

The Prevalence and Determinants of Adolescents' Exposure to Beer Advertisements in Shashemene town, Ethiopia

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Abstract

A substantial proportion of alcohol advertising reaches an underage audience and is presented in a style that is attractive to youths. The objective of the research was to assess the prevalence and determinants of underage adolescents' exposure to beer advertisements in Shashemene town, Ethiopia. An institutional (school) based cross-sectional research survey design was used where the process of data collection was undertaken at a point in time. The study was based on a structured questionnaire distributed to 300 purposively selected boys and girls between 15-17 years old. A pilot study was undertaken before the actual data collection processes. After collection, the data were cleaned, coded and organised. Then, the data were entered into SPSS version 20 for further analysis after which both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were utilized for data analysis and presentation. Underage adolescents in the study area were highly (97.3%) exposed to beer advertisements. Both Pearson's correlation and multivariate linear regression analysis showed that the level of beer advertisements in predisposing adolescents to drinking was significantly associated with sex ($P=.000$), experience of chewing chat ($P=.000$), anticipated reactions of parents ($P=.03$), and student-teacher interactions ($P=.000$). Broadcast advertising of beer both on the electronic and social media has remarkably impacted underage adolescents' alcohol drinking behaviours in the study area. Therefore, alcohol marketing practices in Ethiopia deserve immediate legal and policy restrictions and the danger calls for an effective enforcement of the existing relevant legal codes.

Key words: advertisement, alcohol, adolescents, exposure to advertisements, media

Background

Alcohol drinking is associated with the risk of susceptibility to more than two hundred types of health problems, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases, skeletal and muscular diseases, and reproductive health disorders [1]. Castaño-Perez and Calderon-Vallejo [2] have found alcohol consumption among University students to be detrimental to their academic performance, social relationships, psychological status, and sexual conditions [2]. Worldwide consumption of alcohol in 2010 was equal to 6.2 litres of pure alcohol per person aged 15 years or older, which translates into 13.5 grams of pure alcohol per day. In 2012, about 3.3 million deaths, or 5.9% of all global

deaths, were attributable to alcohol consumption, according to the WHO 2014 report [3]. Although the indiscriminate effects of alcohol have been widely reported across all social groups, alcohol consumption by youths can lead to more adverse consequences.

According to Newbury et al. [4] and Bonomo et al. [5], alcohol consumption among children and young people affects them in many ways including, appetite changes, weight loss, sleep disorders, exposure to chronic diseases, damage to the brain, feelings of depression, poor academic performance, and potential risks of sexually transmitted diseases. In fact, underage drinking is often accepted in many countries, including Ethiopia, where

most parents, especially in the rural areas, have always been tolerant to such behaviours in some circumstances, e.g. religious and cultural rituals. Moreover, the study by Ayalu et al. [6] undertaken in Ethiopia has confirmed the prevalence of high alcohol consumption among high school students. Alcohol consumption by young people is made possible by adults, especially those around them, i.e. family, community, peers, the media, and the society at large [7]. One way the society influences young people's decisions to consume alcohol is by promoting it through massive advertisements.

Alcohol industries in many parts of the world, including Ethiopia, prefer competing through advertising to competing through price [8]. According to Bonnie and Ellen [9], a substantial proportion of alcohol advertising reaches an underage audience and is presented in a style that is attractive to youths. Advertising of alcoholic beverages is a potential public health issue, provided that direct and material effects of advertising on alcohol consumption and alcohol abuse outcomes, generally and for specific populations, can be determined [10]. Alcohol advertising manipulates adolescents' vulnerability by shaping their attitudes, perceptions and particularly expectancies about alcohol use, which then influence their alcohol-related decisions [11].

Recently, a new style of advertising commercial alcohols has emerged where people are encouraged to drink more alcohols in exchange for possible attractive and "life changing" prizes. Such advertising companies usually warn adolescents under the age of 18 that alcoholic beverages are not safe for them. The paradox is that while these alcohols are advertised on social media widely accessible to adolescents telling them that drinking brings rewards, at the same time, they warn that drinking is exclusive just for a certain population segment. Therefore, there are reasonable grounds for doubting that the scenario

may influence adolescents' decisions to consume alcohols, provided that they are frequently exposed to advertisements. While the prevalence of alcohol consumption among young people in Ethiopia is well researched, e.g. Teshome and Gedif [12]; Yismaw and Kebede [13]; Ayalu et al. [6], the studies regarding the prevalence and determinants of alcohol advertisements in predisposing underage adolescents to consume alcohol are hardly found. Therefore, the purpose of the present research was to assess the prevalence and determinants of beer advertisements' influence on drinking behaviour of adolescents in the selected high schools of Shashemene town, West Arsi zone, Ethiopia.

Material and Methods

Study Design

An institutional (school) based cross-sectional survey research design was used where the process of data collection was undertaken at a point in time. Both descriptive and explanatory research designs were intensively employed in order to effectively achieve the research objective. In its descriptive dimension, the research expressed existing realities and facts among the study participants as far as the prevalence and level of influence of beer advertisements on adolescents' drinking behaviour are concerned, including how these facts were distributed among them. On the other hand, the explanatory part of the research considered the relationship between dependent and independent variables in order to seek responses about the characteristics of respondents determining the level of influence of beer advertisements (to the extent of making adolescents to drink beer) on the extent of beer drinking.

Method and Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to provide adequate responses to

achieve the objective of research. First-hand data were collected from the research participants between February 2 to 15, 2019 using the survey research method. An anonymous and self-administered questionnaire was designed for this purpose, translated into both Amharic and Afan Oromo local languages, and distributed to systematically selected samples of underage high school (grade 9 and 10) students. The questionnaire was constructed using variables that can enable the researcher to collect data essential for the fundamental objective of the study. The dependent variable of research was the extent an adolescent was influenced by beer advertisements and it was tested against various independent variables, such as respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, level of education, residential background, ethnicity and religion), experience of chewing chat, student-teacher interaction, expected reactions from parents/guardians after drinking beer, feelings in the school environment, school attendance per week, parenting style (the way in which one was raised in the family), and others. Subsequently, each variable was coded using numbers (for instance, 1 - male and 2 - female; 1 - urban and 2 - rural, etc.) for easiness of data entry and analysis.

The questionnaire contained questions including, but not limited to, socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, whether they had ever seen or heard beer advertisements, the frequency of watching or listening to the advertisements, the type of media (electronic, print or social) on which they mostly watched beer advertisements, if they had ever drunk beer being provoked by beer advertisements, etc. A pilot study was undertaken prior to the main process of data collection on the similar population but different from the actual research samples in order to check the issues related to the tools of data collection. Unreserved efforts were made to achieve a 100%

response rate. In order to supplement the data obtained from the primary sources, the secondary data were also included. Accordingly, books, academic journals, reports of research findings, as well as available alcohol legal and policy frameworks, both national and international, were thoroughly reviewed to substantiate the primary data.

Sampling technique

The survey population included all adolescents below the age of 18 living in Shashemene town, Ethiopia, during the period of data collection. The source population was all young people under the "legitimate" age of drinking alcohol currently attending high schools in Shashemene town. The multistage cluster sampling technique was used to select the final respondents. First, Shashemene town was chosen with the intention that young people living relatively in the urban areas of the country were more exposed to alcohol advertisements and more susceptible to be influenced by the scenario.

Shashemene town administration is organized into ten (10) kebeles, each having its own various levels of schools with a significant number of students. From these kebeles, high schools located in 3 kebeles were purposively selected due to their geographical proximity, hence easy access to data. Subsequently, three of the above mentioned high schools were randomly selected and grade 9 and 10 students aged 15-17 years were included in the survey. The sample frame of adolescent students in these schools was impossible to be obtained from the respective registrar offices, which made the use of random sampling process difficult. Consequently, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique in which grade 9 and 10 students aged 15-17 years during the time of data collection were considered for data gathering. Accordingly, a total of 300 schoolboys

and schoolgirls were chosen to participate in the study, including 129 males and 171 females. Above all, all the necessary measures were considered to reduce any potential bias during the processes of sample selection.

Method of data analysis

After collection, the data were cleaned, coded, organised and entered into SPSS version 20 for further analysis. Moreover, descriptive statistical tools, such as mean, percentage, tables, and figures were used to see the level of young people's exposure to various types of beer advertisements and the prevalence of beer consumption among the study population. Furthermore, both multiple regression analysis and chi-square tests were made to see the determinants of adolescents' exposure to beer advertisements and their likelihood of drinking beer as a result of the influence of advertisements. Data presentation and interpretation of statistical results were carried out in an attempt to find out answers to the specific research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Research on the impact of advertisements on young people's decisions to consume alcohol is an issue that could have an implication on the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of the research participants. Therefore, the study design was approved by the ethical committee of Paradise Valley College. An informed verbal consent was obtained by informing the participants about the objectives and rationale of undertaking the research. Furthermore, during data collection, the names of participants were not written on the interviewer-administered questionnaire in order to keep their personal identity anonymous. Moreover, the participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of respondents in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. As the study was undertaken among adolescent high school students that were not eligible for alcohol drinking, the majority (44.7%) of respondents were 16 years old. Females constituted 57% of participants. As far as the religious affiliation of respondents is concerned, 156 of the 300 participants were orthodox Christians, followed by 71 Muslims. Moreover, the residential background of respondents seems to have been dominated by those who claim to have grown-up in an urban area (93.3%). Furthermore, most respondents (90.3%) replied that both of their parents were alive while 1.0% responded that both of their parents had already died.

Table 1. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=300)

Variables	Categories	Frequency (%)
Age	15	68 (22.7%)
	16	134 (44.7%)
	17	98 (32.7%)
Sex	Male	129 (43.0%)
	Female	171 (57.0%)
Religion	Orthodox Christian	156 (52.0%)
	Muslim	71(23.7%)
	Protestant	62 (20.7%)
	Catholic	4 (1.3%)
	Non-believer (Pagan)	1 (0.3%)
	Other	6 (2.0%)
Residential background (raised-up area)	Urban	280 (93.3%)
	Rural	20 (6.7%)
Number of currently living parents (guardians)	Both parents still alive	271 (90.3%)
	Single parent	26 (8.7%)
	Both parents died	3 (1.0%)
	N	300(100.0%)

Exposure of Underage Adolescents to Beer Advertisements

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of respondents in terms of experiences and level of exposure to advertisements of various beers through electronic media outlets, particularly television. As shown in the table, underage high school adolescents are highly exposed to alcohol advertisements. According to the study findings, 97.3% of participants have ever watched beer advertisements while only 2.7% have never watched them. Moreover, the frequency of watching/listening to beer advertisements is as follows: 36.1% - 10 or more times a day and 11% - only one time a day.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents in terms of exposure to beer advertisements (N=300)

Variables	Categories	Frequency (%)
Experiences of watching/listening to beer advertisements	YES	292 (97.3%)
	NO	8 (2.7%)
N		300 (100.0%)
Level of exposure of adolescents to advertisements	1 time a day	33 (11.0%)
	2 times a day	24 (8.0%)
	3 times a day	44 (14.7%)
	4 times a day	30 (10.0%)
	5 times a day	31 (10.3%)
	6 times a day	8 (2.7%)
	7 times a day	9 (3.0%)
	8 times a day	5 (1.7%)
	9 times a day	7 (2.3%)
	10 times a day or more	108 (36.1%)
N		299 (99.7%)

The exposure of high school adolescents to beer advertisements is not limited to watching the scenes on television; the respondents have also reported to have ever seen such advertisements on social media. The present survey can be a testimony about

the ever-increasing involvement of young people in the use of social media. For instance, among 300 survey respondents, 186(62%) commonly use any of the social media, including Facebook - 13.7% using them for two hours per day, 23% - for less than an hour, while only 1.3% - for twelve or more hours per day.

Figure 1 shows that social media have also provided an extensive playing field for beer producing companies to advertise their products. Significant proportions of underage adolescents spending time on using social media, especially Facebook, seem to have been an easy prey for advertisements.

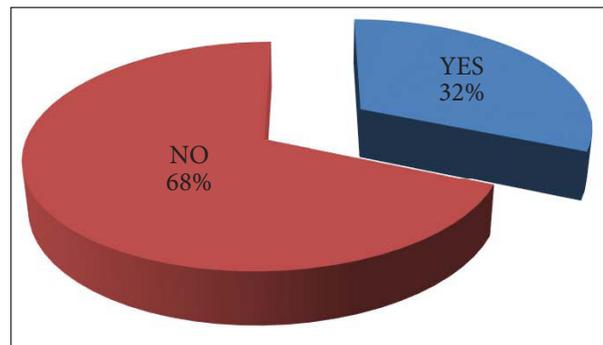


Figure 1: Experiences of watching beer adverts on social media

Analysis of multi-variate regression in table 3 shows that adolescents' experience of drinking beer due to the influence of beer advertisements is significantly associated with sex of respondents (P=.000). The result of the slope (B), .172, indicates that the likelihood of drinking beer as a result of advertisements is higher among male respondents. Moreover, the determinants of the extent of beer advertising influence on underage adolescents' decisions to drink beer include the nature of student-teacher interaction (P= .000), anticipated reaction of parents (P=.03), and respondents' experience of chewing *chat/khat* (P=.000).

Looking into the beta-weights (Beta), it is found that respondents' experience of chewing chat has a strong influence (.252) on their propensity for

Table 3. Determinants of adolescents' experience of drinking beer due to the influence of beer advertisements

Variables	β	95% CI		SE	p
		Lower bound	Upper bound		
Sex	.231	.082	.262	.351	.000
Using social media	.013	-.382	.479	.046	.825
Expected reaction of parents	.134	.003	.059	.218	.030
Having a boyfriend or a girlfriend	.049	-.062	.139	.014	.453
Hours spent on social media	-.079	-.034	.008	.051	.234
Parenting style	-.119	-.199	.012	.011	.081
Student-teacher interaction	-.250	-.487	-.143	.053	.000
Feelings in school settings	.043	-.052	.102	.087	.526
School attendance per week	-.024	-.078	.056	.039	.741
Chewing a chat/khat	.252	.165	.571	.034	.000

Table 4. Chi square test between sex and level of beer advert effect
Sex of Respondents * Experience of drinking beer trying to win a reward

Variable		Males		Females		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Experience of drinking beer trying to win a reward	Yes	28	80.0	7	20.0	35	100.0
	No	101	38.3	163	61.7	264	100.0
Total		129	100.0	170	100.0	299	100.0

Chi square=21.951a ; df= 1; p=.000

drinking beer, followed by the nature of student-teacher interaction (-.250), sex (.231), and anticipated reactions of parents/guardians to beer drinking (.134). Furthermore, the slope for sex, experience of chewing *chat/khat*, and expected reactions of parents is positive while the slope (B) for the nature of student-teacher interaction is negative. This implies that the more respondents chew chat, the positive reaction they expect from their parents, and the more they are likely to drink beer as a result of beer advertisements' influences. On the other hand, the more student-teacher interaction becomes increasingly harsh, the more the respondent is prone to drink beer and vice versa.

Results of the chi-square test also confirm that sex of respondents is significantly associated

with the proneness to beer advertisements; male respondents are more highly influenced by beer advertisements compared to their female counterparts.

Discussion

Findings of the present survey revealed that underage adolescents were highly (97.3%) exposed to advertisements of different alcoholic beverages, especially beer. The exposure varied not only in frequency of exposure, but also in the channels through which these advertisements were transmitted. While the frequency of exposure ranged from watching beer advertisements only once a day (11%) to 10 times and more per day on average (36.1%), the channels of watching the

advertisements ranged from a television screen to social media. Moreover, the survey findings showed that out of 186 (62%) respondents who reported to use any of the social media, 32% of them disclosed to have ever seen beer advertisements on the social media. Furthermore, the potential impacts of beer advertisements on predisposing underage adolescents to drink beer just to try to win attractive lottery rewards could have been expected even to increase in the future, had not the Ethiopian government took the initiative to put restrictions on broadcasting alcohol advertisements that was expected to be effective in the near future since 92.7% of respondents disclosed they had ever heard about the possible rewards to be gained out of drinking most brands of beers produced and sold in Ethiopia.

This finding is consistent with the one found by Anderson [11]. According to his study, the volume of advertisements and media exposure increase the likelihood of young people starting drinking, the amount they drink, and the amount they drink on any one occasion. The author further asserted that high school boys that were heavier television viewers drink more than lighter viewers; each one hour increase in television viewing at baseline was associated with a 9% increased risk for initiating drinking. Moreover, the conclusion of the present survey about the relationship between beer advertisements and youth drinking behaviour is similar to the conclusion of the study undertaken by Bruijin et al. [14]. They have stated that exposure to media and commercial communications on alcohol is associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start drinking alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers.

In addition, the findings of the present survey are also parallel with the study undertaken in other African countries. For instance, [15] conducted a research about alcohol marketing practices and the effects of exposure to alcohol marketing in

Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia, concluding that alcohol marketing exposure increased the likelihood of the onset of drinking alcohol and the likelihood of heavy episodic drinking among the target population. Above all, the finding also coincides with the hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the present study.

Further statistical analysis from the present survey indicated that the level of beer advertisements in predisposing underage adolescents to consume beer was significantly associated to the sex of respondents ($P=0.000$). The chi square test also confirmed that variation of sex was real and males were more influenced than their female counterparts. This might be linked to the cultural context, particularly gender stereotypes, prevalent in the study area. The long-standing gender stereotype might have prevented female respondents either from drinking beer or reporting drinking beer being influenced by the advertisements.

The findings of the present study also seem to be consistent with the propositions of both social ecological theory and social learning theories. An extension of social learning theory, known as modelling theory, explains how media users are greatly influenced by the behaviours they observe through media [16]. This assertion is in line with the finding of this study about the impact of beer advertisements on predisposing young people to drinking. The theory further states that adolescent's use of substances can be more or less problematic depending on social influences and the extent to which she/he is rewarded for the behaviour.

The other theoretical model the proposition of which is consistent with the finding of the current survey is the social ecological model of Kumpfer and Turner [17]. The theory associates adolescents' tendency of substance use with stress in general and school-related stress, in particular. The theory asserts that adolescents who find school to be

stressful or unpleasant are more likely to withdraw from school-related activities, seek out deviant peers as ways of escaping stress, and consequently, engage in substance use. Our findings about the determinants of adolescents' level of influence by beer advertisements are similar. It was found that the likelihood of drinking beer by adolescents as a result of the influence of advertisements was significantly determined by school attendance ($P=.000$), the nature of student-teacher interaction ($P=.000$), parenting style ($P=.000$), and what they felt in the school setting ($P=.000$). This was also further confirmed by social attachment theories: adolescents who have weak conventional bonds will not feel controlled by or compelled to adhere to conventional standards of behaviour [18].

Studies conducted in Ethiopia about the prevalence of alcohol consumption among students at various levels of study have also shown the role of socio-demographic characteristics of research participants on their drinking behaviour. For instance, Yismaw and Kebede [13] undertook a research on the prevalence and associated factors of alcohol consumption among college students in Northwest Ethiopia, finding that alcohol drinking experiences were significantly associated with respondents' sex and religious background. Likewise, according to another study on alcohol drinking patterns among high school students in Ethiopia by Ayalu et al. [6], sex, age, having friends who drink alcohol and living with people who consume alcohol have strong association with drinking alcohol among the students.

Conclusion

Our data demonstrate underage adolescents in the study area are highly exposed to beer advertisements. Moreover, such exposure of adolescents to beer advertisements does not only change their perception towards beer, but also predispose them to drinking beer. Furthermore,

these beer advertisements accompanied by lotteries containing very attractive material rewards also encourage adolescents to drink beer for the sake of winning lotteries. An increasing access to the internet through smart phones which enhanced the use of social media among school young boys and girls has also created a conducive atmosphere for beer companies to easily reach their targets, in addition to the less restricted electronic broadcasts in the country. The dramatic elements that are intentionally designed in the ways that manipulate the social, psychological and cultural contexts of the target audiences have also increased the chance of adolescents to be easily exposed to and influenced by the advertisements.

Above all, adolescents' tendency to drink beer due to the influence of advertisements is significantly associated to sex, the experience of chewing chat, having a boy/girlfriend, the presence of an alcohol selling grocery near a respondent's house, the experience of using social media, the average number of hours spent on using social media per day, youth's expectations about the nature of parent's reactions to their drinking (after realizing that the child came home drinking an alcohol), school attendance, and the nature of student-teacher interaction.

Recommendations

Most alcohol advertisement practices in Ethiopia contradict relevant proclamations in the country due to lenience of law enforcement activities. Therefore, effective enforcement of the law may bring deterrent effects thereby reducing the impact of alcohol advertisements. A more related assignment mainly left to the law enforcement agencies is undertaking a strong follow-up on hotel bars and groceries that are engaged in the business of selling alcohols. Although beer producing companies are made to post a "Not for sell for people under 18 years old"

remark on the bottles, there is no way to make sure whether the retailers sell it to underage youth or not. A controlling mechanism should be put in place in order to regulate potentially irresponsible practices of retailers.

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