



The relationship between alcohol use and peer pressure among college athlete and non-athlete students

* Rowena Nery Monte, Aivi Reyes Buan

University of the Philippines Los Banos, Philippines

Abstract

The primary focus of this study is to investigate the connection between peer relationships and alcohol use among Filipino college athlete and non-athlete students. This paper had examined the contribution of peer pressure to the initiation of alcohol use and the implications of alcohol consumption to Filipino athletes and non-athlete students. To give deeper understanding and justification on the main issue, the descriptive research method was utilized in this study using literature review. The study also identified that college students either athletes or non-athlete often struggle when dealing with the pressure to drink alcohol. Responding to peer pressure is part of human nature but some people are more likely to be in harm or in danger because of it. It consistently linked to alcohol use in college students. Higher peer pressure susceptibility is found to be the main factor why most college athletes and non-athlete students face emotional, physical and mental issues. The research also discussed other studies to re-examine the relationship between participation in sport and binge drinking and how this varies by age and gender. To do so, this study have discussed and analyzed the influences among athletes and non-athletes and implied possible explanations for the relationship between alcohol drinking and peer pressure in organized sport.

Keywords: alcohol consumption, peer pressure, college athletes, non-athlete college students, binge drinking

1. Introduction

Alcohol consumption has steadily become a significant problem on college and university campuses. It remains as eminent public health issue most especially among college students. Drinking alcohol is considered as disturbing trend because it happens in a very large population of youth. As the rate of drinking among college students increases, the harmful effects related to it also increase.

Alcohol consumption today is not just among legal drinkers but is also prevalent with college students. Alcohol use continues to be one of the significant issues faced by many college student either athletes or non-athletes due to the stress and pressure associated with maintaining a balance between student and athlete. Due to heavy consumption of alcohol, student athletes are known to be at greater risk compared to non-athlete and they often experience more frequent negative consequences.

Student athletes are considered heavy drinkers when they drink alcohol on 20 or more occasions in the past 30 days or more than 3-4 standard drinks per drinking session (Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 2011) [7]. Studies confirmed that there are about four out of five college students drink alcohol and half of college students are binge drinking. Binge drinking is heavy episodic drinking or a type of alcohol consumption that takes five or more drinks in a row. According to (Antonelli, 1966; Cavenar & Werman, 1981) [1], college student athletes drink alcohol to relieve stress from training and competition. It is the student athletes way of coping with pressure. On the other hand, (Danish, 1984; McDonald & Hardy, 1990; Rotella & Heyman, 1986) [5] cited that binge drinking among college student athletes is a way of minimizing physical injury. Most athletes suffer from serious

physical injuries to the back, sprains of the ligaments or strains of the muscles. College student athletes who are experiencing chronic pain turn to alcohol to alleviate their suffering. (Swoap & Murphy, 1995) [14] stated that binge drinking is another way of athletes to manage their weight. Most athletes have been concerned with weight because it is one of the important points in competition. Thus, student athletes become obsessive to lose weight and develop a behavior of drinking to combat weight issue.

Another factor that (Borsari & Carey, 2001) [2] consider as to why alcohol use among college student athletes and non-student athletes is prevalent due to peer pressure. Peer interactions in the life of college students is very important as it provides perspective outside of the individual's viewpoints and offer students opportunities to develop various social skills, such as leadership, sharing or teamwork, and empathy. Student athletes and non-student athletes are particularly reliant on peer groups because they need attention, encouragement from others, motivation and social interaction to become a well-rounded and capable person. Peer interaction is one of the major factors that influence the formation of a person's identity either in positive or in negative influence. Most student athletes and non-student athletes see peer interaction as a good opportunity for socialization and that it could help them become a better individual. However, what these students fail to take into consideration are the negative consequences of being with peers. Peer interaction becomes peer pressure when the members of the group encourage another member to try something or influence each other in negative ways.

Many studies have confirmed that adolescent students were being introduced to alcohol by their friends. Circle of friends

is usually composed of people with the same age and status who spend time together. Peer is known as an important element of social support. Student-athletes need support and this is why peer groups normally comes when the need of support and status cross in the same line. Non-student athletes are also linked to peer groups because it can either enhance their school performance or be motivated while student athletes need physical assistance and emotional support. Peers also serve as information resource and a source of strength. However, the positive side of peer group is often abused or even neglected. And because peer association comes with influence and adaptation, behaviors of each member can be changed and influenced. Peer association develops social learning wherein people learn from watching others. Thus, if peers appear to get enjoyment from using alcohol the individual will be tempted to emulate their behavior. It is where bad behaviors from watching other people will be developed.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify how peer pressure is related to excessive alcohol use of Filipino athlete and non-athlete college students. This study will determine if peer pressure among athletes and non-athletes relate to rates and frequency of alcohol consumption. Distinguish the relationship between alcohol use and peer group and what triggers an individual to become binge drinker despite of being a student athlete. Because of peer pressure has seen to be one of the factors that motivates both athlete and non-athlete students to drink alcohol, and to gather baseline information that could be used as guide to know the relation of peer groups to drinking behaviors.

2. Research Objectives

This particular study investigates the relationship between alcohol use such as excessive alcohol use and peer influence among Filipino athletes and non-athlete college students. How does peer pressure affect Filipino athletes and non-athlete college students, specifically to:

1. Determine the differences for variables age, gender, college and sport;
2. identify the drinking behavior of Filipino athletes and non-athlete college students;
3. learn what are alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms;
4. analyze the influences among athletes and non-athletes;
5. know the reasons for limiting alcohol consumption or abstaining from alcohol; and
6. Develop educational intervention.

3. Review of Related Literature

One of the major causes of problems among college student athletes and non-student athletes is the presence of peer pressure according to (Borsari, B., & Carey, K. B. (2001) ^[2]. Peer pressure usually takes place when a person do something because they are pressured by peers (Turrisi, R., Mastroleo, N. R., Mallett, K. A., Larimer, M. E., & Kilmer, J. R. (2007) ^[16]. Being in a group of peers is one of the primary goals of adolescents when they reached college level. Most especially, when a student becomes an athlete, the feeling of belonging and social acceptance becomes stronger. An athlete or non-student athlete is characterized by having a personal

characteristics, traits, and values that have helped them thrive athletically and non-athletically, including discipline, commitment, focus, high energy, work ethic, ability to handle pressure, and resilience. In order for them to become successful academically, they ask for support and encouragement. It is really hard for a college student athletes and non-student athletes to manage time and juggle all the academic and social demands of college life one at a time.

Student athletes are more problematic than most non-athletes in college because they have trainings, competitions and other demands. Due to these reasons, student athletes often suffer from emotional, physical and mental problems. As a result, they seek for special attention and social connection to lessen the suffering of being a student and athlete at same time. Thus, college student athletes and non-student athletes prefer to be with their peers to overcome the challenges.

Peer pressure happens at all ages. It typically begins to occur when an individual experience implied or expressed persuasion to adopt similar values. Peer pressure can be either positive or negative. In one hand, positive peer pressure is one of the most effective ways for a middle age or adolescent to practice good behavior and make smart choices in life. Negative peer pressure on the other hand refers to negative behavioral feelings or desires that drives a person to do negative things. Student athlete started to engage in drinking alcohol because their peers encourage them or they felt of doing so just to fit within the group and not being left out.

4. Methods

Three methods have been used to know the relationship between peer pressure and alcohol use among Filipino student athletes and non-athletes: cost-effectiveness analyses, qualitative and descriptive research method. This study gathered different research studies, analyzed each studies and observed different research studies in order to facilitate a comprehensive literature review to answer the research questions.

5. Discussion

Differences for variables, age, gender, college and sport

Philippine Colleges and Universities have a lot to offer when it comes to opportunities. Every Filipino student can take part in every opportunity they think they fit in. Through various activities, students in college have the chance to explore and learn many things and even join in various sports competition like University Athletic Association of the Philippines of (UAAP). Just like when a student choose to play competitive sports at the varsity level. A student athlete has an opportunity to play sports and to take part in sports. Aside from that, joining sports is a privilege for Filipino students to get full credits such as scholarship. There are several factors to consider why students in college are motivated to participate in sports and become an athlete. However, it seems that alcohol consumption among Filipino college student athletes and non-athletes is an ongoing problem nowadays.

Alcohol consumption is an unending issue among Filipino college student athletes and non-student athletes. Even if there are educational efforts and prevention programming that aims to stop the students, alcohol consumption among Filipino students still increases and there is a need for efficient and

effective strategies for delivering alcohol abuse prevention. It is a common knowledge that student alcohol consumption differs in gender roles and behavioral expectations. A study conducted by (Miller KE, Melnick M, Barnes G, *et al.* (2007) ^[10] has cited that alcohol drinking is associated with personality and peer. While (Thombs *et al.*, 1997) ^[15] stated that alcohol consumption varies on age, gender and living situation. (Thombs *et al.*, 1997) ^[15] explained that differences in age and gender are associated with greater consumption of alcohol.

Age

Students who begin drinking at an early age are at a higher risk of problem drinking or physical dependence on alcohol. Age differences play a huge role in influencing the decisions of an individual towards alcohol consumption. If a teen starts to drink alcohol at early age and enters college wherein alcohol drinkers are prevalent, the teen is more likely to become heavy drinker. Alcohol consumption varies with age. Ages 15 to 20 are reported to be heavy drinkers and can consume alcohol in the past 30 days. Moreover, the minimum age alcohol can be legally consumed can be different also from the age. Difference in age groups can be considered as predictors of alcohol use.

Gender

Females have higher alcohol intake frequencies than males. Difference in gender found to be correlated with heavy alcohol consumption and repeated use of alcohol as stated by (Borsari, B., & Carey, K. B. 2001) ^[2]. This means that gender difference is also being measured in alcohol consumption. Gender differences do influence the effect of alcohol in our body. In general, women have less body water than men of similar body weight. This is why men are heavier drinkers and abstainers compared to women. Men can normally drink more alcohol than women before the effects show. Women's bodies, in general, process alcohol at a slower rate than men.

College

Based on the study conducted by (Wechsler, H., Nelson, T. E., Lee, J. E 2003) ^[20], two out of five college students engage in binge drinking. Students do drink when they become college especially if they are associated with sports and alcohol consumption was strongly linked with their status. Binge drinking is more likely to develop in college regardless of the student's participation in sports. Athletes in college have higher levels of binge drinking than those who have never participated in interscholastic sport. When a student enters college level, there is a transition to institutions of higher learning. In college, athletes engaged in binge drinking at a much higher rate than those who did not play sport at any level.

Sports

According to the study of (Nelson and Wechsler, 2001), sports is associated with healthy behavior, that is why many students are participating in sports because they are being engaged in various activities but (Nelson and Wechsler, 2001) also stated that aside from this reason, students who are active in sports are also active in activity called excessive alcohol use. The

study explained that sport is associated with a higher percentage of binge drinking than a comparable group who has not participated in sports whether or not they are females or males. When a student-athlete is active in sports, it results to higher binge drinking. Alcohol consumption is being developed when a student participates in sports because this is where social pressure occurs as stated by (Miller, 2007) ^[10]. Aside from social factors, (Messner 1993) ^[8] also stated that sports is where an individual is exerting effort or perform certain elements of hegemonic masculinities. Thus, students see drinking alcohol as a way of acquiring "macho" behavior and survival in sports. When the time a student is exposed to sports, it is also the time when the greatest increase in binge drinking occurs.

Drinking behavior of Filipino college athletes and non-athlete college students

Filipinos drink because it is already part of the culture and practice (Caetano, Raul, Catherine Clark, and Tammy Tam 1998) ^[3], it is also significant in Filipino culture and alcohol drinking has been traditionally concomitant with happiness, success, and thrill. It also gives prowess, especially for the males, contemporary images of the young, and the women emerging. According to the survey conducted by (Family Income and Expenditure Survey, NEDA, 2004) ^[6], An average Filipino family spends 1% of its income on alcoholic beverages. For moderate and heavy drinkers, it can go up as high as 20% and (WHO, 2004; DOH-UP, 2001) ^[21] cited also that heavy drinkers among the young and women from 2001-2004 are found to be increasing, still with more males at 66.6% and women slowly catching up at 33.4%. The statistics have proven that underage drinking is a risk that attracts many developing adolescents and teens. It also means that young people's bodies are more vulnerable than adults to the damaging effects of alcohol. In fact, Filipino college students have higher binge drinking rates. (WHO, 2004; DOH-UP, 2001) ^[21] gathered that alcohol drinking is being practiced by Filipino students who are not living with their parents, whose parents approve of drinking, who frequent social gatherings or parties, bars and discos (University of the Philippines and Department of Health 2001) ^[19].

Alcohol can alter human behavior immediately. A person becomes addicted to alcohol when his or her brain adjusts to the way alcohol alters the brain. Filipino college athlete students drink more alcohol per week and become involved in binge drinking more often. Filipino student athletes have higher misbeliefs about drinking alcohol. Compared to Filipino non-athlete students, most Filipino student athletes do not consider alcohol as a problem or a threat. They consider alcohol drinking as stress reliever, for social purposes they believe that drinking alcohol is somewhat effective as a temporary stressor. Thus, they are more at risk for abusing alcohol than non-athlete students.

According to (Turrissi *et al.*, 2006) ^[17], among the college population, student athletes at increased risk for hazardous alcohol use than of non-athletes. Non-athlete students consumed the least amount of alcohol and male non-athletes were the least likely to become intoxicated, whereas student-athletes drank the greatest amount and were the most likely to become intoxicated. Research indicates that athletes begin

drinking at an earlier age, and drink in greater amounts than non-athletes. (Turrisi *et al.*, 2006) ^[17], have found that most college student athletes or former high school athletes, began drinking at an earlier age than non-athletes. However, reasons for such differences in athletes and non-athletes are not fully understood. But a study conducted by (Wilson, Pritchard & Schaffer, 2004) stated that differences in alcohol consumption has something to do with poor coping mechanisms that leads to higher levels of alcohol usage.

Alcohol-related harms

Alcohol consumption has a lot of social and legal problems. It is a major cause of issues like diseases, chronic medical and mental health condition, family problems, poisoning, high toll of incidents and death. Drinking too much alcohol can have serious effects on human health and in society. The risks related to alcohol are linked to the pattern of drinking and the amount of consumption. A person who drinks too much alcohol is most likely to incur high levels of harm. Alcohol is implicated in various types of harm that can occur while participating in a heavy drinking activity. In line with student alcohol consumption, about 25% of students report confirmed that due to alcohol, many students are failing, doing poorly on exams or papers and receiving lower grades overall. Although the dangers of alcohol abuse are known, reasons for the high level of use by athletes are less understood.

Social influences among athletes and non-athletes

Peer group is considered as an agency of socialization. However, in the previous discussion, the study mentioned that peers have negative and positive influence among observers or individuals. Unlike other agents of socialization, such as family and school, peer is where individual learns to form relationships on their own. Through the help of peers, they learn how to cooperate and socialize according to group, age and gender. Studies have indicated a relationship between peers' attitudes and behaviors and college students' alcohol use. In college, strong relationships are key to have good grades and social life. Without your regular support group of friends and family, a student will be confronted with social problems such as isolation.

This is why athletes and non-athletes have peers in college. Peer relationships for college athletics is a tool to become competitive and successful for they can depend considerable time together during trainings and social activities. As such, the influence of peers may be especially relevant for athletes. (Nelson, T.F. & Wechsler, H. 2002) ^[13] cited that peers are very important to student athletes because it allows close social networks and injunctive norms that will help them develop their social behavior. The influence of peers is also relevant to non-athlete students for it is likely to influence their beliefs, attitudes, and in the context of other characteristic in life.

Nevertheless, the social influence of peers among athletes and non-athletes may be indirectly or through influence by descriptive representation. (Cho, 2006; Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) ^[4] explained that peers can exert their social influence through encouragement and or offers. When the encouragement and offers happen, the individual will experience implicit or explicit persuasion. That is when peer

pressure occurs which is among the social influence of peer group. This type of social influence can lead to behaviors like alcohol abuse. College student-athletes and non-athletes are at increased risk for hazardous alcohol use because of the social pressure brought by peer association.

But, peer is not only the social influence among athletes and non-athletes. The parents may also exhibit significant impact, their behavior is also one of the influential factors why athletes and non-athletes are engaged to heavy drinking behavior. Because they also serve as an influential figure for student athletes because of their drinking approval or alcohol drinking is perceived to them. It is likely that many inappropriate and harmful patterns of drinking are learned in the family. Parental behaviors appear to influence students' use of alcohol.

In accordance, permissive of alcohol use is perceived and influenced by both explicit and implicit factors. It can be from the parents or peers but since college students either athlete or non-athlete spend more time with peers, they are expected from binge alcohol use. Drinking alcohol is mediated by social influences, social facilitation outcome and perceived norms.

Reasons for limiting alcohol consumption or abstaining from alcohol

Heavy alcohol consumption among college students either athlete or non-athlete can lead to a cascade of alcohol-related problems, such as increased chances of risky behavior. This is why alcohol consumption should be limited or abstained. Alcohol drinking is fuelling a growing health and crime crisis not only in the Philippines but also around the world. Furthermore, alcohol is implicated in a wide variety of many social, legal and health problems. Liver cirrhosis, cardiac related diseases, stroke, trauma, and liver cancer are some of the diseases related to alcohol (Monte, Dela Cruz, Buan, 2016) ^[12].

Alcohol consumption maybe one of the tools for socialization but it can also damage relationships. Alcohol should be limited because it can cause less time for family, can cause intra-family violence, marital conflicts, or children running away from home. For the students, property damage and vandalism fights, interpersonal violence, sexual violence, and disruption to other students' quality of life are the top related problems of alcohol consumption.

Educational intervention

Despite of some educational interventions of Colleges and Universities on alcohol, there are still people who suffer from alcohol dependence at early age. Efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm will be most effective if educators implement the right practices for the right reasons. Alcohol regulation traditionally falls jurisdiction of several governmental departments and levels. However, Educational ministries have a legitimate role in influencing a wide range of individuals. Therefore, in education, intervention will be beneficial to students in any school setting. Also, combined school and family based alcohol education interventions will be most effective to stop heavy alcohol abuse. Education around alcohol consumption is therefore an important tool to effectively control and reduce alcohol-related harm (Monte,

Dela Cruz, Buan, 2016)^[12]. Good educational intervention can motivate someone to seek help for alcohol or drug abuse. Through this kind of interventions, people will be educated about the disease of addiction prior to the intervention.

6. Findings

The result of the study revealed that peer pressure is the most significant predictor of student-athletes and non student-athletes alcohol use. College student athletes and non-student athletes are driven by peer pressure and are considered to be at risk for abusing alcohol. Moreover, based on the gathered different research studies, peer pressure is associated negatively and is correlated with increased involvement in drinking alcohol.

7. Conclusion

This research has found that there are common motives as to why alcohol use is prevalent among college students most specifically to Filipino students and why the quality of peer relationships influence the college students to have excessive alcohol drinking. Peers can provide what a student athlete and non-student athlete need such as emotional support when times are tough. The present findings reveal that peer pressure from peers influence hazardous alcohol use among Filipino student athletes and non-athletes. This could be due to the fact that college students who are either in sports or not but with peers were more likely to engage in binge drinking behavior because of peer pressure.

8. References

1. Antonelli F. Psychology and psychotherapy in sporting phenomena. *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*. 1966; 6:108-110.
2. Borsari B, Carey KB. Peer influences on college drinking: A review of the research. *Journal of Substance Abuse*. 2001; 13:391-424.
3. Caetano, Raul, Catherine Clark, Tammy Tam. Alcohol Consumption among racial ethnic minorities. *alcohol health and research world*. 1998; 22(4):233-242. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh22-4/233.pdf>.
4. Cho, Cialdini, Reno, Kallgren. CAA Research Staff. NCAA Study of Substance Use Habits of College Student-Athletes. Research Report presented to The National. 1990-2006.
5. Danish SJ. Psychological aspects in the care and treatment of athletic injuries. 1984. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0011000093213002>
6. Family Income and Expenditure Survey and Labor Force Survey, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) By: National Statistics Office. 2004.
7. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 2011. [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1097-4679](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1097-4679)
8. Messner M. *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1993.
9. Messner MA, De Oca JM. The male consumer as loser: Beer and liquor ads in mega sports media events. *Signs*. 2005; 30:1879-1909.
10. Miller KE, Melnick M, Barnes G *et al*. Athletic involvement and adolescent delinquency. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 2007; 36(5):711-723.
11. Miller KE, Hoffman JH, Barnes G *et al*. Adolescent anabolic steroid use, gender, physical activity, and other problem behaviors. *Substance Use & Misuse*. 2005a; 40(11):1637-1657.
12. Monte RN, Dela Cruz JS, Buan AR. Alcohol consumption among Filipino college students. *The Asian International Journal of Life Sciences*. 2016; 25(1):383-398.
13. Nelson TF, Wechsler H. School spirits: Alcohol and collegiate sports fans. *Addictive Behaviors*. 2002; 28(1):1-11.
14. Swoap RA, Murphy SM. Eating Disorders and Weight Management in Athletes. *Sport Psychology Interventions*. 1995, 307-329.
15. Thombs DL, Wolcott BJ, Farkash LGE. Social context, perceived Norms and drinking behavior in young people. *J. Subst. Abuse*. 1997; 9:257-267.
16. Turrisi R, Mastroleo NR, Mallett KA, Larimer ME, Kilmer JR. Examination of the mediational influences of peer norms, environmental influences, and parent communications on heavy drinking tendencies in athletes and nonathletes. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*. 2007; 21:453-461.
17. Turrisi R, Mallett KA, Mastroleo NR, Larimer ME. Heavy drinking in college students: Who is at risk and what is being done about it? *The Journal of General Psychology*. 2006; 133:401-420.
18. UP and DOH | Alcohol drinking in the Philippines. *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Young People*. 2001.
19. University of the Philippines and Department of Health. *Alcohol Drinking*. 2001. http://pcij.org/blog/wp-docs/UP_DOH_Philippines_alcohol_drinking_2001.pdf.
20. Wechsler H, Nelson TE, Lee JE, Seibring M, Lewis C, Keeling RP. Perception and reality: A national evaluation of social norms marketing interventions to reduce college students' heavy alcohol use. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. 2003; 64:484-494.
21. World Health Organization. *Philippines: Socioeconomic Context*. 2004. http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/profiles/phl.pdf.