

A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF ALCOHOLISM AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN LUKAYA TOWN COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent alcoholism is a major health problem in Uganda. This study aims to investigate the prevalence of alcohol consumption among adolescents in Lukaya Town Council boundaries. A descriptive cross-sectional design with multistage sampling was used to collect data on 178 men and 22 women. The data were analyzed through semantic analysis, and SPSS (Version 26.0) for quantitative, and quantitative data respectively. The results showed that the majority of adolescents (46.7%) started abusing drugs in the age range of 16-18 years. Moreover, it was found that the majority of adolescents (48.7%) started drinking alcohol at the ages of 16 and 18 years. In light of the primary causes found in this research, the following tactics are recommended to reduce teen alcohol usage in Lukaya Town Council. It is hoped that this research will inform thorough psychological counseling intervention measures for adolescents, and propel the re-modeling of law-abiding and drug-consumption-free young men and women hence, rendering a healthy living population.

Keywords: *Alcohol, Adolescents, Drinking, Addiction, Psychology, Guidance and counseling.*

BACKGROUND

Lukaya Town Council is located along the Kampala-Masaka highway at the mouth of the Katonga River (near the Lwera wilderness). Lukaya started as a refreshment center for travelers on that route. Its development is believed by residents to have influenced the naming of Lukaya town council in Kalungu district. The sub-county is estimated to have 26,476 people (Muwonge Rapheal, 2020). Being a renown refreshment center, Lukaya welcomes visitors with an aroma of consumables like; roasted goat's meat, chicken, fish, and soft drinks among others. These products are prepared and hawked by native adolescents (10-19 years), youths (20-45 years), and adults (46 years and above).

The security of Lukaya town council was initially bad coupled with burglary and prostitution, pickpocketing, and robbery. The town council leadership together with police have through sensitizations, and arrest of suspects restored law and order. Unlike in the previous times, specifically in the 1980s when natives had opted to desert the locality due to bush wars, Lukaya evolved over time in several aspects like security, and economic development hence making it enjoyable and worth staying.

Unfortunately, apart from being a profitable commercial area, Lukaya town council is also an inhabitant for peer groups or adolescent gangs. Part of these engage in hawking to source funds for survival yet others to buy alcohol among other substances.

Consumption of alcohol greatly increases the burden of disease on a global scale. Young people's alcohol use in Uganda is linked to several negative health outcomes (Atusingwize E, 2022). Using drugs has significant economic, social, and health repercussions and is a major cause of disease burden in young people. Early initiation of use carries risks for short- and long-term well-being as well as social effects because these are typically established during puberty. (Nadkarni, 2022).

According to (Supa Pengpid, 2020), adolescence is one of the most difficult, demanding, alluring, and problematic stages of adolescence for both adolescents and their parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals.

Adolescence is a stage between childhood and adulthood, according to the WHO. Thus, a person between the ages of 10 and 19 is referred to as an adolescent.

Adolescents' ability to participate fully in society, their ability to perform well in school, and their relationships with family and friends are all significantly impacted by psychological discomfort. Concerns about the effects of psychological distress among adolescents have been highlighted as a result of risk-taking behavior among adolescents and difficult life circumstances in nations with low incomes (MU, 2023).

Alcohol addiction amplifies the adolescents' already insecure behaviors. These include but are not limited to; risky sexual intercourse (teenage pregnancies, contracting sexually transmitted diseases), school dropouts, violence, accidents, family and child neglect, consumption of additional substances like Marijuana, cigarettes, Khat (commonly known as Mira or Mairungi in the Ugandan context). According to (Prisons, 2020), 204 youth were convicted, and 62 were remanded from Kalungu district on alcohol ignited cases. This points to crimes committed due to an unhealthy youth population created by the influence of alcohol and adolescence. Thus, this investigation seeks to evaluate alcoholism among adolescents in Lukaya Town Council boundaries. Findings will inform thorough psychological counseling intervention measures for adolescents, and propel the re-modeling of law-abiding and drug-consumption-free young men and women hence, rendering a healthy living population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This segment highlights prior investigations launched in various parts of the world subscribing to the context of adolescents' consumption of substances including alcohol as facilitated by diverging factors as herein articulated by authors.

According to (Keller Mark, 2023), alcoholism is continuous consumption of alcohol in spite of harmful effects that have an impact on an individual's life by impairing their ability to exercise self-control. Whereas, (Abigail Jones, 2023), addresses adolescence as a unique developmental stage that signifies the transition from youth to maturity and takes place between the ages of ten and nineteen. It is characterized by changes in physical, psychological, and biological functioning.

Alcohol consumption among adolescents has long alarmed public health officials because it poses both short-term risks and several long-term negative consequences. In their findings, they revealed adolescents who are addicted to alcohol were neglected hence resulting in unproductive to the communities where they belong (Livingston M, 2023).

Empirical review

Under this segment is the experimental works of literature explored in line with adolescent alcoholism.

An investigation by (Akasaki, 2019), in Lusaka, Zambia, sought to pinpoint the variables that influence young people's alcohol consumption. They discovered two latent classes: one for less dangerous behavior (20.0% of men, 23.6% of the women) as well as another for riskier behavior. Men in the dangerous behavior class were more likely than women to report being delinquent, smoking, drinking excessively frequently, experiencing their initial sex before the age of sixteen, and getting into fights. In order to determine the connection between recklessness and risky behavior in young people with alcohol dependence. (Anupama K, 2022) Surveyed youths that visited clinics, and with a mean value of 30.90, men showed greater levels of impulsivity than women did in the study (mean value of 17.23). The study used non-probability sampling methods to collect data on 178 men and 22 women. The results showed that gender (-3.260**) and high-risk behavior (-2.350*) had a substantial impact on alcoholism on youngsters living in impoverished areas alcohol dependence.

(Nadkarni, 2022) Investigated the consumption of alcohol by teenagers in India. The findings revealed that, in the previous month, 54.2% of those in urban slum youths aged between the ages of ten and nineteen had up to 50 "pegs" of alcoholic beverages. According to the research analysis, 88.2% of low-income youth between the ages of 18 and 20 had alcohol use disorders.

In Uganda, research on young children's alcohol use was done (Skylstad V, 2022), and in Uganda, it was discovered that 10 out of 11 children aged 8 to 18 years old were diagnosed with harmful

alcohol use and dependence, which has been the cause of various risky behaviors in communities throughout Uganda.

Madrid, (María Prieto-Ursúa, 2020) analyzed through an investigation, the reasons for adolescents' consumption of alcohol. Using a sample of 2.865 boys and girls between 12 to 18 years, findings from Pearson's correlation and logistic regression presented no deviation amidst young men's and women's alcohol consumption factors. These stated that alcohol consumption is pleasurable, and a source of intrinsic reinforcement in life.

In 2018, a descriptive cross-section design with multi-stage sampling was performed in Ghana employing 1400 school going adolescents to investigate alcohol consumption prevalence. According to findings, 42% alcohol consumption prevalence with a 73% drunkardness rate was evidenced in Junior High School adolescent learners. (Thomas Hormenu, 2018). Furthermore, 52% of the adolescents experienced early alcohol exposure.

(Edwinah Atusingwize, 2022), conducted a study to determine the level of alcohol consumption in Uganda. The rate of alcohol consumption among Ugandan youth in the 12 months previous was examined using questions posed during the data collection process. And the results demonstrated that (39%), 4/10 youth admitted to drinking in the previous year.

(Imannezhad Sh, 2023), assessed the propensity for high-risk behaviors and the related factors linked to adolescent risk behaviors among Iranian adolescents who are intoxicated. In Iran, adolescents exhibited high alcohol risk behaviors in 63.1% of cases. In this study, they noted that approximately 26.5% of all adolescents aged 15 to 19 worldwide, or about 155 million adolescents, are current drinkers. The findings suggested that drinking alcohol is linked to risky sexual behaviors (RSBs), which have contributed to a high rate of HIV infection in adolescents around the world (Cho, 2023).

A study was made by (Nyemara, 2023), to find out the prevalence of alcohol disorders and the associated demographics in a population of adolescent people in southwest Uganda. Alcohol addiction was found to be more common in men than in women, with a prevalence rate of 39.9%. Since teen drinking increases the risk of alcohol use disorder, it is a major health issue in Uganda.

A study on the religious and ethical effects of teen drinking in Lagos was done by (Discourse Humanus, 2022), A descriptive statistic as well as a Chi-squared test of independence were employed in their study to ascertain whether there were any clear connections between significant associations and teenage drinking behaviors in Nigeria. It was discovered that 72% of teenage boys and 51% of teenage girls drank alcohol with their friends, which had a significant impact on their social behaviors in their communities.

A study was conducted in Turkey to estimate drug abuse prevalence and consequences among youths (Demet Havaceligi Atlam, 2017). 2969 people were investigated with 54.8% of the target

population being males and 45.2% females. Findings portrayed self-harming characters like suicide, fights using sharp objects, and arms then early sexual behaviors were evidenced.

As per (S. Suvitha, 2023), the implementation of effective structured teaching programs for adolescents regarding the perils of alcoholism is crucial in curbing the hazardous behaviors exhibited by young people who consume alcohol. To reach this justification, a sampling technique was used in this study with 50 respondents. The findings showed that, before the beginning of awareness programs, 64% (n=32) of the respondents had no knowledge, 32% (n=16) had moderate knowledge, and just 4% (n=2) had sufficient understanding regarding alcoholism. Following the awareness campaign, 4% (n=2) had good knowledge, 40% (n=20) had somewhat adequate knowledge, and 56% (n=78) had adequate knowledge. The results showed that adolescents' understanding of alcoholism and how to prevent it increased as a result of the structured teaching program.

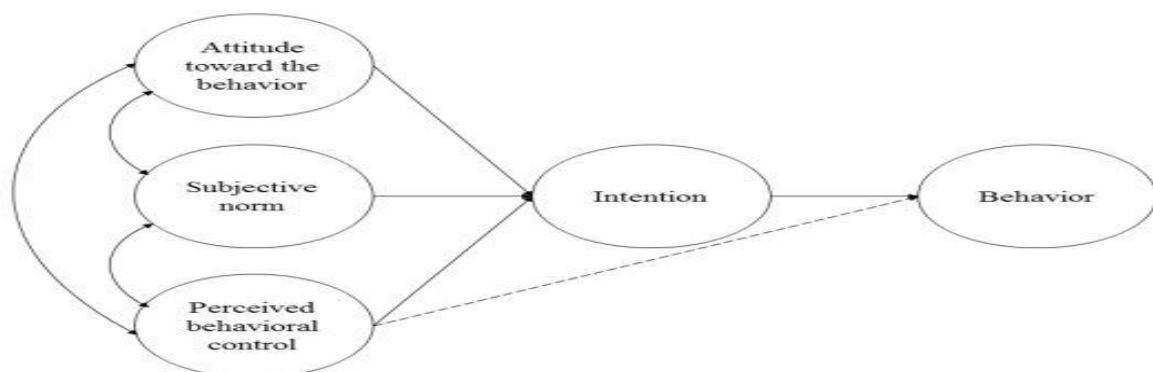
Theoretical review

Theories addressing alcoholism and adolescent risky behaviors were reviewed and presented as follows. These theories include but are not limited to the theory of planned behavior, the theory of reasoned action, Psychopathological Theory, biological theory, Social Learning Theory

The planned behavior theory (TPB)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) led to the development of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in 1980, which was centered on predicting a person's intention or desire to act in a particular way at a specific time and place desired to elaborate on every habit that a human being is capable of using to exercise self-control. Professor Icek Ajzen, a social psychologist, created this hypothesis. The theory highlights important components like attitude, behavioral intention, personal standards, social conventions, perceived authority, and perceived control over behavior to explain specific behavioral targets or options. (Henriette Kyrrestad, 2022).

Figure1: Illustrates the theory of planned behavior



Source: (Olalla Cutrín, 2020)

This theory was used to forecast how people would behave when it comes to how often they would drink alcohol in Norway. A multilevel model based on structural equations was applied to

longitudinal data (a maximum of N=1,563) to look for differences in the amount of alcohol consumed by teenagers. Findings presented onset alcohol consumption for males and females by intention, and subjective norms. Girls' drinking was predicted by attitude, and its frequency was related to perceived behavioral control while boys drinking was predicted by subjective norms. hence prediction of gender differences in alcohol consumption.

However, according to (Olalla Cutrín, 2020), the best predictors for theory of planned behaviors are attitude towards alcohol, social norms, perceived control, and personal intention to take alcohol. In a study to apply the theory of planed behavior to predict alcoholism, 755 Spanish students aged 11 to 15 years (47.7% girls) were sampled. Path analysis results indicated that attitude towards alcohol, favorable norms, vulnerability (perceived control) positively influenced alcoholism. The intention construct was a higher drinking predictor thereby negating behavioral control (strategy to fight alcohol consumption).

Psychopathological Theory

Psychopathology subscribes to an in-depth examination of mental health issues. Under this condition, prevalent signs, and symptoms include; unstable moods, concentration inability, anger, and fatigue, suicide, sleep destruction, among others. The Psychopathological theory puts attention on abnormal characters asserting that alcohol addiction is an indication of another psychiatric condition triggered by a mental disorder. People may exhibit cognitive hardships, mood imbalances, and personality, among other issues.

According to (Taylor M. Treleaven, 2015), the implementation of psychopathological tests (prevalent psychometric test) specifically the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) affords an authoritative clinical identification of personality characteristics. This therefore make people with this condition to easily make alcohol consumption decisions hence timely, and prevalent drug abuse addiction.

Theory of Mind (ToM)

According to a study by (Evan Westra, 2018), The theory of mind is the capacity to forecast and interpret behavior using notions of intentional mental states, which include opinions, feelings, motives, goals, and perceptual states. Thus, (Lakshmi Kumar, 2022) argues that a major contributing factor to adolescent alcohol problems is the misunderstanding and overvaluation of peers' attitudes toward drinking, which encourages young people to view drinking as a means of gaining acceptance from their peer group. In this study, participants There was an assessment of theories of mind (N = 472, 91% female; Mage = 19.28 ± 0.77; White). Using the procedure add-on, intangible impact models were run in the SPSS software to evaluate the indirect influence of ToM on alcohol results using acceptance reasons and self-efficacy to withstand pressure from others to alcoholism. To find relationships between the study variables, bivariate correlations were employed. The results demonstrated that ToM directly impacted alcohol-related issues

through acceptance motives (in contrast to low self-esteem in fending off social pressure to drink).

The Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory emphasizes how society influences people, focusing on relationships and peer pressure in particular (Taylor M. Treleaven, 2015). According to this theory, role modeling influences individual decisions and choices. Consequently, the social learning theory identifies the fundamental causes of an adolescent's repeated participation in risky drinking behaviors. The adolescents might be going through a lot during their adolescence, or they might have originated from experiences that are challenging like having caregivers who don't support them, families that are dysfunctional, or juvenile trauma. Furthermore, the person might have parents who are alcohol addicts, which could encourage them to use alcohol as a coping mechanism for specific stresses.

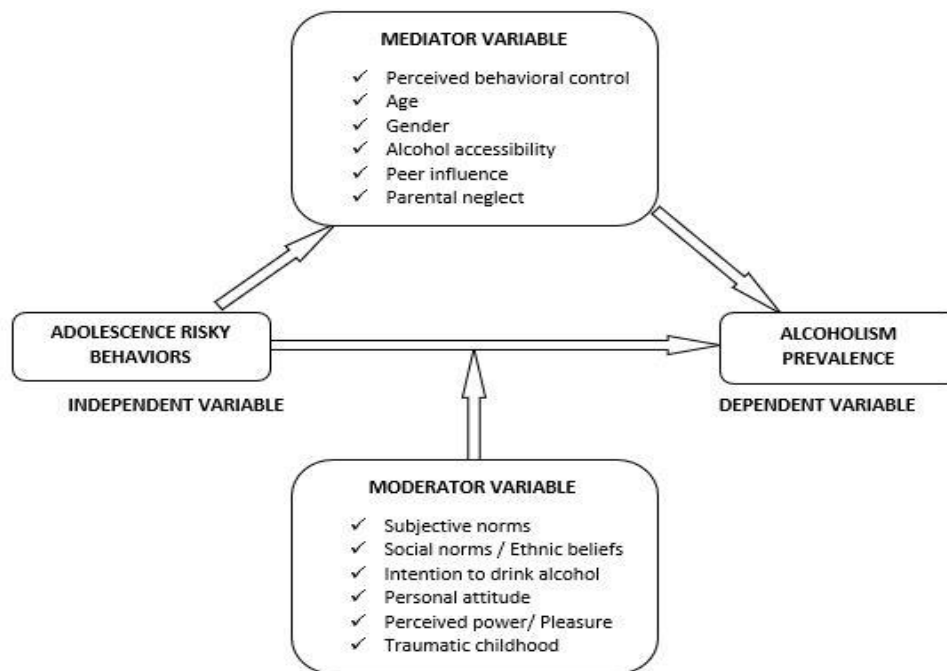
With a thorough benchmark of the studied alcohol addiction theories above, core constructs that directly or indirectly (moderator, and mediator variable factors) influenced the relationship between the studies' independent, and dependent variables were identified for investigation concept design. This is presented in the conceptual framework below.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Following the emphasized variable (mediator, and moderator) based factors presented in the theoretical review, the conceptualization of this investigation was drawn. Figure 2 presents a conceptual framework design of the relationship among the independent, dependent, moderator, and mediating variables as applied herein.

The constructs that determine the relationship amidst the dependent, and independent variables include, traumatic childhood faced by some adolescents, the effects of peer groups, age, gender, and subjective norms which represent how people approve a behavior. Furthermore, perceived power, social norms, and dysfunctional families as stated by the social learning theory, personal attitude, and intention to drink alcohol plays a significant role in alcoholism in adolescents.

It's believed that personal conditions like mental illness affects those morally acceptable decisions in the society hence creating room for failure of perceived behavioral control which mitigates in-appropriate actions.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Source: researcher/study composition

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Specifically, this study seeks to establish why and how often adolescents take alcohol. Identify other substances abused in addition to alcohol that further facilitates their addiction? Then estimate the mental, and psychological impacts imposed on their lives due to drug abuse at a tender age. This research will be directed by questions aiming to disclose why adolescents take alcohol. Establish its consumption frequencies alongside other substances, and assess whether they know the mental, and psychological consequences associated with drug abuse.

Mixed method

With a benchmark of the Lukaya town council youth alcoholism coupled with adolescent risky behavior phenomenon, this investigation finds mixed research methods ideal for its implementation. Hence was be applied thereby incorporating an initial qualitative data followed by a quantitative primary data collection from respondents. A non-probabilistic sampling technique was used to identify the initial study respondents. The Collected data was analyzed through sematic analysis, and SPSS (Version 26.0) for quantitative, and quantitative data respectively. The study target population of this investigation were youths along Lukaya Town council. Through the local council member, the investigator was authorized to interview 250 respondents. Through snowball methodology, the respondents were accessed and interviewed after seeking their consent through thorough explanation of the research aims and purpose.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this investigation are presented as per the different research objectives as follows;

1) Establish why and how often adolescents take alcohol?

According to some respondents, drug abuse is a source of pleasure, swag, and enjoyments. This motivation adolescents to frequently abuse drugs. Other respondents stated that, their parents acknowledge alcoholic content consumption, and yet these adolescents consider it be a refreshment habit.

As an economic activity, it was noticed that involving adolescents in alcohol brewing by parents also sparks off minors' alcoholic contents ingestion.

It was discovered that some relatives deliberately give alcohol to children's when left home with them, an act that fuels tender age alcohol ingesting commencement.

According to field statistics, an estimated 65% of youngsters are exposed to alcohol through relatives, while some children pick it up on their walk home from school or when they are assigned to buy it for their parents.

Events such as parties, outings, and cultural customs have been found to influence teenagers' alcohol use. Adolescents have plenty of freedom and time to take drugs during these events.

Furthermore, stress, and sadness triggers adolescents to abuse drugs to relieve themselves hence their zeal to abuse drugs repeatedly.

2) Identify other substances abused in addition to alcohol which further facilitates their addiction?

Using the observation methodology, 70% of the respondents take alcohol alongside drugs like Khat (Mira or mairungi), cigarettes, and marijuana. As proof to this, some adolescents were from a distance captured abusing drugs near Lwera wilderness. See figure 1.

3) Estimate the mental, and psychological impacts imposed in adolescents lives due to drug abuse

As per the findings aligning to estimating the mental, and psychological impacts of alcoholism coupled with adolescence, the following issues were prevalently identified. These included;

Gang fights, teenage pregnancies, contracting of STD's, memory loss, disrespect for elders, debts and sale of properties to abuse drugs, committing crimes, family neglect, miscarriages, utilizing of obscene phrases, and some run mad thereby losing their mental stability.

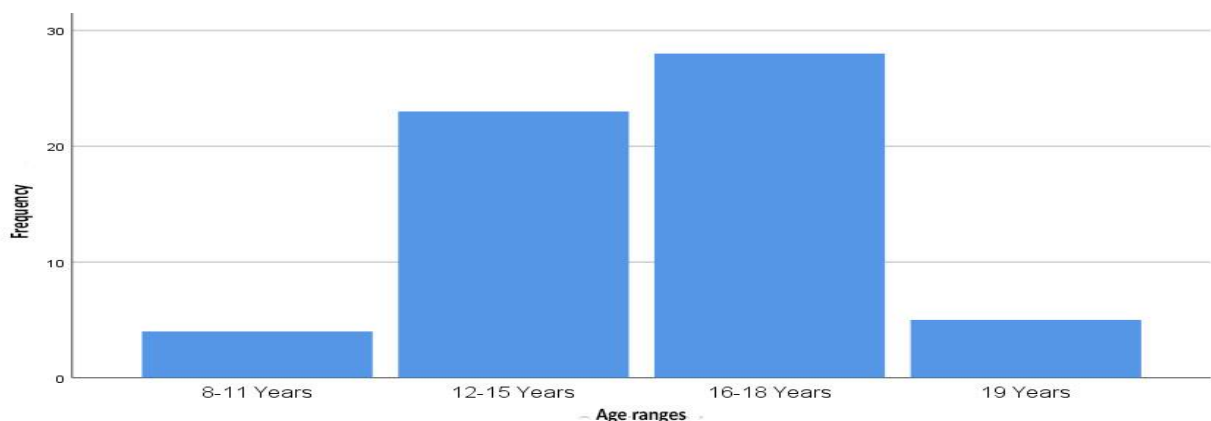
Table 1: This statistic shows the responses of teenagers when questioned about the age at which they began using drugs and alcohol.

S/n	Items	Daily	Weekly	Sometimes	Monthly	Never	M	SD
1	How often do you take alcohol?	45.0	33.3	11.7	3.3	6.7	4.07	1.148
2	If your parent take alcohol, how many times in a day?	36.7	6.7	6.7	36.7	13.3	3.17	1.564
3	For how long have you been taking alcohol?	43.3	41.7	8.3	1.7	5.0	4.17	1.011
Ground Mean							3.8	

Source: computed field statistics

According to the table, 45.0% of the respondents agree to taking alcohol daily followed by 33.3%, 11.7% sometimes do take alcohol, and 3.3% take alcohol monthly. However, 6.7% agree never to have taken alcohol. 36.7% of the respondents agree that their parents take alcohol daily, and monthly respectively, while 6.7% agree to be taking alcohol weekly and sometimes. However, 13.3% of participants' parents do not take alcohol. 43.3% of the respondents agree to have been alcohol for the last two years, while 41.7% agreed to take alcohol weekly. 8.3% respondents take alcohol sometimes, 1.7% monthly but 5.0% of respondents never took alcoholic content.

Figure 1.0: This statistic shows the responses of teenagers when questioned about the age at which they began using drugs and alcohol.



Source: computed field statistics

Figure 1.0: statistics from the respondents indicated that 6.7% adolescents started drug abuse between 8-11 years, 38.3% between 12-15 years, and 8.3% at 19 years. However, it was found out that majority adolescents (46.7%) started abusing drug in the age range of 16-18 years.

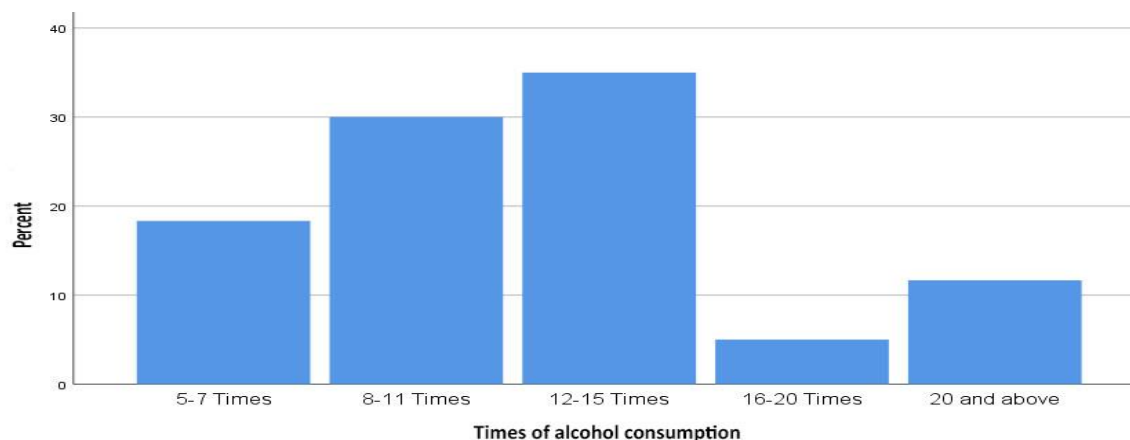
Table 2: Teenagers responses about how many times they took alcohol with their friends over the course of a month.

S/n	Items	Daily	Weekly	Sometimes	Monthly	Never	M	SD
1	How many bars do you visit to take alcohol in Lukaya Town Council?	23	5.0	15.0	31.7	25.0	2.70	1.499
2	How often do you buy alcohol with your money?	10.0	31.7	30.0	15.0	11.7	3.14	1.166
		No	Yes					
3	Do you sometimes take alcohol on credit?	71.7	21.7	6.7			1.85	0.515
4	If yes, how often do you take alcohol on credit?	5.0	30.0	45.0	20.0		3.20	0.819
Ground Mean							2.72	

Source: computed field statistics

The table 2 indicates that 23% of the respondents agree that they visited all of the bars in Lukaya town council five times, 5% visited the bars 4 times, 15% visited three times, 31.7% visited three times. However, 25.0% never visited any bar, but that does not mean they do not take alcohol.

This implies that most adolescents visit bars, while some buy alcohol from retail shops along the roadsides. Similarly, adolescents also, shown from the report 31.7% often buy alcohol with their own money weekly, 30% do buy it sometimes while 15% buy with their money monthly, and 10 % of the adolescents buy alcohol with their money daily. But 11.7% of the adolescents never buy alcohol with their money probably because they don't drink alcohol or they have never been exposed to drinking alcohol. 71% of the adolescents do not take alcohol on credit, the results indicate that either people buy for them or they use their money to buy alcohol. However, 21,7% often take alcohol on credit.

Figure 1.1: shows the answers given by teenagers when asked how many times they had drunk with their friends over the course of a month.

Source: computed field statistics

From the statistics, 18.3% of the respondents admitted to having taken alcohol with friends 5-7 times a month, 30.0% respondents approved to 8-11 times, 35.0% agreed to 12-15 times, 5.0% agreed to 16-20 times, and 11.7% respondents agreed to have abused drugs with friends 20 times and above. This points to the alcohol consumption prevalence in adolescents of Lukaya Town council.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the prevalence of alcohol consumption among adolescents in Lukaya Town Council boundaries poses a significant health concern in Uganda. This research has shed light on the alarming rate at which adolescents in the age range of 16-18 years are engaging in drug abuse, with a particular focus on alcohol. The consequences of alcohol addiction among adolescents further exacerbate societal issues such as risky sexual behavior, school dropout rates, violence, accidents, and criminal activities. It is evident that psychological distress plays a crucial role in influencing these behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to implement psychological counseling intervention measures to address this issue effectively. By promoting law-abiding and drug-consumption-free lifestyles, we can create a healthier living environment for young men and women in Lukaya Town Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the primary causes of alcoholism found in this research, the following tactics are recommended to reduce teen alcohol usage in Lukaya Town Council.

- a) Not involving adolescents in alcohol brewing by parents.
- b) Keep, and supervise adolescents in school.
- c) Increase alcohol prices to deter some adolescents for its consumption.
- d) Condemn children's harsh treatments that was identified to spark off increase of street children.
- e) Stop sending minors buy or sale alcohol as practiced by some parent/guardians.
- f) Sensitization of communities about the dangers involved in drug abuse.
- g) Psychological counseling of adolescents to get off peer groups.
- h) Condemn acknowledgement of alcohol consumption as normal by some societal norms.
- i) A ban on parents drinking alcohol during day time in open place where children can see them.
- j) Parent should enforce regulated punishment associated with adolescents' alcohol consumption.

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