



## Adolescent Perspectives in Eastern Indonesia on Social Motivation in Alcohol Consumption: A Qualitative Study

Violin Irene Ninef<sup>1</sup>, Otniel Blegur<sup>1</sup>, Leviana Surya<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>STIKes Nusantara, Kupang, Indonesia

Correspondence author: Violin Irene Ninef

Email: [ireneviolin7@gmail.com](mailto:ireneviolin7@gmail.com)

address : Jl Frans Seda no 07 Kelurahan Tuak Daun Merah, Kecamatan Oebobo Kota Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur.

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Alcohol consumption among teenagers is a significant public health issue on a global scale. However, the levels of alcohol consumption among teenagers and their understanding of its impact on human health are still relatively poorly documented in various regions of Indonesia, especially among teenagers in the Eastern regions of Indonesia.

**Objective:** This research aims to comprehend the social motivations driving alcohol consumption among teenagers in Eastern Indonesia, identify contributing motivations, and investigate their implications in clinical nursing practice.

**Method:** This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The study population consists of teenagers aged 16-17 in the Eastern region of Indonesia. Sampling was conducted using the snowball sampling method based on predefined inclusion criteria. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, recorded using audio recording devices, and supplemented with field notes. Data analysis was carried out using the Colaizzi method, continuing until data saturation was achieved.

**Result:** The research findings reveal a variety of perspectives among East Indonesian teenagers regarding alcohol consumption, including cultural normalization of drinking and youth parties, factors associated with adolescent alcohol consumption, conflicting feelings about alcohol consumption, and alcohol consumption as a symbol of masculinity.

**Conclusion:** This study underscores the importance of a more holistic approach in understanding and addressing alcohol consumption issues among teenagers in Eastern Indonesia. Clinical nursing practice implications involve intensifying health education efforts for adolescents and developing more effective interventions to reduce the risks associated with alcohol consumption among teenagers, particularly in Eastern Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Social Motivation, Alcohol Consumption, Qualitative

## Introduction

Alcohol consumption is one of the most significant public health issues. In Europe, as many as 57% of teenagers have consumed alcohol in the past month. (Marques-Sanchez et al., 2020) Alcohol consumption during adolescence can lead to permanent damage to their brains, potentially affecting their quality of life. (Pedroni et al., 2021) The use of alcoholic beverages among teenagers has been considered a commonly occurring behavior that requires serious attention. (Prasetyo et al., 2022) During this phase, teenagers also believe that by consuming alcohol, they will be able to build many friendships and be accepted in their social circles. (Manurung, 2019) Adolescence is a crucial transitional phase involving physical, mental, and psychosocial development. (Forehand & Wierson, 1993) During this period, alcohol consumption practices start to form, and teenagers' expectations regarding the impact of alcohol change from negative to positive as they become aware of the potential benefits of alcohol consumption. At the same time, they may become less certain about its consequences and risks. (Buvik et al., 2022)

Data from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) indicates that approximately 80% of 15-16-year-old students have tried alcohol, and 13% of them have experienced intoxication in the last 30 days. (Kraus et al., 2016) Alcoholic beverages fall into the category of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and other addictive substances because they possess properties that calm the central nervous system, affect the functions of the body and individual behavior, and can alter the mood and feelings of those who consume them. (Arman Rifat Lette et al., 2016) The use of alcohol can also lead to a range of issues, including an increased risk of HIV infection, higher crime rates, changes in personality, decreased academic performance, and a high incidence of deaths and injuries due to road accidents. (Mungandi et al., 2022) Previous research has also indicated that among teenagers aged 12-15 in 19 countries in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, such as Indonesia, alcohol or alcoholic beverages are a key factor mediating premarital sexual relationships among both male and female teenagers. (Smith et al., 2020)

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation with diverse cultures and varied origins and backgrounds. As a result, it exhibits different customs regarding alcohol consumption. The habit of consuming alcoholic beverages can have adverse effects on health, especially when done excessively and consistently. Excessive alcohol consumption can harm various organs in the body, particularly the liver, brain, and heart. (Riskiyani et al., 2015) The consumption of alcoholic beverages (locally known as "miras") among teenagers has become common in Indonesian society. (Pihahay & May, 2022) According to a survey conducted by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the number of alcohol users in Indonesia increases by 1 million people every year. Additionally, research findings also indicate that 3.3% of Indonesian teenagers begin consuming alcohol at the age of 10. (Shaluhayah et al., 2020) In certain ethnic groups in Indonesia, alcohol consumption has become a cultural reality deeply ingrained in the lives of the people, serving as an integral part of personal, social, and economic aspects of life. (Yerkohok et al., 2020) The presence of alcoholic beverages in traditional celebrations,

especially in Indonesia, is due to traditions that have originated from the ancestors of the local communities, with some people considering alcoholic drinks as a symbol of honor.(Riskiyani et al., 2015) International studies indicate that teenagers living in rural areas tend to have a higher inclination to consume alcohol compared to those residing in urban areas.(Marques-Sanchez et al., 2020)

In East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT), there are locally fermented alcoholic beverages that have been traditionally produced by the communities in the East Nusa Tenggara archipelago. Despite their illegal status, these beverages have become widespread in the city of Kupang.(Arman Rifat Lette et al., 2016) According to the 2019 data from the National Institute of Health Research and Development, the proportion of alcohol consumption among the adult population in East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT) also ranks the highest. (Mutia Wahyuni Manoppo et al., 2023) Inappropriate alcohol consumption can have detrimental health effects, including brain damage, depression, heart disease, cancer, lung issues, liver disorders, gastrointestinal problems, and the risk of poisoning.(Mungandi et al., 2022) Various driving factors, such as peer pressure, can trigger alcohol consumption among teenagers. In this modern era, peer influence has led to alcohol misuse among adolescents, and this behavior is even considered a culture they take pride in.(Mukrimin et al., 2017)

Previous research has exhibited similar characteristics, primarily focusing on understanding alcohol consumption issues from a correlational perspective. However, more detailed explanations from the individual's perspective engaging in the consumption tend to be overlooked. Qualitative methods enable researchers to comprehend and delve into subjective meanings.(Korstjens & Moser, 2018) Therefore, qualitative methods enable researchers to gain deeper insights into this phenomenon. Furthermore, while previous research has identified teenagers' perspectives on alcohol consumption, studies in the Eastern regions of Indonesia have not been the primary focus. This knowledge gap highlights the need for more specific research, prompting a study aimed at understanding the social motivations behind alcohol consumption among teenagers in Eastern Indonesia.

## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with the aim of understanding the perspectives of teenagers in Eastern Indonesia regarding their alcohol consumption habits. The study is conducted in Liliba Village, Oebobo Subdistrict, Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Data is collected through in-depth interviews, which are recorded using audio recording equipment and documented in field notes. The informants in this study are six teenagers who are currently consuming alcohol and are aged 16-17. A total of 10 individuals are involved. The sampling technique used is snowball sampling, tailored to inclusion criteria. In this research, we entered the community through one of the participants who also served as the initial participant, and the selection of subsequent participants was based on information provided by the previous participants. Data is collected through in-depth interviews, recorded using audio recording equipment, and documented in field notes. The data collected from each participant is analyzed using the Colaizzi data analysis technique,

continuing until data saturation is reached. To ensure data validity, three steps are taken through repeated data collection at the end of each interview, as well as scheduled periodic meetings or data verification from various sources. Data is confirmed using various methods and involves participants in data checking.

## **Results**

In this research, ten willing participants were identified to undergo in-depth interviews. Participants were selected using the snowball sampling method with pre-established inclusion criteria. To begin, an initial participant was chosen from the community and then served as the source of information to recruit subsequent participants. The emerging themes in this study include:

### **Theme 1: Cultural normalization of drinking and youth parties.**

The research findings indicate that among the younger generation in Eastern Indonesia, alcohol consumption is often viewed as a well-established practice and an accepted part of the culture.

- *"At every party, there's drinking, and wherever there's a party, there's drinking, so where else can we go? (P1, LM, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"Well, if we grow up around people who regularly consume alcohol, it's considered normal for us. (P6, RK, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"In family events, parties, and such, there's always a need for drinks, so we think it's quite normal." (P7, AD, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"You see, at parties, we always pitch in and buy drinks, and there's no one stopping us." (P10, BB, 17, Alcohol consumer)*

### **Theme 2: Factors associated with adolescent alcohol consumption.**

#### **a) Peer Influence**

Many teenagers are influenced by peer pressure to consume alcohol. This often serves as a motivating factor in their decision to try alcohol.

- *"If you don't drink, you can be pressured, and you'll definitely be seen as disloyal to your friends." (P2, SS, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"Friends come to my place, buy drinks, and we drink together. When we hang out, it's a lively atmosphere, and they invite me to drink, so I just join in." (P9, WR, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"Sometimes when stressed or facing problems, it's like an escape. Friends invite me to drink together." (P10, BB, 17, Alcohol consumer)*

#### **b) Adult Behavior**

Moreover, observing many parents or adults around them who consume alcohol can also influence teenagers.

- *"In my family, almost everyone gets drunk." (P4, UL, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"At family gatherings, they usually drink, so seeing the elders drink makes it seem normal." (P8, PT, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"My father, my older siblings, they all drink alcohol, so I drink in secret." (P9, WR, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"I get drunk because of my dad and my older siblings, they drink in front of me. I see my dad getting drunk every day, so I thought it's okay." (P10, BB, 17, Alcohol consumer)*

### **Theme 3: Conflicting Feelings About Alcohol Consumption**

Conflicting feelings refer to the lack of harmony between an individual's actions and their perceptions. In this context, the desire to avoid alcohol consumption is reflected in the statements of some participants.

- *"Every day with my friends, and luckily, we're close friends, so I can refuse; it's not enjoyable." (P2, SS, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"I actually know, if I stay healthy, it's better not to drink, but it's hard to explain." (P5, MD, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"I can refuse if I want to." (P7, AD, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"If someone invites me, I can refuse, but it's not easy because sometimes I really want to drink." (P9, WR, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"If I'm around friends who are drinking, I naturally want to drink too." (P10, BB, 17, Alcohol consumer)*

### **Theme 4: Alcohol Consumption as a Symbol of Masculinity**

Many adolescent participants from Eastern Indonesia often associate the concept of masculinity with alcohol consumption.

- *"When you're drunk, you feel braver, more confident." (P4, UL, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"Not getting drunk can be troublesome; you feel weak." (P5, MD, 17, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"Because when I'm drunk, I know it's not healthy, but sometimes it's enjoyable." (P6, RK, 16, Alcohol consumer)*
- *"It makes you feel cool. Yes, it's not good for your health, but I don't know why it makes me feel brave." (P10, BB, 17, Alcohol consumer)*

## **Discussion**

In this qualitative study, adolescents expressed their views on alcohol consumption in the Eastern Indonesian region. The findings of this research are highly relevant to educators and healthcare practitioners, especially those involved in efforts to prevent risky alcohol

consumption and promote health, in order to support the design of effective and efficient intervention programs. The discussion is presented according to the themes.

### **Theme 1: Normalization of Drinking Culture and Youth Parties**

Alcoholic beverages are already considered an inseparable element of life. In family gatherings, the consumption of alcohol is often portrayed as something enjoyable and normal to do without providing sufficient information about its negative impact. As a result, young people in Eastern Indonesia often enter their teenage years with a positive view of alcohol. This is supported by previous research by Pilar (2020), which found that social normalization of alcohol consumption in society leads adolescents to not perceive alcohol as a substance with short-term or long-term effects. Consequently, they underestimate the physical, psychological, emotional, and social consequences of alcohol consumption, both at the personal level and for society as a whole. Adolescents perceive alcohol as something ordinary and not too harmful. (Marques-Sanchez et al., 2020) Furthermore, this is also supported by the findings of a study conducted by Riskiyani et al. (2016), which indicated that alcohol consumption has become a habit because it has become a part of the culture in certain areas. In some regions, alcoholic beverages have become an integral part of their culture, and, as a result, alcohol consumption in those areas has become a customary practice. (Riskiyani et al., 2015)

### **Theme 2: Factors Related to Adolescent Alcohol Consumption**

#### **a) Peer Influence**

One prominent aspect is when they face problems, their peers often offer solutions involving alcohol consumption. They feel that drinking alcohol is a way to cope with the difficulties they are facing. This illustrates the strong influence of peers and social culture in viewing alcohol as an escape from the challenges they experience. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Pilar (2020), which also explains that peer groups have a very strong socializing influence, both through deliberate and inadvertent stimuli, which can shape various different behaviors. Therefore, for adolescents, alcohol consumption becomes one way to socialize and be accepted within their group. This is significant because adolescents tend to emulate peers who play a significant social role in their lives. (Marques-Sanchez et al., 2020)

#### **b) Adult Behavior**

When adolescents observe alcohol consumption behavior in the family or community, they tend to perceive it as a normal and acceptable behavior. This creates social norms that support alcohol consumption among adolescents. These findings are reinforced by the results of the research conducted by Christina (2018) that children tend to emulate the habits of parents or family members in consuming alcohol. (Christina et al., 2017)

### **Theme 3: Conflicting Feelings About Alcohol Consumption**

There is an awareness of the negative impacts of alcohol consumption, but difficulty in resisting peer pressure. Peer pressure can make adolescents find it challenging to refuse alcohol consumption because they want to conform to social norms in their environment. This phenomenon is known as conflicting feelings often experienced by adolescents, where they want to reject alcohol consumption, but at the same time, they are confronted with situations that make it difficult for them to do so. The participants' statements reflect the complex dynamics in dealing with alcohol consumption among adolescents. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Tri et al (2018). (Liana, 2018) It explains that peer influence significantly affects adolescent behavior. Due to these invitations, adolescents feel compelled to consume alcohol. The analysis results indicate that participants feel pressured to consume alcohol when their friends offer it, even if they don't actually want to. They feel the need to respect their friends by accepting the offer. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Yudisa (2020) on alcohol consumption, which begins as an experiment, a search for identity, and a way to maintain solidarity with friends because they feel uncomfortable rejecting offers to drink alcohol. (Yudisa et Al., 2020)

### **Theme 4: Alcohol Consumption as a Symbol of Masculinity**

The results of this study revealed that some adolescents in Eastern Indonesia perceive that an individual who consumes alcohol reflects specific characteristics that are considered part of masculinity, such as strength, courage, and composure. This creates a connection between the image of masculinity and alcohol consumption behavior among adolescents, where they feel that by consuming alcohol, they can demonstrate these attributes and conform to existing social norms. Participants expressed that by consuming alcohol, they feel cool. This is in line with research conducted by Susiani et al. (2019) which explained that alcohol consumption is used to enhance the impression of coolness among adolescents. In an effort to enhance their cool image, adolescents consume alcoholic beverages. (Susiani, 2019)

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this research indicate that alcohol consumption among adolescents in Eastern Indonesia is a complex issue influenced by various social and cultural factors. The strength of this study lies in providing insights into the perspectives and behaviors of adolescents regarding alcohol, which can be used to design effective intervention programs. However, a limitation of this research is the lack of in-depth analysis on how to address influencing factors and contradictory feelings. Overall, this research offers valuable insights into alcohol consumption among adolescents in Eastern Indonesia, and its results can be used to guide efforts in preventing risky alcohol consumption and promoting health among adolescents. A comprehensive approach is needed to address these challenges, taking into account the social, cultural, and individual factors that influence adolescent alcohol consumption.

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