

Joint Mediation of Psychosis and Mental Stress on Alcohol Consumption and Graduates' Job Performance: A PLS Structural Equation Modelling

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Abstract

Previous research has interlinked alcohol consumption (AC), mental stress (MS), psychotic experiences (PE) and academic performance (AP) of students and psychological behaviour of the general population. The current study seems to be the first to consider the joint and partial mediation effects of MS and PE in linking AC to graduates' job performance in specific areas such as teamwork (TW), communication competence (CC), customer service (CS) and job functions (JF). A virtual cross-section of 3,862 graduates with self-reported cases of having taken alcohol in the past participated in the study. These participants responded to an electronic questionnaire that was mailed to them. The instrument used for data collection had acceptable psychometric properties. The study used the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to achieve its objectives. The inner and outer models were all evaluated for quality and goodness of fit. Results showed a significant negative effect of AC and MS on graduates' job performance in terms of TW, CC, CS and JF, respectively. AC had a significant positive effect on MS and PE. MS has a significant positive effect on PE. A significant joint mediation effect of MS and PE was found in linking AC to graduates' TW, CC and CS, excluding JF. MS partially mediated AC's paths to all the graduates' job performance indicators. PE was only a significant partial mediator of the connection between AC to JF, but not TW, CC and CS. This study's result can help improve graduates' work effectiveness and has revealed some negative predictors. Therefore, it is recommended that graduates avoid alcohol or only consume mild quantities of it to enable them to discharge services effectively at the workplace.

Keywords: Alcohol use, higher education, mental health, psychotic episodes, SmartPLS.

Citation: Owan, V. J., Duruamaku Dim, J. U., Okon, A. E., Akah, L. U., & Agurokpon, D. C. (2022). Joint Mediation of Psychosis and Mental Stress on Alcohol Consumption and Graduates' Job Performance: A PLS Structural Equation Modeling. *The International Journal of Learning in Higher Education*, 30(1), 89–111. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7955/CGP/v30i01/89-111>

Introduction

The need to promote service quality in formal and informal organisations has attracted the attention of many stakeholders and researchers, who are now paying closer attention to graduates' job performance. Generally, job performance has been defined as actions or behaviours that employees engage in to achieve organisational goals (Christian et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2010). Specifically, graduates' job performance refers to how well an employer is impressed with the services of graduate employees after conducting an assessment (Odigwe et al., 2018). In this study, we defined graduates' job performance as the extent to which holders of higher education certificates and diplomas can discharge assigned duties effectively to realise set objectives. Measures of graduates' job performance include competence, knowledge application, ability to work with minimal supervision and resourcefulness (Abas & Imam, 2016; Caballero & Walker, 2010; Molefe, 2012; Plantilla, 2017). Others include timeliness, attention to detail, speed, flexibility and ability to work under pressure (Owan, Odigwe, et al., 2022). Other performance indicators include teamwork, communication competence, customer service, productivity, practical demonstration, discharge of assigned job functions, problem-solving and versatility (Owan & Agunwa, 2019).

Despite these critical indicators, it has been documented that the job performance of some graduates is abysmal at the workplace (Odigwe et al., 2018). A misalignment between graduates' school grades and their ability to do practical tasks after gaining employment has been documented (Arop et al., 2018; Basseyy et al., 2019). Other scholars have revealed that employers encounter various obstacles when hiring university graduates due to poor work performance and ineptitude (Chikazhe et al., 2022). Most employers have also complained about the skills gap between graduates' expected and actual performance (Muchemwa, 2017). This tendency has prompted numerous researchers to question the quality of the Nigerian educational system (Irele & Kayode, 2019; Sengsri & Agbi, 2020).

Many reasons have been blamed for the disparity between school and employment performance. It is claimed that enormous student enrolment jeopardises higher education service delivery and produces graduates with employability and performance issues (Chikazhe et al., 2022; Ekaette et al., 2019, 2020). Other scholars have attributed it to graduates being unprepared, having too much theory and insufficient practical content, and engaging in unethical academic activities for good school grades (Arop et al., 2018; Madukwe et al., 2019). Poor school financing (Akomolafe & Aremu, 2016; Odigwe, 2020; Odigwe & Owan, 2019), parental socioeconomic level, nutrition (Akah, Owan, Uduigwomen, et al., 2022), residence, peer pressure, school administration, and evaluation techniques (Onyebuchukwu et al., 2015) are other suspected variables affecting graduates' job performance. For improvement, it has been suggested that rather than relying just on academic grades (which might be deceptive), higher education graduates should have their productivity in the workplace and degree of experience, talents, and competencies evaluated (Ajjawi et al., 2020; Basseyy et al., 2019; Espinoza et al., 2020; Nabulsi et al., 2021).

The current study uses these issues to shed more light on other factors that could affect higher education graduates' performance in the workplace. These include alcohol consumption, mental stress, and psychotic experiences. According to some scholars, these variables were considered since numerous physical, behavioural, and psychological changes occur throughout late adolescence and early adulthood due to obligations and expectations (Chacón et al., 2018). The influence of social groups and being away from one's family and home causes these changes in physiology, sociology, and culture (Tanner & Arnett, 2016). Besides, many graduates seem to be intense at the prospects of securing good jobs as they venture into adulthood to occupy central places in society. Failure to meet these aspirations often promotes frustrations, fear, and anxiety. As a coping strategy, most of them resort to alcohol consumption and other substance abuse (Dorn-Medeiros & Doyle, 2018; Spadola et al., 2018; Tretyak et al.,

2022). Since most graduates have greater freedom in making choices (Bewick et al., 2008; Karam et al., 2007), their decisions could be effective or otherwise. For this reason, a study on alcohol consumption, mental stress and psychotic experiences became important.

Previous studies on job performance have linked the construct to predictors such as vocational training duration (Odigwe et al., 2018), recruitment procedures, selection and work readiness (Caballero & Walker, 2010), entrepreneurship skills (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015), nationality and personality traits (Ajanovic et al., 2021), among other variables. None of these studies assessed the contribution of alcohol consumption on job performance, nor the mediation of mental stress and psychotic experiences on the link. Instead, previous research had focused mainly on the general population, without a specific focus on higher education graduates. While it can be argued that graduates are a part of the general work population, not all employees are higher education graduates.

Previous research on graduates' job performance often treated the construct unidimensionally (Chikazhe et al., 2022; Odigwe et al., 2018; Plantilla, 2017; Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015); whereas it has been argued that job performance, as an abstract construct, is multidimensional (Ajanovic et al., 2021). Similarly, a study found three dimensions of job performance: job time, quality and quantity (Na-Nan et al., 2018). Even though some job performance dimensions can be generalised, some may differ between jobs (Ajanovic et al., 2021), whereas others can depend on the context and operational definition of the construct. Along these lines, the current study treated graduates' job performance multidimensionally by focusing on aspects such as teamwork, communication competence, customer service and job functions.

Literature Review

Alcohol Consumption (AC)

Studies on AC and mental stress have yielded varied results, although most studies tend to agree that AC affects the cognitive performance of individuals (Gunn et al., 2018; Rehm et al., 2017). According to the affect regulation model, stress and alcohol use are intertwined in a transactional process in which stressors cause discomfort and people self-medicate with alcohol to decrease the unpleasantness of stress (Grzywacz & Almeida, 2008). High-stress levels were linked to increased alcohol consumption in both men and women (Keyes et al., 2011). Similarly, a previous study proved that addictive substances like alcohol and opioids are closely linked to a tendency toward risky behaviour, mental problems, and poor performance (Kiepek & Baron, 2019). This implies that someone who has been a heavy drinker for a long time is likelier to feel anxious in stressful situations than someone who has never consumed alcohol or drunk lightly.

Studies on AC and psychotic experiences have provided ample evidence that consistent use of alcohol may cause psychosis (known as substance-induced psychosis). For instance, it has been documented that individuals that drink too much and are experiencing symptoms like hallucinations and delusions may have developed alcohol-related psychosis (Mauri et al., 2018). Earlier research showed that people with alcoholism may also have a mental illness and that people with schizophrenia and other psychotic illnesses are more likely to have issues with alcohol and other drugs, with prevalence rates as high as 50% (Addington & Addington, 2007; Petersen et al., 2007). Like first-episode psychosis, drinking and drug misuse issues are far more common in these individuals (Margolese et al., 2004). Furthermore, other studies have proven alcoholism is linked to PTSD symptoms and psychotic events (Debell et al., 2014; Kachadourian et al., 2014). This shows that trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) co-occur with problematic alcohol consumption in various samples. A previous study has also documented that alcohol use as a coping mechanism is associated with violent behaviours due

to mental alterations (Bonomi et al., 2018). Similarly, another study found that alcohol use was associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms among males and females since COVID-19 started (Tran et al., 2020). This also tallies with another research which found a high correlation between increased alcohol consumption and mental health problems (Jacob et al., 2021).

Previous studies on AC and performance have documented an unfavourable effect of excessive alcohol consumption on consumers' outcomes (Atoyebi et al., 2020; Castellanos-Perilla et al., 2022; Hakulinen & Jokela, 2019; Rehm et al., 2017; Romac et al., 2022). The negative effect occurs in specific areas such as mood (Alford et al., 2020), workplace productivity (Łyszczarz, 2019; Stepanek et al., 2019) and presenteeism (Buvik et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). Other analyses have shown marginal consequences of drinking on educational performance (Eze et al., 2017; Zadarko-Domaradzka et al., 2018). It has been argued that alcohol consumption reduces human performance generally, regardless of whether it is consumed in a modest amount (Osain & Alekseevic, 2010). Furthermore, other scholars have clarified that, while exceptions exist, high consumption of beverages such as local beer cocktails contributes to the poor performance of academic activities by students (Eze et al., 2017), leading to half-baked students in society (Ajayi & Somefun, 2020; Dumbili, 2015). Regarding school performance, there is evidence that substantial variations exist in the academic performance of students who consume alcohol versus others who do not (Onyebuchukwu et al., 2015; Zadarko-Domaradzka et al., 2018). Another piece of evidence indicates that alcohol intake substantially decreases by almost one-tenth of the standard deviation by academic performance (Carrell & West, 2010). Therefore, students' use of alcohol in schools may likely continue even after graduation since alcohol-induced psychosis, hallucinosis and paranoia are known to only occur in chronic alcoholics who have been drinking for a long time and in large quantities (Revadigar & Gupta, 2022).

The bulk of the literature in this section tends to have a general agreement on the direction of effect of alcohol consumption on consumers' mental health, psychotic experiences and performance. Nevertheless, much of it has been on the general population, with no study found using graduates' samples. Studies on AC and performance have mainly dwelt on students' school performance, with none considering their workplace performance. This creates a gap in knowledge requiring further investigations to determine how alcohol consumption might influence graduates' out-of-school performance. The current study addressed this gap.

Mental Stress

In the general population, epidemiological studies have shown a clear correlation between (subclinical) psychotic experiences and regular exposure to critical life events that produce stress (Kelleher et al., 2013; Varese et al., 2012). Such events, defined as arising beyond sleep or drug use, may be assessed as clinically significant symptoms (hallucinations or delusions) by subclinical experiences, not triggering activity that seeks support (Yung & Lin, 2016). Another study investigated the connection between stressful life experiences (SLEs) and psychotic encounters in adolescence using a structural equation model fitting (Shakoor et al., 2016). SLEs were shown to associate substantially with optimistic psychotic symptoms. Likewise, the findings of another analysis showed a strong association between perceived stress and psychotic experiences even after adjusting for depression (Turley et al., 2019). More specifically, it was proven in another research that greater stress sensitivity was linked to a higher risk of psychotic episodes even after controlling for co-occurring anxiety and depressive symptoms (DeVylder et al., 2016). Other studies have also documented a connection between psychological stress and people's experiences with psychosis (Bolhuis et al., 2018; Kelleher et al., 2015).

Another study (Jones et al., 2020) discovered that exposure to stressful events, among other variables, was linked to an increased likelihood of developing psychotic characteristics.

It has also been reported that people with mood swings are more likely to develop psychotic feelings (Smith & Dubovsky, 2017; Zahodne et al., 2015). After correcting for sex and age, a study has found higher family functioning to dramatically reduce the impact of perceived stress on psychotic-like symptoms (Wu, Zou, et al., 2021). Additionally, some recent studies have found a clear association between routine exposure to stressful life events and psychotic episodes in a general population (DeVylder et al., 2020; Kelleher et al., 2015; Yates et al., 2019). Research reveals that the connection mediated problems with emotional regulation between psychotic experiences and nightmares (Akram et al., 2020). Although the results of all the studies cited tend to agree that a high-stress level is connected to higher chances of individuals developing psychosis, they mostly drew their results from general populations. This study seems to be the first to assess this connection in a graduate population.

Past studies on mental stress have also documented its negative effect on the job performance of academic staff (Aduma et al., 2022; Akah, Owan, Aduma, et al., 2022; Daniel, 2019) and other work-related variables such as productivity (Ma & Ye, 2019; Ramos-Galarza & Acosta-Rodas, 2019) and job satisfaction (An et al., 2020; O'Brien et al., 2019). This means that the more academic staff are exposed to stressful conditions, the higher the declining chances of their job performance, other things being equal. Since academic staff are all graduates, the results of the cited studies are pretty helpful to the current study focusing solely on graduates' job performance. Nevertheless, job performance in these studies was treated unidimensionally, whereas, in the current study, job performance is operationalised into four indicator areas. This was done because job performance is a multidimensional construct (Ajanovic et al., 2021).

Another study reported that academic stress dramatically affects students' performance; stress impairs people's capacity to learn, work, and concentrate, all of which contribute to subpar work and performance (Pascoe et al., 2020). A previous study found that very high levels of persistent mental stress were linked to worse academic performance (Lee et al., 2021). Mental stress, on the other hand, disrupts people's thoughts (Kaiser et al., 2015; Rosiek et al., 2016), reasoning (Hidalgo et al., 2019; Schoofs et al., 2009), and functioning (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). Stress decreases students' ability to learn in class and causes a lack of attention, resulting in subpar work and low academic grades (Pascoe et al., 2020). There is a negative correlation between academic stress and students' performance; therefore, the more stressed a student is, the worse their academic achievement (Aafreen et al., 2018; Herath, 2019; Oduwaiye et al., 2017; Oketch-obo, 2018). While several studies have identified a link between stress and academic success, others contradict conventional findings, arguing that students with high and moderate stress levels did better than those with lower stress levels (Kumari & Garita, 2012; Mohamad et al., 2018). Going by the disagreements in the results of different researchers, the connection between mental stress and academic performance is still debatable, up for question and requires further investigation and proof.

Previous studies on mental stress and students' performance have mostly considered students' school performance, neglecting their out-of-school performance. Thus, the degree to which mental stress affects graduates' job performance remains unclear. This often ignored aspect of performance is the primary reason for setting up schools. Schools were designed to equip learners with skills to enable them to function independently. To date, this study seems to be the first or among the very few thinking in this direction. This study attempted to bridge this gap in the literature and contribute to the ongoing debate.

Psychotic Experiences

Research showed that psychotic episodes and psychotic diseases share genetic, cognitive, and environmental risk factors (Linscott & van Os, 2013; Zavos et al., 2014). Since most prospective research on psychotic experiences has focused on severe adult consequences,

little is known about whether psychotic episodes hurt job performance. In the past, psychotic experiences have been linked to worse academic success in adolescents and adults (Davies et al., 2018; Wu, Liu, et al., 2021). It has also been documented that cognitive impairment is linked to an increased risk of psychosis (Khandaker et al., 2011). Consequently, children with psychotic experiences had worse educational results than their non-affected counterparts (Steenkamp et al., 2021). As with the preceding sections, research on psychosis and performance has dwelt solely on students' academic achievement. To our knowledge, no previous study has linked psychotic experiences among the graduate population intending to understand the role in their out-of-school performance. This neglected area is begging for research to expand the frontiers of knowledge, hence the present study.

Purpose of the study

This study was designed to precisely estimate:

- i. the direct effects of Alcohol Consumption (AC), Mental Stress (MS), and Psychotic Experiences (PE) on graduates' job performance indicators such as Teamwork (TW), Communication Competence (CC), Customer Service (CS) and Job Functions (JF);
- ii. the direct effect of AC on MS and PE, and MS on PE;
- iii. the joint mediation effect of MS and PE in linking AC to graduates' job performance indicators;
- iv. the partial mediation effect of MS and PE in the nexus between AC and graduates' job performance indices;
- v. the mediation of PE in the link between MS and graduates' job performance variables.
- vi. the amount of variance in TW, CC, CS and JF that AC, MS and PE can jointly explain;
- vii. the degree of variation in PE that AC and MS can jointly explain.

Methods

Design and study participants

The cross-sectional survey research design was employed in this study (Hall, 2008). All Nigerian graduates from higher education institutions who received their certificates or diplomas between 2015 and 2020 made up the study's population. A virtual cross-section of 3,862 graduates who self-reported having consumed alcohol in the past served as the study's sample. These individuals answered a questionnaire that was sent to them electronically. The study's participants were 57% (n = 2201) males and 43% (n = 1661) females. The average age of the participants was 24.5 years. Regarding religion, 56% (n = 2163) were Christians, whereas 44% (n = 1699) were Muslims. Regarding educational qualifications, 40% (n = 1545) held Higher National Diploma, 51% (n = 1970) and 9% (n = 347) were Bachelor's and Master's degree holders respectively. The distribution for respondents' year of graduation were as follows – 2015 (10%, n = 386), 2016 (13%, n = 502), 2017 (16%, n = 618), 2018 (23%, n = 888), 2019 (15%, n = 580), 2020 (23%, n = 888).

Data collection instruments

A questionnaire composed of five sections was used for data collection. Respondents' biographical information, including age, sex, religion, level of education, and year of school completion, was gathered in Section 1. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of the San Fernando Valley created the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST), which was the basis for the 15 questions in section 2 (the Alcohol Consumption Scale [ACS]). The ACS uses patient self-reports of alcohol consumption to screen for alcohol difficulties in the general population with a 98 per cent accuracy rate. As in the original form, the items on

the AIS were scored using a dichotomous system (Yes = 1; No = 2). The sum of a person's scores on all 15 items yields their degree of alcohol use.

Ten items measuring mental stress were included in Section 3 of the electronic survey (Mental Stress Scale [MSS]), which was based on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) created and verified by some researchers (Cohen et al., 1983). The responses for the MSS items ranged from 0 to 5, according to the original (PSS) six-point Likert scale. The scores from the 10 elements are added together to provide a final mental stress score. Ten modified questions from the Questionnaire for Psychotic Experiences (QPE) made up Section 4 (Psychotic Experiences Scale [PES]) of the electronic survey. The same six-point Likert scale and response choice as the MSS was also used for the PES items.

There are 25 items in Section 5 (Graduates' Job Performance Scale [GJPS]) that assess graduates' performance on the job. We created items in section 5 based on our expertise and information from a literature review. The 25 questions in section 5 were grouped into four categories. These include job functions, communication competence and teamwork (each with six items), customer service (with five items), and communication competence (with seven items). A 6-point linear scale, ranging from 0 to 5, was used to grade each question in Section 5 of the online survey.

Validity and Reliability of the instrument

A paper version of the instrument was made and sent to nine specialists at three public universities in South-South Nigeria. The instrument was submitted as part of a suite that included a document outlining the primary goals and hypotheses of the study so that readers could comprehend the scope of the investigation. There were three specialists in the fields of psychology, three in the field of measurement and evaluation, and three in the field of health education. Because the researchers believed they had the necessary expertise to evaluate the items, they considered experts in these three fields. Part 2 (ACS) and section 3 (MSS) were the primary areas of concentration for the specialists in health education. Section 4 (PES) was for psychologists, and section 5 (GJPS) was for measurement experts. The critical task for each expert was to rank the degree to which the items were understandable and pertinent when evaluating the variables in the target areas.

We employed expert evaluation reports to calculate the instrument's Item Content Validity Indices (I-CVIs) and Scale Content Validity Indices (S-CVIs). For relevance, I-CVI varied from .79 to .99 across all variables, whereas I-CVI ranged from .78 to .99 for clarity. S-CVI for all constructs varied from .87 to .90 (for clarity) and .85 to .90 (for relevance). Eight recent college graduates who were not a part of the study's subjects participated in a focus group discussion (FGD) on the instrument's second iteration. The graduates qualitatively assessed each item to determine its acceptability, sufficiency, and existence of any potential omissions. The final draft of the instrument was updated to include the focus group's recommendations. To assess the degree of internal consistency of the final instrument draft, 50 non-sample graduates participated in a trial test. The reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency method, with coefficients ranging from .86 to .90.

Procedure for data collection and analysis

The data for this study was gathered in two steps by the researchers. In the first phase, the researchers emailed the responders information about the study, its goals, and why they were asked to participate. A follow-up email with a link to the online survey created with Google Forms was sent after receiving written informed consent to participate. Three thousand eight hundred sixty-two unique replies were obtained during the 18-month data gathering

project. The collected data were cleaned, wrangled, and converted to prepare them for analysis. With the use of SmartPLS software, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed for data analysis. PLS-SEM was chosen over the covariance-based SEM because our data failed the normality test, leading to distribution problems that only PLS-SEM has the comparative advantage to handle over other programmes.

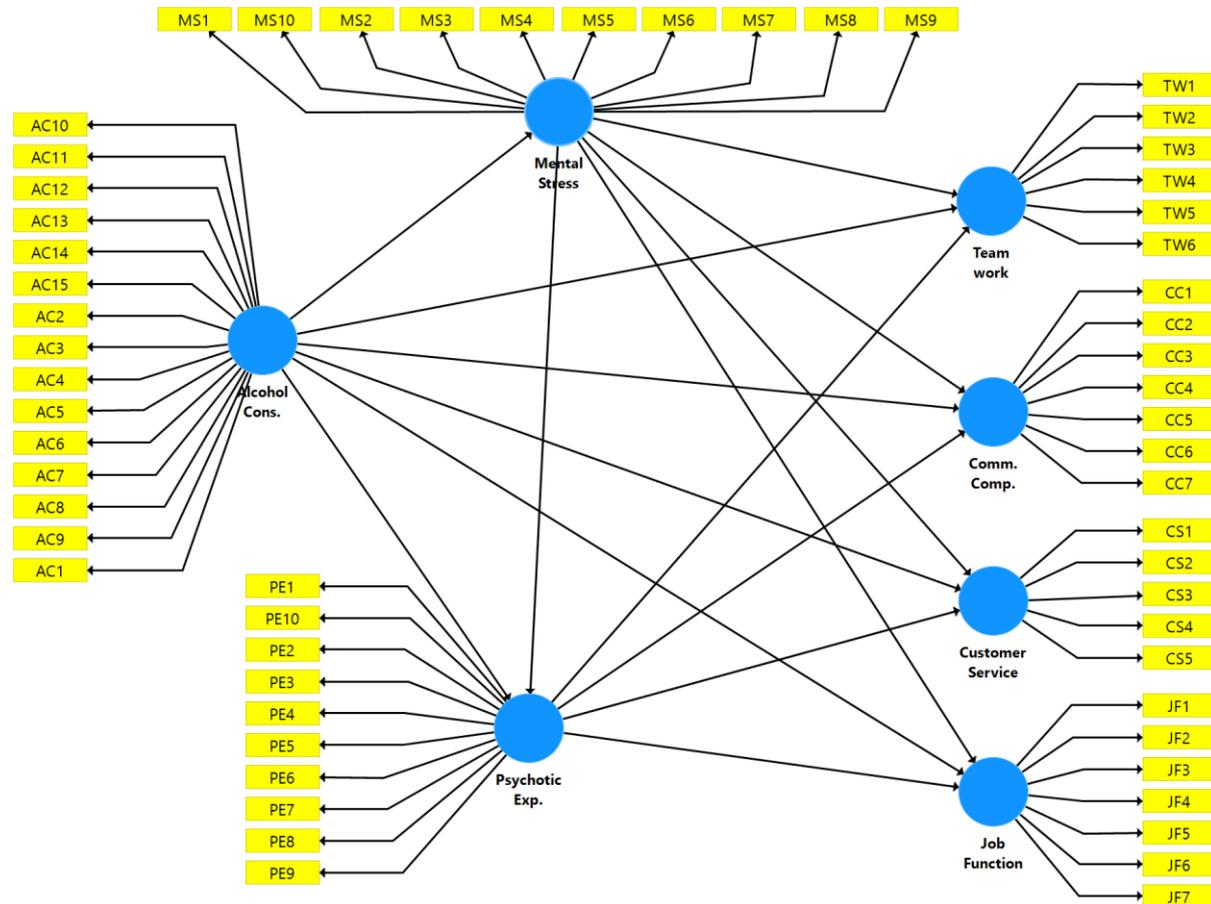


Figure 1: A hypothesised causal model of alcohol consumption, mental stress, psychotic experiences and graduates' job performance in terms of teamwork, communication competence, customer service and job functions

Results

Hypothesis 1

Alcohol Consumption (AC), Mental Stress (MS) and Psychotic Experiences (PE) have significant direct effects on graduates' job performance in terms of Teamwork (TW), Communication Competence (CC), Customer Service (CS) and Job Functions (JF). Table 1 reveals a significant direct negative effect of AC on graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = -.25$, 95% CI[-.31, -.19], $p < .000$), CC ($\beta = -.42$, 95% CI[-.48, -.35], $p < .001$), CS ($\beta = -.46$, 95% CI[-.53, -.40], $p < .000$), and JF ($\beta = -.52$, 95% CI[-.58, -.45], $p < .001$), respectively. Therefore, our hypothesis was supported (for AC). Table 1 also shows that MS has a significant direct negative effect on graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = -.33$, 95% CI[-.42, -.24], $p < .001$), CC ($\beta = -.31$, 95% CI[-.42, -.22], $p < .001$), CS ($\beta = -.22$, 95% CI[-.35, -.11], $p < .001$) and JF ($\beta = -.28$, 95% CI[-.41, -.16], $p < .001$). Thus, the hypothesis earlier formulated was upheld. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that PE has a non-significant direct positive effect on graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = .01$, 95% CI[-.10, .11], $p > .05$), CC ($\beta = .10$, 95% CI[-.02, .23], $p > .05$) and CS ($\beta = .14$, 95% CI[.00, .29], $p > .05$) respectively. However,

PE has a significant direct positive effect on graduates' job performance in terms of JF ($\beta = .27$, 95% CI [.12, .42], $p < .001$). Following this result, our hypothesis was not supported for PE versus TW, CC, and CS; it was, however, supported (for JF).

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant direct effect of AC on MS and PE, respectively, while MS has a direct effect on PE. Table 1 reveals a significant direct positive effect of AC on MS ($\beta = .81$, 95% CI [.80, .82], $p < .001$) and PE ($\beta = .26$, 95% CI [.22, .30], $p < .001$) respectively. According to Figure 2, alcohol consumption is sole accountable for 65% ($R^2 = .65$, 95% CI [.63, .67], $p < .001$) of the total variance in graduates' mental stress. Thus, we can hold other predictors accountable for 35% of the unexplained proportion of variance in the graduates' mental stress. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was proven to be statistically significant; hence our hypothesis was empirically supported. Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that MS has a significant direct positive effect on PE ($\beta = .70$, 95% CI [.65, .74], $p < .001$). Our hypothesis for the effects of AC and MS was confirmed based on these results.

Table 1: Direct effects

Hypothesis	β	95%CI	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (β/SD)	<i>P</i>
AC → CC	-.42***	-.48, -.35	-0.42	0.03	12.89	.000
AC → CS	-.46***	-.53, -.40	-0.47	0.03	13.64	.000
AC → JF	-.52***	-.58, -.45	-0.52	0.03	15.76	.000
AC → MS	.81***	.80, .82	0.81	0.01	119.64	.000
AC → PE	.26***	.22, .30	0.26	0.02	11.89	.000
AC → TW	-.25***	-.31, -.19	-0.25	0.03	7.72	.000
MS → CC	-.31***	-.42, -.22	-0.32	0.05	6.25	.000
MS → CS	-.22***	-.35, -.11	-0.23	0.06	3.60	.000
MS → JF	-.28***	-.41, -.16	-0.28	0.06	4.32	.000
MS → PE	.70***	.65, .74	0.70	0.02	31.79	.000
MS → TW	-.33***	-.42, -.24	-0.33	0.04	7.67	.000
PE → CC	.10	-.02, .23	0.10	0.07	1.54	.120
PE → CS	.14	.00, .29	0.15	0.07	1.91	.060
PE → JF	.27***	.12, .42	0.27	0.08	3.42	.000
PE → TW	.01	-.10, .11	0.01	0.05	0.19	.850

***Significant at the .001 alpha level

Hypothesis 3

There is a significant joint mediation effect of MS and PE linking AC to graduates' job performance indicators. The results in Table 2 shows a significant joint mediation effect of MS and PE in linking AC to graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = -.26$, 95% CI [-.32, -.21], $p < .001$), CC ($\beta = -.17$, 95% CI [-.22, -.12], $p < .001$) and CS ($\beta = -.06$, 95% CI [-.12, -.01], $p < .05$), respectively. However, MS and PE did not jointly mediate the relationship between AC and graduates' job performance in terms of JF to a significant extent ($\beta = .00$, 95% CI [-.07, .05], $p > .05$). Therefore, our hypothesis was supported for the link between AC and TW, CC and CS; whereas, it was not supported for the link between AC and JF.

Table 2: Joint mediation effects of MS and PE on different links

Hypothesis	β	95%CI	M	SD	t (β/SD)	p
AC → CC	-.17***	-.22, -.12	-0.17	0.03	6.64	.000
AC → CS	-.06*	-.12, -.01	-0.06	0.03	2.21	.030
AC → JF	.00	-.07, .05	-0.01	0.03	0.15	.880
AC → TW	-.26***	-.32, -.21	-0.26	0.03	9.7	.000

***Significant at .001 level

*Significant at .05 alpha level

Hypothesis 4

There is a significant partial mediation effect of MS and PE in the nexus between AC and graduates' job performance indices. Table 3 shows that mental stress has a significant partial mediation effect on the paths linking AC to graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = -.27$, 95%CI[-.34, -.20], $p < .001$), CC ($\beta = -.25$, 95%CI[-.33, -.17], $p < .001$), CS ($\beta = -.18$, 95%CI[-.27, -.09], $p < .001$), and JF ($\beta = -.23$, 95%CI[-.32, -.12], $p < .001$). Following this result, our hypothesis was supported by the evidence presented.

Table 3 also shows that PE has a significant partial mediation effect on the connection between AC and graduates' job performance in terms of JF ($\beta = .07$, 95%CI[.03, .11], $p < .001$). However, PE did not partially mediate AC's connection to graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = .00$, 95%CI[-.02, .03], $p > .05$), CC ($\beta = .03$, 95%CI[-.01, .06], $p > .05$) and CS ($\beta = .04$, 95%CI[.00, .07], $p = .05$). Therefore, our hypothesis was partly supported for PE's mediation effect on AC and JF. However, it was not supported for the link between AC to other graduates' job performance indices such as TW, CC and CS.

Hypothesis 5

The mediation of PE in the link between MS and graduates' job performance variables is statistically significant. Table 3 indicates that PE significantly mediates the link between MS and graduates' job performance in terms of JF ($\beta = .19$, 95%CI[.08, .28], $p < .001$) to a significant extent. However, PE has no significant mediation effect in linking MS to graduates' job performance in terms of TW ($\beta = .01$, 95%CI[-.07, .08], $p > .05$), CC ($\beta = .07$, 95%CI[-.02, .15], $p > .05$) and CS ($\beta = .10$, 95%CI[.00, .19], $p = .05$). Based on this evidence, the hypothesis was partly supported for path MS → PE → JF. However, it was not supported for the following paths MS → PE → TW, MS → PE → CC and MS → PE → CS.

Table 3: Partial mediation effects of MS and PE

Mediation paths	β	95%CI	M	SD	t (β/SD)	p
AC → MS → TW	-.27***	-.34, -.20	-0.27	0.04	7.59	.000
AC → MS → CC	-.25***	-.33, -.17	-0.25	0.04	6.31	.000
AC → MS → CS	-.18***	-.27, -.09	-0.18	0.05	3.71	.000
AC → MS → JF	-.23***	-.32, -.12	-0.22	0.05	4.22	.000
AC → PE → TW	.00	-.02, .03	0	0.01	0.18	.850
AC → PE → CC	.03	-.01, .06	0.03	0.02	1.58	.120
AC → PE → CS	.04	.00, .07	0.04	0.02	1.93	.050
AC → PE → JF	.07***	.03, .11	0.07	0.02	3.39	.000
MS → PE → TW	.01	-.07, .08	0.01	0.04	0.18	.850
MS → PE → CC	.07	-.02, .15	0.07	0.04	1.59	.110
MS → PE → CS	.10	.00, .19	0.1	0.05	1.97	.050
MS → PE → JF	.19***	.08, .28	0.18	0.05	3.41	.000

***Significant at the .001

Hypothesis 6

There is a significant variance in TW, CC, CS and JF that AC, MS and PE can jointly explain. Figure 2 shows that the predictors (AC, MS, and PE) jointly accounted for 30% ($R^2 = .30$, 95% CI [.28, .32], $p < .001$), 37% ($R^2 = .37$, 95% CI [.35, .39], $p < .001$), 29% ($R^2 = .29$, 95% CI [.27, .31], $p < .001$), and 29% ($R^2 = .29$, 95% CI [.27, .31], $p < .001$) of the total variance in graduates' job performance in terms of teamwork, communication competence, customer service and job functions, respectively. By implication, 70, 63, 71 and 71% of the unexplained variance in TW, CC, CS and JF are attributable to other predictors not included in the model. According to the results, the proportion of variances in the endogenous explained jointly by the exogenous variables are all statistically significant. Therefore, our hypothesis received statistical support.

Hypothesis 7

The degree of variation in PE that AC and MS can jointly explain is significant. Figure 1 shows that alcohol consumption and mental stress jointly explained 85% ($R^2 = .85$, 95% CI [.83, .87], $p < .001$) of the total variance in graduates' psychotic experiences. This result suggests that 15% of the unaccounted portion of the variance is explainable by other extraneous variables not included in the model. The variance explained was statistically significant; hence, our hypothesis was supported.

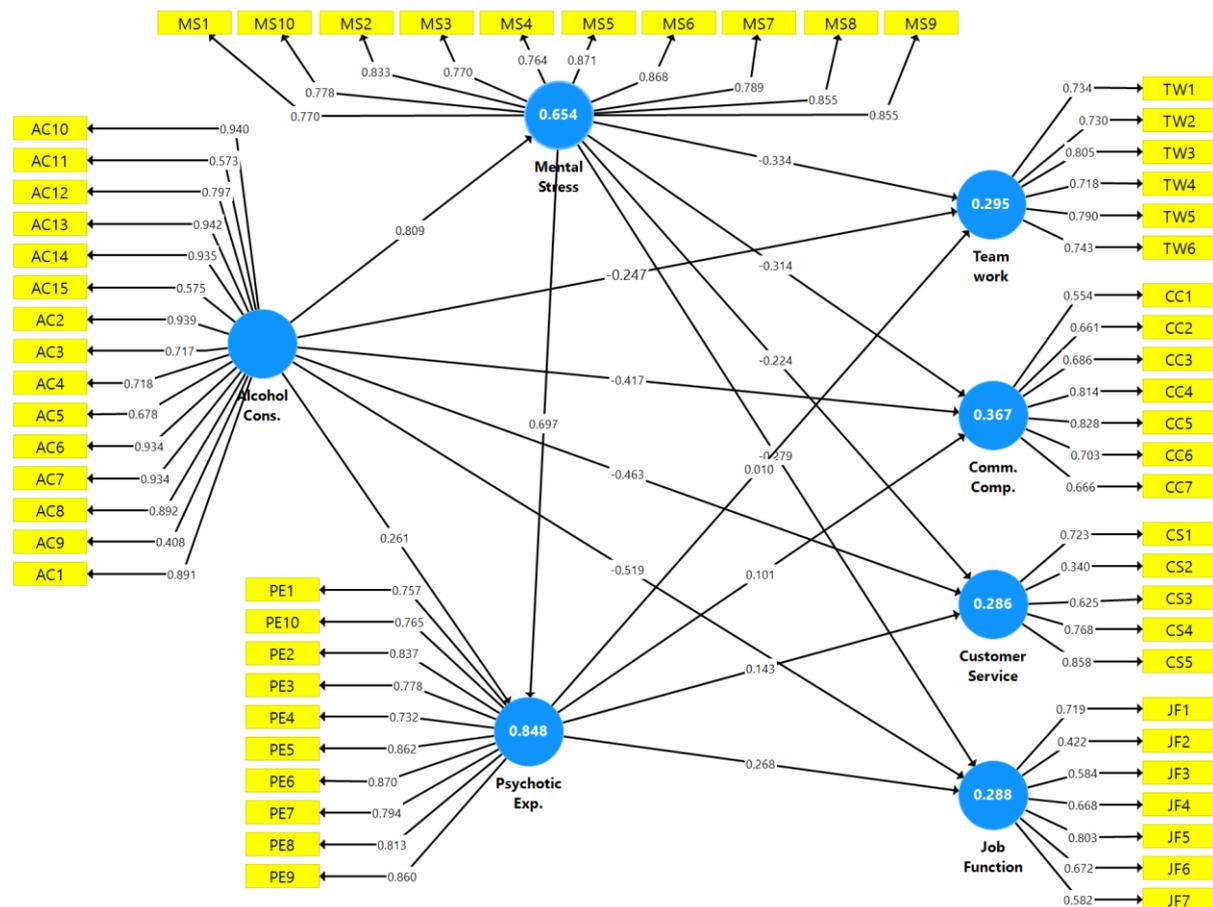


Figure 2: Fitted Structural Equation Model showing the direct and mediation linkages among AC, MS, PE, TW, CC, CS and JF

Quality Assessment: Construct, discriminant validity and Reliability

The construct validity of the outer model was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE values greater than .50 indicate the attainment of construct validity following the Fornell-Lacker criterion (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Owan, Emanghe, et al., 2022). As shown in Table 4, construct validity was achieved for all the latent variables since their AVE values are equal to or greater than .50. For discriminant validity, the Fornell-Lacker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) was used. Table 4 shows that the square roots of the AVE values (in bolded fonts) along the diagonal are greater than the correlation coefficients with other latent constructs. Thus, discriminant validity is achieved under the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Leguina, 2015). The Hetero-Trait Mono-Trait (HTMT) approach (Henseler et al., 2009) was also used to evaluate the outer model for discriminant validity. HTMT values must not exceed .90 to avoid discriminant validity concerns (Henseler et al., 2015; Owan et al., 2021). Table 4 shows that all the HTMT values (above the leading diagonal) are below the .90 threshold, indicating evidence of discriminant validity. The Reliability of the outer model was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) rho_A and Cronbach alpha. Values for these statistics must be greater than .70 for evidence of internal consistency (Bassey et al., 2020; Owan, Odigwe, et al., 2022). Table 4 shows that all the CR, rho_A, and Cronbach alpha values are above the .70 threshold. Thus, there is evidence of internal consistency across these three criteria.

Table 4: Construct validity and Reliability

Variables	AVE	CR	rho_A	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AC (1)	.65	.96	.97	.96	.91	.85	.88	.51	.61	.56	.53
MS (2)	.67	.95	.95	.94	.81	.93	.76	.55	.58	.49	.46
PE (3)	.65	.95	.94	.94	.82	.91	.81	.52	.55	.46	.42
TW (4)	.57	.89	.87	.85	-.51	-.52	-.50	.94	.73	.04	.76
CC (5)	.50	.87	.87	.84	-.59	-.56	-.53	.87	.88	.14	.16
CS (6)	.55	.81	.85	.71	-.53	-.47	-.44	.83	.86	.79	.87
JF (7)	.52	.83	.87	.77	-.52	-.46	-.41	.79	.76	.78	.65

Bolded values along the diagonal are Fornell-Larcker Discriminant validity coefficients.

Values above the diagonal are HTMT ratios.

Values below the diagonal are latent variable correlations.

Model fit assessment

When it comes to the overall model fit assessment, researchers have been warned to interpret them cautiously since they are not fully developed (Hair, Hult, et al., 2017) and, as a result, have not gained universal agreement on their use, unlike those of covariance-based structural equation modelling (Owan, Emanghe, et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the model (Figure 2) was evaluated using the following fit indices – Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), exact fit criteria (d_ULS and d_G) and RMS_theta (See Table 5). The SRMR values for the saturated and estimated models are less than the .08 threshold. The NFI values of .98 for both models are also higher than the cut-off value of .90. Under the d_ULS criteria, the estimated model showed evidence of an acceptable fit since its value is less than the upper bound of the confidence interval. However, the d_ULS value for the saturated model is greater than the upper bound of the confidence interval. Nevertheless, the model was accepted because the estimated model is more reasonable than the saturated model (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Hair, Hollingsworth, et al., 2017). The model also performed well under the d_G assessment since all the values are lower than the confidence interval's lower and upper bounds. RMS_theta should be less than 0.12 (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013). Table 5 shows an RMS_theta value of .058 (below the benchmark) and indicates the model's acceptability.

Table 5: Inner Model fit assessment

Fit Index	Threshold	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	< .08	.008, CI [.008, .010]	.01, CI [.011, .013]
NFI	> .90	.982	.982
d_ULS	Nil	.126 [.118, .198]	.192, CI [.219, .288]
d_G	Nil	.357, CI [.372, .450]	.357, CI [.375, .529]
RMS_theta	< .12	.058	

Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis showed that a significant direct negative effect of Alcohol Consumption (AC) and Mental Stress (MS) on graduates' job performance in terms of Teamwork (TW), Communication Competence (CC), Customer Service (CS) and Job Functions (JF). These results imply that high levels of AC and MS are associated with low job performance among higher education graduates. Therefore, the more graduates consume alcohol or face MS, the less likely they will perform well across the five indicators. This result is not surprising because AC affects the cognitive performance of individuals (Gunn et al., 2018; Rehm et al., 2017). Thus, the cognitive displacement of individuals might affect their physical behaviour, which can alter how victims relate with colleagues and other people at the workplace. This result corroborates other previous studies which have documented an unfavourable effect of excessive alcohol consumption on consumers' mood (Alford et al., 2020), workplace productivity (Łyszczarz, 2019; Stepanek et al., 2019) and presenteeism (Buvik et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). Past studies on mental stress have also documented its negative effect on job performance (Aduma et al., 2022; Akah, Owan, Aduma, et al., 2022; Daniel, 2019) and other work-related variables such as productivity (Ma & Ye, 2019; Ramos-Galarza & Acosta-Rodas, 2019) and job satisfaction (An et al., 2020; O'Brien et al., 2019).

One major surprise in the result of the first hypothesis is the direct positive effect of psychotic experience (PE) on graduates' job performance in terms of TW, CC, CS and JF, respectively. Although the effect was not substantial for all the job performance variables except JF, it is a surprise because an adverse effect was anticipated. The result suggests that graduates' job performance increases with their psychotic experiences and the other way around. The result is attributed to the temporary and inconsistent occurrence of PE, which could give room for graduates to refocus while at their duty posts. This result could also mean that the respondents of this study are not experiencing severe levels of psychosis. This result disagrees with the finding of some previous studies (Davies et al., 2018; Wu, Liu, et al., 2021), revealing that PE is linked to worse performance in adolescents and adults. The variation in the results is attributable to the context, nature of respondents and study designs.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed a significant direct positive effect of AC on MS and PE. AC solely accounted for 65% of the total variance in graduates' MS. The variance explained is high, making AC a substantial predictor of mental stress. This result implies that graduates that consume alcohol are also more likely to experience MS and PE. This result supports the finding of a previous study that alcohol use as a coping mechanism is associated with violent behaviours due to mental alterations (Bonomi et al., 2018). Similarly, another study found that alcohol use was associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms among males and females since COVID-19 started (Tran et al., 2020).

Furthermore, it was found that MS has a significant direct positive effect on PE. This aspect of the finding suggests that graduates who experience MS are also more likely to encounter psychosis. A reason for this result is the emotional and cognitive destabilisation that follows mentally stressed people. Consequently, there is a possibility that the harmful effects of mental stress on people may also be related to psychotic episodes, influencing individuals' work performance negatively. Previous studies have also documented a connection between

psychological stress and people's experiences with psychosis (Bolhuis et al., 2018; Kelleher et al., 2015). This result further aligns with a previous study (Jones et al., 2020) which discovered that exposure to stressful events, alcohol, methamphetamine usage, and cannabis use were all linked to an increased likelihood of developing psychotic characteristics.

The evidence of the third hypothesis revealed a significant joint mediation effect of MS and PE in linking AC to graduates' job performance in terms of TW, CC and CS, respectively. However, MS and PE did not jointly mediate the relationship between AC and graduates' JF significantly. Since the joint mediation effects were all adverse, graduates who consume alcohol are more disposed to perform poorly if they jointly experience mental stress and psychosis. This implies that MS and PE can strengthen the negative effect of AC on graduates' job performance. This finding is due to the negative effect of mental stress and psychotic experiences on graduates' job performance. This result corroborates another research which reported that academic stress significantly affects students' performance; stress impairs people's capacity to learn, work, and concentrate, all of which contribute to subpar work and performance (Pascoe et al., 2020).

This study's fourth hypothesis documented that mental stress has a significant partial mediation effect on the paths linking AC to all the graduates' job performance indicators. Similarly, PE proved to be a significant partial mediator of the connection between AC and graduates' JF. However, PE did not partially mediate AC's connection to graduates' TW, CC and CS. The direction of the mediation effect of MS was negative, suggesting that mental stress can solely compound the negative contribution of AC to graduates' job performance to a significant extent. This finding is attributable to the adverse effects that mental stress partially induced on graduates, thus, affecting their performance negatively. This finding supports the study's result that stress significantly impacts graduate students' capacity to learn and perform in the workplace (Pascoe et al., 2020). A previous study also found that very high levels of persistent mental stress were linked to worse academic performance (Lee et al., 2021). The positive mediation of PE on the nexus between AC and TW may be attributed to mood. Previous studies have reported that people with mood swings are more likely to develop psychotic feelings (Smith & Dubovsky, 2017; Zahodne et al., 2015). The mood may affect how they collaborate with team members to achieve collectively.

The fifth hypothesis of this study proved that PE significantly mediated the link between MS and JF to a significant extent. This result suggests that mentally stressed graduates with PE will function poorly in their jobs than those without PE. Thus, PE can catalyse the effect of MS on graduates' job functions. This aligns with a study which documented, after correcting for sex and age, that higher family functioning reduced the impact of perceived stress on psychotic-like symptoms (Wu, Zou, et al., 2021). However, in the current study, PE had no significant mediation effect linking MS to graduates' TW, CC and CS. This result suggests that even though PE has a mediation effect, the magnitude of the effect is insignificant in altering the effect of MS on graduates' CC, TW and CC. This means mentally stressed graduates are likely to communicate, collaborate and render customer services at about the same level as those with MS and PE.

The result of the sixth hypothesis documented that AC, MS, and PE jointly accounted for a significant portion of variances in graduates' TW, CC, CS and JF, respectively. Together, the three predictors significantly lowered all the graduates' job performance measures. The outcome points to a significant combined adverse influence from these three variables. This result is not unexpected, given that excessive alcohol use has been linked to lousy consumer outcomes in previous research (Atoyebi et al., 2020; Castellanos-Perilla et al., 2022; Hakulinen & Jokela, 2019; Rehm et al., 2017; Romac et al., 2022). Mental stress, on the other hand, disrupts people's thoughts (Kaiser et al., 2015; Rosiek et al., 2016), reasoning (Hidalgo et al., 2019; Schoofs et al., 2009), and functioning (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). The current study

confirms past findings from several studies that poorer academic performance in adolescents and adults correlates with psychotic events (Davies et al., 2018; Wu, Liu, et al., 2021). This explains why jointly possessing these three qualities simultaneously might be suicidal for a person, given the detrimental effects AC, MS and PE have previously been shown to have on human welfare.

Through the seventh hypothesis, this study proved that AC and MS jointly explained a significant proportion of the variance in graduates' psychotic experiences. This finding suggests that graduates may encounter psychotic episodes more frequently when alcohol is used, and mental stress occurs. These findings are consistent with earlier research, which showed that people with alcoholism may also have a mental illness and that people with schizophrenia and other psychotic illnesses are more likely to have issues with alcohol and other drugs, with prevalence rates as high as 50% (Addington & Addington, 2007; Petersen et al., 2007). The current study's findings confirm those of earlier research, revealing a clear association between routine exposure to stressful life events and psychotic episodes in a general population (DeVylder et al., 2020; Kelleher et al., 2015; Yates et al., 2019).

Limitations and future research implications

Just like every other study, this study faces some limitations. First, the study derived data from a cross-section of individuals that graduated between 2015 and 2020. This implies that the results of this study should be carefully generalised to those that graduated earlier or later. By using a cross-sectional design, this study is unable to tell when or what changes in the links among AC, MS, PE and graduates' job performance are likely to occur in the long run. Therefore, future research should consider using a longitudinal approach to examine such links. Thirdly, the scope of this study did not allow for comparisons of the effect of AC, MS, and PE on job performance among graduates with different demographic characteristics. Thus, it is recommended that a multigroup analysis be conducted using structural equation modelling to address this weakness. Lastly, the result of this study is from the Nigerian context and might differ from the situations in other contexts. Therefore, applying this study's findings in another context should follow revalidation studies.

Conclusion

This study used a partial least squares structural equation modelling to examine the joint and partial mediation effect of alcohol consumption on graduates' job performance across five indicators: teamwork, communication competence, customer service and job functions. The study proved that alcohol consumption is negatively associated with graduates' job performance across all the proxies. Similarly, mental stress had an inverse association with graduates' job performance variables but maintained a positive link with alcohol consumption and psychotic experiences. Psychotic experiences demonstrated significant positive ties with alcohol consumption but had a negligible positive effect on all graduates' job performance indices except for job functions. Mental stress and psychotic experiences jointly and partially mediated the nexus between alcohol consumption and graduates' job performance across the four indicators.

This study can help improve the work effectiveness of graduates and has revealed some negative predictors. This study can also enable employers to develop strategies to reduce alcohol consumption among employees for positive job performance. Such strategies might include the provision of counselling and therapeutic services to alcohol addicts, mentally stressed workers and those experiencing psychosis. Employers can also award outstanding employees for quality service delivery to enable workers to develop strategies to reach a similar milestone subsequent y. Such strategies might include workers adjusting their drinking lifestyle

and addressing their mental health and other underlying issues affecting their optimal service delivery.

Employers could also use strict measures to punish employees caught consuming alcohol to serve as a deterrent to others. Although this study focused on Nigerian graduates, the results could also be meaningful to graduates in other countries with similar socioeconomic characteristics as the sample of this study. Since alcohol consumption is associated with mental stress and psychotic experiences, graduates should understand that their job performance decreases drastically when these three jointly occur through alcohol. Therefore, it is recommended that graduates avoid alcohol or only consume mild quantities of it to enable them to function effectively in the workplace.

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