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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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SOCIO-COGNITIVE GOSKOLO (ALCOHOL) BINGE DRINKING BEHAVIOUR MODEL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF YOUTHS IN JOS METROPOLIS, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This grounded theory study aimed to explore the factors influencing Goskolo binge drinking behavior among youths in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, and to examine the associated negative effects. Using semi-structured interviews, the study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 23 participants, including both male and female youths aged 18-30 who were identified as regular Goskolo drinkers. The findings revealed that the negative effects of Goskolo binge drinking were categorized into four main areas: health issues (including organ damage, cancer, and death), social issues (such as irresponsible behavior and social misconduct), economic issues (including financial strain and unproductive habits), and psychological issues (such as memory loss and cognitive impairment). Additionally, the study identified peer pressure, the surrounding social environment, and poverty as key factors driving youths toward Goskolo binge drinking. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the multifaceted impact of Goskolo abuse and underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions. The recommendations include the implementation of community-based educational campaigns, peer mentorship programs, and youth empowerment initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and promoting healthier coping mechanisms. These actions are crucial for curbing Goskolo binge drinking and its harmful effects in Plateau State.

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INTRODUCTION

Goskolo is a hazardous local alcoholic drink that has gained significant popularity in Plateau, especially among youths who seek to experience a state of intoxication or escape into a "higher realm." This potent beverage, often referred to as a "silent killer," has tragically claimed the lives of many young individuals, while the community struggles to address the growing addiction and its devastating consequences. Goskolo is known for its dangerously high alcohol content, which ranges from 29% to 32%. The drink comes in various forms, with the clear version containing 29% alcohol, the colored version having 30%, and the combined clear and colored version, known as Ogoro, reaching the highest alcohol concentration of 32% (Ambrose *et al.*, 2022). The rapid spread of Goskolo abuse has left the community feeling helpless in combating the alarming rise in its use, with severe health and social implications for those caught in its grip. Consequently, the widespread abuse of Goskolo among youths in Jos, Plateau State, has led to an alarming rise in binge drinking behavior. Binge drinking is characterized by the rapid consumption of large quantities of alcohol within a short timeframe, with the primary goal of achieving intoxication. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks within approximately two hours for men, and four or

more drinks for women (NIAAA, 2020). This drinking pattern results in a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or higher, which is the legal limit for driving in many jurisdictions (NIAAA, 2007; Bayane, 2023). Binge drinking is linked to various negative health and social outcomes, including an increased risk of alcohol poisoning, injuries, accidents, and long-term conditions such as liver disease, cardiovascular issues, and addiction (Rehm *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, it is associated with impaired judgment, which can lead to risky behaviors such as unsafe sexual practices and driving under the influence (Weitzman *et al.*, 2003). Despite these growing concerns, there is limited research focusing specifically on the socio-cognitive factors influencing binge drinking behavior related to Goskolo in Jos Metropolis. This study bridged this gap by exploring how youths' knowledge, social influences, and individual factors shape their drinking behaviors and developed a socio-cognitive model for the Goskolo binge behaviour of youths in Jos, Plateau state. This is critical because human behavior is shaped by the ongoing interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Socio-cognitive elements play a pivotal role in this process by highlighting the dynamic relationship between an individual's cognitive processes, social environment, and personal experiences (Rado & Prada, 2021). Individuals observe others within their social circles engaging in specific behaviors, they are more likely to replicate those behaviors, especially when they perceive the behavior to be rewarded or socially accepted by the group. The socio-cognitive perspective emphasizes

that people acquire and modify behaviors through observation, social interaction, and cognitive evaluation of those behaviors.

Statement of the Problem: Alcohol consumption is responsible for approximately 2.3 million deaths worldwide, representing 3.8% of global mortality. These fatalities are primarily attributed to alcohol abuse (Okafor *et al.*, 2022). As one of the four major risk factors for the development of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), alcohol use contributes significantly to global mortality, accounting for 60% of deaths related to such conditions. In a 2011 report, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified Nigeria as the leading country in alcohol consumption across Africa (Hassan *et al.*, 2017). This highlights the serious public health impact of alcohol, not only on individual health but also on broader societal well-being, particularly in regions with high consumption rates. It contributes to conditions like liver disease, liver cancer, and hepatitis, as well as the spread of HIV. In 2017, alcohol abuse caused tens of thousands of deaths from liver-related issues. Locally, in Plateau State, Gskolo, a highly potent alcoholic drink, has become a significant health, social, and economic concern. The abuse of Gskolo has a profound negative impact on society, often contributing to juvenile delinquency, violent crimes such as armed robbery, sexual assault, the breakdown of family structures, and unintended pregnancies. These social consequences extend beyond individual harm, affecting communities and society as a whole. The far-reaching effects of alcohol abuse not only harm individuals and families but also place a heavy strain on economies, limiting opportunities for growth and progress. Unfortunately, there is a significant lack of documented statistics on deaths related to Gskolo use in Plateau State, making it challenging to fully understand the scope of the issue. Additionally, existing government policies do not adequately tackle the growing problem of Gskolo abuse, leaving a critical public health concern both unaddressed and poorly managed. Misconceptions surrounding Gskolo further complicate the situation, hindering effective communication about its dangers and preventing the implementation of necessary interventions. These misunderstandings about the risks of Gskolo contribute to the persistence of the problem and delay efforts to address it effectively. In order to reduce the devastating effects of Gskolo binge drinking behaviour, there is the critical need to explore the socio-cognitive realm. There is the need to specifically explore factors related to their knowledge (cognition) and how this knowledge is socially constructed.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study include:

- To explore the knowledge of youths in Jos, Plateau State of the negative effects of Gskolobuse.
- To ascertain factors that lead to Gskolo binge drinking behaviour by youths in Jos, Plateau State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies reviewed under this section collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of alcohol consumption, with an emphasis on binge drinking and the various demographic, knowledge, social and behavioral factors that contribute to it. Demographics and socio-economic status play crucial roles in drinking behavior. Higher socio-economic status and being female were often linked to higher binge drinking rates in some studies, though results varied across regions. In the study by Hassan *et al.* (2017) that assessed alcohol use in an urban Nigerian community and identified key predictors of harmful alcohol consumption, a high percentage (60.8%) of respondents were current drinkers, with 32% engaging in harmful levels of alcohol consumption. Significant predictors included sex, the quantity of alcohol consumed in one sitting, and the age at which alcohol use began. These results underscore the importance of early drinking behaviors and gender differences in determining harmful alcohol use in urban Nigerian populations.

Knowledge about the harms of alcohol is widespread, it does not necessarily correlate with reduced risky drinking. This suggests that interventions targeting behavior change may need to go beyond education, addressing social influences and providing strategies for coping with peer pressure and environmental stressors. Farace and Tarabella (2023) examined whether prior knowledge about the adverse effects of alcohol influences drinking behavior. Despite participants' awareness of the risks of alcohol consumption, no significant differences were found in drinking behavior between those with and without prior knowledge. This suggests that awareness alone may not be enough to prevent excessive drinking among young adults, pointing to the need for broader interventions that address social and psychological factors. Similarly, the study by Dumbili and Swahn (2024) focused on young Nigerians (both students and non-students) and explored the normalization of heavy drinking despite participants' awareness of its adverse effects. Participants commonly engaged in heavy drinking, leading to various negative health outcomes like vomiting, hangovers, and abdominal pain. Additionally, alcohol consumption impacted participants' academic and work performance. The findings suggest that even with knowledge of the harms of alcohol, the social context and the normalization of heavy drinking contribute to persistent high-risk behavior among young Nigerians.

Social Influences like peer pressure, living arrangements (off-campus vs. on-campus), and friendships with drinkers are consistently associated with higher rates of binge drinking and harmful alcohol consumption, particularly among university students. Bayane (2023) investigated binge drinking among university students in South Africa and identified a significant relationship between peer pressure, off-campus living, socio-economic status, and binge drinking. Female students, students with friends who drink, and those living off-campus were more likely to engage in binge drinking. Additionally, students with higher socio-economic status were more likely to binge drink than their counterparts from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The results emphasize the social influences and lifestyle factors that contribute to binge drinking behavior in a university setting. The study by Ramón-Arбуés *et al.* (2025) that investigated risky alcohol consumption and binge drinking among Spanish college students, found that 40% of participants engaged in risky alcohol consumption, with 26.7% classified as regular binge drinkers. Factors associated with risky drinking included smoking, problematic internet use, and living away from home. Conversely, older age and being female were protective factors. These findings highlight the role of lifestyle factors such as smoking and internet use in fostering risky drinking behaviors and suggest that living arrangements also influence binge drinking patterns. In conclusion, these studies reinforce the idea that binge drinking and heavy alcohol use are influenced by a complex interplay of social, demographic, and behavioral factors. Targeted interventions should address not only the knowledge of alcohol's harms but also the social contexts and lifestyle factors that promote risky drinking behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a grounded theory research design. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews. The qualitative approach was chosen for its effectiveness in uncovering the meanings young alcohol abusers attribute to their consumption of Gskolo (alcohol). The study population consisted of 23 young Gskolo-alcohol addicts, aged 18-25, drawn from four major markets in Jos metropolis. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on their direct experience with Gskolo-alcohol abuse. Additionally, snowball sampling was used to identify further participants. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and insights related to the subject matter.

RESULTS

Knowledge of youths in Jos, Plateau State of the negative effects of Gskolo abuse: This objective of the study explored the knowledge

of participants of this study on the negative effects of Gaskolo abuse. Four themes emerged from the narratives of the participants of this study to include: i) Health issues ii) Social issues iii) Economic issues and iv) Psychological issues. Table 1 shows the themes and their corresponding sub-themes.

Factors that lead to Gaskolo binge drinking behaviour by youths in Jos, Plateau State: This objective of the study sought to ascertain factors that lead to Gaskolo binge drinking behaviour by youths in Jos, Plateau State. Three themes emerged from the narratives of the participants of this study: i) Peer Pressure and ii) Social Environment

Table 1. Knowledge of youths in Jos, Plateau State of the negative effects of Gaskolo abuse

Objective	Themes	Sub-themes
Can you please share with me the negative effects of consuming Gaskolo?	1. Health issues	1.1 Gaskolo causes Death 1.2 It destroys the body organs 1.3 Gaskolo causes cancer 1.4 It causes fever and headache
	2. Social issues	2.1 It makes people misbehave 2.2 It makes one irresponsible
	3. Economic issues	3.1 Emptys one's pocket 3.2 Unproductivity menace
	4. Physiological issues	4.1 It makes one loss memory

Table 2. Factors that lead to Gaskolo binge drinking behaviour by youths in Jos, Plateau State

Research Question	Theme	Sub-theme
What factors contributed to your (Gaskolo) alcohol abuse ?	1. Peer pressure	1.1 Through my friends 1.2 Temptation
	2. Social Environment	2.1 I saw people taking it
	3. Poverty	3.1 No money

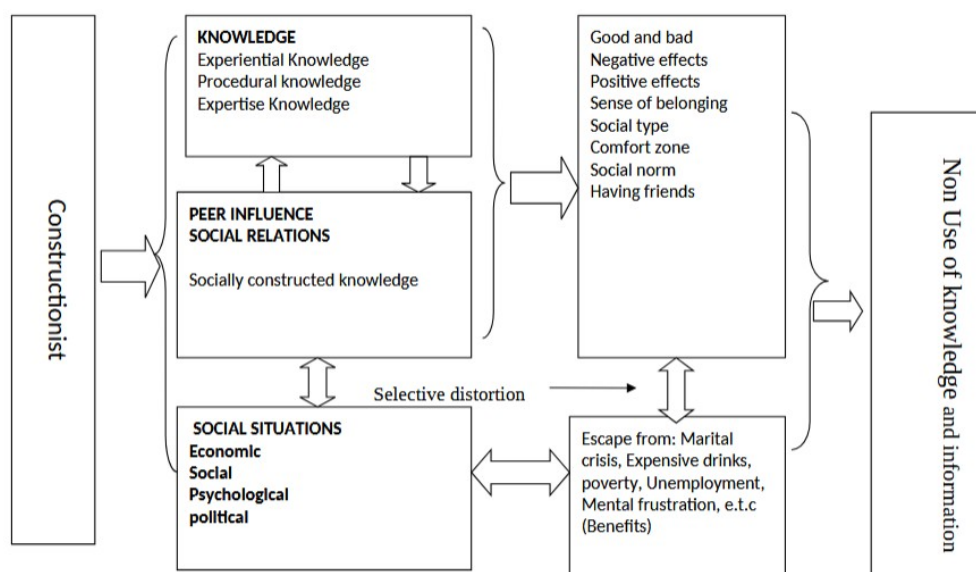


Fig 1. "Socio-cognitive binge insight" Model

The table 1 shows that participants of this study are fully aware of its harmful health effects, including damage to vital organs such as the liver and kidneys, and they also acknowledge its potential to cause death. This aligns with findings from Lub (2017) and Gronbaek (2009). Additionally, they recognize other negative consequences, such as impaired judgment, intoxication, and physical harm to the body (Gelder, Mayou, & Geddes, 2005; WHO, 2022). Despite this knowledge, they continue to engage in reckless drinking habits. This behavior can be explained by the "backfire effect". The "backfire effect" is a cognitive bias where individuals, when confronted with information that contradicts their beliefs, may become more strongly committed to those beliefs rather than revising them. This reaction occurs as a result of cognitive dissonance, where people feel discomfort from holding conflicting ideas and therefore reject or ignore evidence that challenges their views (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017). Rather than adjusting their opinions in light of new information, individuals may cling even more to their original beliefs, reinforcing them. Recent research indicates that this effect is particularly strong when the information challenges deeply held political or ideological views (Nyhan, 2021).

and iii) Poverty. Table 2 shows the themes and their corresponding sub-themes. Table 2 shows Peer pressure, social environment and poverty as factors that lead participants to Gaskolo binge behaviour. Peer pressure has long been recognized as one of the most influential factors in adolescent and youth substance abuse. The desire to fit in with a peer group, gain social acceptance, or imitate behaviors perceived as "cool" often leads youths to engage in risky behaviors, including alcohol and substance misuse. In the case of Gaskolo abuse, young people may be influenced by friends or social networks who normalize or encourage heavy drinking as part of social gatherings or to cope with life stresses. A recent study by Roberts and Odumodu (2024) in Nigeria underscores how peer pressure contributes significantly to alcohol and substance misuse, especially in communities with high levels of youth unemployment and limited recreational options. This pressure to conform to the drinking habits of peers is a potent risk factor for Gaskolo abuse, particularly in settings where youth culture involves collective drinking as a means of socialization. Similarly, the social and cultural context in which youths live also plays a role in shaping their attitudes toward alcohol use. In many Nigerian communities, drinking alcohol is normalized,

especially in social and celebratory contexts. A study by Eke *et al.* (2023) noted that social acceptability of drinking, particularly within peer groups, can lead to higher rates of alcohol consumption, as youths may not perceive the behavior as risky. This cultural normalization of alcohol use, combined with peer pressure and economic stressors, creates a dangerous environment for the proliferation of Gskolo abuse. Poverty, coupled with limited access to education and health resources, plays a central role in substance abuse. Research has shown that youths in impoverished environments are more likely to turn to alcohol and other substances as a form of escapism or to cope with the harsh realities of their socio-economic conditions. A study by Jones (2024) highlights that low-income youth often experience higher levels of stress, frustration, and a lack of future prospects, making them more susceptible to engaging in risky behaviors such as alcohol abuse. In Jos, Plateau State, economic hardship may contribute to Gskolo abuse by fostering an environment where alcohol becomes a coping mechanism for unemployment, poverty, or social marginalization.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the profound and multifaceted consequences of Gskolo binge drinking among youths in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, which encompass serious health, social, economic, and psychological issues. Health-wise, Gskolo abuse is linked to severe outcomes such as organ damage, cancer, and even death. Socially, it fosters irresponsibility and disruptive behavior, while economically, it drains financial resources and contributes to unproductivity. Psychologically, the habit leads to memory loss and other cognitive impairments. Furthermore, the study identifies peer pressure, the surrounding social environment, and poverty as key factors driving youths toward this harmful behavior. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that address the underlying social and economic factors contributing to Gskolo abuse and its devastating impact on individuals and communities.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Plateau State Government should implement community-focused educational campaigns that raise awareness about the negative consequences of Gskolo binge drinking, particularly among youths. These campaigns can utilize social media, local radio stations, and community events to reach young people and educate them about the health, social, economic, and psychological risks associated with Gskolo. Additionally, the government could establish peer mentorship programs in schools and local communities, training young leaders to guide their peers in resisting peer pressure and making healthier choices. By fostering peer-to-peer support, these programs can help create a more positive social environment and empower youths to avoid substance abuse.
2. To address the role of poverty in driving Gskolo binge drinking, the Plateau State Government should prioritize youth empowerment programs that focus on economic development and job creation. These programs could offer vocational training, entrepreneurship workshops, and access to small business grants to equip young people with the skills and resources needed for self-sufficiency. Providing youths with stable economic opportunities and a sense of purpose can reduce the allure of alcohol as a coping mechanism. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses and NGOs could be fostered to create internship and apprenticeship programs, ensuring that young people have access to viable career paths and financial independence.

Theoretical Contribution: The Socio-Cognitive Gskolo (Alcohol) Binge drinking model is grounded in the concept of socio-cognitive theory, which posits that behavior is influenced by an individual's thoughts, feelings, and social environment. The theory emerged from this study to explain why young adults engage in binge drinking behavior, despite being aware of its negative consequences.

Key Concepts: The Socio-Cognitive Gskolo (Alcohol) Binge drinking model is based on four fundamental concepts: knowledge, peer influence, social relationships, and social situations.

1. **Knowledge:** This concept refers to the information and understanding that individuals acquire through their experiences and social interactions. In the context of binge drinking behaviour, knowledge includes the individual's awareness of the negative consequences of excessive drinking.
2. **Peer Influence:** Peer influence refers to the impact that friends and social networks have on an individual's behavior. In the case of binge drinking, peer influence can encourage or discourage excessive drinking behavior.
3. **Social Relationships:** Social relationships refer to the connections and bonds that individuals form with others. In the context of binge drinking, social relationships can provide a sense of belonging and identity, which can contribute to excessive drinking behavior.
4. **Social Situations:** Social situations refer to the environmental and contextual factors that influence an individual's behavior. In the case of binge drinking, social situations can include parties, social gatherings, poverty and other events where excessive drinking is common.

Implications for Practice: The Socio-Cognitive Gskolo (Alcohol) Binge drinking model has significant implications for practice, particularly in the development of interventions aimed at reducing binge drinking behavior among young adults. To be effective, these interventions must take into account the complex interplay of factors that contribute to binge drinking behavior, including knowledge, peer influence, social relationships, and social situations. Additionally, they must address the perceived benefits that individuals derive from engaging in binge drinking behavior.

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