

Association between Peer Group Influence, Alcohol Consumption, and Attitudes of Youth towards Social Responsibility

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Abstract

In a current situation, increased alcohol consumption can be seen among youths which can be influenced by peer groups. Those peer groups have positive as well as negative relationship with the youths. It leads to major changes in the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. So, the present study was intended to find out the association between peer group influence, alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. For the study purpose data were collected from 214 youths in Batticaloa district. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption. Further there is a significant negative relationship between alcohol consumption and attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. And also there is no significant relationship between peer group influence and attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. For the purpose of data analysis, Statistical package of SPSS 22.0 has been used.

Keywords: *Peer group influence, Alcohol consumption, Attitudes of youths towards social responsibility*

1. Introduction

When children move out of the family through childcare centers, education, and the community as a whole, they begin to form attachments, and through their play and friendships grow. At around three years of age, early friendships begin to develop and the peers of children tend to have a more lasting influence (Barbour, Barbour & Scully 2002). Such kids start thinking and acting like their peers, and they begin to see that there are other beliefs, thoughts, and laws besides those that their parents have set. Young people join

different peer groups in their adolescence and associate with these groups by engaging in their activities so as not to be rejected. A group of peers is a great source of influence during adolescence (Chauhan, 2007). Peer groups have become an increasingly important context in a contemporary society in which teenagers spend time. How much time one spends with friends will play a big part in adolescent growth into mature adults (Barbour, Barbour & Scully, 2002).

Peer influence is the power, planned or unplanned, exerted by peers to influence personal behavior and peer pressure is the persuasive impact your friends have on you, which can make you identify with certain people, wear certain clothing use certain words and use certain languages. Peers may influence each other exceptionally in the development of certain habits, including alcohol consumption (Yeh, 2006). It has also been found that harmful peer effects contribute significantly to increased substance use (Johnson, O'Malley & Bachman, 2000). The power of the peer group is a common source for the participation of adolescents and peers in harmful behaviors such as alcohol usage.

Alcohol consumption remains one of the riskiest activities that adolescents participate in by the adolescents (Arata, Stafford & Tims, 2003) and it is one of peer group common behaviors that cause psychological and social problems. Because of that, youths have unstable attitudes towards social responsibility which cause serious issues in the society.

2. Research Problem

The attitudes of the youths have been changing time to time with the experience of bad to worse behaviors. The common factors for that negative behavior such as peer group influence, alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility are examined under western context. In Sri Lanka minimal research study focused to find out the relationship between them. Hence, the clear knowledge gap is explicit. This knowledge gap becomes a problem to planners, policy maker and the administrators. Therefore, this research study examines the problem and attempts to fill this knowledge gap.

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are advanced in this study.

1. What is the relationship between peer group influence and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility in Batticaloa district?
2. What is the relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption among youths in Batticaloa district?
3. What is the relationship between alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility in Batticaloa district?

2.2 Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are given below. These objectives have been derived from the research questions and purpose of the study.

1. Establish the relationship between peer group influence and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility in Batticaloa district?
2. Establish the relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption among school students in Batticaloa district?
3. Establish the relationship between alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility in Batticaloa district?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Peer Group Influence and the Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

The influence of peer groups plays an important role in adolescent achievement and responsibility. It is well known that the degree to which a youth succeeds in meeting the expectations of the society has a major and direct impact on his or her peer status (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005). Each adolescent peer group represents its own world with its own rituals, practices, etiquette and even its own language. Particularly with regard to the youths attitudes, peers can have extraordinary influence on one another (Cara & Davis, 2006). Influence of peer groups on attitudes of youths towards social responsibility can be supportive of established organizational expectations regarding the importance of the social objectives.

Lindgren (1980) observed that, individuals need to relate to their peers for they are dependent on their attitudes, feelings, and expectations to help them construct their own views of the world. Farmer (2010) also affirms that peers are not really positive or negative inherently; they can be both good and bad. He also said that peer friendships group dynamics and

pressures are part of positive development. Young people learn to judge themselves through their peer's eyes, receive feedback on their personal characteristics, gain social skills and trust, and learn how to delegate personal gratification to community objectives.

But, Burton, Ray and Mehta (2003) noted that peers are a common source of negative influence for youths, such as drug experimentation, drinking, vandalism and stealing. It was noted that some students frequently view the school as another sign of adult authority, full of restrictions and laws, and quite often decide to leave. It is worth mentioning that individual students as a youth who hold negative views of school and choose to drop out of school bring emotional disappointment and break the hopes of their future success that people had in them. This negative consequence ultimately leads to unsuitable attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

Lindgren (1980) observed that, firstly, the attitudes of an adult towards society appear to be positive; opportunities from the society becomes an exciting adventure as new skills are learned and experiences opened, but something happens later. Perhaps opportunities have bias on youths, their expectation and motivations in conflict with society and their responsibility. At this point the power of peer groups starts to set goals that compete with those of the society. The society becomes less interesting and attractive, and the power of negative peer group's sets in. Under the influence of their peers, there was an increasing tendency for young people to express criticism of the academic aspects of school as well as the society (Dunn & Cutting 2002). However, Gara and Davis (2006) affirmed that the schools are the breeding grounds for potential academic success and growth which has an influence on the attitudes of the youth.

While some of the above literature indicates that peer group influence affects the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility, it does not point to the relationship between the two variables. This research attempted to find out whether there was any association between peer group influence and attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

3.2 Peer Group Influence and Alcohol Consumption

The subject of alcohol consumption remains a moral issue which is socially established (Hyde, 2001). Maxwell (2002) observed that, when friends do not engage in activities such as alcohol consumption, teenagers may be less likely to engage in such activities. Chalder,

Elgari and Bennett (2005) agreed that the influence of peer groups is a primary determinant of alcohol consumption and this effect could be enhanced by individual's drinking habits in peer groups themselves. However, it is good to note that the type of peer group that you join will dictate the type of influence that you get. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) found that when young people grow, they begin to surrender to their peer's influences by shedding off their parental orientation and replacing it with dependency on their peers. Friends may encourage their peers to participate in undesirable acts such as fighting, drinking alcohol, and promiscuity to sex. Kandel, Kessler, & Margulies (1978) pointed out that children who are regularly friends, have similar attitudes and have similar habits including alcohol use. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) argued that the presence of peers is a significant factor in the use of alcohol by adolescents, contributing to delinquent behaviors. They noted as a whole that peer group control is the common source of negative behavior participation. Because of this, administrators do their hardest to encourage therapy services and have counselors to assist students with different issues. The aim of the current study was to determine whether there is a link between peer group influence and alcohol consumption and whether such attitudes of youths toward social responsibility influenced by youths

3.3 Alcohol Consumption and Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

Today alcohol is widely available and marketed vigorously through society. Many people, including the young, tend to accept its use as a natural part of growing up. Alcohol consumption is a major concern for parents, policy-makers, teachers and public health officials, and alcohol consumption can initially generate a nice feeling of euphoria and a decrease in anxiety (Singleton & Wolfson, 2009). Such sensations can eventually contribute to the perpetuation of alcohol consumption to the point that one is dependent on alcohol and this has some implications for a person. The effects of alcohol intake include renal and brain damage, thus reducing concentration and reaction rates. It can disrupt the cognitive function and can cause psychological disorders. It can lead to disorientation of an adult when it comes to society.

Alcohol consumption can have detrimental effects on youths, as it decreases concentration rates (Singleton & Wolfson, 2009). It was observed by Ngabirano (2003), that alcohol consumption results into consequences that include anxiety disorders, depression, insomnia, violent behavior, memory lapses, mental incapacity, and dementia. A youth who encounters

the above effects due to alcohol abuse, his level of focus is low and responsibility tend to be a burden to him and ultimately have negative impact on social responsibility. Youth's use of alcohol poses a significant danger to society, to the youths themselves and to the behavior patterns. All of this will eventually impact the person and have negative consequences for society. A youth requires attention, focus, discipline, and hard work without the worries and interruptions listed above. So, this research attempted to find out whether there was any association between alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

4. Rationale of the Study

This study provide information on peer group influence and alcohol consumption and how these factors affect the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility and it give information to change their behavior. And also parents, administrators and socially responsible organization able to design programs to make positive behavior on youths.

5. Conceptualization

Following conceptual framework was developed based on literature survey. This conceptual framework highlights the relationship between the peer group influence, alcohol consumption and attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

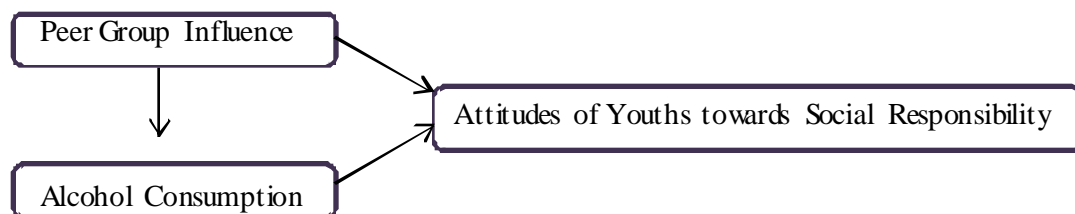


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model

6. Methodology

The purpose of this research is to empirically investigate the assumption that peer group influence, alcohol consumption and attitudes of youths towards social responsibility have relationship between them in Batticaloa district.

6.1 Sample Selection

In Batticaloa, from the particular area data were collected. Based on the simple random sampling and the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the sample size was determined as 214 youths.

6.2 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

This study was carried out based on the primary data. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The Questionnaire comprised of statements on the variables. Hence questionnaire was given to selected youths in Batticaloa district.

Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index (RAPI) was used to measure alcohol consumption. It was formulated by White & Labouvie (1989) and it has a 10 items to measure the variable. Another variable is attitudes of youths towards social responsibility measured by the modified questions which is designed by Bills (1975). Lastly, to measure the peer group influence, the Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) was used and this instrument was designed by Clasen and Brown (1985).

6.3 Data Presentation, Analysis and Evaluation

Data has been presented using tables. Frequency analysis was used for data analysis and it's from the analysis of 214 respondents. Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was used to analysis the relationship between them. Statistical package of SPSS 22.0 has been used for this purpose.

7. Analysis and Findings

7.1 Sample Profile

The youths from particular area in Batticaloa district have been selected for this study. It consists of 214 youths as per the Table 1. The response rate of this study is 100%.

Table 1. Sample and Response Rate

Gender	Number of Students	Proportion	Response Rate (100%)
Male	100	46.73%	100
Female	114	53.27%	100
	214	100%	

(Source: Survey data)

7.2 Findings and Discussion of the Relationship between Variables

This section presents the details of the relationships between variables

7.2.1 Spearman's Rank Order Correlation

Spearman's rank order correlation was carried out to verify the relationship between peer group influence, alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

7.2.2 The Relationship between Peer Group Influence and the Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

Table 2. Coefficient of Correlation between Peer Group Influence and the Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

Variable		Attitudes of Youths
Peer Group Influence	Correlation Coefficient	-.183
	Sig (2-tailed)	.257
	N	214

(Source: survey data)

(p = Significance level, the model is not significant at 5%)

The Table 2 shows that peer group influence is not significantly related to the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility (p = .257; rho = -.183). In addition, the correlation analysis describes how the relationship between dependent variable and independent

variables exists at 5% significance level. The correlation between peer group influence and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility shows no relationship.

7.2.3 The Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Alcohol Consumption

Table 3. Coefficient of Correlation between Peer Group Influence and Alcohol Consumption

Variable		Alcohol Consumption
Peer Group Influence	Correlation Coefficient	.313
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
	N	214

(Source: survey data)

(p = Significance level, the model is significant at 5%)

The Table 3 shows that peer group influence is significantly related to alcohol consumption of school students ($p = .028$; $\rho = .313$). In addition, the correlation analysis describes how the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables exists at 5% significance level. The correlation between peer group influence and alcohol consumption shows a positive relationship.

7.2.4 The Relationship between Alcohol Consumption and the Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

Table 4. Coefficient of Correlation between Alcohol Consumption and the Attitudes of Youths towards Social Responsibility

Variable		Attitudes of youths
Alcohol Consumption	Correlation Coefficient	-.379
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	214

(Source: survey data)

(p = Significance level, the model is significant at 5%)

The Table 4 shows that alcohol consumption is significantly related to the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility ($p = .001$; $\rho = .379$). In addition, the correlation analysis describes how the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables exists

at 5% significance level. The correlation between alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility shows a negative relationship.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

Youths are the main human resource for the future. So, the behaviors of the youths have an important role in the social responsibility. This study analyzed the three main factors which have an association with youth's behaviors and established the relationship between the study variables. Those study variables are peer group influence, alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility.

According to the study, peer group influence has no significant relationship with the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. This shows that factors other than peer groups may be responsible to explain the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility from the findings. Secondly, the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption. Chalder, Elgari, and Bennett (2005) also pointed out that peer group influence is a key factor in causing alcohol consumption that may result into getting into fights, engaging in sexual promiscuity, and missing school. Finally there is a significant negative relationship between alcohol consumption and the attitudes of youths towards social responsibility. Further the negative behavior of the youths have influenced by alcohol consumption.

It is recommended that administrators, parents and responsible organization want to get involved in making concepts of guidelines for the youths. Guidance and counseling can make changes in the attitudes of the youths towards social responsibility.

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