Thesis

Previous academic studies have found a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and suicidal behavior in adolescents and young adults. I postulate this is not due to direct causation but rather it is from a confounding variable of parental involvement. Parents who are close to and more involved with their children are more likely to spot alcohol usage as well as depressive and anxious behavior. This gives these teens better access to a support system as well as parents pursuing medical treatment for suicidal behavior. On the other hand, students with less parental involvement may see their drinking go unmitigated and their mental illness untreated. Parents may also be less involved due to personal turmoil, such as financial and marital strife, which has a confirmed negative impact on children. I further propose that there’s a negative association between mild to moderate alcohol use and suicide related mental illness. Drinking is a social activity far more than hard drugs and marijuana, so drinking often requires a teen to participate in activities that often help keep depression at bay such as leaving the home, teamwork, goal setting, and having distinct social circle. Essentially, teens may unintentionally be using alcohol, and everything that comes with it, to self-medicate mental illness until college or financial independence. This would explain why states that relatively strict alcohol laws, such as Utah, have higher suicide rates than average.