



MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS ON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN UGANDA

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INTRODUCTION

The increased alcohol consumption among young people in Uganda is alarming.

Such higher rates of consumption are attributed to;

- Weak alcohol regulations
- Social acceptance
- Multi-media marketing of alcohol
- Informal production
- Limited treatment facilities

The study focuses on the role of media in shaping the opinion of young people about alcohol consumption in Uganda.

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- Health risks like; liver cirrhosis, heart disease, and stroke.
- Alcohol dependence.
- Family and friend-based violence.
- Unsafe sexual behaviours
- Reduced work productivity.
- Death.

Background

- Approx 80% of Uganda's population is largely youthful i.e. below 35.
- Close to 70% of the population has cellular connectivity, a larger percentage has access to radio and television.
- There is no legislation restricting media alcohol advertising, promotion.
- Alcohol is considered to be socially important and acceptable in almost all traditions of the population.
- Media glamorizes alcohol consumption portraying it as a social status and success

FORMS OF
MEDIA
PLATFORMS

Traditional; Tvs, Radios,
Newspapers

Digital; X, Facebook,
Instagram etc..

Promotional; fliers,
posters, shows,
billboards

**All forms are used to reenforce each other
hence a multi-media approach.**

Methodology

Qualitative analysis using desk review of sources such as;

- Television, radio, newspaper, social media, publications.
- Reports on subject matter eg UAPA 2022, WHO 2024, UBOS 2019, UYDEL 2008.

Findings

- AI uses multi-media channels to heavily advertize alcoholic products.
- Alcohol advertizing targets young people.
- Alcohol is advertized at any time of the day or night
- Alcohol billboards are highly visible in urban areas and along high-ways
- AI frequently, publicly sponsors many entertainment shows
- Alcohol is freely advertized in many public spaces including; restaurants, bars, supermarkets, neighbourhood shops.
- Alcohol is freely marketed using online shopping platforms and door to door delivery services

Discussion of findings

- Media advertising normalises alcohol use among young people.
- More access to the media content advertising, alcohol by young people is likely to initiate them into alcohol consumption at early ages.
- Alcohol advertising and free access on online platforms can likely promote ease of initiation and consumption by young people.
- Heavy advertising and publicity contributes to driving social change on perceptions of alcohol consumption.

Recommendations

- Strictly regulate alcohol advertizing on different media platforms eg hours, children's programs, etc.
- Initiate mass media programs that create public awareness on social, economic and health harms of alcohol use.
- Involve social media influencers/celebrities to create content that directly addresses alcohol harm.
- Offer incentives to media houses that do not undertake advertizing of alcoholic products.
- Invest in multi-media products that expose and counteract the misinformation by the AI.

Conclusion

Unrestricted media advertizing and promotion can potentially influence young people's perspecption of alcohol as positive and glamorous hence leading to their iniatition and/or increase in its consumption.

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