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DRUG USE AMONG PEOPLE WHO PATRONIZE BEER PARLOURS: THE FUNCTION OF BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACTORS AND SELF-MONITORING

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates big five personality factors and self-monitoring as predictors of drug use among people who patronize beer parlours within Ibadan metropolis. The study adopted ex-post facto design. Two hundred and twenty eight (228) people who patronize beer parlours were sampled using purposive sampling technique. The participants responded to Big five personality, self-monitoring and drug use scales with their demographic information. Two hypotheses were tested using multiple regression and independent t-test. Extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness and self-monitoring jointly predicted drug use. Agreeableness, conscientiousness and self-monitoring independently predicted drug use. Gender difference was found in the level at which participants use drugs. It is concluded that personality factors such as extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness and self-monitoring are relevant in understanding the dynamics of drug use in Nigeria. Men use drugs more than women.

Key Words: Drug use, big five personality factors, self-monitoring, beer parlours.

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol appears to be one of the major drugs or substances people do abuse easily. This seems to be true when one considers the extent at which people patronize "beer" parlours in our communities these days; in day time as well as night hours. Consumption of alcohol could be a source of occasional pleasure or usual habit. Drug use is defined in this study as alcohol use. The drinking of alcoholic beverages may be viewed from two perspectives: either the drinker is happy or sad. However, moderate consumption of alcohol may be advised because the risks involved when taking moderate levels of drinks appear to be minimal. The low risk of moderate consumption of alcohol could be attributed to the fact that the drinker may still be fully aware of his or her surroundings. Irrespective of the levels of drug use; alcohol has been noted to have a link with personality characteristics of drinkers (Bogt, Engels & Dubas, 2006); and perhaps their abilities to monitor themselves.

People consume alcohol at their private domain; and as if this is not enough, beer parlours

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under the cover of eating houses; have been identified as places where most people patronize to engage in every forms of drugs use. Indeed, it is while drinking alcohol that most shady deals are discussed, money changes hands, prey corrupt predators not to be devoured by the law, decisions are summarily taken over complaints, complaints are being made, documents are sure to be signed since the conditions of signing are discussed and taken after the gulping of at least a bottle or two. Any benefits from alcohol seem to involve drinking small amounts spread throughout the week. Exceeding two drinks per day is linked to increases in blood pressure and heavy drinking raises the risk of stroke and can cause swelling of the heart as well as irregular heart beat. These are some of the risks that some people in Nigeria are exposed to as they cling to the habit of immoderate drinking of alcohol.

While alcohol use is deeply embedded in many societies, recent years have seen changes in drinking patterns across the globe with Nigeria not excluded. Rates of consumption, drinking to excess among the general population and heavy episodic drinking among the young people are on the rise in Nigeria. Alcohol consumption is one of the unhealthiest habits, across the world. The consumption of alcohol carries a risk of adverse health and social consequences related to its intoxicating, toxic and dependence-producing properties. In addition to chronic diseases that may affect drinkers after many years of heavy use, alcohol contributes to traumatic outcomes that kill or disable people at a relatively young age, resulting in the loss of many years of life to death or disability. It also causes about 20 to 30 per cent worldwide disease of oesophageal cancer, liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, homicide, epilepsy, and motor vehicle accidents. What is more, drinking is fuelling an epidemic of "risky sex" among teenagers, leading to pregnancies and spread of diseases. Although excessive drinking is already known to stimulate people doing stupid things, alcohol consumption is one important factor to create a feasible environment for HIV transmission as well as other sexually transmitted infections.

Personality has not been looked at extensively in the previous research on alcohol use among people who patronize beer parlours. Certain subscales of personality have been examined as correlates of alcohol use. For example, Wood, Nagoshi, & Dennis (1992) looked at the Eysenck Personality subscales of impulsivity, sensation seeking, and empathy. This research extended the work on personality by using the Big Five Factor personality inventory, which measures the five dimensions of personality - Neuroticism or emotional stability, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. This is a widely used personality test, and therefore it would be valuable to be able to correlate alcohol use with such a widely used and accepted test. Also, in addition to the big five personality factors, is self-monitoring as predictors of alcohol use among people who patronize beer parlours in Nigeria.

Examining the big five personality factors, the first factor is neuroticism, or emotional stability. Coasta and McCrae (1992) argue that neuroticism includes the traits of anxiety, anger and hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability. The second factor, extraversion includes traits such as "warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions" (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Openness, which is the third factor, is sometimes referred to as Intellect. Openness to experience includes the facets "fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values" (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The fourth factor is agreeableness. Agreeableness includes the traits "trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender mindedness" (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The fifth factor is conscientiousness. Conscientiousness includes the personality traits of "confidence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation" (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Lots of studies in different setting among different samples have showed the link between personality characteristics and drug use. For example, Booth-Kewley and Vickers

(1994) investigated the association between health behavior and personality dispositions. They found Conscientiousness to be a strong predictor of health behavior and low agreeableness to be responsible for risk taking. Health related habits were analyzed by Lemos-Giraldez and Fidalgo-Aliste (1997) and they found, in a cross-sectional study with over a thousand university students, a significant relationship between conscientiousness, agreeableness and health-related behaviors like current alcohol consumption. Martin and Sher (1994) investigated the family history of alcohol use disorders and their relation to the Five-Factor model and found neuroticism, non-Conscientiousness and non-Agreeableness to be associated with problem drinking.

Regarding self-monitoring, there are people who are high self-monitors and people who are low self-monitors. A high self-monitor is someone who is concerned about how they are perceived by others and will actually change their behavior in order to fit different situations (e.g., if they believe they will be perceived negatively by others, they may change their behavior so that they are perceived more positively; rather than just acting in a consistent manner). On the other hand, a low self-monitor is someone who is less concerned with how other people perceive them and will be more likely to act consistently. Self-monitoring may therefore have independent relationship with drinking behaviour of people who patronize beer parlours.

Compared with women throughout the world, it appears that men are more likely to drink, consume more alcohol, and cause more problems by doing so. It appears that this gender gap is one of the few universal gender differences in human social behavior. It is evident in all areas of the world (Almeida-Filho, Lessa, Magalhaes, Araujo, Aquino, Kawachi & James, 2004; Sieri, Agudo, Kesse, Klipstein-Grobusch, San-Jose, Welch, Krogh, *et al.,* 2002), in drinking versus abstinence (Mohan, Chopra, & Sethi, 2002; Peltzer, 2002), in heavy drinking and intoxication (Gmel, Rehm, & Kuntsche, 2003), and in alcohol use disorders (Jhingan, Shyangwa, Sharma, Prasad, & Khandelwal, 2003). The current study follows the previous studies by examining the gender differences in drinking behaviours of individuals who patronize beer parlours in Nigeria. In the current study, it was predicted that all these big five personality factors along with self-monitoring would independently and jointly predict drinking behavior among people who patronize beer parlours.

This study aimed to (i) determine the extent to which big five personality factors and self-monitoring will independently and jointly predict drug use among people who patronize beer parlours, and (ii) determine gender difference in drug use among people who patronize beer parlours.

METHOD

Design

The research adopted the use of ex-post facto design. The design was chosen because the assignment of participants to the levels of the independent variables was based on events that occurred in the past.

Setting

The study took place in some selected beer parlous popularly called “joints” located within Ibadan metropolis.

Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants in the study. The sampling technique was chosen because the participants were selected considering their drinking behaviours as common characteristics. The participants were drawn from some selected “beer parlours” located within Ibadan metropolis. Two hundred and twenty eight (228) individuals who patronized beer parlours participated in the study. The participants comprised of 152 males and 76 females with ages ranged from 18 years to 40 years (mean age=24.44; SD=4.81). Concerning those who work among the participants, they indicated a minimum of 1 year of work experience and a maximum

of 10 years, with a mean year of 5.18 and a standard deviation of 3.09 years. Majority of the participants 91% were singles while 20 of them were married; an indication that most of the people who patronize beer palours are young adults who are yet to marry. Description of educational background of the participants showed that majority of them were first degree holder 122(53.5%), 22(9.6%) of them had post graduate qualifications, 14(6.1%) had ordinary diploma with 70(30.7%) indicated unclassified educational qualifications.

Measures

A self-structured questionnaire designed by the researcher was used as an instrument for data collection in the study. The questionnaire sought information on demographic characteristics of the participants, big five personality factors, self-monitoring and drug use scales. All scales used a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The order of the questionnaire is as follows:

Socio-Demographic Variables

The following variables were recorded as socio-demographic factors of the participants: sex, age, marital status and highest educational qualifications. Most of these socio-demographic variables have been implicated as determining factors for drug use among young adults.

Big Five Personality Factors

The participants were given 44-item personality inventory for measuring the Big Five personality dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness. The big five personality scale was developed by Pervin and John (1999). The scale is self-administered and requires respondents to indicate whether he or she agree to disagree. This Big five personality scale has demonstrated good internal consistency (coefficient alpha=0.82, $p<0.0001$). In the current study, a cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.63 was obtained for the 44-item Big five personality scale.

Self-monitoring Scale

The self-monitoring scale was developed by Snyder (1974). The Self-Monitoring (SM) scale measures the extent to which the respondents consciously employ impression management strategies in social interactions. Basically, the scale assesses the degree to which respondents manipulate the non-verbal signals that they send to others and the degree to which respondents adjust their behaviour to situational demands. In his original study, Snyder (1974) reported very reasonable test-retest reliability (0.83 for one month), and for the present study, an alpha reliability coefficient of an initial study, provided ample evidence regarding the scale's validity.

Personal Drug Use Questionnaire

This 39-item Personal Drug Use Questionnaire was developed by Miller and Tonigan (1996). Each one describes a way that you might (or might not) feel about your drug use including drinking alcohol. For each statement, the participants were to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the test item on a 5-point Likert format. High score on the scale indicates higher drug use.

Procedure

All data were collected directly from the participants through the use of questionnaire. A brief introduction of the study objectives was given to the participants. The procedures to protect their confidentiality were explained, and participants were told that filling in the questionnaire implied informed consent. Then, the participants responded to the questionnaires. At the completion of filling in the questionnaires, participants were thanked for their participation.

Results

Big Five Personality Factors and Drug Use

Big five personality factors and self-monitoring independently and jointly predicted drug use among people who patronized beer parlours.

The result presented in Table 1, reveals that extraversion, agreeableness,

Table 1: Personality characteristics as predictors of drug use

Predictors	β	t	*p*	R	R^2	F	*p*
Extraversion	.037	.583	NS	.707	.499	36.723	<.05
Agreeableness	-.240	-3.248	<.05				
Conscientiousness	-.424	-8.368	<.05				
Neuroticism	.021	.355	NS				
Openness	.039	.675	NS				
Self-monitoring	-.654	8.435	<.05				

conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness and self-monitoring as predictor variables jointly predict drug use ($F(6, 221) = 36.723$; $p<.05$, with $R=.707$; $R^2 = .499$. This suggests that all the predictor variables jointly accounted for 50% variation in drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. However, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and self-monitoring were significant in independent prediction ($\beta=-.240$; $t=-3.248$; $p<.05$; $\beta=-.424$; $t=-8.368$; $p<.05$ and $\beta=-.654$; $t=8.435$; $p<.05$) respectively. This suggests that Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and self-monitoring have significant independent contribution in the joint prediction and are directly related to drug use in the population of people who patronize beer parlours. However, extraversion, neuroticism and openness were not significant in independent prediction of drug use ($\beta=.037$; $t=.583$; $p>.05$; $\beta=.021$; $t=.355$; $p>.05$; $\beta=.039$; $t=.675$; $p>.05$) respectively. The stated hypothesis that Big five personality factors and self-monitoring will independently and jointly predict drug use among people who patronize beer parlours was partially confirmed.

Gender difference in drug use

The result of t-test for independent samples shows that gender had a significant influence on drug use among people who patronize beer parlours ($t=3.442$; $df = 226$; $p<.05$). In the means, the result further confirms that male participants ($\bar{X}=117.414$) significantly report higher drug use than female participants ($\bar{X}=96.881$). The result indicates that there is gender difference in levels of drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. The stated hypothesis that male participants will significantly report higher drug use than female participants among people who patronize beer parlours was confirmed.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the present study are consistent with the existing literature, which support the link between personality characteristics and drug user in Nigeria. Specifically, hypothesis stated that Big five personality factors and self-monitoring would independently and jointly predict drug use among people who patronize beer parlours was partially confirmed. The results showed that all the predictor variables jointly predicted drug use by accounting for 50% of variation of the drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. In the result agreeableness, conscientiousness and self-monitoring as personality factors independently predicted drug use. The same result revealed that other personality factors did not independently contribute to the prediction of drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. This finding indicated that personality factors such as extraversion, neuroticism and openness are not significantly related to drug use among people who patronize beer parlours; rather agreeableness, conscientiousness and self-monitoring do.

The results showed low scores on agreeableness to be related to higher drug use. This suggests that the lower the agreeableness

personality characteristics of those who patronize beer parlours, the higher their levels of drug use. It was found that low conscientiousness related with high drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. This means that the more this category of people feels confidence or dutiful and is achievement striving, the lower the levels of drug use. It was also found that higher self-monitoring relates with lower drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. In line with the present study, Booth-Kewley and Vickers (1994) investigated the association between health behavior and personality dispositions and found Conscientiousness to be a strong predictor of health behavior and low agreeableness to be responsible for risk taking. The result also supports the work of Lemos-Giraldez and Fidalgo-Aliste (1997) who found a significant relationship between conscientiousness, agreeableness and health-related behaviors like current alcohol consumption. This result generally showed a set of evidence suggesting that personality traits are risk factors for psychoactive substance use, along with social environment and life experiences.

The stated hypothesis that male participants would significantly report higher drug use than female participants among people who patronize beer parlours was confirmed. The result showed that male participants abuse drugs than female participants. This appears to be true when one admit the fact that more men patronize beer parlours than women and the fact that it is always the men that take women to beer parlours for drinks; not always the other way round in this society. The finding is supported as evident in all areas of the world in drinking versus abstinence, in heavy drinking and intoxication and in alcohol use disorders (Mohan, Chopra, & Sethi, 2002; Gmel, Rehm, & Kuntsche, 2003; Jhingan et al., 2003).

This research found agreeableness, conscientiousness and self-monitoring as predictors of drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. This study is particularly valuable with its addition of a complete personality measure to the study of drug use among people who patronize beer parlours. It also used a more in depth look at situations than some previous studies. The significant findings for the personality factors are important additions to the previous research in this population. Confirmation of gender difference in drug use also adds to the body of knowledge in the population of people who patronize beer parlours. Future research should be done to explore some of the factors not concentrated on in this study, to find a better measure of situations to predict alcohol use as a form of drug, and to compare this sample to other samples in terms of personality and alcohol use.

Implications and recommendations

Personality characteristics have been found to associate with alcohol as a form of drug among people who patronize beer parlours. The major implication of this is that individual differences among drug abusers can play an important role in the choice of a change in drinking behaviours of those who patronize beer parlours. Regarding the relationship self-monitoring and drug use, there is a need for drug users to keep track of their daily drinking and be accurate about it in order to help them to effectively change their drinking behaviour. Therefore, more attention should be focused on personality characteristics effects on the efficacy of different treatment plans for alcoholism or any other forms of drugs. More research is needed to fully evaluate how personality assessment can be useful in the choice of drinking behaviour or drug use for treatment plans.

Limitations

There are several limitations to consider when interpreting the results. This sample is not representative of the entire people who patronize beer parlours in Nigeria, but it was drawn from a sample that included a wide range of ethnics. Of course, there may be some misclassification with the categories of never, former, and current-users of drugs. For example, some individuals might be reluctant to disclose their illicit drug use; some might not recall use in the distant past and some might even exaggerate their levels of drug

use. Categorizing people who patronize beer parlours based on self-reported behavior at the spot of drinking beers might be too broad. Future studies should use multiple methods for assessing drug use and personality traits.

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