

# Consumption of alcoholic drinks: Educative practices in Youth and Adult Education

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to investigate the knowledge and conceptions of Youth and Adult Education students regarding alcohol consumption and its effects and outline educational practices that may contribute to the resignification of these aspects. The project was approved by the Ethics Committee of ULBRA and CONEP and was carried out with Youth and Adult Education students in a public school in the city of Viamão. The guiding methodology consisted of participatory qualitative research. The work was performed at different stages comprising activities such as: literature review, visits to the study environment, application of data collection instruments with teachers and students and utilization of a didactic sequence. It was observed that students attributed, as major reasons for alcohol consumption, factors related to curiosity, need to overcome timidity, and family and financial issues. Regarding the effects of the substance on the body, the liver was predominantly mentioned, and the systemic effect of consumption on the body as a whole needs to be problematized. However, despite the perceived importance, it was found that the students had never participated in a study on the subject, which demonstrates the usefulness of these educational practices in youth and adult education.

**Keywords:** Alcohol consumption. Conceptions. Health education. Youth and adult education.

## Consumo de bebidas alcólicas: práticas educativas na Educação de Jovens e Adultos

### RESUMO

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo investigar junto a estudantes da Educação de Jovens e Adultos quais os seus conhecimentos, e concepções, em relação ao consumo do álcool e seus efeitos, assim como delinear práticas educativas que possam contribuir para uma resignificação destes aspectos. O projeto foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética da ULBRA e CONEP e foi realizado com alunos de Educação de Jovens e Adultos em uma escola pública na cidade de Viamão. A metodologia norteadora foi a pesquisa qualitativa participante. O trabalho foi executado em diferentes etapas que compreenderam atividades como: revisão da literatura, visitas ao ambiente de estudo, aplicação de instrumentos de coleta de dados junto a professores e alunos e aplicação de uma sequência didática. Foi observado que os alunos atribuíam como maiores motivos para o consumo do álcool fatores relacionados à curiosidade, necessidade de vencer a timidez e problemas

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de ordem familiar e financeira. Em relação aos efeitos da substância sobre o organismo, foi citado, preponderantemente o fígado, havendo a necessidade de problematizar o efeito sistêmico do consumo sobre o organismo como um todo. Porém, apesar da percepção de importância, constatou-se que os alunos nunca haviam participado de trabalho sobre o tema, evidenciando a proficiência das tais práticas educativas na educação de jovens e adultos.

**Palavras-chave:** consumo de álcool, concepções, educação em saúde, EJA.

## INTRODUCTION

The First National Survey on Alcohol Consumption Patterns in the Brazilian Population, conducted by the National Anti-Drug Office of the Ministry Of Justice, in 2005, brings several data requiring a more careful look from educators. The report shows that 12.3% of the people surveyed, aged between 12 and 65, meet the criteria for alcohol dependence and about 75% have drunk at least once in life. The data also indicate alcohol consumption in increasingly younger age groups and suggest that control, prevention and treatment measures should be revised. The Southern region stands out in the report for presenting the highest levels in very frequent and frequent drinks when compared with other regions of the country. Especially for young people, the survey shows that 13% of adolescents have an intense pattern of alcohol consumption (BRAZIL, 2007).

The data from the above survey indicate that 30% of the adolescents under study drank, if male, five or more doses, and if female, four or more doses (a behavior known as “binge drinking”) twice a month. This, in addition to reporting heavy consumption by a significant share of adolescents, also shows that this behavior is exhibited regularly. Taking as a base group people who drank about half of those who drank, these reported having some problem with the habit, social, labor, family, physical and legal issues being the most mentioned (BRAZIL, 2007).

This study is part of this context and seeks to provide input for the development of educational practices related to alcohol consumption and its effects on people’s bodies and lives. More precisely, the aim is to investigate and understand the knowledge and conceptions of students on this topic. We also intend to investigate possible contributions of pedagogical practices to the resignification of previous conceptions.

Due to the relevance of this subject, many studies have been conducted around the world in order to identify and understand the pattern of consumption and risk factors associated with it. In Brazil, there are research records such as the studies by Gomes et al. (2010) investigating the alcohol consumption among students in schools in the greater Recife, Vieira (2008) on the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs by school adolescents in a city in the south of Brazil, Boni (2008), mapping the use of alcoholic beverage at gas stations in Porto Alegre, and Noal (2010), who wrote a work on the experimental use of alcohol in early adolescence.

Although there are many studies focusing on alcohol consumption, few studies address aspects related to school performance and teaching practices, as well as approaches seeking to understand the conceptions of students on the subject. In this sense, Dal-Farra

et al. (2009) mapped the main topics that students associate with alcohol in order to seek support for future pedagogical approaches.

Currently, Youth and Adult Education (YAE) is responsible for meeting part of the demand for primary and secondary education.

According to Haddad (2011):

The field of study on Youth and Adult Education (YAE) in Brazil is recent. There is little research and few researchers. This is the reality of a country that in the twenty-first century still maintains a social debt to 30 million young people and adults over age 14 who cannot read or write or who just took the first steps in this process and have not gotten sufficient skills yet to meet the challenges of a society like ours. (HADDAD, 2011, p.7)

We intend to attain a wider view on the subject, working from the perspective of subjectivity, concepts and meanings of alcohol among students in order to support the development of new approaches in schools.

## **Alcohol and health**

Brazilian demographic data demonstrate that alcohol consumption leads to more than 10% of all morbidity and mortality taking place in the country (MELONI; LARANJEIRA, 2004).

Primo (2004), while conducting a cross-sectional population-based study in the city of Rio Grande, RS, to investigate the prevalence of alcohol abuse and dependence, estimated that 5.5% of the population consumes alcohol excessively and 2.5% is dependent. The study concluded that the group formed by male smokers with a low socioeconomic status is more vulnerable to alcohol abuse and dependence. Laranjeira et al. (2010) conducted a study to investigate the pattern of alcohol use in Brazilian adults. The study found that 29% of drinkers reported that they usually consume five or more units of alcohol (drinking binge). Regarding gender, for example, while 38% of men reported usual consumption of five or more units of alcohol, among women the rate drops to 17%. Among other aspects, the authors stress that more than a fourth of the population under study reported this pattern of alcohol consumption over the last twelve months.

The problems caused by alcohol consumption can be direct or indirect. Direct problems include, for example, acute poisoning and hepatic cirrhosis. However, there are a number of indirect consequences associated with the damaging effects of alcohol consumption. The adoption of risk behaviors that may cause traffic accidents, infection with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, increased suicide risk in patients with depression, fetal disorders, and other complications related to alcohol consumption during pregnancy are the most easily observable damage. In addition, the years of healthy life

lost due to disability should also be computed (Disability-Adjusted Life Years – DALYs) attributable to Alcohol Use Disorders (AUD) (FIGLIE et al., 1997; TURISCO et al., 2000; SILVEIRA et al., 2007; MALOW et al., 2006).

Alcohol use during pregnancy is one of the main preventable causes of e birth defects and changes in child development. Alcohol, when ingested, crosses the placental barrier and causes the fetus to receive the same concentrations as the pregnant woman (MAY, 1995; SHARPE, et al., 2004).

Vieira (2008), while studying the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by teenagers in the city of Gravataí-RS, found that young people had their first contact with alcohol at the mean age of 11.7 years old.

## **Youth and adult education**

Pierro (2005) mentions the main reasons leading young people and adults to participate in educational programs. He notes that, among the reasons for pursuing improved schooling, multiple needs for knowledge related to the access to information and communication resources are included. This occurs as the labor market becomes increasingly more competitive and excluding within a complex and multicultural society.

Currently, YAE has a significant share of young people who drop out of regular classes and migrate to this educational modality. The reasons are various: there are students who are “invited” by day shift coordinator to move to YAE, and others join as a result of situations arising from early pregnancy or getting a job.

The growing presence of young people in YAE has been giving rise to new questions for teachers, requiring more thorough preparation from them. One such challenge is related to intergenerational conflicts in classes with the presence of young people (very young, only 16 years old) and adults, in some cases seniors over age 60.

Regarding juvenilization, Baquero et al. (2008) point out,

[...] juvenilization imposes questions not only from a theoretical-methodological and educator’s training perspective, but also (re) views about the purpose of the educational practice in this area, not only because there is the presence of a new social segment in the adult education classes but also due to the multitude of features that it can take on, since the youth do not constitute a homogeneous category, but a population segment with a wide range. (BAQUERO et al., 2008, p.3)

Another challenge relates to the development of a pedagogical work that is capable of meeting the expectations and conditions of these different age groups. This brings us to the training of educators working with this public, requiring the development of specific

knowledge related to content, methodology and assessment of such a culturally diverse group (ARBACHE, 2001).

Citizenship is not built on schooling alone; a space for development is needed, and we need to understand that education is not something that takes place within the confines of school walls. As Machado (2009) emphasizes, YAE does not boil down to mere schooling, because we need to consider that the production of knowledge occurs in the world of culture and work in different living spaces for youths and adults.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research used an approach with a qualitative emphasis that aims to explore the spectrum of views and the various representations about its subject (BAUER; GASKELL, 2007). It is also qualitative because this modality is applicable to the study of history, relationships, representations, beliefs, perceptions and opinions produced from the interpretation that men make about what they experience, build, feel and think (MINAYO, 2007). Thus, according to Richardson (1999), a survey of this nature can be understood as an attempt to understand the meanings and characteristics of a situation as presented by the respondent.

The state high school Açorianos is located in the city of Viamão- RS, at Rua Almeida Rosa, 51, Jardim Krahe. Records were entered in the logbook, interviews and data collection with questionnaires and forms were performed, and a didactic sequence related to alcohol and its effects on the body was applied.

Given that the students are achieving literacy, the instruments were applied as individual interviews with the aid of the teacher who was responsible for the class. Although the object of the study was explained to them, in many questions they used expressions such as “I don’t know, teacher”, “I have no opinion”, “it depends” or answered using colloquial language, “whatever”, “that’s hard”.

The sequence applied to YAE 5,6 was adapted to YAE 1,2, particularly with the decrease in the textual part and addition of a greater number of images. The implementation of this didactic sequence in this class occurred differently in another two respects: in relation to the pace, it was slower, and notions about the human body and its systems were concomitantly addressed, as students asked questions and showed curiosity. For this work, an illustrative material was produced and its prints were distributed for each student.

Qualitative research, according to Minayo (1998, 2007), aims to explore the set of opinions and social representations on the subject you want to investigate, and it does not need to cover all the words and expressions of interlocutors, but to seek a common ground to the sociocultural dimension of opinions, despite the singularities unique to the biography of each interlocutor.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the twelve students, seven were aged between 18 and 23 and the others were over 30 years old. Regarding the composition by sex, 75% were women. Regarding marital status, three reported being married, eight were single and one person was divorced. Four people reported having children. Only two people said they did not work, and the other (10) reported working.

When asked if they already repeated a year in school, prior to their participation in youth and adult education, 9 out of 12 answered affirmatively. Only two respondents had no interruption in their school attendance, and only one student stated having dropped out of school directly in connection with the consumption of alcohol at parties, while three others reported drinking alcohol, corresponding to 25% of the total.

As reported jokingly by the students, four students were “heavy drinkers”. A student said that she drank a lot: “I drink too much, teacher, I couldn’t care less, I drink until I don’t remember anything, until I drop. About the type of drink they consumed, the four students said out loud: “what’s available to us”, “yes, teacher”, “that’s right”, “whatever comes, it’s all right”. All of them laughed and said “they’re boozers, teacher”. The four students demonstrated they were “proud” of drinking and laughed. The most consumed drinks are mentioned in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – Types of drinks consumed in each event by respondents who drank.

Student 1	Beer, sugarcane liquor and vodka
Student 2	Whiskey, redbull and beer
Student 3	Beer and bigapple
Student 4	Vodka and coke drink, wine and redbull

Source: The survey.

Spirits and non-distilled drinks are observed to be consumed in the same event, and two respondents reported mixing energy drinks with alcohol. By analyzing the data together with the report of the students, it is observed that, in fact, there is a preference for a type of drink specifically, which may show that ethanol is consumed simply for its effects, from what is available, as reported by a student (corroborated by the others) “we drink whatever we come across.”

Regarding the frequency of consumption over the last 12 months, two students reported having consumed 50 or more times, a female student, 60 or more times, and another one, “four times”. To make this calculation, the students asked; “teacher, how many weekends does a year have?” They reported drinking every weekend and some began drinking on Friday and stopping on Sunday, often missing class because they were “exhausted”.

Regarding the amount consumed (number of doses), a female student and a male student said they did not have the slightest idea why they drank a lot. Another student

reported 16 or more doses, and one student reported one dose only. Note that, of the 4 students, 3 reported heavy drinking (drinking binge), and their associated risks are confirmed by the respondents in the next question.

When asked about problems caused by alcohol consumption, the three respondents who drank excessively reported having had problems, namely: unconsciousness, vomiting, fights, nausea, and headache. The girl reported to the teacher that she often drank until losing consciousness, that this was common and that she was usually taken home in an awful state. One of the students reported being involved in several fights, and the others warned him “one day you’re going to get in trouble, man.” The student agreed and said “yes...but what can I do?”

Data reported in the First National Survey on Alcohol Consumption Patterns in the Brazilian population indicate that in the southern region (highlighted by the higher rates compared to other regions of the country), 13% of adolescents had an intense consumption pattern, and 30% indulged in a drinking binge. Around half of those who drank reported having experienced some kind of problem because of alcohol consumption (BRAZIL, 2007).

Among the study participants, three of the 12 students interviewed reported a drinking binge and they all reported different problems related to alcohol consumption, and the reported problems were: physical and emotional problems predisposing individuals to greater risks, involvement in fights and accidents as pointed out in a large number of studies (MELONI; LARANJEIRA, 2004; PECHANSKY, 2004; MINAYO, 1998; KIRBY,2002).

When asked about when they began consuming alcohol, two students answered at age 12 at home out of curiosity and/or because they so desired, others reported having started at age 15 at their friends’ home and out of curiosity. Vieira (2008) in his study of the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by adolescents in the city of Gravataí in Rio Grande do Sul concluded that the mean age of the first contact of young people with alcohol was 11.7 years old.

The students were requested to: *Answer in a single word, alcoholic drinks are related to?*

The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 – Categories associated with drinking.

Category	Associated Words	Occurrences
Motivations for alcohol consumption	Party and happiness	2
Negative effects on physical and mental health	Illness, cirrhosis, angst, addiction	8
Events caused by consumption	Accident, death	2

Source: The survey.

Kuntsche et al. (2006) in a review of the scientific literature on the reasons why young people aged 10-25 use alcohol, showed that in male adolescents aged 18-19 social issues and the search for effects of the substance on their bodies prevailed. Thus, the words “party” and “happiness” listed in the table can be inserted in this context of “pursuit” or motivation for consumption.

Note, however, that 10 associations were made taking into account the negative aspects of alcohol consumption, covering predominantly impacts on physical health than on mental health. There was no association with the word violence, although the word “death” was mentioned, which we imagine to be more related to issues such as one’s own illness or accidents. Regarding drinking habit losses, allusions were made to different aspects, including:

- *fighting, falling down, getting hurt and getting lost*
- *spending money and damaging one’s health*
- *acting impulsively without thinking about consequences*
- *car accidents*
- *becoming an alcoholic*

When reflecting about the organs that are most affected by alcohol, of the 12 students, six mentioned more than one organ affected, predominantly the liver (11 students), kidneys (4), heart (2), stomach (2), vesicle (1), and brain (1).

The knowledge that alcohol affects the liver is noted to be widespread in the group, related to “cirrhosis”, as seen in the answers to the previous question, followed by “kidney”, the other organs were scarcely mentioned. It is understood there are two important aspects to be analyzed in the answers. The first is that the students are individually unaware of the systemic effects of alcohol consumption. However, analyzing the responses within the group as a whole, it is clear that there is a collective intelligence that does not ignore a more widespread or systemic effect of ethanol. Thus, the important role of the teacher in pursuing this collective knowledge and working on pedagogical practices that encourage the sharing of this knowledge is highlighted.

The didactic sequence applied to the group in YAE 5,6 aroused great interest among students, especially in regard to historical aspects and processes of sugar fermentation into ethanol. The picture showing the path of alcohol in the body provided a quick review of the main organs of the human body, and the group began to question how alcohol affected the brain. At this time, a drawing of the brain was shown with the main areas and their functions such as motor coordination, speech, and visual area. It was questioned whether a person under the effect of alcohol is able to perform tasks well using these functions. The group was able to quickly establish connections between alcohol consumption and its effects on the brain.

The students were asked to make an account of the main health problems these people face using cases they knew. Through the participation of students, who brought



their experiences, it was possible to easily address all health problems that alcohol consumption may cause.

The most common motives that lead to alcohol consumption are:

*- To get high, teacher.*

This answer brings an understanding that people seek alcohol for its effects and sensations.

*- A person sees the others drinking and gets curious, they also want to know what it is like.*

This student brings two aspects: the first is the influence from contact with people who drink and the second is the curiosity to experiment and try to find out why others are drinking.

*- The guy arrives at the party and then he has to drink to loosen up and hit on chicks, otherwise it won't work out. And then he keeps doing this, and at each party he drinks a little more and more, and when he realizes he is addicted.*

*- Ah (sounding nonchalant) – who cares!*

*- And do the girls like to see the boys hitting on them with alcohol breath?*

*- And so what? They drink, too, they drink even more, they're equal!*

(widespread laughter in the class).

The dialogue between these two students puts alcohol consumption as a search for relaxation, for the user to stay relaxed and overcome their inhibitions. The female student reports that people become dependent without noticing.

*- I think people drink because of friends, to get into the clique and not to feel different, otherwise the guys make bad taste jokes.*

In this view, the student expresses the issue of the influence from the “gang” and the fact that people drink to avoid being excluded or a laughing stock. It should be noted that most of the reasons given by students corroborated the literature results later presented to them. The following claims were presented:

**Claim 1** – Alcohol is a drug that depresses the Central Nervous System – CNS (brain).

**Student 1** – *Of course not, an individual gets happy, relaxed.*

**Student 2** – *It depends, isn't it? It depends on how much you drink, because after some time you start to feel sad.*

**Student 1** – *OK, that's true. After drinking a lot, isn't it?*

**Claim 2** – Women are more sensitive to the effects of alcohol than men.

This claim was agreed by all the class.

**Claim 3** – Drinking is a way to cure sadness.

There was a lot of feedback to this statement, and the students reasoned that, although alcohol does not cure sadness, because one of its effects is to be a depressing substance, many people think so.

**Claim 4** – An individual under the effect of alcohol is more vulnerable to contracting HIV.

The group was split toward this claim: some of the students claimed that “one thing has nothing to do with the other”, which clearly showed the difficulty of establishing a correlation between consumption and being exposed to risk situations. Another part of the group argued that it was a fact, but when asked why, they could not explain at first. Then a student said:

*- Listen: if a guy gets drunk, he doesn't know what he does. He won't even remember if at that time he wore a condom or what he did, teacher!*

This sentence led to reflection and agreement on this aspect in the class.

Two photos of the singer Amy Winehouse, a fatal victim of the excessive consumption of alcohol and drugs, were presented. The first picture was customarily shown in the media and the second was a less publicized picture of the singer on drugs: ragged, unkempt, almost unrecognizable.

At that point the group was invited to reflect on how and what kind of people usually appear in beverage ads. Students actively participated and all agreed that the ads always display “broads” “only broads, teacher” and beautiful people, with cars and friends. They allude to joy and happiness, and slovenly or unhappy people never appear. A student commented on the absence of appearance of people after drinking excessively: “an individual becomes ugly and ill, wretched, this isn't shown”.

Finally, the meaning of the word “welcoming” was presented and what it represented for a person suffering from addiction. The important role of each one was highlighted, now elucidated, to guide people seeking medical attention. It was also emphasized that “welcoming” also includes non-discrimination and assistance, in addition, the referral to a healthcare clinic protects an individual from engaging in risky behaviors.

In the YAE 1,2 classes, students between ages 18 and 30 prevailed. Most of them did not work, unlike in YAE 5,6. It is inferred that the low education of YAE 1,2 students is decisive for their exclusion from the labor market. This fact is perceived by YAE 1,2 students themselves, because, when asked whether they worked or not, those who did not work tried to “justify” attending or returning to school as a means to improve their education and get a job.

During the interaction with the class, students who reported “not working” said that they carried out activities seeking to earn financial resources: two said that they collected cans in events and boxes and papers from shops and grocery stores to sell for recycling, two female students said that they were artisans involved with needlework and

painting, respectively. Thus, it can be noticed that the term “work” in the questionnaire was associated with a job as a subordinate earning a salary and not with the practice of a remunerated activity. Perhaps this signals that, in a next survey, the instrument or the way questions are made should be adjusted, when administered in an interview. On the other hand, it is clear that, although it may have certain limitations, the presence, observation and interaction of the researcher in the study environment for a longer time is a key factor to achieve a better and more thorough understanding of the subject matter.

As for repeating a grade in school, of the 11 respondents, nine said they had repeated the first grade more than once since they could not become literate and gave up attending school. Five said they already entered school “out of age”, because they had to care for younger siblings or carry out household chores while their parents worked.

Asked about the time that they stayed away from school, two said they had never attended school (a 58-year-old male student and a 73-year-old female student), two said that they spent between one and two years without going to school, and four spent more than three years without attending classes. At the time of consolidation of the survey results, a number of questions arose: the youngest student was 18 years old (considering the hypothesis that these did not attend school from one to two years), how do two students who failed to attend school for a short time have such a low level of literacy? It does not matter how short or inconsistent their attendance was, they attended school for many years and were unable to achieve literacy at all. These are only a few questions (without answers) that emerged from this research. This reveals the YAE, especially YAE 1 and 2 (literacy), is a rich field of research, so that they can think about improvement of school practices.

In this group, everyone stated that they did not consume alcohol, even occasionally. Eight respondents made a point of saying that “they stay away” from drinking because “it only destroys.” Virtually everyone in the course of the study reported having experienced situations with family members such as parents, siblings, husband and godfather who became dependent on alcohol and suffered many effects from heavy drinking. Thus, the group demonstrated a high degree of knowledge as a part of their life stories.

The students were requested to:

*Answer in a single word, alcoholic drinks are related to (Table 4).*

TABLE 4 – Categories and words associated with drinking – YAE 1,2

Category	Associated Words	Ocurrences
Reasons for alcohol consumption related to searching for its effects	Getting high and drunk	2
Reasons for alcohol consumption related to daily life difficulties	Problems/discomfort, family issues	6
Negative effects in behavior	Violence, killing people, rage	3

Source: The survey.

As can be seen, students in YAE 1,2 associate alcohol consumption most of the time (50%) to the motivations that lead people to wrongfully consume the substance. Among these are family problems. While answering to the questionnaire, in addition to speaking the words, they added that people “drink to forget.” Qualitatively, there is a marked difference between the answers of the YAE 5,6 group and the YAE 1,2 group. While the former linked drinking to the consequences, mostly physical ailments, the second group linked drinking to personal and social reasons. As the study continued, the second group was observed to also have a good understanding of the effects of alcohol on the body, i.e. the failure to mention physical effects did not occur due to lack of knowledge. Therefore, it is concluded that this group, based on their experiences, gives greater weight to aspects related to personal and social difficulties for alcohol consumption.

The last question in this part of the ICD asked students to mention what organs were most affected by alcohol, ranking from the most affected to the least affected.

Of 11 students, 6 mentioned more than one affected organ and two students stated that they did not drink. Once again answers related to the liver (5 students), heart (4) and kidneys (3) prevailed, lung, blood, brain and pancreas had only one answer.

It was also possible to observe a qualitative difference in answers about the organs mentioned: while in YAE 5,6 stomach and gall bladder were mentioned, in the second group lung and blood were mentioned.

Regarding the evaluation of the work by the students, Table 5 shows the agreement rates attributed by each YAE group.

TABLE 5 – Agreement rate of groups regarding the propositions related to the evaluation of the work.

Proposition	Agreement YAE 1,2	Agreement YAE 5,6
I think it is important that activities about alcohol be performed in school	100%	100%
I would like to participate in more activities about the subject	100%	100%
I am interested in the results of this study	100%	92.3%
The topic could be addressed in several subjects	83.3%	81.8%
I think I am well informed of alcohol and its effects	63.6%	100%
Alcohol consumption has <b>never</b> caused problems to me	45.5%	83.3%
Alcohol consumption has <b>never</b> caused problems to my family	36.4%	91.7%

Source: The survey.

Regarding the relevance of the theme and its approach in school, as well as the desire to continue participating in activities of this type, the agreement rates were high, and to a lesser extent, the fact that the issue can be treated by several subjects, consequently, the scope in which the issues were included in the educational process in question is

understood. Broader studies have demonstrated this aspect (PRIMO, 2004), in addition to other characteristics and losses from the consumption of alcoholic drinks in the Brazilian population (MELONI.; LARANJEIRA, 2004; BRASIL, 2007).

However, there was a great difference in the preparation of the groups according to their own assessment, and especially different considerations in relation to alcohol damage, being much more frequent in YAE 1,2 students, indicating an association between low education and losses from the excessive consumption of alcohol and its resulting individual and family losses.

When asked whether the matter should be approached only in the science class, seven students in YAE 1,2 agreed completely, and four fully disagreed, which may show a difficulty in understanding the claims, or an understanding that the topic **could** be addressed in various subjects and **should** (obligatorily) be worked in the subject of science, in this case the word “only” was ignored in the understanding of the statement.

The understanding that the subject can be worked in various subjects was predominant in YAE 1,2 compared to YAE 5,6, perhaps this is due to the fact that the YAE 1,2 groups work in the same room with a single teacher who organizes all activities, reducing the perception of disciplinary fragmentation as seen in YAE 5,6, which have a teacher for each subject.

Although in this group all YAE 1,2 students reported not drinking alcohol, six reported that the consumption of the substance caused them some sort of family problem. As with the YAE 5 and 6 students, the level of participation of YAE 1,2 students was quite high. However, this group participated more by bringing their life experiences, such as accounts of relatives, neighbors and friends they knew who habitually consumed alcohol. A student reported personal problems with her husband.

Asked about the most common reasons that lead people to drink, these students said that those who drink are “ill” and they start to drink to “forget their problems and drown their sorrows” (a sentence that will also appear in theatrical narrative).

Unlike the responses of YAE 5,6 students, among the reasons for drinking, parties, curiosity, overcoming inhibitions and friends (influence of the group) were not mentioned, YAE 1,2 students listed “problems” (especially financial) as major reasons for consumption. This fact might be related to the higher age of this group, while YAE 5,6 students are still in the “adolescence” and bring in their answers issues related to this stage of development.

Another interesting aspect to be noted is the “atmosphere” in the classroom. While the YAE 5,6 students led the class with a relaxed atmosphere and answered, often laughing, “to get high”, in YAE 1,2, the topic and the climate in the classroom was “heavy”, people responded seriously, especially after a student gave a testimony about her husband, which stimulated other accounts of serious and complex cases.

Generally, the reports by students made it clear that they were properly aware of the effect of alcohol consumption on people’s lives and on society.

When the picture of body organs was presented (especially the digestive system), they showed great interest in the subject “body” and asked where the organs were located in the body. While asking, they always pointed to their own bodies, which signaled a need to understand “in practice” where the bodies were located. Examples were always brought together with explanations, “cases” that students knew (especially diseases of the organs), which enriched the work and always produced an atmosphere of seriousness.

Regarding the promotion of alcohol consumption in the media, especially television, the group reached conclusions nearly identical to those of students in YAE 5,6, reporting that ads showed only “pretty” people and places, and a student said that “alcohol is a disgrace in people’s lives”, getting the agreement of everyone. It can be concluded that the work was considered interesting, because all the responders fully agreed that they intended to talk to others about what they learned, corroborating the relevance of these issues and their diffusion in the community (MELONI; LARANJEIRA, 2004; BRAZIL, 2007).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

YAE is constituted by a richness and diversity of meanings and representations. Therefore, it offers a space that seeks to understand how identities are generated, circulated, and produced regarding the consumption of alcoholic drinks and health.

This study aimed to investigate among Youth and Adult Education students what types of knowledge and concepts related to alcohol consumption and its effects and how pedagogical practices can contribute to a redefinition of the preconceptions about the matter.

Regarding the teaching practice, it can be concluded that this provided a resignification spaces and deepening of preconceptions about the subject through the creation of spaces that provided an interaction between social entities.

I believe that this study can signal how important and necessary it is to make efforts in order to encourage pedagogical practices for Health Education. Reinforcing the positive aspects in the construction of new health representations, shedding light on the systemic effects of alcohol on people’s bodies and lives are only a few topics requiring a better approach. This being said, I understand that a more effective learning logic can be favored and that, finally, this will be able to promote a better quality of life for all the social players involved.

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