

A Review of Alcohol Consumption as a Leisure Activity among College Students

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Abstract: *The review article aimed to gather information regarding alcohol consumption as a leisure activity among college students. Many research articles are diversified towards different aspects of alcohol use, such as the effects on academics, the COVID - 19 period, friend zones, etc., among students. This review aims to examine the role of alcohol consumption as a leisure activity among college students, assessing its prevalence, positive and negative impacts, and the implications for student well - being and academic performance. Only twenty - eight research articles focus on consuming alcohol during leisure activities among college students. The range of duration of published articles is between 2013 and 2024. Eight databases were searched: PubMed, Scopus, Embase, Cochrane Library, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, and Research Gate. Studies involved college students aged 18 to 25 from various Indian and international colleges. Few studies have identified alcohol consumption during leisure as "Alcohol Addiction". Consuming alcohol during leisure was not reported to be beneficial for college students. In summary, this review explores the use of alcohol as a leisure activity among college students, analyzing 28 research articles published between 2013 and 2024. The study examines various dimensions of alcohol use, such as social gatherings, weekend enjoyment, and its impact on mental health. Findings indicate that while alcohol consumption serves as a key tool for relaxation and entertainment, it also poses challenges, including addiction and mental health issues. The review suggests further research into mitigating negative outcomes.*

Keywords: Alcohol consumption, Leisure activities, College students, Mental health, Alcohol addiction

1. Introduction

Leisure activities are pursuits done for enjoyment, relaxation, and self - actualization during downtime. They can be very different; they might include more energetic activities like sports, hiking, and yoga as well as more sedentary ones like reading, watching movies, and playing video games. Engaging in these activities is crucial for enhancing one's mental and physical well - being, reducing stress, and strengthening social ties. Since they foster creativity, improve mood, and provide a sense of accomplishment, leisure activities are essential to a balanced and healthy existence.

Recreational activities are vital for maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle because they have numerous benefits for both mental and physical health. Engaging in recreational pursuits provides a respite from the demands and responsibilities of everyday existence, hence mitigating stress levels. Relaxing hobbies and pastimes like reading, gardening, or listening to music might help reduce cortisol levels and promote calm. Leisure activities improve mental health and lessen the signs of anxiety and sadness by offering chances for enjoyment and relaxation. Hobbies and interests can enhance overall happiness and life satisfaction, as well as provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Numerous leisure pursuits, including hiking, swimming, and sports, involve exercise.

It helps one maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of chronic illnesses. Social connection is usually required when engaging in leisure activities like team sports, club membership, or going to local events. Through these interactions, relationships are developed, social skills are

enhanced, and a sense of community and belonging is established. Mentally demanding pastimes that support and improve cognitive function include learning a new language, playing games like chess, and solving puzzles. These cerebral workouts enhance one's capacity for creativity, memory, and problem - solving. A healthy work - life balance is facilitated by leisure activities, which provide a much - needed break from work - related obligations.

This balance is essential for preserving long - term job happiness, increasing productivity, and preventing burnout. People might develop new skills and find new passions through leisure activities.

This research may lead to increased self - worth, a broader perspective on life, and personal growth. Enjoyable activities release endorphins, the body's natural "feel - good" hormones that improve mood and energy. People's daily life could be improved by this boost because it could increase their motivation and enthusiasm. By incorporating leisure activities into their daily routines, people can improve their quality of life and lead healthier, more balanced lives.

Leisure activities have a big impact on college students' lives because they give them a much - needed break from their rigorous academic commitments. Engaging in sports, hobbies, and social events can help lower stress levels, improve mental health, and improve overall well - being. Children can develop their social skills, make friends, and create a supportive community by participating in these activities. Engaging in leisure can enhance one's capacity for creativity, problem - solving, and time management, thus contributing to a more fulfilling and comprehensive college

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experience. Students can enjoy happier, healthier, and more productive college lives by including leisure activities in their daily schedules.

The most prevalent type of substance usage among college students is alcohol consumption. According to the 2018 Monitoring the Future Survey, college students drank more alcohol in the previous year and the previous 30 days than their counterparts who did not attend college. Binge drinking and other risky drinking habits have been identified as recurring issues on college campuses. In one sitting, or within two hours, binge drinking is defined as having four or more drinks for women and five or more for men. Compared to 25% of their classmates who are not in college, over a third (29%) of college students reported binge drinking within the last two weeks. Binge drinking, as opposed to excessive sedentary behavior or inadequate physical activity, can have negative effects on the individual as well as others around them.

Worldwide variations in the quantity and kind of alcohol used as well as the temporal patterns of alcohol use are a result of the influences of economic, social, religious, and traditional factors on alcohol consumption. India boasts the greatest youth population in the world, and as a result of outside influences, its youth are drinking alcohol at younger and higher rates than ever before. One of the main activities for college students is drinking alcohol. A dearth of studies has examined the leisure context in which students' alcohol consumption patterns occur and their preference for alcohol

over wine. Most of the research on this topic has concentrated on the reasons why students engage in binge drinking.

2. Material and Methods

Eight databases were searched: PubMed, Scopus, Embase, Cochrane Library, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, and Research Gate. The range of duration of published articles is limited between 2013 and 2024. Works involving college students of 18 to 25 years of age and from different colleges in India and abroad are considered for inclusion in this review article. Articles written on various other aspects of alcohol consumption like their importance in the social field, their relation with different physical and mental issues, activities related to social and cultural behaviors, etc. are excluded as these articles are not found to be fit for selection. Articles written in the English language are considered. The review utilized a systematic approach, including a comprehensive search across eight databases. Criteria for inclusion were limited to studies published between 2013 and 2024, focusing on alcohol use for leisure among college students. Data were analyzed based on thematic trends and the impact of alcohol use on mental health.

3. Results and Discussion

Only twenty - eight research articles are found to be dedicated to the use of alcohol during leisure activities among college students. The colleges are chosen from both India as well as from outside India.

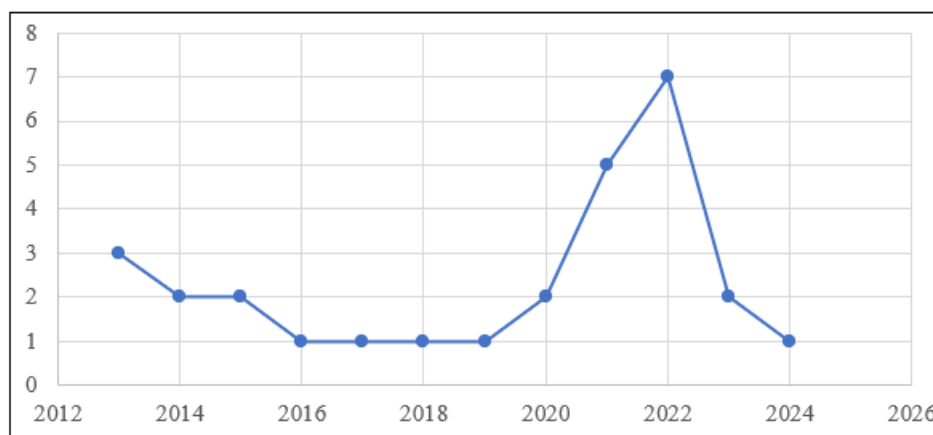


Chart 1: Publication of Research Articles between 2013 and 2024

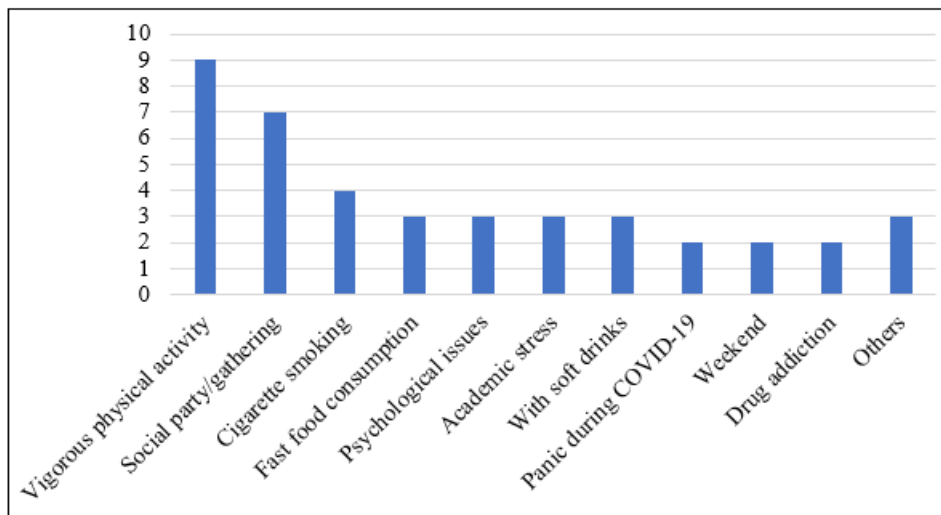


Chart 2: Reasons for intake alcohol during leisure time

Chart 01 clearly shows the number of articles published between 2013 and 2024 that consider the topic of alcohol consumption as a leisure activity among various college students. **Chart 02** clearly shows various reasons for consuming alcohol as the only leisure activity among college students in India and abroad. Three articles have been put forward in 2013 concerned the topic of review (Nayak & Prabhu, 2013; Smith 2013, and Lorant et. al., 2013). The study by Nayak & Prabhu (2013) involved 25, 000 students 18 - 25 years of age and found that 90% of the participants consumed alcohol during their leisure period and most of them preferred liquor over wine. The study by Lorant et. al., (2013) involved 7015 college students and observed that the most popular period of alcohol intake during leisure time was the weekend. Smith (2013) included 232 college students of both sexes and found during leisure the students preferred to intake alcohol mixed with soft drinks. Two research articles dealt with the present topic of interest (Seo et. al.2014 and Pillai et. al.2014). The study by Seo et. al. (2014) involved college students and found that the main reason for alcohol consumption during leisure time is cigarette smoking. The study of Pillai et. al. (2014) studied on the college students of Karnataka (India). The study concluded that social gatherings either with family or friends, odd lifestyles like intake of fast food regularly, and family problems are the key reasons for taking alcohol in leisure time. Another two articles were found in the year 2015 (Xidas, 2015, Yismaw & Kabede, 2015). The study by Yismaw & Kabede, (2015) involved 454 college students of both sexes and concluded that behavioral and psychological disturbances were the two main reasons for consuming alcohol in leisure periods. Xidas (2015) has researched 434 college students and concluded that due to academic stress, students were taking alcohol during their leisure time to release stress. Hittpole (2016) has put almost the same findings forward. The study included 61 higher education institutions. The outcome of the study was due to academic stress and social gatherings students were taking alcohol in their leisure time. Abrantes et. al. (2017) involved 132 college students and concluded that vigorous physical activity was the reason for to intake of alcohol. The same findings have been put forward by Niedermeir et. al. (2018). The study involved 861 college students of both sexes. Oh et. al. (2019) conducted a study on students in South Korea (n=4592) and concluded that students took alcohol during

their leisure time by mixing it with energy drinks (AmED). Nazareno et. al. (2020) have researched college students and found that 44.3% of the participants consume alcohol during leisure periods. The prime reasons put forward were cigarette smoking, smokeless tobacco use, vigorous physical activity, and obesity (in females). Schmucker et. al. (2020) have researched 535 college students and concluded that, fast food consumption and vigorous physical activity were the 2 main reasons of leisure alcohol consumption. In the year 2021, five research articles put forwarded related to the present topic (Henderson et. al., 2021; West et. al., 2021; Sandell et. al., 2021; Aranjó et. al., 2021, and Mohapatra & Pradhan, 2021). Mohapatra & Pradhan, (2021) worked on 200 nursing college students and found that drug addiction was the prime cause of alcohol consumption during leisure time. Henderson et. al., (2021) involved 383 college students of 18 years. The study concluded that, 59% of the participants consume alcohol in their leisure period and the reason is physical activity of extreme level. West et. al. (2021) also concluded the same worked on 58 college students. Sandell et. al., (2021) have done research on 76 college going students during COVID - 19 pandemic and found that most of the students drank due to panic of the disease. Aranjó et. al. (2021) included 313 Brazilian college students and found that cigarette smoking and sleep disturbance been the main two reasons for alcohol consumption during free time. Total seven research articles have been found in the year 2022 (Hna et. al., 2022; Najjar et. al., 2022; Booker et. al., 2022; Hussien et. al., 2022; Wilson et. al., 2022; Ramirez et. al., 2022; Saini & Suthar, 2022). The study of Hna et. al., (2022) involved 83 college students of 18 - 19 years of age. The study found that 86% of the participants were found to use alcohol. The reasons were social gatherings and peer pressure. Saini & Suthar, (2022) conducted a study on 180 college students of 18 - 19 years of age. According to the study, 86% of the participants were consuming alcohol during their leisure time. Social gatherings and peer pressure were the reasons identified in the study. Najjar et. al. (2022) pointed out vigorous physical activity to be the main cause of alcohol consumption in leisure period. The study included 250 college students of both sexes. The study by Booker et. al. in 2022 (n=127) observed that weekend celebration was the prime cause of alcohol consumption by college students. Hussain et. al. (2022) included 200 college students of both sexes and reported that massive physical activity, smoking,

unhealthy dietary practice (intake of fast food more frequently) were the main causes for leisure time alcohol consumption. Wilson et. al. (2022) included 1775 college students in a study and concluded that use of drugs and depression like mental issues were important reasons for alcohol consumption in leisure. Social gathering again pointed out to be the main cause of alcohol consumption by Ramirez et. al. (2022). In the year 2023 two research articles have been found related to the present topic of discussion. Slijiro et. al. (2023) have been conducted a study on 1045 college students during COVID=19 period and observed that, alcohol consumption during this pandemic period increased due to panic. Another study during COVID - 19 period have been conducted by Drenjak et. al. (2023) involving 788 college students. The outcome of the study was due to pandemic panic the students consu, ed much alcohol during leisure time. Ebuehi & osibogun conducted a study on Nigerian college students and found that academic stress and social stress were the two main reasons for alcohol consumption during leisure period.

4. Conclusion

The review paper sought to learn more about college students' use of alcohol for recreational purposes. Numerous studies focus on various facets of alcohol consumption among students, including how it affects their academic performance, the COVID - 19 pandemic, friend zones, etc. Examining alcohol use as a recreational activity among college students, this review tries to determine how common it is, what effects it has both positively and negatively, and how it affects students' academic performance and general well - being. Just twenty - eight studies address college students' use of alcohol for recreational purposes. The papers that have been published span the years 2013 through 2024. PubMed, Scopus, Embase, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, Research Gate, and the Cochrane Library were the eight databases that were searched. Students from various Indian and foreign colleges, ages 18 to 25, participated in the studies. Only a small number of studies have classified drinking alcohol recreationally as "alcohol addiction. " Alcohol consumption in free time has not been found to be advantageous for college students. In conclusion, this analysis examines college students' usage of alcohol for recreational purposes by examining 28 research studies that were released between 2013 and 2024. The study looks at a number of aspects of alcohol consumption, including weekend enjoyment, social interactions, and its effects on mental health. Results show that although drinking alcohol is a great way to unwind and have fun, it can also have negative effects like addiction and mental health problems. The assessment recommends more investigation on adverse outcome mitigation.

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