

Alcohol Consumption, Diet, and Emotional Resilience

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between habits surrounding alcohol use, diet quality, mental distress and resilience. An anonymous online survey was administered through Google Forms and was disseminated through text messages and social media. The survey was conducted on primarily young adults and other adults in the New York area, and data was analyzed using Pearson's Correlation Analysis in SPSS version 28.0. Our research found a strong positive correlation between high alcohol consumption and feelings of hopelessness ($p < 0.01$), as well as a positive correlation between a healthy diet and mental resilience (eg: fruit consumption ($p < 0.05$), beans ($p < 0.05$), and fish ($p < 0.01$)). Through this study, the hope is to identify connections between dietary practices and mental health, ultimately giving people the tools they need to promote an overall positive mental state.

Introduction

- Resilience: the ability to recover from emotionally taxing circumstances
- Prior studies have shown that a diet high in unprocessed foods and low alcohol consumption is linked to increased resilience
- We predict that our data will show a similar pattern to prior research and that healthier diets and lower alcohol consumption will be linked with higher instances of emotional resilience
- We also predict that our data will show a positive correlation between poor dietary habits and mental distress.

Methods

Participants

152 participants
ranging from ages
18-65+

Distribution

Text message,
Snapchat,
Instagram,
GroupMe,

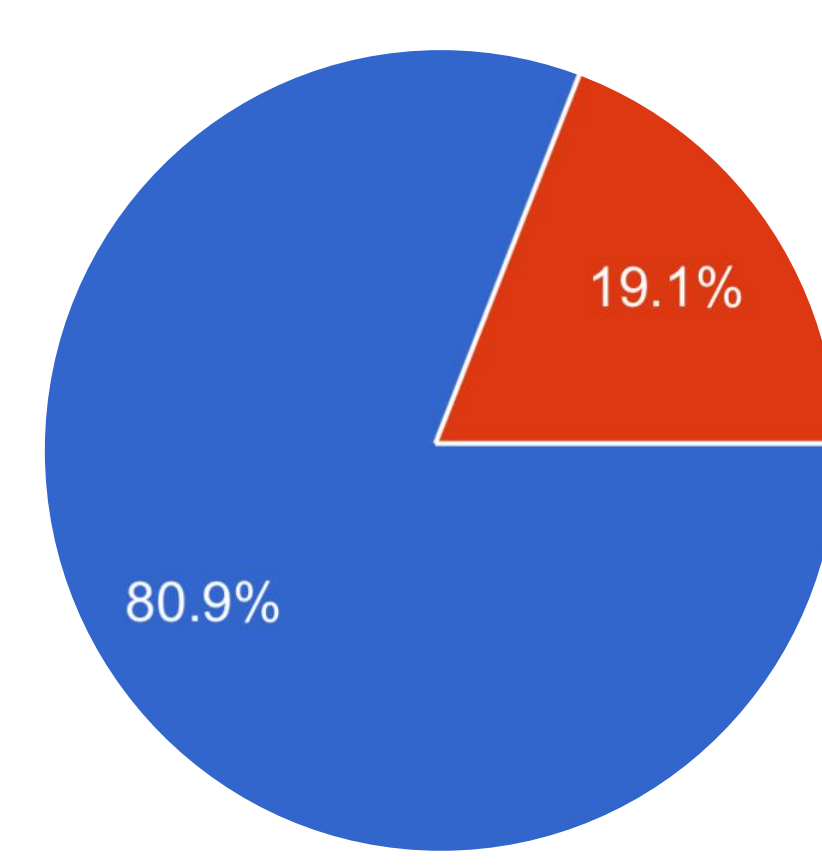
Survey Utilized

Questionnaire via
Google Forms

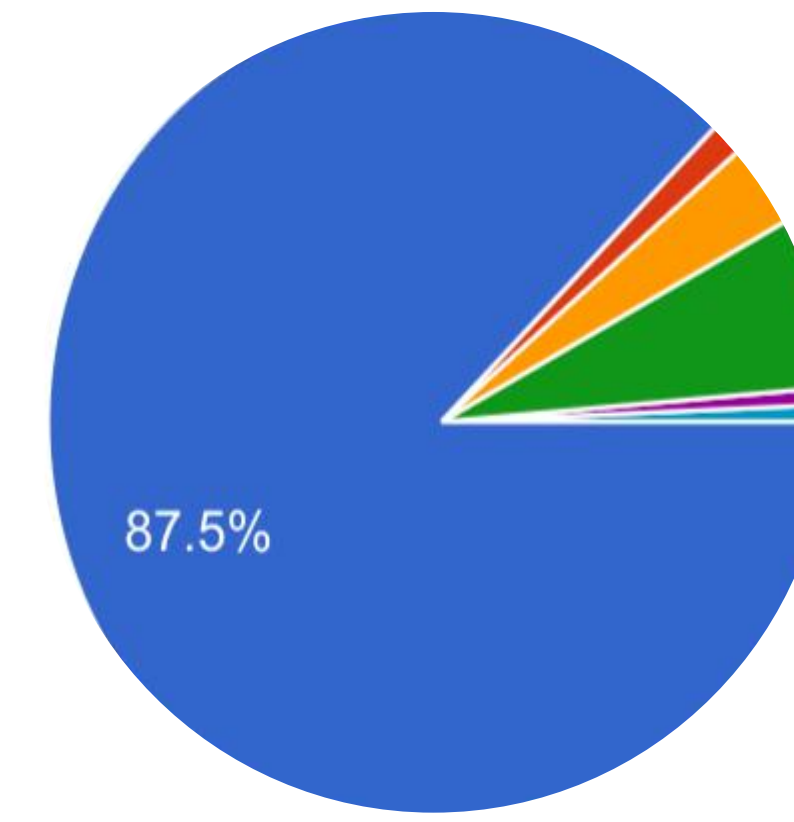
Statistical Analysis

Pearson's
Correlation Analysis
with SPSS version
28.0

Demographics



Gender:
Female: 80.9%
Male: 19.1%

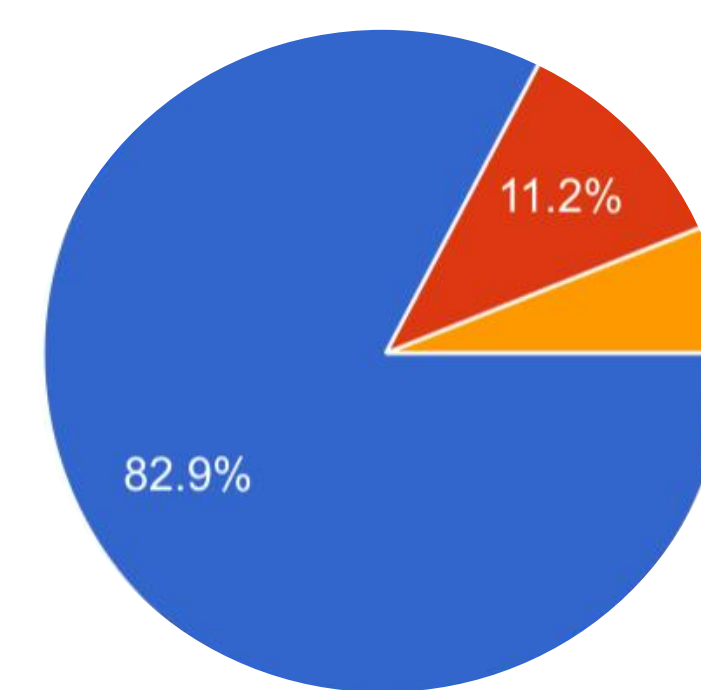


Age
18-29: 87.5%
30-39: 1.3%
40-49: 3.3%
50-59: 6.6%
60-69: 0.7%
70 or older: 0.7%

Results

Do you consume alcoholic drinks?

Yes: 82.9%
Never drank: 11.2%
I used to but I quit: 5.9%



How often do you have 5 or more drinks on one occasion?

Never: 47.4%
Monthly: 30.9%
Weekly: 21.7%

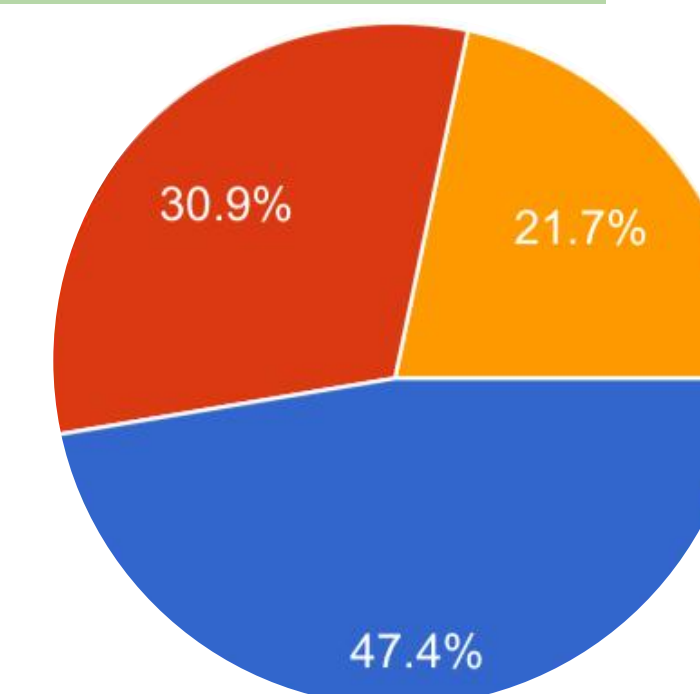


Table 1: High alcohol consumption and mental resilience

Question	Pearson's Correlation	p (2-tailed)
During the past month, about how often did you feel hopeless?	.262**	0.001
I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.	-.180*	0.027
I have a hard time making it through stressful events	.216**	0.008

Table 2: Mental resilience and dietary patterns

Question	Pearson's Correlation	p (2-tailed)
Eating fruits regularly	.163*	0.044
Eating fish regularly	.251**	0.002
Eating sugary foods, such as chocolate, candy, and sweets regularly	-.199*	0.014
Eating pre-packaged and/or fast food regularly	-.191*	0.018

Table 3: High alcohol consumption and dietary patterns

Question	Pearson's Correlation	p (2-tailed)
Eating sugary foods, such as chocolate, candy, and sweets regularly	.198*	0.015
Eating pre-packaged and/or fast foods regularly	.175*	0.031
Eating green, leafy vegetables regularly	-.212**	0.009

$p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$

Discussion and Conclusion

Our findings include:

- Participants who have a high alcohol intake have increased feelings of hopelessness (Lannoy et al., 2022).
- Participants who had higher alcohol consumption had a harder time quickly bouncing back from hard times compared to people with less alcohol intake.
 - These individuals also have a harder time making it through stressful events (Brown & Caley, 2021).
- Also, people who ate healthier foods such as fruit or fish regularly showed better mental resilience, while the participants who regularly eat sugary foods or fast food regularly show decreased mental resilience.
 - This illustrates a potential linkage between dietary patterns and resilience
- The results indicated that participants with high alcohol consumption are more likely to eat sugary foods, and eat pre-packaged or fast food regularly and less likely to consume green, leafy vegetables.

In conclusion...

- The data from our research leads us to believe that, with increased consumption of alcohol leads more emotional distress and lower levels of mental resilience.
 - There may also be a cyclic link between alcohol consumption and mental distress/resilience (eg: high alcohol consumption leading to high mental distress and poor mental resilience, and high mental distress and poor mental resilience leading to higher alcohol consumption (Chang, et al., 2021)).
- People who eat a balanced diet with less processed foods are more likely to show higher levels of mental resilience.
 - This finding is consistent with prior research that states that a diet high in unprocessed foods has positive effects on psychological resilience (Christodoulou et al., 2023)
- Finally, people who consume high levels of alcohol are more likely to have poor dietary habits.
 - This can be due to cravings that occur when intoxicated or to an overall lessened concern for what substances an individual consumes.

Future Work and Limitations

Future Research:

- Is there a difference between alcohol consumption and mental resilience between age groups (ie: college students vs. older adults)?
- In cultures where alcohol consumption at a younger age is more normalized, is there a difference in mental resilience and alcohol consumption?
- In cultures that eat the Mediterranean diet, is mental resilience higher than in cultures that eat the Western diet?

Limitations

- Although the study size was sufficient, this study would've been more reliable if we had at least 250 participants
- The participants were limited with the answers they were able to choose when the questions were not open ended. This led to participants having trouble identifying with some answer choices
- Self-reported data

Acknowledgements

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References



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