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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL STRICTNESS, LIFESTYLE AND ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the lifestyle of Eastern Samar State University – Salcedo, Guiuan and Maydolong Campuses college students that included alcohol consumption, smoking, sexual activities, cell phone use and its relationship to the different factors such as age, gender, marital status, level of happiness, parental strictness and academic performance. This study involved three hundred forty-eight college students who were mostly twenty years old and above, female, single, moderately happy and with liberal parents. Their academic performance was average. Some (13%) of them consumed alcohol two or more times a week, and attended classes drunk while others missed classes due to hang-over. This kind of lifestyle was often practiced by male students with liberal parents. Majority were not smokers but have boyfriend/girlfriend who engaged in dating practices and mostly disapproved premarital sex. Academic performance of college students was significantly related to smoking. This study revealed that in general, level of parental strictness is a protective factor in the promotion of healthy lifestyle among college students.

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**INTRODUCTION**

About three million Filipinos are now enrolled in tertiary institutions with 40% of them in state-run schools receiving government subsidies by an average of twenty four thousand pesos per year (Tomeldan, 2013). They cover a significant group and constitute a formidable force. Given their participation in nation building, they can define and drive our development. Going to college is a very significant step in the students' journey in life. For many, it is a time in life that has more freedom and opportunity for growth than anything experienced since birth (Morris and Johnson, 2005). College life is a transition period that may include moving for the first time from parents' home to school dormitory or boarding houses to be more proximate to the school campus. This new living arrangement is stressful and can have negative impact to students' lives. With the influx of technology, liberalization and globalization, lifestyle of college students have changed and has become complicated. Attention has to be given to help our students cope with these transitions in a way that this newly found freedom and independence may lead one to structure a lifestyle that will channel them to excel in school and live a happy, fruitful and fulfilling life. Necessary assistance such as parental monitoring, supervision and

control among others have to be extended in their periods of vulnerability and confusion for they too are in the prime time for engagement in behaviours that may run counter to their health such as smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, sexual explorations and many more. In 2009, Garena's study disclosed that almost 20% of the world populations are smokers. Department of Health (DOH) estimates that 36% of the Filipino are smokers with high percentage coming from the youth. Domingo and Marquez as cited by Choe and Raymundo (2001) reported that the prevalence of drinking and smoking among Filipino youths is quite high. Among 15–24 year olds, 55% have ever drunk and 38% have ever smoked. The gender differences in the level of risk-taking behaviour are also reported to be large wherein the males engage in risk-taking behaviour much more frequently than females.

Sevilla as cited by Marquez and Galban (2004), believes that sexual behaviours of college students are a growing concern as these are associated with a host of deleterious consequences which may severely compromise their health, education, economic situation and general well-being. Amidst modernization and social media exposures of college students, the role of parents has to be examined if they want to retain its significant role in shaping the lives of their children. According to Dhali and Thukral (2012) parental influence in the child's personality remains throughout life, with the most pervasive of all influences.

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Thus, a working knowledge on lifestyle of college students is necessary on how best to support and promote psychosocial and cognitive development. This investigation focused on respondents characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, level of happiness, parental strictness and academic performance and its association to the lifestyle of college students to include alcohol consumption, smoking, sexual activities and cell phone use. The study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between respondents' characteristics and college students' lifestyle; and no significant relationship between academic performance and lifestyle of college students.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive – correlation design was used in order to describe and interpret existing relationships of respondents characteristics and their lifestyle. This study involved 348 college students with age ranged from 15 to 24 years old. They were enrolled in three external campuses of Eastern Samar State University namely: Salcedo, Guiuan, and Maydolong during the first semester, school year 2009-2010. Slovins' formula was used to determine the sample size of the study. While a stratified random sampling was used to get the proportionate representative of each course, year level and section of students in the different campuses.

The questionnaire on level of parental strictness was based on the study of Cruz et al. (2002). Respondents were asked if their parents will approve or disapprove certain social activities including: going to parties at short notice; going out on a date unchaperoned; smoking; drinking alcoholic beverages; stow away from home; getting married at an early age, overnight study groups and premarital sex. Those who claimed that their parents approved of at least three of the eight activities were classified to have "liberal" parents; if two have "moderately strict" if one have "strict" parents. Respondents who claimed that their parents did not approve any of the activities were categorized to have "very strict" parents. Variables on alcohol consumption and smoking were measured using questions relative to its use, frequency and amount of consumption. Respondents were asked on their dating activities, cell phone use and their level of happiness based on the objectives of the study. The grade point average of students in all subjects for the midterm was computed to represent their academic performance.

Profiles of the respondents on age, gender, marital status, level of parental strictness, level of happiness and academic performance were obtained to paint a picture about the respondents which were considered as the independent variables of the study. To determine the level of happiness, respondents were made to answer the question "How happy are you as a student in Eastern Samar State University (ESSU)? Answers were categorized into 5, with 5 very much happy, 4 as moderately happy, 3 as happy, 2 not so happy and 1 not happy. Questions on lifestyle were mostly answerable by yes or no and were categorized as 1 for yes, and 0 for no. The lifestyle of the respondents to include alcohol consumption, smoking, sexual activities and cell phone use served as the dependent variables of the study. Cramer's V correlation coefficient was computed to determine significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variables which were set at .05 level of significance. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents and explained to them the significance of the study and to request that they participate. To guarantee and safeguard the confidentiality of information, respondents were requested to enclose the questionnaire in a sealed envelope after completely answering all the questions in the self-administered questionnaire. With this, the researcher was already confident to illicit accurate and honest answers from respondents. No validation of answers was ever made.

The basic tool used in this study was the questionnaire which was presented to the research panel of the institution for improvement. A dry run was made prior to the actual conduct of the study to determine the administrability of the instrument and to find out the need for revision. The researcher asked permission from the different campus administrators before the conduct of the study. Then the questionnaires were administered by the researcher herself, collected, encoded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondents' Profile

Most of the respondents were twenty (20) years old and above. Two-thirds of them (67%) were female, 97% single and thirty percent (30%) of their parents were liberal who allowed much freedom to their children. Forty percent (40%) were moderately happy considering that they enjoyed their studies.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Profile	Categories	Frequency N=348	Percentage
Age	20 yrs. old and above	104	30
	Below 20 years old	244	70
Gender	Male	115	33
	Female	233	67
Marital Status	Single	338	97
	Married	10	3
Parental Strictness	Liberal	104	30
	Moderately strict	94	27
	Strict	84	24
	Very Strict	66	19
Level of Happiness	Not So Happy	17	5
	Happy	115	33
	Moderately Happy	139	40
	Very Much Happy	77	22

The result on level of happiness conforms to the findings of the study conducted by the NSCB's Social Statistics Office with the Philippines comes in the middle range of the World Happiness Index, with a rating of 6.4. Denmark topped the World Happiness Index (which lists 95 countries), with a rating of 8.2.

### Alcohol Consumption

Results show that some respondents' drunk alcoholic beverages during the past month with 13% of them consumed alcohol two or more times a week.

**Table 2. Profile of ESSU College Students Lifestyle in Terms of Alcohol Consumption, School Year 2009-2010**

No. of Times Drunk in the Past Two Months	Frequency	Percent
0-1 time per week	302	87
2-3 times per week	31	9
4-5 times per week	10	3
6 or more times per week	4	1
Total	347	100
No. of Times Attended Classes Drunk	Frequency	Percent
0	154	58
1	84	32
2	15	6
3 or more	12	4
Total	265	100
No. of Times Missed Classes Due to Hang-over	Frequency	Percent
0	158	58
1	87	32
2	19	7
3 or more	7	3
Total	271	100

On the same period, some respondents attended classes drunk or have missed classes due to hand-over. According to Valenzuela (1997), alcohol impairs the body's motor skills by blocking the brain neurotransmitters and the brains channel for communication with the body. Long periods of use will have negative effects on the body, especially the brain and kidney. Results of this study should be a cause of concern for students who may attend classes drunk for they may initiate misbehaviors that might disturb the whole class. They too will be deprived of the opportunity of maximizing their cognitive development. This kind of lifestyle must be corrected as it may adversely affect students learning or achievement.

**Table 3. Profile of ESSU College Students Lifestyle in Terms of Smoking, School Year 2009-2010**

Smoking Status of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Currently smoking	27	8
Social smoker	18	5
Smoked in the past	22	7
Never smoked	262	80
Total	329	100
No. of Cigarettes Smoked	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5	38	84
5 or more	7	16
Total	45	100

### Smoking

The table below shows the result of the study on smoking activities of college students. It can be gleaned that eight percent (8%) of the respondents are smokers with 5% occasional smokers who smoke during social gatherings only. Twenty-two or seven percent of them have smoked in the past while eighty percent are non-smokers. It is also revealed in the study that majority (80%) of college students who smoke consumed less than five cigarettes a day.

This incidence is lower compared to the reported results of the 2009 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) of twenty-eight percent or 17.3 million Filipino adults ages 15 years and older are current tobacco smokers. On the average according to the study, male daily smokers consume 11 cigarettes per day while female daily smokers consume 7 cigarettes per day. Among adults who smoked 12 months before the survey, 48 percent made a quit attempt, while only 5 percent made a quit attempt and successfully quit smoking.

This implies that consumption is still that low. However, educating this group of students on the adverse effect of smoking is necessary as an important step to help them quit this unhealthy lifestyle.

### Sexual Activities

College students are in their exploratory stage of their life and are curious about sexual experimentation. It was revealed in the study that more than one-half of the college students were having an affair with an opposite sex. Forty-six percent of them were having dating activities with their partner of opposite sex. While it is healthy for them to cultivate relationship with an opposite sex, this requires maturity and discipline on their part. It is in this period that they need proper guidance, knowledge,

experience, and maturity to avoid grave risks. Risky sexual activities often result in social problems, the most serious of which is teenage pregnancy.

**Table 4. Sexual Activities of College Students**

Sexual Activities	Frequency (n=338)	Percent
<b>Boyfriend/Girlfriend Relationship</b>		
Yes	176	52
No	162	48
<b>Dating Activities</b>		
Yes	155	46
No	183	54
<b>Premarital Sex Opinion</b>		
Approved	56	17
Disapproved	282	83
<b>Experienced Premarital Sex</b>		
Yes	72	22
No	256	78

### Opinion on Pre-marital Sex

The result revealed that college students remain relatively traditional in their sexual values as eighty-three percent (83%) of them still value virginity by non-accepting pre-marital sex (PMS). This finding is almost similar to the study of Lacson *et al.* (1997), where 92% of the university students in the country held a non-accepting attitude towards pre-marital sex. Although the percentage has lowered, this may be explained due to increasing modernization. The data however indicates that twenty-two (22) percent of the respondents have experienced pre-marital sex which means that in every ten students, two (2) students are sexually active. It can be noted that there is a difference of five (5) percent on the opinion of PMS to actually experience. This deviation implies that our college students are in a difficult stage of life characterized by confusion, curiosity, and adventure. It can also be noted that the greater percentage remains traditional in their sexual behavior. The percentage for sexually abstinent students which is seventy-eight in this study is much lower compared to Lacson's study (1997), which was 83%. This upward trend may be due to college students' exposure to growing number of conflicting messages that challenge traditional views which may result in risky sexual activities.

### Age of First Sexual Onset

The first sex encounter of college students is at age 15. However, greater percentage of them is at 18. This result is a wake-up call to everyone as this is a high-risk sexual activity.

### Cell Phone Use

Cell phone use among teens has been rising. This research study investigated the number of cell phone users among college students. It had been found that seventy-seven percent of the respondents owned a cell phone.

This result is far higher than the study disclosed by authors [2] that only 33% of teens have cell phone. Also, this study revealed that sixty-one percent of the college students sent more than 18 text messages each day. Some respondents (16%) put off their homework and engaged in text messaging. Students should be warned on the proper use of cell phone as it poses some threats. In the study of author [4], it was found that cell phone users were exposed to radiation that activated the brain's stress system, making people more alert and more focused, and decreasing their ability to wind down and fall asleep. Also, researchers discovered that most teenagers used their cell phones after going to bed. Those who did this once a week was more than three times and those who used those more often more than five times were likely to be "very tired". This implies the need to educate our college students on the proper management of cell phone to their utmost advantage. The need for proper orientation on the use of cell phone is necessary most especially during the start of classes when faculty members are having an orientation with students regarding policies of the school. Thus proper dissemination on the use of cell phone in the classroom be instituted during this period.

### Academic Performance of College Students

Students' academic performance is a valid indicator of learning obtained in the formal instruction received in school. In this study, this served as the dependent variables where data was obtained using the mid-term grade for the semester. It was revealed that almost half of the respondents have a grade of 2.1 to 2.5 and very few of them have a grade lower than 2.6. This is an indicator that most of them are doing just good in their studies.

### Relationship between respondents' profile and lifestyle on Alcohol Consumption

Table 5 shows the significant factors that are related to the alcohol consumption of college students.

Frequency of alcohol consumption is moderately associated to various characteristics of respondents which is significantly related to gender ( $p=0.000$ ) and level of parental strictness (0.000). Whereas, missing classes due to hangover is significantly associated to age ( $p=0.002$ ), gender (0.001) and parental strictness (0.004). Coming to school drunk is significantly associated to age (0.009), gender (0.004) and level of parental strictness (0.049). Thus the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between students characteristics and alcohol consumption is rejected.

This means that male students with liberal parents frequently drink alcoholic beverages, whereas female students with very strict parents seldom engage in this kind of activity. Missing classes due to hangover are often practiced by older male students. This study revealed that in general, the parent's level of parental strictness is a protective factor on the alcohol consumption among college students. Those who perceived their parents to be strict were less likely to consume alcohol, thus would not miss classes nor attend classes drunk compared to those who thought their parents are liberal.

**Table 5. Relationship between Respondents' Profiles and Lifestyle on Alcohol Consumption**

Lifestyle	Age		Gender		Level of Happiness		Parental Strictness	
Alcohol Consumption	Correlation coefficient	p-value						
Frequency of Alcohol Consumption	0.245	0.199	0.285	0.000*	0.177	0.378	0.312	0.000*
Missed Classes Due to Hang-over	0.437	0.199	0.281	0.001*	0.285	0.169	0.355	0.004*
Come to School Drunk	0.410	0.009*	0.253	0.004*	0.214	0.706	0.304	0.049*

\*Significant at 0.05 level or less

**Table 6. Relationship between Respondents Profile and Lifestyle on Smoking and Cell Phone Use**

Lifestyle	Age		Gender		Parental Strictness	
	correlation coefficient	p-value	correlation coefficient	p-value	correlation coefficient	p-value
Smoking	0.260	0.138	0.423	0.000*	0.289	0.002*
Cell Phone use	0.125	0.879	0.081	0.337	0.162	0.002*

\*Significant at 0.05 or less

**Table 7. Relationship between Respondents Profile and Sexual Activities Lifestyle**

Sexual Activities	Age		Gender		Parental Strictness	
	correlation coefficient	p-value	correlation coefficient	p-value	correlation coefficient	p-value
Girlfriend/boyfriend relationship	0.313	0.000*	0.005	0.923	0.190	0.007*
Dating activity	0.341	0.000*	0.077	0.157	0.218	0.001*
PMS Attitude	0.296	0.000*	0.327	0.000*	0.214	0.001*
Experience Sexual Intercourse	0.387	0.000*	0.320	0.000*	0.290	0.000*
Age of Sexual Onset	1.00	0.000*	0.427	0.044*	0.530	0.337

\*Significant at .05 or less

**Table 8. Relationship between Smoking and Academic Performance**

Academic Performance	Smokers		Non Smokers		Correlation coefficient	p-value
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Low Grade (Below 2.0)	31	(60%)	138	(53%)		
High Grade (1.00-2.00)	21	(40%)	122	(47%)		
Total	52	(100%)	260	(100%)	0.312	0.01

Similar result was reported by Cruz *et al.* (2002) that made a study on influences on the lifestyle of Filipino youth. The study revealed that parents level of strictness show some protective association with the propensity towards forms of mass media exposure such as movies, video and x-rated films. Results also indicated the strong linkages between certain risk behaviors and the subscription to some negative forms of mass media. The study revealed that cell phone use is not significantly related to respondents characteristics, whereas, two important variables that are significantly associated to smoking of college students were gender ( $p=0.000$ ) and level of parental strictness ( $p=0.002$ ). This means that students who smoke are usually male with liberal parents. Very few female students from strict parents smoke. Measures to address smoking should be more focused to male students as they are more inclined to engage in this unhealthy lifestyle. Also, this study affirms the important role of parents in the promotion of healthy lifestyle of their children. Parents need to be strict in dealing with unhealthy behaviors of their children though they are already in college.

Proper guidance and monitoring of students' behaviors is imperative to avoid or minimize students in engaging to anti-social behavior like smoking. Educational institutions should also establish close coordination with parents in monitoring risky behaviors of students.

In the promotion of healthy lifestyle of students, this study explored some respondents' characteristics that may play a significant role in the understanding of the phenomenon. The study revealed weak correlations of age (0.313), gender (0.005) and parental strictness (0.190) to girlfriend/boyfriend relationship but highly significant to age and level of parental strictness. Similarly, dating activities is significantly related to gender ( $p=0.000$ ) and parental strictness ( $p=0.001$ ). Thus, students with girlfriend/boyfriend relationship and were having dating activities were often those older students with liberal parents. Those who approved that pre-marital sex is just okay were older and male students that came from liberal parents.

This result is different to that of Lacson *et al.* (1997) which revealed that 90% of all students held non accepting attitudes towards premarital sex. However, the study of Tan and Batagan (1997) is consistent with the present study as both found out that females value virginity more than males. It was also disclosed in the study that those who already experienced premarital sex were mostly older male students with liberal to moderately strict parents.

Age and gender were significantly associated to age of first sexual onset. Age of first sexual onset in the study was 15, but majority of the male respondents was 18 while female students were at age 20.

This finding conforms to the study made by Lacson in 1997 wherein males were more likely than females to have ever had sexual intercourse. The table shows that greater percentage of those with high grades came from non-smokers. Based on the statistical analysis, the test revealed a weak correlation (0.312) but this relationship was significant having posted a p-value of 0.01. So the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between smoking activity of college students and their grade point average is rejected. This finding is consistent with Helms (2005) study stating that there was a connection between tobacco-use with students' grade.

## Conclusion

Most college students were twenty years old and above, female, single, moderately happy having liberal parents with average academic performance. Lifestyle of students included texting messages. Male students with liberal parents were smokers that consumed more alcohol than female with strict parents. They also had the tendency to attend classes' drunk or missed classes due to hang-over. Smokers have lower grades than non-smokers. Girlfriend/boyfriend relationship, dating activities, pre-marital sex and sexual intercourse were minimized when students have very strict parents. Thus, level of parental strictness is a protective factor in the promotion of healthy lifestyles of students.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

Campaign against smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages should be undertaken to minimize its incidence and avoid health problems at the end.

Promotion of healthy lifestyle maybe integrated into the curricula.

Discussion on the promotion on lifestyle of students during parents-teachers meeting with emphasis on level of parents' strictness or parental supervision scheme be encouraged.

The conduct of a more descriptive and qualitative research to discover other important aspects regarding smoking, drinking, and sexual activities of students should be done.

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