Investigating the Connections between Alcohol Use, Mental Health, and Undergraduate Academic Achievement in Sri Lanka

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Abstract - *Alcohol and mental health problems are becoming more common among university students. During university activities, students use alcohol to ease the pressure on their mental freedom. The primary goal of this study is to have a look at how alcohol usage and depression affect university students' academic performance. Students face issues like skipping classes, late assignments, and dropping GPA due to substance abuse and mental health issues. The main purpose of this research is to investigate how alcohol use and mental health affect the academic performance of university students. A mixed-method approach was used, including online questionnaires, surveys, and interviews. The study found a significant link between binge alcohol consumption and academic performance, with factors like peer influence, coping mechanisms, and academic stress influencing this relationship. The study emphasizes the need for universities to address this relationship and recommends measures and awareness programs to reduce stress and improve student health in Sri Lanka.The study analyses data using correlation and thematic analyses and utilizes the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) to determine alcohol intake levels.*

***Keywords*:** Academic Achievements, Alcohol Consumption and Psychological Distress.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2022) an estimated three million deaths occur worldwide every year from harmful use of alcohol consumption. This represents 5.3% of global deaths, moreover 5.1% of the global diseases and injuries are afflicted due to diagnosable alcohol consumption (World Health Organization, 2022). High level of alcohol consumption among adults along with poorer social integration and mental health is common among student community (Sæther et al., 2019).

Recently, many people in society are facing mental health problems due to alcohol. Alcohol has become a common habbit of many young people. Sri Lanka is a middle-income country with population of 22 million and a GDP per-capita of USD 3354.4 (World Health Organization, 2022). According to the findings of (Somatunga et al., 2014), only 2.4% of women in Sri Lanka drink alcohol, while the percentage of men is 39.6%. Alcohol use is increasing in Sri Lanka especially in urban areas (33.9%) compared to rural areas (20.8%). Male students are 28.48% of male student population and 10.44% of female student population who chew betel nut along with tobacco. Compared to women, men are more likely to have a positive view of alcohol consumption and the percentages laying at 7% and 27% respectively (World Health Organization, 2022;World Report, 2022).

Adolescents between the ages of 18 and 24 have recently been found to have a high-risk alcohol consumption. This exposes the short-term and long-term risks of alcohol related harm of university students (C Tembo et al., 2017; Chimwemwe Tembo et al., 2017). Academic failure, financial challenges, family troubles, and memory loss are the most common issues that students confront. College students in Europe, the United States of America, and Australia have been found to have greater rates of alcohol use disorders, alcohol dependency, stress, anxiety, eating disorders, and depression than the general population. It appears that college students are more likely than ever to consume alcohol and have unlimited access to it today.

There is a large body of evidence linking hazardous alcohol use to a variety of mental disorders, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, and stress. Boden and Fergusson (2011) Compared to non-college participants, college students have an increased risk of developing alcohol-related disorders, stress, anxiety, disordered eating, and depression, according to research conducted in Europe, the United States, and Australia (Kirsch et al., 2015). People with a genetic predisposition to alcoholism are more prone to stress, sadness, and anxiety.

The entire campus community is affected by the negative effects of alcohol. The university environment is often conducive to heavy drinking (Hallett et al., 2012) and influences alcohol consumption both psychologically and physically (C Tembo et al., 2017). Peer association with college drinkers, academic stress, and risk-taking behaviors are couses behind these behaviors (Hallett et al., 2012). An Australian university found that approximately 50% of young students drank to intoxication on one or more days per week (Obst et al., 2002) and a research conducted in the universities of the United States confirmed that due to harmful alcohol consumption, there can be side effects such as sleep disturbance, insults, harmful sexual behavior and having to care for intoxicated friend or roommate. However, this was limited to student houses only. Alcohol has become a staple of social life among many young people. Short-term effects from episodic drinking are found to be considerable among young university students (Rickwood et al., 2011). Students mostly use alcohol for the first time during their first year of university. (Turrisi et al., 2006)There were around 20-25% of college students who had drinking issues, suffered drinking related repercussions, or were at an elevated risk of engaging in excessive episode drinking (Bethesda, (2007). University students suffer from poor mental health and psychological disorders (Said et al., 2013). Interventions for these disorders should incorporate psychological literacy and must include information and strategies for identifying, managing, and preventing mental health problems (McGorry et al., 2007).

As noted by Werner and Greene (1992), many nations, binge drinking and the repercussions of drinking among college students are major issues. This implies that there is a link between students' alcohol use and their academic accomplishment. (H. Wesley Perkins, 2002;H. W. Perkins, 2002; H.. Perkins, 2002). However, it is worth noting that well-controlled studies have not provided empirical evidence of the effect of heavy drinking on college dropout (Kessler et al., 1995). Prospective studies have found no correlation between alcohol consumption and lower grades among college freshmen (Chimwemwe Tembo et al., 2017).

Undergraduate students from Sri Lanka commonly exhibit mental health issues, with a significant prevalence of depressed symptoms (Amarasuriya et al., 2015). Recent research among medical students at Sri Jayewardenepura University revealed

significant psychological damage in those in their last year, with academic pressure being the primary cause (Liyanage, 2017).

Another study found that among final-year medical students, high emotional intelligence was linked to higher levels of self-satisfaction, lower levels of stress, and better academic success (Wijekoon et al., 2017). Most of the students who attend universities in Sri Lanka varies between the age of 18 to 29. When students completed their school academic career and entered a university can make substantial changes in their lifestyles and behaviors with both positive and negative impacts.With the current influences and trends of society, there is a higher chance for university students to get addicted to alcohol and undergoes immense pressure because of the heavy academic and nonacademic workloads which can lead to mental stress or decoders such as migraine and depression. It is important to identify the impact of alcohol consumption and the mental well-being of university undergraduates towards academic performance and should eliminate any identified negative outcomes by addressing these issues to enhance the academic and personal performance of university undergraduates.

A comparable study was carried out by Balsa et al. (2011) to look into how high school pupils' academic performance is affected by alcohol use. The study also found that alcohol consumption has a modestly negative influence on student's GPA, and this effect is partly offset by higher absence rates and difficulty performing school-related tasks. Researchers concluded that drinking alcohol had a bad effect on academic achievement

Young university students have been reported to have higher rates of mental health issues and harmful alcohol use than the overall population. This study investigates the relationship between drinking habits, mental health issues, and academic performance among university students. This study aims to explore the relationship between alcohol consumption, mental health, and academic performance of undergraduates in Sri Lanka, a gap in previous research. Most studies are based on other countries and have found a significant portion of university freshmen consume alcohol at risky levels, which is linked to poor academic and mental health outcomes.

II. METHODOLOGY

Participants in the study could be considered undergraduates at public and private universities in Sri Lanka. 15 Government universities and 10 private universities make up the population of research. There are 256,227 undergraduate students in the entire population, based on this information. This study uses a simple random sampling method to select a representative sample of 384 Sri Lankan undergraduates. The data will be collected using a probability sampling strategy. Additionally, 10 students are interviewed at private and public universities using snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, to find suitable subjects within the group.

The survey included demographic information, alcohol consumption levels, psychological distress, and academic performance. A basic questionnaire was used to collect demographic data, which contained the following information: gender, age, kind of university, current year, field of study, and GPA. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) was used to determine the level of alcohol use. The audit has been described as a reliable method for detecting alcoholism among undergraduate students (Barry & Fleming, 1993). To assess mental health, utilize the Kessler psychological distress scale.

The software program SPSS is utilized for quantitative data analysis. This software was used to calculate both descriptive and inferential statistics pertinent to the research. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the overall characteristics of the study participants. While the derived hypothesis of the research study will be evaluated using tests of Correlation Analysis, the researcher employed a qualitative data analysis technique using the thematic analysis. This technique was applied to qualitative data. This technique is useful for identifying, evaluating, and reporting recurring patterns (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The Correlation Analysis was performed to determine the relationship between Alcohol Consumption, Mental Health, and Academic Performance.

Alcohol intake levels can be assessed using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). The AUDIT has been hailed as a reliable instrument for identifying alcohol dependence in college students. The AUDIT assessment uses a damage score to categorize drinkers into low, moderate, high, and extremely high-risk groups (0-7, 8-15, 16-19, and 20+, respectively). The AUDIT was used to generate binary variables, as it has been used in previous research. There are no health concerns associated with drinking fewer than eight drinks per week, but heavy drinking increases the chance of major health problems (Reinert et al., 2002).

We may quickly and easily measure psychological discomfort by using Kessler's tool. To assess mental health, utilize the Kessler psychological distress scale. K10 version of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, 2003. This contains ten questions that ask about a person's most recent 30-day history of experiencing anxiety and depressive symptoms. Scores range from 10 to 50. According to previous studies, psychological discomfort can be divided into four categories, as follows: 15 to 21 moderate to low psychological anguish, 22 to 29 high distress, and 30 to 50 very high distress (Milkias et al., 2022). The four different types of psychological pain were combined into one binary variable that had categories for low, moderate, high, and extremely high levels of discomfort. The first division of the binary variable was defined using the categories of mild psychological discomfort, moderate/severe psychological pain, and extremely high psychological distress. Were produced by merging the categories of moderate, high, and extremely high distress (KESSLER et al., 2002).

To find the data related to Academic Performance, G.P.A of the students were used. In-face to face interviews with 10 participants will be done in-person interviews as the way of data collection for the study's qualitative approach to find the main causes for alcohol consumption among undergraduate students in Sri Lanka.

III. RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
17-19	17	4.4%
20-22	118	30.7%
23-25	202	52.6%
25 and above	47	12.2%
University Attended		
Non-State University	201	52.3%
State University	183	47.7%
Current Year		

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
1st Year	53	13.8%
2nd Year	82	21.4%
3rd Year	103	26.8%
4th Year	146	38%
Field of Study		
Applied Science	20	5.2%
Arts	23	6.0%
Business Management	106	27.6%
Computing	94	24.5%
Engineering	75	19.5%
Humanities & Social Science	27	7.0%
Other	39	10.2%
GPA		
2.00-2.5	11	2.9%
2.5-3.00	139	36.2%
3.00-3.5	139	36.5%
3.5-4.00	95	25.1%
Gender		
Female	133	34.6%
Male	251	65.4%

Source: Authors' compilation.

The current survey analysed six distinct categories of socio-demographic factors (Table 1), including respondents' age, gender, university attended, GPA, field of study, and current year. As given in Table 1, most participants (52.6%) were between the ages of 23 and 25, with the remaining 47.4% falling into one of the other three categories. The gender distribution is as follows: 65.4% are male and 34.6% are female. A substantial proportion (52.6%) of respondents were from non-state universities, and many respondents (106, 27.6%) were from the Business management topic of study. Others included 24.5% from computing, 14.31% from engineering, 9.3% from humanities and social sciences, and 10.2% from other categories. Current education levels of young adults in Sri Lanka are classified using the GPA, with the maximum number of respondents having a GPA of 2.9 and the biggest proportion of respondents being in their fourth year (37.8%).

A. Descriptive Statistics
Descriptive statistics describe the numerical or graphical procedures used to organize and describe the characteristics of a sample. For example, this include gender, age, university attended, current year, field of study, and GPA. These statistics aim to describe the midpoint of a range of scores, known as central tendency, and the range of scores, known as dispersion or variance. The degree of measurement used determines the type of descriptive statistics used to describe a variable in a sample. This study presents measures of central tendency and dispersion for quantitative variables, with the standard deviation measuring dispersion and the mean measuring central tendency. Table 2 illustrates the understanding of the central tendencies and variabilities within the three variables in the research.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics alcohol consumption, mental health status and academic performance

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Alcohol Consumption	384	15.99	9.320
Psychological Distress	384	27.82	8.249
G.PA	384	3.1987	0.40679

Source: Authors' compilation.

B. Quantitative Analysis

This study aimed to examine the relationships between alcohol consumption, academic performance, and psychological distress, using correlation analysis. Correlation is a statistical tool that assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The study used Pearson correlation analysis to test to find the relationship between each independent variable (Alcohol Consumption, Psychological Distress) and the dependent variable (Academic Performance).

Table 3: Correlation Anaysis

		G.P. A	Alcohol Consumption	Mental Health
Academic Performance/ G.P. A	Pearson Correlation	1	-.246**	-.101**
	Sig. (2tailed)		<.001	.048
	N	384	384	384

Source: Authors' compilation.

In terms of the strength of the relationship; a weak relationship is indicated by 0.1 to 0.3, a moderate relationship by coefficients of 0.3 to 0.7, and a strong relationship by coefficients of 0.7 and above. According to Table 3 the correlation between Alcohol Consumption and Academic Performance according to G.P.A was not statistically Significance at the 0.000 level, with a Pearson Correlation (R-value) of -.246. Which indicates a moderately Weak relationship between Alcohol Consumption and the DV. Based on other variables Mental Health and Academic Performance integration there is a significant predictor of Academic Performance (DV), as evidenced by the fact that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than alpha value 0.03 and the Pearson correlation (R-value) of 0.48, indicates a weak relationship as the correlation coefficient value falls between the range which is less than +0.1 according to the standard correlation scale.

C. Main Causes for Alcohol causes among Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

The final objective of the research study was to discover the main causes for alcohol consumption among undergraduates in Sri Lanka. . The thematic analysis was used to analyse the third objective.

The face to face interviews were carried out between April 1ˢᵗ and June 10ᵗʰ, 2023. The recruitment of interview participants using a combination of volunteer and purposive sampling among those who responded to the quantitative survey. The interview process

was conducted with undergraduate students in Sri Lanka.10-15 minutes face to face interview were used to collect data.

Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to manually follow familiarisation, coding, generating themes, assessing themes, defining and identifying themes, and lastly interpreting the observed theme. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach was used to transcribe and analyse the results collected from the respondents. The goal is to identify the most important coping mechanisms.

A growing number of students in Sri Lanka's undergraduate population engage in binge drinking and other harmful alcohol-related activities, raising concerns about the country's undergraduate alcohol consumption rate. Alcohol usage is seen as a health hazard among university students, and it is currently prevalent (Chandrasekara, 2017). The high rates of alcohol consumption among undergraduates in Sri Lanka are caused by a number of variables. Alcohol use is also linked to social norms surrounding drinking, such as college students drinking more alcohol when they believe their friends are partaking in and approving of similar behaviour (Halim et al., 2012). Students at universities today face a number of challenges as a result of these practices. Based on the data we gathered under alcohol use, factors affecting it, and potential solutions, this condition is described.

In Sri Lanka, drinking alcohol is a serious social and health problem, especially among university students. This phenomenon is influenced by several elements, including availability, pricing, cultural standards, and peer pressure. Alcohol abuse can have a variety of detrimental effects, such as poor health, dangerous conduct, and academic failure. There are, however, several strategies to lower alcohol use among college students in Sri Lanka, including educational campaigns, harsher laws and restrictions, and substitute activities.

Two important elements that influence alcohol intake among undergraduates in Sri Lanka are peer pressure and cultural norms. Heavy drinking is frequently viewed as the social norm, and many students feel forced to engage in it to blend in with their peers. One interviewee said, *"When friends drink alcohol, we also get used to them. Since we hang out with friends for a long time, we get used to them quickly".*

Alcohol abuse can have a variety of detrimental repercussions on a student's life. Heavy drinkers may struggle academically, with issues like poor attendance, worse marks, and trouble focusing. One interview participant informed, *"University lectures are missed due to alcohol use. It will affect the exam negatively because the coursework will be cut. It can affect the student's grades".* Additionally, drinking alcohol can harm a student's physical and mental health, increasing the risk of chronic illnesses and mental health problems.

There are numerous steps that might be implemented to lower alcohol use among college students in Sri Lanka. Campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of binge drinking and the value of moderation in alcohol intake can be successful. To further restrict access to alcohol and lessen underage drinking, tighter laws and rules can be put in place. Alcohol consumption can be decreased, for instance, by raising the drinking age, boosting the cost of alcohol, and reducing the number of permitted establishments.

Alternative activities can be added as well to provide students with chances to interact and have fun without alcohol. Sports, music, and other cultural events are a few examples of these things that could be done to take the attention off drinking as the only form of entertainment.

Alcohol use among college students in Sri Lanka is a serious issue, and several variables contribute to this issue. Alcohol abuse can have negative effects on one's life, including bad health, dangerous conduct, and academic failure. One interviewee stated, *"reducing their stress, giving them an understanding of the use of alcohol, and by organizing events from the universities to reduce the stress of the children, bringing a counselor in the campus, and giving counseling to the children about the misuse of alcohol. I think we can keep them away from alcohol by teaching them about the side effects".* These steps can be taken to lessen alcohol use and enhance the health and welfare of university students in Sri Lanka.

D. Factors for Alcohol Consumption

Drinking alcohol is a habit that many undergraduate college students have. It is well-known that members of this group partake in high-risk drinking practices, such as heavy alcohol usage. Referring to Table 4, the academic pressure universities provide can be the main factor for university students to get used to alcohol. One interviewer said, *"I think the workload for one semester is too much. Because of that undergraduate students get stressed. I am also getting appointed. Because of that, we used alcohol".* Students having assignments, presentations, mid-exams, and final exams of 6 or 7 subjects per semester has greatly influenced this situation. Most of the students who participated in the interview admitted to drinking once a week or once a month. Students now use it frequently as a technique to reduce their academic pressure.

The breakdown of relationships is another reason for affecting undergraduates to alcohol. University students start relationships early in their university careers. But after a while, those relationships end due to unexpected problems. Some students can't face these situations and because of that these university students turn to alcohol. *"Many people start affairs on campus. But after a while, they stop. Therefore, their mental health decreases. Finally, they turn to alcohol because of that relationship problem".* The above statement is from one of the interviewers of this study. Economic problems and family problems also affect this situation. This is another justification for university students' unrestricted independence. A lot of undergraduate students stayed in boarding houses. As a result, individuals start drinking because of the things like not having anyone to take care of them. It is a common situation in universities that if one's friends drink alcohol, one will also drink alcohol. University Batch trips, get-togethers, birthday parties, and after-exam parties in universities have also caused this situation.

E. The Effect of Alcohol Consumption

Undergraduate alcohol drinking is a common issue with numerous detrimental implications on one's physical and mental health, academic performance, and interpersonal interactions.

Alcohol use has an impact on other areas as well, including academic performance. One interviewer said, *"University lectures are missed due to alcohol use. It will affect the exam negatively because the coursework will be lost. It can affect a lot of university work".* According to studies, students who habitually consume alcohol miss more classes, lag in their coursework, and receive inferior grades. Most of the interviewer's opinion is that someday they attend lectures while they are drunk, and they cannot understand what the lectures did and didn't do any work on the day or the day after consuming alcohol. This leads to issues like not being able to submit assignments on time or prepare enough for presentations, among other things. Drinking alcohol can

affect cognitive function, making it harder to concentrate, retain details, and solve issues. A lack of motivation brought on by frequent drinking can impede academic success.

Alcoholism also has an impact on mental health. Alcohol use is regarded as a health issue among university students, which presently has a high occurrence (Chandrasekara, 2017). Alcohol use can impact brain chemistry and consequently mood and behavior. The likelihood of developing depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders rises with excessive alcohol usage. Additionally, it may raise the chance of suicide. Binge drinking, which involves consuming a lot of alcohol quickly, can result in unpleasant or dangerous circumstances as well as memory loss and blackouts. Alcohol use can affect judgment and cause risky conduct like drunk driving or unsafe sex.

Another factor influencing alcohol use is social connections. Underage drinking also contributes to issues with the economy, government, and the environment, including property damage and higher medical expenses for university officials. Personal issues including arguments, disagreements, and violent altercations can be brought on by alcohol. Because there are always gatherings in universities, they use alcohol while participating in them. In such situations, disagreements arise between students and fights occur. The reason for this is the lack of tolerance when using alcohol. Additionally, it may lead to dangerous behavior, which may result in legal issues or strained relationships with friends and family. As university students may spend more time drinking than participating in social activities, alcohol use can also result in social isolation.

Drinking alcohol while a student has several detrimental implications on one's physical and mental health, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. There is a high prevalence of alcohol usage among college students, so it's critical to recognize the risks and consume alcohol sensibly.

F. *Suggestions to reduce Alcohol Consumption*

Extreme alcohol use can have negative effects on one's health, including alcohol poisoning, impaired judgment, and poor academic performance. Fortunately, there are a variety of tactics that universities and individuals can employ to lower undergraduate alcohol consumption.

Through education and awareness initiatives, one of the most effective strategies to lower alcohol consumption among college students can be accomplished. Information on the risks of binge drinking, the telltale signs of alcohol poisoning, and responsible drinking advice can all be included in these advertisements. Posters, flyers, social media, and other avenues can all be used to spread awareness of these efforts. They may also be used in new student orientation sessions.

The pressure given to students by universities should be reduced a little. Students face various difficulties in giving quizzes, assignments, and presentations in many subjects for a little bit of time. One interviewer said *"Universities should reduce the students' workload. Lecturers should be involved with the students more than ever. Each of the students should be given the moral to actively participate in events and sports. It is good to keep students busy, but not just the education aspects, if they actively participate in entertainment and sports, they will have a calm, less stressful mind".*

It is crucial to acknowledge that some students might experience issues with alcohol-related issues including addiction or alcoholism. Through counseling services and support groups, universities can offer these students help. Universities can also collaborate with nearby treatment facilities to recommend students who require more intensive care to those facilities. A contributor of this study said, *"It is crucial to*

acknowledge that some students might experience issues with alcohol including addiction or alcoholism". Through counseling services and support groups, universities can offer these students help. Universities can also collaborate with nearby treatment facilities to recommend students who require more intensive care to those facilities.

The information gleaned from the interview suggests that the best course of action is to lessen the pressure placed on students by the universities. Most of them have talked about giving lectures and planning events. Additionally, some people have provided information on hosting various events and held different events to increase the relationship between students and lecturers.

Table 4: Frequency of the Codes derived from the Thematic Analysis

Codes	Respondents					
	R1	**R2**	**R3**	**R4**	**R5**	**R6**
Peer Pressure to drink	✓		✓		✓	✓
Social Events and Gathering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Desire to Fit	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Academic Stress		✓		✓		✓
Family Related Stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personnel Challenges		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mental Health Issues	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Cultural Acceptance of Alcohol Use	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Influence of Traditional Practices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Norms related to Alcohol Consumption	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Easy to Access to Alcohol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Availability of Cheap Alcohol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alcohol Advertising and Marketing		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Perception of Alcohol as a Rite of Passage	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Desire for Social Acceptance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Limited Awareness of The Risk s of Alcohol Use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insufficient Education on Responsible Drinking		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Misconceptions about Alcohol's Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Counselling	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Social Concerns		✓		✓		✓

Source: Authors' compilation.

IV. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between alcohol consumption, mental health, and academic performance among undergraduates in Sri Lanka. The study shows that 81.7% of the males were drinking alcohol at hazardous level compared to females. There was similar research conducted with the same topic in Australia and the findings were similar as her our findings (Tembo et al., 2017).

The findings reveal a link between alcohol intake, psychological distress, and academic achievement. Aside from difficulty concentrating in class, students who consumed alcohol at a dangerous level and experienced psychological discomfort were late to class, missed classes, and failed to finish assignments on time.

There was a substantial variation between different ages and levels of drinking. In our study, students aged 23-25 and 25 and up were found to drink more dangerously

than those aged 17-19 (72.2%), 20-22 years (68.4%), and underage. There is a substantial difference between age and alcohol use in this study, as opposed to previous studies where there was no significant difference between age and alcohol consumption. We may learn from the study that getting older can lead to harmful drinking practises.

Most of the students in this survey were from public universities. However, there was a significant relationship between being a state university student or a non-state university student and alcohol intake (p 0.001). State university students were found to consume alcohol at higher risk levels than non-state university students. Some students may come from various backgrounds, with differing attitudes and beliefs about alcohol drinking.

However, when binary variables were created from Kessler's and Audit, this study found that the students who are consuming hazardous level of alcohol been late for classes, missed classes and failed to complete assignments more than the low level of alcohol consuming students and these studies shows that we should be concerned about the mental health among binge drinking undergraduates in Sri Lanka.

The study implies that universities should be seen as an appropriate location to place mental health promotion that work to create awareness and safe consumption of alcohol. Also, universities must conduct youth friendly programs which take care of mental health issues associated with young university programs. The results show that students from both genders are more likely to experience mental health issues and the necessary treatments should be conducted to fix these issues.

Some of the limitations of the study are the tools we used to find about mental health issues among university students, are more concerned about anxiety and depression symptoms and the full mental health problems faced by students are not fully focused. Comparing the participants for our study there are more male participants compared to female which is not equally focused therefore there is a limitation there. Initially, there were various constraints that the researchers had to work around when doing the investigation. Based on the study, 384 students filled out the Google form and 20 students were interviewed covering most universities in Sri Lanka. As a result of this, researchers find a wide range of results. Researchers faced problems such as obtaining information from most university students, not filling out the Google form willingly, reluctance to face interviews raised while filling out the Google form and taking interviews. The fact that information collected from a large group of university students may lead to valid conclusions.

Participants in the research were allowed to give their answers freely. The findings of this study are more important in the future decisions and plans of universities. The study focused on the behavior of university students, their mental problems, their perception of alcohol use, the problems they face in their studies and their solutions. The purpose of the research is to expand the scope of the university framework by pointing out their problems through the opinions of current university students, considering our objectives. The shortcomings of the limitations of the study will contribute to the implications for future research. Although many universities in the country were used for the survey, it was not possible to get information from all the universities. Research in the future should aim to cover a broader scope, using all the universities in Sri Lanka. As well as to all the universities in Sri Lanka and may be other country university students. This will allow for broad comparisons and generalizations to be drawn across geographic areas, countries, and different peoples.

The qualitative study data collection has been limited to ten undergraduates in Sri Lanka because it was difficult to go to distinct universities. Most universities removed researchers to the qualitative segment due to time constraints. However future researchers are allowed to bring out research including the whole population of university in Sri Lanka. It can be recommended for the future researchers to expand the scope by doing a comparison between state and non-state university students and, they can expand their research by considering in depth about the examining how alcohol usage and psychological distress differ is non state and state university students.

From a university perspective, understanding the relevance of students' inherent cultural and value systems is critical when thinking about student behavior. In addition, the limitations mentioned in the previous sections provide a broad platform to develop future studies. The study focuses on a limited scope of representatives which does not cover the overall basis of the population. For instance, undergraduates following a path in the public institution would not have the same opinions as those in the private institutions. This would draw up a gap in the research drawn. Furthermore, the accuracy of the questionnaires would have a direct relationship to the answers provided by the representatives which would not guarantee full honesty and credibility.

The findings also show an association between alcohol consumption mental health issues and academic difficulties and show that students with severe psychological distress were more likely to fail to turn in assignments. The results of this study are highly comparable to those of other studies that show students who report severe psychological distress are more likely to have scholastic difficulties. The percentage of risky drinking among university students in this study is still high. As a result, the present prevalence statistics offer more evidence in favor of measures aimed at lowering youth alcohol intake. The outcomes also support the concept that universities are the best settings for programs aimed at promoting health.

V. CONCLUSION

Drinking alcohol is a serious social and health problem in Sri Lanka, especially among university students. This study was able to identify the exploring the relation between alcohol consumption and mental health effect on academic performance among undergraduates' students in Sri Lanka. To find that, several demographic and socio-demographic variables were studied, as well as their link and relationship to academic performance. The majority of the study's conclusions are closely related to past research, but some were made in inconsistency to previous findings. As Alcohol Consumption is influenced by availability, pricing, cultural standards, and peer pressure. It can have detrimental effects, such as poor health, dangerous conduct, and academic failure. Strategies to lower alcohol use include educational campaigns, harsher laws, and substitute activities. Alcohol use among college students in Sri Lanka can be reduced by raising the drinking age, boosting the cost of alcohol, and reducing the number of permitted establishments. Alternative activities such as sports, music, and cultural events can also be added to provide students with chances to interact and have fun without alcohol. These steps can help reduce stress and enhance the health and welfare of university students in Sri Lanka.

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