

ABSTRACT

Adolescent alcohol use is an issue of serious concern that has physical, emotional, and behavioral consequences. Alcohol use among this age group is highly prevalent and leads to poorer outcomes later in life. Adolescent drinking causes high public health and economic burden, making it crucial to understand why they drink to inform intervention and prevention efforts. The present study aimed to understand the relationship between alcohol use and family and school factors among adolescents transitioning to adulthood. This study uses secondary data drawn from the longitudinal Raising Healthy Children Project, consisting of a subset of 494 participants obtained through stratified random sampling of 10 public elementary schools in a suburban district north of Seattle, Washington. The multiple chi-square tests were used to test the relationship between adolescents' drinking in the past year and school and family factors, including feeling safe at school, positive notice from teachers, having clear family rules, and parents knowing where they are when not at home.

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

- Alcohol is the most used substance among youth in the U.S. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Purpose

- The purpose of the current research was to examine the relationship of family and school factors on alcohol use among adolescents who are in transition to adulthood.

Research Question

- What is the relationship of families and schools on alcohol use among adolescents who are in transition to adulthood?

Hypothesis

- Healthy family and school factors would be negatively associated with alcohol use among adolescents in transition to adulthood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory

Social Control Theory

- Social control theory holds that deviant behaviors are more likely to occur when individuals have weak social and interpersonal bonds (Gottfredson et al., 2018; Li et al., 2011). Having strong bonds and role models, such as parents or teachers, encourage normative behaviors, and oppose deviant behaviors such as substance use (Gottfredson et al., 2018).

Social Development Model

- The social development model holds that adolescent engagement in problem activities such as alcohol use is attenuated to the degree that they are tied or attached to prosocial primary socialization units because they are encouraged to adhere to the prosocial unit's rules and values (Henry et al., 2009; Rovis et al., 2016).

Family and School Contexts

Family Context

- Family is one of the most influential microsystems in adolescent alcohol use. Certain aspects of a family context can serve as protective factors from alcohol use such as parenting styles, attachment, and communication in the parent-child relationship.

School Context

- School-level studies have demonstrated that schools have a significant effect on the development of risk behaviors and found that students with higher school bonding have lower alcohol consumption rates

Gaps in Research

- Less studies have focused on adolescents in transition to adulthood alcohol use specifically and the specific variables in this research study.

METHODS

Research Design and Data Collection

- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from the longitudinal project Raising Healthy Children. The project was carried out from 2004 to 2011 in the Seattle metropolitan area (Bailey, 2011). Raising Healthy Children was an etiologic study of substance use development that focuses on environmental risk and protective factors for substance misuse from the family and school domains.
- Original data was collected from 1,040 individuals when they were in the first or second grade. Individuals were recruited from 10 schools in a suburban school district in the Northwest United States.
- The current study is cross-sectional and uses only the specific wave of data collected from respondents at 18 years of age.

Sample

- The study used stratified random sampling in which the ten schools that were selected in the district to be a part of the study were selected because they had students with the highest aggregate risk, which consisted of the highest percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch and the lowest scores on standardized achievement tests
- The subsample of the current study utilizes the data obtained in 2005 and has a sample size of 494 respondents.

Measures

- Raising Healthy Children used quantitative measures in surveys. The variables examined within the current study include demographics, alcohol use, school contexts, and family contexts at 18 years of age. Variables were measured in the initial study using a 4-point Likert scale and recoded as binary variables for this study's analysis as either "yes" or "no".
- To measure alcohol use in the past year, participants at age 18 were asked if they had any past year alcohol use and were given the options to respond to either "No" or "Yes." . To measure variables in the school context, respondents answered yes or no to the following: "Teacher's notice when I'm doing good and let me know" and "I feel safe at school." To measure variables in the family context, respondents answered yes or no to the following: "When not home, parents know where I am" and "Rules in my family are clear."
- Demographic items in the current study include household income, parent education level, race, and sex.

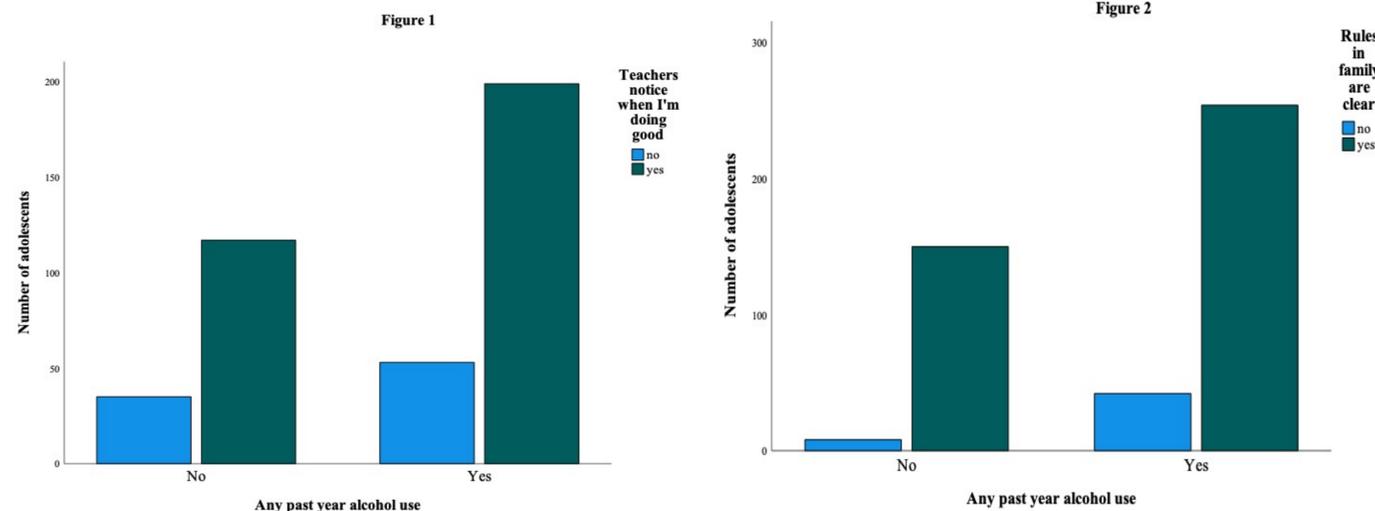
Statistical Analysis

- The Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 27 was utilized for the descriptive and inferential analyses contained in this study
- Multiple chi-square tests were used to test the relationship between adolescents' drinking in the past year and school and family factors

RESULTS

Chi-Square Analysis

- Most adolescents (60.7%, n=300) reported drinking alcohol in the past year, compared to only 32% (n=158) of adolescents who reported no alcohol use in the past year.
- A significant association was found in the analysis of a sense of safety at school and alcohol consumption $\chi^2(2) = 14.25, p < 0.01$, while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (0.176). Adolescents who felt safe in school were significantly more likely not drink alcohol in the past year (92.4%) compared to those who did not feel safe in school (3.8%).
- A significant association was found in the analysis of having clear family rules and alcohol consumption $\chi^2(1) = 8.75, p < 0.01$, while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (-.139). Adolescents who felt they had clear family rules were more likely to not drink alcohol (94.9%) compared to those who do not have clear family rules (5.1%).
- A significant association was found in the analysis of parents knowing their whereabouts and alcohol consumption $\chi^2(1) = 8.34, p < 0.01$, while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (-.139). Adolescents whose parents knew where they were when not at home were more likely not to drink alcohol (91%) than those who reported their parents did not know where they were when not at home (9%).
- A significant association was found in the analysis of positive notice from teachers and alcohol use $\chi^2(2) = 14.57, p < 0.01$, while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (0.178). Adolescents who felt their teachers noticed when they were doing good were more likely to not drink alcohol in the past year (74.1%) than those who did not feel their teachers noticed when they were doing good (22.2%).



DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

- Those who drank alcohol in the past year outnumbered those who did not drink alcohol in the past year regardless of the school and family factors in this study.
- Most adolescents who did not drink alcohol in the past year had clear family rules which may indicate that adolescents in families with clear rules are less likely to drink
- Most adolescents who did not drink alcohol in the past year felt safe in school and more adolescents whose teachers noticed when they were doing good did not drink compared to those whose teachers did not notice when they were doing good
- The significant association between alcohol use in the past year and feeling safe in school, positive notice from teachers, parents knowing their whereabouts, and having clear family rules supports previous studies and theories that indicate the significance families and schools play in adolescent substance use behaviors, and how these family and school factors can serve as protective factors from alcohol use.

Implications for Research and Practice

- Findings highlight the importance of further research into risk and protective factors, policy changes to increase school safety, and including parents in social work practice interventions to decrease adolescent alcohol use
- Findings suggest it would be beneficial to address both school and family factors to enhance intervention efforts

Strengths and Limitations

- Strengths of this study include the relatively large sample size (n=494).
- Limitations of this study include the measure of "any" alcohol use in the past year which is vague and does not define the amount of alcohol consumed or its frequency and sample demographics of only participants from the Seattle metropolitan area who are primarily white do not represent a diverse geographic or racial population.

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