Women are a large part of this increase. The females especially who are working and are empowered with good jobs



while balancing a family at home, so they have money and freedom to do as they are happy. As a result, drinking for social and coping purposes is coming into trend. The habit continues today (Moinuddin, Goel, Saini, Bajpai & Misra, 2016).

### Conclusion

Alcohol abuse among students is not associated with parenting style according to the results of this study. On one hand, the use of high levels of control and restrictions when dealing with children made them less prone to abuse alcohol, and at an early age. Also, the failure to provide rules and guidance from permissive parents made the children less prone to pressures to begin drinking at an early age which totally does not make sense. Authoritative parents tended to be more expressive and reasoned with their children concerning punishment, rules, and boundaries. Consequently, authoritative parenting resulted in higher prosocial behaviour, and children were the most likely to engage in alcohol abuse. These findings suggest that warm and loving parenting fosters a more alcoholic child but with a mild level of alcohol consumption. On the other hand, the parents that are not warm or loving make them less prone to alcohol misuse. Parenting style around alcohol use which included parental bond and specific parental rules regarding alcohol had a strong influence on adolescent drinking behaviour that extended into young adulthood.

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