

Factor Affecting of Tobacco Uses among Bachelor Level Business Students in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study examines factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business student in Kathmandu valley. Student performance is the dependent variable. The independent variables are cultural background, stress level, peer influence, awareness and education and availability of tobacco product. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of the respondents regarding the factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business student in Kathmandu valley. The study is based on primary data of 127 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the different factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business student in Kathmandu valley.

The result shows that cultural background has a positive impact on student performance. It indicates that diversified cultural background leads to increase in student performance. Similarly, stress level has a positive impact on student performance. It shows that increase in stress level leads to the increase in level of student performance. Likewise, peer influence has a positive impact on student performance. It implies that positive peer influence leads to the higher student performance. Furthermore, awareness and education has a positive impact on student performance. It indicates that higher awareness and education leads to increase in the level of student performance. Moreover, availability of tobacco product has a negative impact on student performance. It states that higher availability of tobacco product leads to increase in the level of student performance.

Keywords: student performance, cultural background, stress level, peer influence, awareness and education, availability of tobacco product

1. Introduction

Tobacco refers a plant that belongs to the *Nicotiana* genus, most commonly *nicotiana tabacum*, and its leaves are processed to make various products like cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and snuff. The plant contains nicotine, a highly addictive substance that can affect the nervous system. Tobacco is often smoked, chewed, or inhaled, and its consumption has been linked to serious health risks like lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory issues. Siddiqui *et al.* (2017) identified that factors such as the desire for social acceptance and stress management as key contributors to tobacco use. According to Chezian *et al.* (2015), some of the social factors that are associated with smoking habits are peer influence, mass media, and family history of smoking, stress among other factors. Antismoking campaigns are becoming more on television which positively encourages regular smokers to quit and nonsmokers not to attempt smoking (Niederdeppe *et al.*, 2018). The study found that most smokers are targeted by tobacco the industry at an early stage in life to continue thriving in the market because of the addictive nature of tobacco (Abdulaziz *et al.*, 2022). Many of tobacco future victims are the current young adults because tobacco is initiated in adolescence and continues through adulthood (Ngaruiya *et al.*, 2018). Mass media such as television, music, movies, newspapers, magazines and internet have been proven as powerful tools that influence smoking habits (Noland *et al.*, 2016).

Miller *et al.* (2018) investigated that the relationship between peer group dynamics and smoking behavior among business students. The study showed that students are more

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likely to initiate tobacco use if their peers engage in similar behaviors, particularly within social groups in business schools. Similarly, Hernandez *et al.* (2018) examined that the tobacco use and peer influence in the business student population. The study highlighted that the direct and indirect effects of peer influence on smoking behavior among business students, emphasizing the role of social norms, group identity, and professional networking in tobacco use. Likewise, Kim and Lee (2019) evaluated that cultural influences on tobacco use among university students. The study stated how cultural backgrounds shape tobacco use among university students, particularly focusing on differences between business students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Further, Thompson and Johnson (2020) analyzed that the role of cultural norms in smoking behavior among business students. The study showed that cultural acceptance of smoking in social settings is a key factor contributing to tobacco use. Moreover, Kurgat *et al.* (2019) analyzed that the trends in cigarette smoking in Kenya and the Challenges Impeding Cessation. The study stated that the smoking still persists among the young people since there is lack of funds to launch a serious antismoking campaign to reduce the behaviour and insulate the nonsmokers around.

Miller and Green (2017) analyzed that the cross-cultural variations in tobacco use among business students. The study highlighted that how cultural perceptions of health, wellness, and peer acceptance shape tobacco-related behaviors. Similarly, Martinez and Gupta (2021) examined that the global perspective on how cultural factors, such as local customs, beliefs, and tobacco marketing, influence smoking behavior among business students. The study stated that cultural differences lead to varying levels of tobacco consumption across regions. Likewise, Fernandez and Ahmed (2019) evaluated that the Tobacco use among business students: The impact of cultural and social factors. The study stated that the both cultural and social factors that influence smoking habits among business students, focusing on the impact of cultural background on social behaviors related to tobacco consumption. The study also emphasized that the importance of cultural context in shaping smoking behaviors. Further, Gonzalez and Williams (2020) investigated that the international business students and how their cultural backgrounds shape their smoking habits. The study highlighted that students from countries with high smoking rates are more likely to engage in tobacco use, especially when exposed to similar behaviors in their university environments. Moreover, Johnson and Hart (2019) examined that how cultural diversity in university settings influences tobacco use among business students. The study highlighted that the intersection of cultural identity, social influence, and smoking behavior in academic settings.

Smith and Lee (2018) examined that how the availability of tobacco products in university settings contributes to tobacco use among students, with a particular focus on business students. The study found that the availability of tobacco products directly affect the tobacco use among students. Similarly, Chen and Thompson (2019) studied that the availability of tobacco products and its impact on smoking patterns among college business students. The study stated that how the local availability of tobacco products influences smoking patterns among business students. Likewise, Parker and Kogan (2017) analyzed that the social environments and the availability of tobacco products: Implications for business students. The study also investigated that how the social environments surrounding business students contribute to tobacco use, particularly focusing on the availability of tobacco products in social spaces such as dormitories and bars. The study explored that direct relationship between tobacco accessibility and smoking behavior among business students. Further, Stewart and Roberts (2021) investigated that the role of tobacco product availability in promoting smoking behaviors among business students. The study emphasized that the

relationship between tobacco availability in stores, campus settings, and peer influence in tobacco use. Moreover, Patel and Robinson (2018) analyzed that the stress management and tobacco use among business students: The moderating role of coping strategies. The study suggested that business students with poor stress management techniques are more likely to use tobacco to cope with academic pressures.

Liu and Zhang (2018) examined that how business students cope with academic stress and its correlation with cigarette use. The study highlighted that students in business schools report significantly higher stress levels, leading to a higher tendency to use tobacco. Similarly, Guliani *et al.* (2019) studied that the factors affecting tobacco smoking in Ethiopia: Evidence from the demographic and health surveys. The study found that chewing khat and geographic regions are statistically significant determinants of tobacco smoking even after controlling for various socioeconomic and demographic factors. The study also stated that people living in lowlands are more likely to smoke compared to those living in highland areas. Likewise, Park (2012) examined that the factors affecting tobacco use among middle school students in Saudi Arabia. The study showed that clear gender differences in social influences and attitudes towards tobacco use. The study also revealed that the religious beliefs and access to tobacco products were significantly associated with attitudes towards tobacco use and future intention of use. Further, Sharifi *et al.* (2023) investigated that the factors affecting waterpipe tobacco smoking trend in students. The study revealed that effective factors on the students' trend toward WTS are classified into 3 groups, including background (gender, race, and background of smoking a cigarette), mental (characteristics elements, bitter experiences of childhood, and sensual attractions), and social (easy and cheap access, wrong attitude and knowledge, role of family and friends, religious and cultural elements, and health policies) factors.

In Nepal, tobacco use is a growing public health concern, particularly among university students, including those in business schools. One of the significant contributing factors to tobacco consumption is stress, which can arise from academic pressure, social expectations, and the challenges of balancing studies with personal and career goals. Business students, often facing a highly competitive and demanding academic environment, are especially vulnerable to stress. Adhikari and Shrestha (2020) examined that the relationship between academic stress and tobacco use among university students in Nepal. The study highlighted who experience high levels of academic stress are more likely to engage in tobacco consumption as a coping mechanism. Similarly, Rai and Tamrakar (2020) investigated that how stress, combined with peer influence and the availability of tobacco products, contributes to smoking behaviors among college students in Nepal, particularly in business schools. The study showed the association between stress and smoking behavior among business students in Nepal. Likewise, Shrestha and Khadka (2019) studied on the relationship between psychological stress, coping mechanisms, and tobacco use among business students in Nepal. The study indicated that students with poor coping mechanisms tend to use tobacco as a way to manage their stress. Further, Pandey and Subedi (2020) analyzed that the stress-induced smoking behavior among business students in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The study identified that students facing pressure to perform well academically and socially are more likely to use tobacco products. Moreover, Singh and Lama (2021) assessed that the social norms, cultural factors, and tobacco consumption: the study of business students in Kathmandu Valley. The study revealed that students who experience persistent stress are more likely to develop smoking habits as a means of stress relief.

Khatri and Singh (2022) investigated that the tobacco awareness campaigns and

their impact on student behavior in Kathmandu. The study showed the link between stress and tobacco use, with a focus on how coping strategies moderate the relationship. The study also suggested that business students with poor stress management techniques are more likely to use tobacco to cope with academic pressures. Similarly, Subedi and Bhattarai (2021) studied that the impact of tobacco product accessibility on business students' smoking behavior. The study found that the availability of tobacco products in convenience stores and kiosks near university campuses was a significant predictor of smoking behaviors among business students. Likewise, Bhattarai and Poudel (2020) examined that the impact of peer pressure on tobacco consumption among business students. The study focused on that peer pressure, particularly from close friends, to be a significant factor influencing tobacco use among business students. The study stated social acceptance and the desire to fit in were key motivators for smoking.

The above discussion reveals that the empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies concerning the factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business student. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main objective of the study is to analyze factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley. Specifically, it examines the effect of cultural background, peer influence, stress level, awareness and education and availability of tobacco on tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on primary sources of data which were gathered from four major parameters such as gender, age, religion and types of family which industry tobacco platform do the respondents use the most in Nepal. For primary data a structured questionnaire was used. The respective data are collected from a total of 127 respondents. The respondents' views were collected cultural background, peer influence, stress level, awareness and education, availability of tobacco and student performance.

2.1 Model specification

The model used in this study assumes that student performance depends upon factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley. The dependent variable selected for the study is student performance. Similarly, the independent variables are cultural background, peer influence, stress level, awareness and education and availability of tobacco. Therefore, the model estimated in this study is stated as follows:

$$SP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CB + \beta_2 AE + \beta_3 PI + \beta_4 SL + \beta_5 ATP + e$$

Where,

SP=Student performance

CB = Cultural background

AE = Awareness and education

PI = Peer influence

SL = Stress level

ATP = Availability of tobacco products

Student performance was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I consistently achieve good grades in my academic courses”, “I am able to focus and complete my assignments or tasks on time” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.851$).

Cultural background was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The cultural background of tobacco industry”, “I trust tobacco industry as much as other business industry” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.862$).

Awareness and Education was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am concerned about the security of tobacco platforms”, “I worry about the privacy of my financial information on tobacco uses” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.821$).

Pear influence were measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “tobacco are user-friendly and easy to navigate”, “I find it convenient to perform transactions using tobacco” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.875$).

Stress Level was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Recommendations from friends or family influence my choice of tobacco uses”, “Knowing that people I trust use tobacco influences my adoption of them” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.831$).

Availability of tobacco product was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “My overall satisfaction with tobacco services is high”, “tobacco platforms meet my expectations effectively” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.861$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Cultural background

Cultural background would refer to how tobacco use and its meaning have been shaped by the cultural practices, beliefs, and social norms of different societies over time. This could encompass how tobacco has been integrated into rituals, its role in social gatherings, its status as a commodity or symbol, and how it has been viewed in terms of health and morality within various cultures. Kim and Lee (2019) evaluated that cultural influences on tobacco use among university students. The study stated how cultural backgrounds shape tobacco use

among university students, particularly focusing on differences between business students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Thompson and Johnson (2020) showed that cultural acceptance of smoking in social settings is a key factor contributing to tobacco use. Likewise, Miller and Green (2017) highlighted that how cultural perceptions of health, wellness, and peer acceptance shape tobacco-related behaviors. Further, Martinez and Gupta (2021) stated that cultural differences lead to varying levels of tobacco consumption across regions. Moreover, Fernandez and Ahmed (2019) revealed that the both cultural and social factors that influence smoking habits among business students, focusing on the impact of cultural background on social behaviors related to tobacco consumption. The study also emphasized that the importance of cultural context in shaping smoking behaviors. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between cultural background and student performance

Awareness and education

Awareness and education about tobacco use have become critical components in public health efforts around the world. As research has made it clear that tobacco use is linked to numerous health risks, including lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory issues, various initiatives have been implemented to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and to promote healthier behaviors. Mass media such as television, music, movies, newspapers, magazines and internet have been proven as powerful tools that influence smoking habits (Noland *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, Chezian *et al.* (2015) stated that some of the social factors that are associated with smoking habits are peer influence, mass media, and family history of smoking, stress among other factors. Antismoking campaigns are becoming more on television which positively encourages regular smokers to quit and nonsmokers not to attempt smoking (Niederdeppe *et al.*, 2018). Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between awareness and education and student performance.

Stress level

Stress is a natural physical and mental response to challenges, pressures, or demands, whether from work, relationships, or other life circumstances. It can manifest in many ways, including emotional, psychological, and physical symptoms. Siddiqui *et al.* (2017) identified that factors such as the desire for social acceptance and stress management as key contributors to tobacco use. Similarly, Patel and Robinson (2018) suggested that business students with poor stress management techniques are more likely to use tobacco to cope with academic pressures. Likewise, Liu and Zhang (2018) highlighted that students in business schools report significantly higher stress levels, leading to a higher tendency to use tobacco. According to Chezian *et al.* (2015), some of the social factors that are associated with smoking habits are peer influence, mass media, and family history of smoking, stress among other factors. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a negative relationship between stress level and student performance.

Peer influence

Peer influence refers to the impact that individuals within a person's social group (such as friends, classmates, or coworkers) have on their behaviors, attitudes, and decisions. Peer influence can be positive or negative, and it plays a significant role in shaping people's actions, especially during adolescence and early adulthood, when individuals are forming their identity and social bonds. According to Chezian *et al.* (2015), some of the social factors

that are associated with smoking habits are peer influence, mass media, and family history of smoking, stress among other factors. Similarly, Miller *et al.* (2018) showed that students are more likely to initiate tobacco use if their peers engage in similar behaviors, particularly within social groups in business schools. Likewise, Hernandez *et al.* (2018) highlighted that the direct and indirect effects of peer influence on smoking behavior among business students, emphasizing the role of social norms, group identity, and professional networking in tobacco use. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a negative relationship between peer influence and student performance

Availability of tobacco products

The availability of tobacco products refers to how easily tobacco products, such as cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes, can be accessed by consumers. The availability of these products is influenced by factors like local laws, retail access, advertising, and economic conditions. Smith and Lee (2018) found that the availability of tobacco products directly affect the tobacco use among students. Similarly, Chen and Thompson (2019) stated that how the local availability of tobacco products influences smoking patterns among business students. Likewise, Parker and Kogan (2017) explored that direct relationship between tobacco accessibility and smoking behavior among business students. Further, Stewart and Roberts (2021) investigated that the role of tobacco product availability in promoting smoking behaviors among business students. The study emphasized that the relationship between tobacco availability in stores, campus settings, and peer influence in tobacco use. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a negative relationship between availability of tobacco product and student performance.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with means and standard deviations have been computed, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 127 observations. The dependent variable is SP (Student performance)). The independent variables are CB (Cultural background), SL (Stress level), PI (Peer influence), ATP (Availability of tobacco product) and AE (Awareness and education).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	SP	CB	SL	PI	ATP	AE
SP	2.825	0.928	1					
CB	2.841	0.816	0.633**	1				
CL	2.836	0.828	0.634**	0.677**	1			
PI	2.863	0.929	0.474**	0.633**	0.577**	1		
ATP	2.956	0.895	0.503**	0.608**	0.586**	0.703**	1	
AE	2.967	0.842	0.567**	0.674**	0.642**	0.684**	0.734**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables. The study shows that cultural background is positively correlated to

student performance. It means that diversified cultural background leads to increase in student performance. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between stress level and student performance. It means that increase in stress level leads to increase in student performance. Likewise, peer influence has a positive relationship with student performance. It shows that positive peer influence leads to increase in student performance. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between availability of tobacco product and student performance. It indicates that increase in availability of tobacco product leads to increase in student performance. Moreover, awareness and education has a positive relationship with student performance. It indicates that increase in awareness and education leads to increase in student performance.

Regression analysis

Having indicated Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of cultural background, peer influence, stress level, awareness and education and availability of tobacco on student performance towards tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley.

Table 2

Table 2 estimated regression results of cultural background, stress level, peer influence, availability of tobacco product and awareness and education as independent variables on student performance

The results are based on 127 observations using linear regression model. The model is $SP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (CB) + \beta_2 (SL) + \beta_3 (PI) + \beta_4 (ATP) + \beta_5 (AE) + e$, where the dependent variable is SP (Student performance). The independent variables are CB (Cultural background), SL (Stress level), PI (Peer influence), ATP (Availability of tobacco product) and AE (Awareness and education).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficient of					Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		CB	SL	PI	ATP	AE			
1	0.359 (1.85)	0.868 (13.21)**					0.579	0.602	174.513
2	0.334 (1.816)		0.879 (14.133)**				0.612	0.578	199.733
3	1.335 (5.819)**			0.521 (6.831)**			0.266	0.795	46.666
4	0.995 (4.335)**				0.619 (8.335)**		0.352	0.747	69.476
5	0.635 (2.813)**					0.738 (10.094)**	0.445	0.692	101.892
6	0.097 (0.532)	0.420 (4.089)**	0.541 5.345)**				0.655	0.545	120.79
7	0.163 (0.923)	0.645 (5.384)**	0.571 (5.844)**	0.276 (3.321)**			0.681	0.524	90.718
8	0.151 (0.846)	0.635 (5.213)**	0.560 (5.557)**	0.307 (2.937)**	0.550 (0.495)		0.679	0.526	67.682
9	0.103 (0.572)	0.566 (4.399)**	0.548 (5.452)**	0.326 (3.117)**	0.045 (0.353)	0.212 (1.591)	0.683	0.523	55.331

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Student performance is the dependent variable.

The table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for cultural background are positive with student performance. It indicates that cultural background has a positive impact on student performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Martinez and Gupta (2021). Similarly, the beta coefficients for stress level are positive with student performance. It shows that stress level has a positive impact on student performance. This finding is similar to the findings Liu and Zhang (2018). Likewise, the beta coefficients for peer influence are positive with student performance. It reveals that the peer influence has a positive impact on student performance. This finding is similar to the findings of Hernandez *et al.* (2018). Furthermore, the beta coefficients for availability of tobacco products are positive with student performance. It indicates that availability of tobacco product has a positive impact on student performance. This finding is similar to the findings of Stewart and Roberts (2021). In addition, the beta coefficients for awareness and education are positive with student performance. The study indicated that awareness and education has a positive impact on student performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Chezian *et al.* (2015).

4. Summary and conclusion

Tobacco is a plant from the Nicotiana genus, primarily Nicotiana tabacum, whose leaves are harvested and processed to create products like cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco. Tobacco has been used for centuries for recreational and medicinal purposes but is most commonly associated with smoking. Tobacco use among bachelor-level business students in Kathmandu Valley is influenced by a combination of personal, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Peer influence, stress, accessibility, family background, and media exposure are significant contributors to tobacco consumption. Addressing tobacco use requires a multifaceted approach, including stronger public health education, stricter tobacco regulations, awareness campaigns targeting youth, and support systems to help students manage stress in healthier ways. By understanding these factors, universities, public health organizations, and policymakers can design more effective strategies to reduce tobacco use and promote healthier behaviors among students. This study provides insightful information regarding the factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley. The study analyzes various significant variables that could impact student performance. These variables include how cultural background, peer influence, stress level, awareness and education and availability of tobacco product influence student performance.

This study attempts to examine factor affecting of tobacco uses among bachelor level business student in Kathmandu valley. The study is based on primary data with 150 observations.

The major conclusion of the study is that cultural background, stress level, peer influence, availability of tobacco product awareness and education have a positive relationship with student performance. The study also concludes that stress level is the most significant factor followed by cultural background and awareness and education that influence the student performance towards tobacco uses among bachelor level business students in Kathmandu valley.

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